

Childfree as a Modern Life Option: An Analysis of Islamic Law and Psychology on Contemporary Social Phenomena

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Abstract

The phenomenon of childfree or the conscious decision not to have children is becoming an increasingly prominent social issue in modern society, including in Indonesia. This decision gave rise to normative, moral, and psychological debates in society based on religious values. This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of childfree from the perspective of Islamic law and psychology, in order to understand how this life choice can be accepted or rejected within the framework of religious values and individual psychological well-being. The research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method through descriptive analysis of Islamic legal literature, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah theory, and studies of modern psychology and Islamic psychology. The results of the study show that in Islamic law, childfree can be categorized as a decision that is mubah as long as it is based on considerations of benefits such as health, emotional stability, or economic factors, and does not contradict the principles of maqāṣid al-syarī'ah. From a psychological perspective, these decisions are closely related to the factors of mental readiness, social pressure, and the need for self-actualization that reflect the process of finding a balance in life and personal happiness. Meanwhile, from the socio-religious side, this phenomenon still causes stigma because it is considered deviant from cultural norms and religious values that place children as a symbol of family success. Thus, the phenomenon of childfree requires a holistic and moderate approach in order to understand the proportionate relationship between individual freedom, social welfare, and Islamic spiritual values.

Keywords: *Childfree; Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah; Islamic Psychology; psychological well-being; Contemporary Social Phenomena.*

Abstrak

Fenomena childfree atau keputusan sadar untuk tidak memiliki anak menjadi isu sosial yang semakin menonjol dalam masyarakat modern, termasuk di Indonesia. Keputusan ini memunculkan perdebatan normatif, moral, dan psikologis di tengah masyarakat yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai keagamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis fenomena childfree dari perspektif hukum Islam dan psikologi, guna memahami bagaimana pilihan hidup ini dapat diterima atau ditolak dalam kerangka nilai religius dan kesejahteraan psikologis individu. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka (library research) melalui analisis deskriptif terhadap literatur hukum Islam, teori maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, dan kajian psikologi modern maupun psikologi Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam hukum Islam, childfree dapat dikategorikan sebagai keputusan yang bersifat mubah selama didasari pertimbangan kemaslahatan seperti kesehatan, stabilitas emosional, atau faktor ekonomi, serta tidak bertentangan dengan prinsip maqāṣid al-syarī'ah. Dari perspektif psikologi, keputusan



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ini berkaitan erat dengan faktor kesiapan mental, tekanan sosial, dan kebutuhan aktualisasi diri yang mencerminkan proses pencarian keseimbangan hidup dan kebahagiaan personal. Sementara itu, dari sisi sosial-keagamaan, fenomena ini masih menimbulkan stigma karena dianggap menyimpang dari norma budaya dan nilai religius yang menempatkan anak sebagai simbol keberhasilan keluarga. Dengan demikian, fenomena childfree memerlukan pendekatan yang holistik dan moderat agar dapat dipahami secara proporsional antara kebebasan individu, kemaslahatan sosial, dan nilai spiritual Islam.

Kata Kunci: Childfree; Maqāsid al-Syarī'ah; Psikologi Islam; Kesejahteraan Psikologis; Fenomena Sosial Kontemporer.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of childfree or the conscious decision not to have children has become one of the most interesting social conversations in the last decade. The term childfree comes from two words, child and free, which literally means "free from child." This choice is usually made voluntarily by an individual or married couple who are biologically capable of having offspring, but choose not to do so for some reason. In a global context, childfree has evolved as a modern lifestyle that is often associated with the values of individual freedom, rationality, gender equality, and economic and environmental considerations. However, when this phenomenon emerges in a society with strong religious and cultural foundations like Indonesia, it gives rise to complex theological, moral, and social debates.¹

In Western society, childfree has long been part of the transformation of post-industrial family values, in which individual autonomy and life choices are top priorities. In the United States, a Pew Research Center survey (2021) shows that 44% of adults aged 18–49 say they do not want to have children in the future. Similar trends are seen in Japan and several European countries such as Germany and Italy, with a total fertility rate (TFR) below 1.5 births per woman.² This phenomenon indicates a paradigm shift in the global family from procreation-oriented to the search for quality of life and personal well-being. However, in Indonesia, a country where the majority of the population is Muslim and still upholds family values, the decision to live without children is often considered against religious and social norms.³

Culturally, Indonesian society places marriage and offspring as two inseparable entities. A family is considered perfect if the presence of children completes the marital relationship. This view comes from the teachings of Islam which places children as *ni'mah* (gifts) and trusts from Allah SWT. The Word of Allah in surah Al-Furqan verse 74 states that children are "a comforter for the believers," while the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH encourages his people to marry fertile women because he wants his people to be the most numerous on the Day of Judgment. Thus, having children is not

¹ Alya Sofuro and Syifa Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an," *FUAH Annual International Talks on Humanities and Spirituality*, 2025, 75–94.

² Sofuro and Nurrohmah.

³ Tazkiya Asri Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts," *Journal of Religious Studies and Da'wah* 11, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.3783/tashdiqv2i9.2461>; Raja Rahmat Rayhan and Abdullah Afif, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage Perspectives on Marriage," *Nusantara Scientific Journal (JINU)* 1, no. 3 (2024): 23–36, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61722/jinu.v1i3.1505>; Irma Fauzia and Husen Mony, "The Meaning of Childfree for Unmarried Women Reviewed from The Perspective of Symbolic Interaction Theory," *MEDIASI Journal of Media Studies and Applications, Language, Communication* 4, no. 3 (October 4, 2023): 298–315, <https://doi.org/10.46961/mediasi.v4i3.835>.

only interpreted as personal happiness, but also part of social worship and the continuity of the civilization of the people.⁴

However, in the modern context, various factors have emerged that encourage couples to choose childfree. Economic factors such as the high cost of living, job instability, and high education costs are the dominant reasons. Psychological factors are also significant, where some individuals feel mentally unprepared to become parents or are worried about the emotional pressures of parenting. In addition, career considerations, health, and environmental awareness also influenced the decision.⁵ In urban societies, especially among highly educated women, this decision is often associated with the struggle for gender equality, where women want to assert control over their bodies and lives without having to submit to patriarchal social expectations.⁶

The childfree phenomenon is also closely related to the change in the value structure of contemporary society which increasingly emphasizes personal freedom and self-actualization. In the perspective of Islamic sociology, this shift illustrates the transition from an institutional marriage to an individualistic marriage, where the purpose of marriage is no longer centered on procreation but on the achievement of personal happiness.⁷ This creates tensions between traditional Islamic values that emphasize family social responsibility and modern values that emphasize individual autonomy. It is at this point that psychological approaches and Islamic law need to be combined to comprehensively understand the phenomenon of childfree.

Thus, the phenomenon of childfree in modern society needs to be seen not only as a form of deviation from religious teachings, but as a reflection of the social and psychological dynamics of Muslims in the global era. The challenge is how Islamic law and psychology can provide a balanced guide between individual freedom and social responsibility.⁸ On the one hand, sharia must be able to respond to the needs of modern

⁴ Yuvelia Indrawan and Akhmad Rifa'i, "Childfree in Premarital Communication from the Perspective of the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl Verse 72," *Al-Hiwar Journal of Da'wah Science and Techniques* 11, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 105–20, <https://doi.org/10.18592/alhiwar.v11i2.11483>; Citra Widyasari Salahuddin and Taufiq Hidayat, "A Review of Maslahah Mursalah on the Childfree Phenomenon," *DIKTUM: Journal of Sharia and Law* 20, no. 2 (December 29, 2022): 399–414, <https://doi.org/10.35905/diktum.v20i2.2924>; Eva Fahdillah, "Childfree in Islamic Perspective," *Al-Mawarid: Journal of Sharia & Law* 3, no. 2 (2022); Siti Zulaikha, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Some Influencers," *ARRUS Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (April 11, 2023): 59–64, <https://doi.org/10.35877/soshum1666>.

⁵ Ahmad Fauzan, "Childfree Islamic Law Perspective," *As-Salam* 15, no. 2 (2016): 1–23; Fahdillah, "Childfree in an Islamic Perspective"; Mhd Sufi'y, M. Muslih, and Ahmad Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Syariah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era," *Bulletin of Islamic Law* 1, no. 2 (2024): 73–82, <https://doi.org/10.51278/bil.v1i2.1516>; Rayhan and Afif, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage Perspectives on Marriage."

⁶ Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an"; Indrawan and Rifa'i, "Childfree in Premarital Communication from the Perspective of the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl Verse 72."

⁷ Urip Giyono and Sofiyatun Nurkhasanah, "Childfree Perspektif Psikologi Dan Hukum Islam" 8, no. 2 (2024): 1–15; Nailis Shofita, Raushani Azza, and Syahrozad Khunafah, "Childfree Problems And Their Solutions From An Islamic Perspective," *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies* 1, no. 12 (December 20, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v1i12.309>; M Apriyanti and E S Rahmawati, "Childfree in The Perspective of Al-Ghazali and Nur Rofiah," *Sakina: Journal of Family ...*, 2022.

⁸ Rayhan and Afif, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage Perspectives on Marriage"; Ayu Wulandari et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon Against the Islamic Demographic Bonus in Indonesia," *SOKO GURU: Journal of Education* 3, no. 1 (June 26, 2023): 43–54, <https://doi.org/10.55606/sokoguru.v3i1.2039>; Zidni Hidayah, "Childfree: Reducing Human Population for

humans without losing its substantial value; on the other hand, psychology needs to help individuals understand the emotional, moral, and social consequences of each life choice. This study is important because it concerns the sustainability of the value of the family as the smallest unit of society, as well as the challenges of reproductive ethics in an ever-changing global context.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the interaction between Islamic legal values and psychological dynamics in understanding the childfree phenomenon. This study is expected to make a significant academic contribution in building a moderate, rational, and humanistic discourse on modern childless life options in the midst of a religious and cultured Indonesian Muslim society.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research, because all the data analyzed is sourced from texts and academic documents that are relevant to the theme of childfree in the perspective of Islamic law and psychology. A qualitative approach is chosen to gain a deep understanding of the meanings, values, and arguments contained in various scientific sources as well as to interpret social phenomena contextually and interpretively. Through this approach, the research seeks to examine the dynamics of childfree discourse as part of contemporary social changes faced with Islamic sharia principles and modern psychological theories.

The data source of this research consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained from major scientific literature such as tafsir, hadith, and classic works of scholars that discuss maqasid al-shari'ah, Islamic family law, and nash-nash related to reproduction and heredity. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from scientific journal articles, psychology books, contemporary academic publications, as well as the results of empirical research on the childfree phenomenon both in Indonesia and abroad. The selection of sources is carried out purposively, namely based on relevance, scientific authority, and the up-to-date publication so that the results of the analysis can be accounted for methodologically and academically.

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies and directed literature studies, namely by identifying, reading critically, and recording conceptual and contextual data related to childfree issues. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using *content analysis* and *thematic analysis* to classify the main themes that emerged from Islamic legal sources and psychological theories. The analysis process is carried out inductively, starting from the study of empirical and normative data, then synthesized into a comprehensive conceptual understanding. Thus, the results of the research are expected to be able to present a balanced scientific interpretation between Islamic legal norms and psychological perspectives on the phenomenon of childfree as a modern life choice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Childfree in Review of Islamic Law

The phenomenon of childfree, which is the conscious decision of a married couple not to have children, has given rise to a complex debate in the study of contemporary Islamic law. On the one hand, Islam encourages the continuation of offspring as one of

Welfare in the View of Islam and Social Science," *Philosophy of Integration of Islamic and SaKins Interconnection* 5, no. 1 (2023).

the main goals of marriage.⁹ But on the other hand, Islam also emphasizes the principle of benefit and gives limited freedom to human beings to make life decisions based on their conditions and capacity.¹⁰ Therefore, the Islamic view of childfreedom cannot be assessed rigidly, but must be studied through the approach of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* and a holistic Islamic legal ethical framework.

In the Qur'an, the existence of children is considered a gift and trust from Allah SWT, as in surah Al-Furqan verse 74 and An-Nahl verse 72,

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا فُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

Meaning: "And, those who say, 'O our Lord, grant us the refreshment of our spouses and descendants and make us leaders for the righteous.'"

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

Meaning: Allah has made for you a spouse (husband or wife) of your own kind, made for you from your spouse children and grandchildren, and bestowed upon you good sustenance. Why do they believe in the unbelievers while in the favor of Allah do they disobey?

In addition, in the hadith the Prophet Muhammad PBUH emphasized the important value of offspring in his words,

تَزَوَّجُوا الْوُلُودَ الْوُدُودَ فَإِنِّي مَكَاثِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

Meaning: Marry a loving woman who has many children, then I will be proud of the number of you in front of the rest of the people on the Day of Resurrection (HR Abu Daud, an-Nasa'i and Ahmad).

These normative texts show that Islam places procreation as an integral part of *maqāṣid an-nikāḥ*, which is the noble goal of marriage in realizing tranquility, affection, and the sustainability of the human generation.¹¹

The *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach as developed by Al-Ghazali and Al-Syatibi provides a relevant analytical framework for assessing this phenomenon. *Maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* generally aims to maintain the five fundamental aspects of human life, namely religion (*hifẓ ad-dīn*), soul (*hifẓ an-nafs*), intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*), heredity (*hifẓ an-nasl*), and property (*hifẓ al-māl*).¹² In the context of childfree, the aspect of *hifẓ an-nasl* becomes the most relevant because it is directly related to the sustainability of the human

⁹ Rayhan and Afif, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage Perspectives on Marriage"; Fauzan, "Childfree Islamic Law Perspective"; Shofita, Azza, and Khunaifah, "Childfree Problems And Their Solutions From An Islamic Perspective."

¹⁰ Siti Nurjanah and Iffatin Nur, "Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law and the Reality of Society," *Al-'Adalah* 19, no. 1 (June 20, 2022): 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v19i1.11962>.

¹¹ Moch. Nurcholis and Muhammad Rizki Maulana, "Childfree: Between Human Population Issues And The Purpose Of Marriage In Islam (Maqasid Al-Nikah)," *Minhaj: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 4, no. 2 (July 7, 2023): 249–59, <https://doi.org/10.52431/minhaj.v4i2.1989>.

¹² Mohammad Fauzan Ni'ami and Bustamin Bustamin, "Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah in the Review of the Thought of Ibn 'Āsyūr and Jasser Auda," *JURIS (Sharia Scientific Journal)* 20, no. 1 (June 21, 2021): 91, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v20i1.3257>; Kamarusdiana Kamarusdiana and Naili Farohah, "Reform on The Marriage Age Limit by Jakarta Women's Health Organizations in Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'ah Perspective," *Samarah: Journal of Family Law and Islamic Law* 6, no. 1 (June 27, 2022): 198, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v6i1.12892>.

generation. Islam encourages its people to preserve their descendants so that human existence and Islamic values continue. However, the principle of *hifz an-nasl* is not only a matter of the quantity of births, but also the quality of the generation born.

The Qur'an in surah An-Nisā' verse 9 warns that people should not abandon a weak generation. This verse emphasizes that reproduction must be carefully considered by taking into account physical, mental, and social readiness.¹³ Thus, the decision to delay or even not have children in certain situations can be seen as a form of moral responsibility to avoid the birth of a generation that is unprepared or not well managed.¹⁴ In this view, childfree can be of *maslahah* value if it is done to protect the welfare of the soul and intellect, not as a form of rejection of religious teachings.

The concept of *maslahah mursalah* in *ushul fiqh* also provides a basis for flexibility for Islamic law in responding to social phenomena that are not explicitly mentioned in the sharia text. *Maslahah mursalah* means a benefit that is not directly determined by the *nash*, but is not contrary to it. According to Al-Ghazali's view, an action can be considered *maslahah* if it brings real benefits to humans and does not cause damage (*mafsadah*).¹⁵ In the context of childfree, if the decision is made based on medical reasons, such as a high risk to the mother's health, or strong psychological and economic reasons, then Islamic law can consider it a legitimate action and even recommended to avoid greater harm.¹⁶

On the other hand, if the childfree decision is based on ideological reasons that are contrary to Islamic values, such as the rejection of the nature of human creation or the belief that having children precludes the freedom to live without responsibility, then the

¹³ Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an"; Indrawan and Rifa'i, "Childfree in Premarital Communication from the Perspective of the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl Verse 72."

¹⁴ Salahuddin and Hidayat, "Maslahah Mursalah's Review of the Childfree Phenomenon"; Arinda Roisatun Nisa' et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Review of Maslahah Mursalah (Phenomenological Study of Generation 5.0)," *Psycho Aksara : Journal of Psychology* 1, no. 2 (July 15, 2023): 179–89, <https://doi.org/10.28926/pyschoaksara.v1i2.1026>; Yanuriansyah Ar Rasyid, "Reflections of Islamic Law on the Childfree Phenomenon from the Perspective of Maslāhah Mursalah," *Syaksia : Journal of Islamic Civil Law* 23, no. 2 (May 2, 2023): 148–63, <https://doi.org/10.37035/syaksia.v23i2.6952>; Zubair Rahman Saende, Lomba Sultan, and Abdul Syatar, "Ijtihad Ulama in Formulating Methods for Understanding Maqâsid Al-Syarī'ah," *Indonesian Journal of Shariah and Justice* 3, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 73–94, <https://doi.org/10.46339/ijjs.v3i1.43>; Rayhan and Afif, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage Perspectives on Marriage."

¹⁵ Bahtera Persada et al., "Analysis of the Childfree Phenomenon According to the Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali," *Comparativa: Comparative Scientific Journal of Comparative Madhhab and Law* 4, no. 1 (July 27, 2023): 55–75, <https://doi.org/10.24239/comparativa.v4i1.133>; Apriyanti and Rahmawati, "Childfree in The Perspective of Al-Ghazali and Nur Rofiah"; Muhammad Khatibul Umam and Nano Romadlon Auliya Akbar, "Post-Marriage Childfree: Women's Reproductive Rights Justice from the Perspective of Masdar Farid Mas'udi and Al-Ghazali," *Al-Manhaj: Journal of Indonesian Islamic Family Law* 3, no. 2 (December 29, 2021): 157–72, <https://doi.org/10.19105/al-manhaj.v3i2.5325>; Muhammad Khalidin, "The Legal Status of Childfree Practices in the Perspective of Shafi'iyah Scholars," *Al-Nadhair Journal* 2, no. 1 (June 23, 2023): 95–118, <https://doi.org/10.61433/alnadhair.v2i1.29>; Hidayat, "Childfree: Reducing Human Population for Welfare in the Islamic and Social Science View."

¹⁶ Salahuddin and Hidayat, "Maslahah Mursalah's Review of the Childfree Phenomenon"; Nisa' et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Review of Maslahah Mursalah (Phenomenological Study of Generation 5.0)"; Ar Rasyid, "Reflections of Islamic Law on the Childfree Phenomenon from the Perspective of Maslāhah Mursalah"; Saende, Sultan, and Syatar, "The Ijtihad of Ulama in Formulating the Method of Understanding Maqâsid Al-Syarī'ah"; Rayhan and Afif, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage Perspectives on Marriage."

decision can be considered against the maqāsid syarī'ah.¹⁷ This is because Islam rejects views that glorify individual freedom in absolute terms without regard to social and spiritual responsibilities. The basic principle of Islamic law is the balance between individual rights and obligations to society and God.¹⁸ Thus, childfree cannot be viewed only from the perspective of personal freedom, but must be placed in the context of Islamic social ethics that emphasizes balance, justice, and responsibility.

In contemporary discourse, some Muslim scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Wahbah al-Zuhaili assert that Islam permits the arrangement of birth (*tanzīm al-nasl*) or the delay of having children (*tahdīd an-nasl*) as long as it is based on conjugal agreement and clear consideration of benefits.¹⁹ This principle can be extended to the childfree context by noting that the decision is not permanent and still leaves room for possible changes according to future conditions. In other words, Islam gives tolerance to personal decisions as long as it does not ideologically reject offspring.

The childfree phenomenon can also be understood in the context of *ijtihād al-waqi'*, which is *ijtihād* towards social reality. The changing times, urbanization, and the complexity of the global economy have changed people's mindset about the meaning of family. In the modern era, many couples face economic pressures, career competition, and social demands that are different from those of the past.²⁰ In this situation, Islam requires its people to continue to use common sense ('aql) and moral considerations in making decisions. This rational approach is in line with the principle of *hifz al-'aql* in

¹⁷ Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an"; Giyono and Nurkhasanah, "Childfree Perspectives on Islamic Psychology and Law"; Sufi'y, Muslih, and Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Syariah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era"; Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts."

¹⁸ Indrawan and Rifa'i, "Childfree in Premarital Communication from the Perspective of the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl Verse 72"; Maisyatusy Syarifah and Hudzaifah Achmad Qotadah, "Childfree In The Qur'an: Reinterpretation Of Al-Nahl Verse 72 With Ma'nā Cum Maghzā Approach," *Al-Tahrir* 22, no. 2 (2022); Sembiring Amelia Feriel and Rholand Muary, "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Perspective of the Batak Community," *Journal of Social and Political Sciences Malikussaleh (JSPM)* 4, no. 1 (March 2, 2023): 22–35, <https://doi.org/10.29103/jspm.v4i1.9904>.

¹⁹ Yulika Ramdayani, Ashar Pagala, and Maisyarah Rahmi Hasan, "Maqasid Syariah and the Efforts of the National Population and Family Planning Agency in Population Control in East Kalimantan," *Qonun: Journal of Islamic Law and Legislation* 6, no. 2 (December 30, 2022): 99–115, <https://doi.org/10.21093/qj.v6i2.5363>; Yuli Yuli and Awaliyah Musgamy, "Sociological Analysis of Child Regulation in Creating Household Harmony (Comparison of the Views of Imam Shafi'i and Mahmud Syaltut)," *Shautuna: Scientific Journal of Comparative Students of Madhhab and Law*, January 1, 1970, <https://doi.org/10.24252/shautuna.v1i3.14915>; Awaliyah Musgamy Yuli, "Sociological Analysis of Child Regulation in Creating Household Harmony," *Shautuna, Scientific Journal of Comparative Students of Madhhab* 1, no. 3 (2020); Ahmad Munawar Ismail, "Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's Critical Reflections on Extremism and Religious Extremism," *Islamiyyat* 45, no. 1 (June 1, 2023): 233–42, <https://doi.org/10.17576/islamiyyat-2023-4501-19>; Sahrul Mulya Sari and Refti Handini Listyani, "Perception of Children's Value in Birth Arrangements in Couples of Childbearing Age," *Paradigm* 5, no. 1 (2017).

²⁰ Nashrun Jauhari, "Fiqh Prioritas an Instrument of Ijtihād Maqāsidī Yūsuf al-Qarāḍawī's Perspective and Its Urgency in the Contemporary Era," *Maraji: Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (September 1, 2016): 132–62, <https://doi.org/10.36835/maraji.v3i1.65>; Muhammad Said, "Recontextualization of Islamic Thought in Manhaj Ushul Fiqh Hassan Hanafi," *Muharrrik: Journal of Da'wah and Social* 2, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3544708>; Zaenal Mutaqin and Ridzwan Ahmad, "Legal Moderation as the Foundation of Islamic Society," *Temali: Journal of Social Development* 2, no. 2 (July 3, 2019): 272–310, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jt.v2i2.4695>.

maqāsid syarī'ah which places reason as an important instrument in maintaining the welfare of life.

In addition, Islam does not only judge actions from the formal aspect, but also from the intention (niyyah) behind them. If the couple chooses childfree with the intention of maintaining health, household stability, or improving the quality of life, then the decision can be considered as *maslahah dharuriyyah* (urgent benefit). However, if it is done with the intention of rejecting Allah's destiny or rejecting the social functions of the family, it is included in the category of *mafsadah* (damage) that must be avoided.²¹ Therefore, the dimension of intention and social context is the main determinant in the assessment of Islamic law on the phenomenon of childfreedom.

Islamic law in general does not recognize the principle of coercion in personal affairs that does not have a direct impact on others, as long as it does not contradict Islamic moral principles. Therefore, childfree is not necessarily categorized as haram or deviant, but depends on its reason, context, and social consequences. The rules of *fiqh al-ḥukmu yadūru ma'a al-'illah wujūdān wa 'adaman* (the law revolves according to the illat or its cause) provides flexibility for the establishment of childfree law in accordance with the underlying illat.²²

Thus, Islam views childfree as a phenomenon that needs to be reviewed with a contextual and non-extreme approach. The decision not to have children can be a form of *maslahah* if it is based on legitimate rational and moral considerations, but it can also be *mafsadah* if it is driven by an attitude of rejecting the values of human nature. The principle of balance (*tawāzun*) and benefit (*maslahah*) is the main key in assessing this phenomenon.

So in the context of Islamic law, childfreedom is not just a matter of biological reproduction, but part of spiritual and social dynamics that reflect human responsibility as a caliph on earth. Islam does not reject social change, but directs it to remain within the corridor of *maqāsid syarī'ah*. This means that the childfree decision is acceptable as long as it does not cause moral damage, does not reject human nature to have a family, and still upholds the values of balance and benefit that are at the core of Islamic law.

Psychological Aspects in Childfree Decisions

The childfree phenomenon shows a paradigm shift in the way individuals and couples interpret marriage, family, and reproductive responsibilities. From a psychological perspective, the decision not to have children cannot be understood only as a form of rejection of biological function, but rather as a complex reflection of psychological dynamics, mental readiness, personal values, and responses to social and

²¹ Nurjanah and Nur, "Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law and the Reality of Society"; Ramdayani, Pagala, and Hasan, "Maqasid Syariah and the Efforts of the National Population and Family Planning Agency in Population Control in East Kalimantan"; Salma Salma, "Maslahah in the Perspective of Islamic Hukim," *Al-Syir'ah Scientific Journal* 10, no. 2 (September 9, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.30984/as.v10i2.261>; Fauzan, "Childfree Islamic Law Perspective"; Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an"; Sufi'y, Muslih, and Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Syariah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era"; Indrawan and Rifa'i, "Childfree in Premarital Communication from the Perspective of the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl Verse 72."

²² Achmad Arif et al., "The Use of Marijuana for Medical Purposes: Between Normativity and the Principle of Islamic Law Perspective," *Mazahib* 21, no. 2 (December 27, 2022): 315–39, <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v21i2.4751>.

environmental pressures.²³ In this context, the psychological aspect is key to understanding the motivation behind childfree decisions, since it contains a process of rationalization, emotional consideration, and the search for a deep life balance.

One of the main reasons that emerges from the study of contemporary psychology is the aspect of mental and emotional readiness in carrying out the role of parent.²⁴ The decision to become a parent has to do not only with financial ability, but also mental readiness to face major changes in lifestyle, responsibilities, and emotional stability. Many modern individuals judge that they have not or will not reach the ideal level of mental readiness to raise a child well.²⁵ According to Santrock (2021), the role of parents requires high psychological stability, because the emotional pressure of the parenting process can be a source of chronic stress if individuals do not have adequate self-control capacity and emotional maturity.²⁶ In this context, the decision to be childfree is often the result of a deep self-awareness of a form of *self-awareness* that mental unpreparedness can negatively impact the well-being of the child and family in the future.²⁷

In addition to mental readiness, emotional stability also plays a significant role in childfree decisions. Individuals with low levels of emotional stability, or who have had

²³ Jenuri et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Modern Era: A Phenomenological Study of the Gen Z Generation and Islamic Views on Childfree in Indonesia," *Socio-Cultural* 19, no. 2 (2022); Fadlan Nugraha Nur Pangestu and Jenuri Jenuri, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Millennial Families in Islamic Views: Controversy or Solution?," *Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq: Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (December 28, 2023): 323–30, <https://doi.org/10.34005/tahdzib.v6i2.3412>; Allison Carol Karana and Fransisca Dessi Christanti, "Early Childfree Adult Women: A Psychocultural Review," *Experientia: Indonesian Journal of Psychology* 11, no. 2 (December 15, 2023): 232–50, <https://doi.org/10.33508/exp.v11i2.5172>.

²⁴ Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts"; Indrawan and Rifa'i, "Childfree in Premarital Communication from the Perspective of the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl Verse 72"; Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an"; Giyono and Nurkhasanah, "Childfree Perspectives on Islamic Psychology and Law."

²⁵ Sufi'y, Muslih, and Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Syariah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era"; Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts."

²⁶ Tesaviani Kusumastiwi and Gina Puspita, "Mental and Financial Health Training for Parents of Child Welfare in the Yogyakarta WKCP Community," *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Community Service Programs*, January 28, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.18196/ppm.43.590>; Sri Wahyuni and Raden Diana, "The Role of Single Mothers in Maintaining Early Childhood Mental Health," *Golden Generation* 6, no. 2 (October 3, 2023): 94–102, [https://doi.org/10.25299/ge.2023.vol6\(2\).13526](https://doi.org/10.25299/ge.2023.vol6(2).13526); Annisa Rahmani et al., "Socialization of Mental Health in Housewives and Career Mothers in Malakasari Village," *Journal of Community Service (Adi Dharma)* 2, no. 1 (September 9, 2023): 75–82, <https://doi.org/10.58268/adidharma.v2i1.58>; Arlayati Arlayati and Ikhwan Ikhwan, "The Relationship Between Maternal Mental Health and Child Parenting," *Journal of Perspective* 8, no. 2 (2025); Buyung Surahman, "The Role of Mothers to the Future of Children," *Hawa Journal: A Study of Gender and Children* 1, no. 2 (December 28, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.29300/hawapsga.v1i2.2600>.

²⁷ Caio A. Lage, De Wet Wolmarans, and Daniel C. Mograbi, "An Evolutionary View of Self-Awareness," *Behavioural Processes* 194 (January 2022): 104543, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beproc.2021.104543>; Anna Sutton, "Measuring the Effects of Self-Awareness: Construction of the Self-Awareness Outcomes Questionnaire," *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 12, no. 4 (November 18, 2016): 645–58, <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v12i4.1178>; Julia Carden, Rebecca J. Jones, and Jonathan Passmore, "Defining Self-Awareness in the Context of Adult Development: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Management Education* 46, no. 1 (February 28, 2022): 140–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562921990065>; Manuel London, Valerie I. Sessa, and Loren A. Shelley, "Developing Self-Awareness: Learning Processes for Self- and Interpersonal Growth," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 10, no. 1 (January 23, 2023): 261–88, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-044531>.

traumatic experiences in childhood, may feel incapable of living their parenting roles optimally.²⁸ Some research suggests that past parenting trauma can be a major driving factor in rejection of parenting roles.²⁹ In this case, the decision not to have children can be understood as an effort to protect oneself so as not to repeat the negative parenting patterns that have been experienced. On the other hand, for some individuals with a good level of emotional stability, the childfree option arises precisely because they want to focus their psychological and emotional energy on self-development and more intimate partner relationships without distractions from parenting responsibilities.³⁰

Social pressure is also a psychological dimension that cannot be ignored in the analysis of the childfree phenomenon. Traditional societies tend to judge the success of marriages based on the presence of children, so couples who choose not to have children often face social stigma and negative judgment. This pressure can lead to significant inner conflict, especially in individuals who have a high need *for social approval*.³¹ According to Maslow's theory of needs, the need for social reward and acceptance is included in the essential layers of human psychological well-being.³² However, in a modern society that is increasingly individualistic and open to a plurality of values, social pressure on childfree couples is beginning to diminish, although it has not completely disappeared. This phenomenon illustrates how social and psychological values are transformed towards an orientation that is more based on individual autonomy and personal rights to life choices.³³

²⁸ Ningsih Hospital, "The Implications of Early Marriage on Islamic Religious Education in the Family in Tanea Village, Konda District, South Konawe Regency," *IAIN Kendari Repository*, no. 1 (2018).

²⁹ Carol K. Sigelman et al., *Understanding Life Span Human Development, Life Span Human Development*, 2019; Guusje Collin and Martijn P. van den Heuvel, "The Ontogeny of the Human Connectome," *The Neuroscientist* 19, no. 6 (December 18, 2013): 616–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073858413503712>; Duane F. Alwin, "Integrating Varieties of Life Course Concepts," *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 67B, no. 2 (March 1, 2012): 206–20, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbr146>.

³⁰ Pangestu and Jenuri, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Millennial Families in Islamic Views: Controversy or Solution?"; Jenuri et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Modern Era: A Phenomenological Study of the Gen Z Generation and Islamic Views on Childfree in Indonesia"; Nisa' et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Review of Masalah Mursalah (Phenomenological Study of Generation 5.0)"; Karana and Christanti, "Early Adult Women Childfree: A Psychocultural Review."

³¹ Nurul Khoiriyah et al., "Childfree, an Existentialist Feminist Perspective: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Youtube Cretivox Content 'Mending Punya Anak or No Punya Anak??'," *International Journal Of Multidisciplinary Research And Analysis* 06, no. 12 (December 31, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v6-i12-84>; Puput Sapinatunajah, Tantan H Ermansyah, and Nasichah Nasichah, "Content Analysis of Influencer Gitasav on 'Childfree' Statements in Islamic Perspectives," *JKOMDIS : Journal of Communication and Social Media Sciences* 2, no. 1 (April 1, 2022): 180–86, <https://doi.org/10.47233/jkomdis.v2i1.266>; Ferial and Muary, "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Perspective of the Batak Community"; Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an."

³² Laeli Nur Azizah, "Teori Kebutuhan Maslow: Pengertian, Konsep & Pembagiannya," *Gramedia Blog*, 2021; Amran Rasli, Salman Memon, and Mohd Fauzi Abu-Hussin, "Congruency Between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and the Principles of Maqasid Shari'Ah," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 2 (November 11, 2022): 136–50, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.122.10>; Christian Montag et al., "Linking Individual Differences in Satisfaction with Each of Maslow's Needs to the Big Five Personality Traits and Panksepp's Primary Emotional Systems," *Heliyon* 6, no. 7 (July 2020): e04325, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04325>.

³³ adinda Syofiyatun Nabillah, "Kontekstualisasi Konsep Kehadiran Anak Sebagai Tujuan Pernikahan Dalam Alquran," *Uin Sunan Ampel Surabaya*, 2022; Khoiriyah et al., "Childfree, an Existentialist Feminist Perspective: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Youtube Cretivox Content 'Mending Punya Anak Atau Tidak Punya Anak???'"; Alwin, "Integrating Varieties of Life Course Concepts";

From the perspective of modern psychology, childfree decisions are often associated with the concept of *self-actualization*. Individuals who choose not to have children often view that the achievement of the meaning of life does not have to be realized through childcare, but can be achieved through career, social contribution, or the development of self-potential.³⁴ In the view of Carl Rogers (1961), human beings are inherently driven by the need to realize their best potential, and each individual has the right to determine the form of self-actualization according to his or her personal values and goals. Therefore, childfree can be understood as an expression of psychological freedom and existential independence in defining happiness.³⁵ This view is also supported by contemporary research showing that the *subjective well-being* of childfree individuals is not necessarily lower than that of those who have children; in fact, in some cases, their levels of happiness and life satisfaction are higher because they have greater control over time, career, and interpersonal relationships.³⁶

However, childfree decisions can also have ambivalent psychological impacts. On the one hand, the absence of children can reduce the financial and emotional stress that

London, Sessa, and Shelley, "Developing Self-Awareness: Learning Processes for Self- and Interpersonal Growth"; Alftisya Victory Hutabarat and Karel Karsten Himawan, "Kids for a Happy Marriage? A Preliminary Study on Marriage Satisfaction and Presence or Absence of Children Among Married Individuals in Indonesia," *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia* 27, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.7454/hubs.asia.1181023>; Harmona Daulay et al., "Psychology of Newly Married Couples in Indonesia: Is It Possible to Choose Childfree by Choice or Face the Gossip of Society and Family?," *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies* 6, no. 4 (October 18, 2023): 1023–31, <https://doi.org/10.53894/ijirss.v6i4.2260>.

³⁴ Moh. Ziyadul Haq Annajih, Ishlakhatu Sa'idah, and Taufik, "Abraham Maslow's Self-Actualized Concept: A Sufistic Psychological Perspective," *Edu Consilium: Journal of Islamic Education Guidance and Counseling* 4, no. 1 (February 7, 2023): 43–52, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ec.v4i1.7282>; Mohamat Hadori, "Self-Actualization; A Peak Manifestation of the Potential of a Healthy Personality Individual (A Concept of Abraham Maslow's Dynamics-Holistic Theory)," *Lisan al-Hal: Journal of Thought and Cultural Development* 9, no. 2 (December 9, 2015): 207–20, <https://doi.org/10.35316/lisanalhal.v9i2.92>; Hilmy Rabi'ah Nur and Iffaty Zamimah, "Mental Health Perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab," *Hikmah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 2 (February 3, 2022): 118, <https://doi.org/10.47466/hikmah.v17i2.200>.

³⁵ Chen Zechuan and Zhang Kan, "On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy," in *The ECPH Encyclopedia of Psychology* (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2024), 1–3, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-6000-2_219-1; Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming A Person A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*, Houghton Mifflin Company - Boston, 1961; Carl R. Roger, *On Becoming a Person a Therapist View*, *Philosophical Psychology*, vol. 0094604401, 1961; C Rogers, "Rogers On Becoming a Person - A Therapiist's View of Psychotherapy," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 158 (1991); Caifang Zhu and Hongyu Liu, "On Becoming a Person: Perspectives from Carl Rogers, Huineng, Wang Yangming, and Ken Wilber," *Beijing International Review of Education* 3, no. 4 (January 31, 2022): 564–77, <https://doi.org/10.1163/25902539-03040005>; Carl R. Rogers, "On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy: To Be That Self," *Contemporary Psychology* 41, no. 8 (1996); Duncan Cramer, "On Becoming a Person: A3 Therapist's View of Psychotherapy: Carl Ransom Rogers," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 158, no. 1 (January 2, 1991): 139–41, <https://doi.org/10.1192/S0007125000048364>; Rogers, *On Becoming A Person A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*.

³⁶ Vasiliki Voukelatou et al., "Measuring Objective and Subjective Well-Being: Dimensions and Data Sources," *International Journal of Data Science and Analytics* 11, no. 4 (May 29, 2021): 279–309, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41060-020-00224-2>; Ed Diener, Richard E. Lucas, and Shigehiro Oishi, "Advances and Open Questions in the Science of Subjective Well-Being," ed. Nathan Hall and M. Brent Donnellan, *Collabra: Psychology* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.115>; Ed Diener, "Subjective Well-Being," *Psychological Bulletin* 95, no. 3 (1984): 542–75, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542>; Wadsworth, Tim. "Marriage and Subjective Well-Being: How and Why Context Matters." *Social Indicators Research* 126, no. 3 (2016): 1025–48. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48714759>.

usually accompanies parenting; But on the other hand, childfree individuals can experience feelings of loneliness and emotional emptiness in old age. Erikson's developmental psychology perspective states that the need for generativity, the desire to pass on something to the next generation, is an important stage in the psychosocial development of adult humans.³⁷ The absence of parenting experience may make some individuals lose this generative dimension, which can have an impact on the crisis of meaning of life later in life. Thus, the psychological well-being of childfree individuals is highly dependent on how they construct systems of alternative meaning and deep social relationships outside of conventional family structures.

In the perspective of Islamic psychology, childfree decisions also have a psychiatric dimension that can be reviewed from the concepts of balance (*tawazun*) and self-responsibility (*amanah*). Islam views that every life decision should be oriented towards a balance between physical, spiritual, and social needs. When a person chooses not to have children for reasons of maintaining mental health, household stability, or certain psychological conditions that can interfere with parenting functions, then the decision can be understood as a form of responsibility towards oneself and the environment.³⁸ In this view, the childfree decision is not necessarily contrary to Islamic values, as long as it is taken with moral awareness and not out of rejection of nature or religious teachings.

Islamic psychology also emphasizes the importance of intention (*niyyah*) and spiritual meaning in every decision. Individuals who choose to live child-free for profound reasons such as wanting to focus more on social services, education, or da'wah may be considered to be carrying out self-actualization in a different form of biological parenting. This is in line with Al-Ghazali's view that true happiness (*sa'adah*) does not always lie in material or hereditary aspects, but in the ability of man to achieve the perfection of the soul through devotion and inner balance.³⁹ Thus, Islamic psychology sees the childfree decision not simply as a rejection of reproductive roles, but as a reflection of complex spiritual dynamics and personal responsibility.

The emotional well-being of childfree individuals in the perspective of Islamic psychology can be explained through the concept of *nafs muthmainnah*, which is a calm

³⁷ Ode Yahyu Herliany Yusuf and La Ode Abdul Salam Al Amin, "Erik Homberger Erikson's Theory of Social/Psychosocial Development," *Journal of Idrus Qaimuddin* 2, no. 1 (2020); Ratu Fajrina Julieta, "The Development of Human Personality from Childhood to Adulthood to Adulthood According to the View of Erik Erikson Ratu Fajrina Julieta (2021031035) Abstract A . Background," *Faculty of Humanities and Business, Psychology Study Program, Universitas Pembangunan Jaya* 1, no. 2022 (2023); Diana Putri Arini, "Emerging Adulthood: The Development of Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Theory in the 21st Century," *Psyche Scientific Journal* 15, no. 01 (July 1, 2021): 11–20, <https://doi.org/10.33557/jpsyche.v15i01.1377>; Arini D, "Emerging Adulthood Development of Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Theory in the 21st Century," *Scientific Journal PSYCHE* 15 (2021).

³⁸ Sayful Islam Ali, "Childfree Decisions from the Perspective of Maqasid Syari'ah Jamaluddin Athiyyah (Case Study of Childfree Adherents of Victoria Tunggono)," *Nucl. Phys.* 13, no. 1 (2023); N Nasrulloh et al., "Phenomenon of Childfree Campaign Hadith Perspective: Hadith Analysis Multiplies Children Using Yusuf Qardhawi'S Hermeneutics," ... *on Social and ...*, 2021; Nurhaliza et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage from an Islamic Legal Perspective," *Judiciary: Journal of Islamic Law & Law* 10, no. 1 (2023); Giyono and Nurkhasanah, "Childfree Perspectives on Islamic Psychology and Law."

³⁹ Aprilyanti and Rahmawati, "Childfree in The Perspective of Al-Ghazali and Nur Rofiah"; Persada et al., "Analysis of the Childfree Phenomenon According to the Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali"; Muhammad Khatibul Umam and Nano Romadlon Auliya Akbar, "Childfree Postmarriage: Justice of Women's Reproductive Rights from the Perspective of Masdar Farid Mas'udi and Al-Ghazali"; Muhammad Khalidin, "The Legal Status of Childfree Practices in the Perspective of Shafi'iyah Scholars"; Annajih, Sa'idah, and Taufik, "Abraham Maslow's Self-Actualized Concept: A Sufistic Psychological Perspective."

and balanced soul. Life decisions made with full awareness and based on good values will bring inner peace, even if it is not in accordance with the general view of society.⁴⁰ Therefore, a child-free person can still achieve psychological and spiritual happiness if he or she is able to maintain a balance between personal freedom and moral values that he or she believes in. In this case, psychological well-being is not measured by the presence or absence of children, but by the extent to which a person is able to live in harmony with the values and goals of life that are believed to be true.

Overall, the psychological aspects of childfree decisions reflect the complexity of the relationship between self, values, and society. This decision is not merely a form of individualism or hedonism, but an expression of a deep reflective process of the meaning of life, emotional readiness, and self-balance. Modern psychology helps to understand this phenomenon through the theory of motivation, development, and subjective well-being, while Islamic psychology provides an ethical and spiritual framework that guides such freedom of choice to remain within a balanced moral corridor. Thus, childfree choice is a psychological and social phenomenon that needs to be understood empathically and scientifically, not judged narrowly based on traditional norms alone.

Social and Religious Impact of the Childfree Phenomenon in Indonesia

Indonesian society in general still views the existence of children as a symbol of blessings, successors to the lineage, and determinants of social status. Therefore, the decision not to have children is often seen as a form of deviation from long-held social norms and religious values.⁴¹ However, the development of modern discourses on individual freedom, gender equality, and awareness of economic and environmental responsibilities has given rise to new discourse spaces that challenge these traditional views.

In the social context, the childfree phenomenon can be understood as a form of paradigm shift in the value structure of Indonesian society. The tradition that placed the family and offspring at the center of social life is now faced with a new view that emphasizes aspects of personal choice and quality of life.⁴² The decision not to have children is not merely a rejection of family values, but rather a reflection of a change in the way individuals understand the meaning of happiness, responsibility, and social roles. On the one hand, traditional societies still uphold the principle that the existence of children is an integral part of family identity and social survival. On the other hand, the

⁴⁰ Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts"; Sufi'y, Muslih, and Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Syariah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era"; Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an."

⁴¹ Rivaldo Alfi Nugraha, "Childfree in the Purpose of Marriage Perspective of Imam AL Ghazali," *AT-TAWASSUTH: Journal of Islamic Economics* VIII, no. I (2023); Novalinda Rahmayanti, "Childfree as a Life Choice for Women with Families in Sidoarjo Regency," *Thesis* (2022); Desi Asmaret, s 5, no. 1 (July 24, 2023): 73–89, <https://doi.org/10.37876/adhki.v5i1.108>.

⁴² Pangestu and Jenuri, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Millennial Families in Islamic Views: Controversy or Solution?"; Nida Nuriah, "The Childfree Phenomenon of the Perspective of the Concept of Maslahat Said Ramadhan Buti," *Mitsaqan Ghalizan* 2, no. 2 (July 12, 2023): 37–52, <https://doi.org/10.33084/mg.v2i2.5413>; Ana Rita Dahnia, Anis Wahda Fadilla Adsana, and Yohanna Meilani Putri, "The Childfree Phenomenon as a Culture of Contemporary Indonesian Society from the Perspective of Feminist Theory (Analysis of Childfree Social Media Followers)," *Al Yazidiy Journal of Social Humanities and Education* 5, no. 1 (April 26, 2023): 66–85, <https://doi.org/10.55606/ay.v5i1.276>.

younger generation, especially urban groups with higher levels of education, are beginning to interpret happiness in a more individualistic and rational way.⁴³

This shift has an impact on the social structure and patterns of interaction between individuals. In a community that still holds traditional values strongly, childfree couples often face social pressure in the form of sneer, negative judgment, or even symbolic exclusion. This phenomenon shows the existence of a tension between collective norms and individual freedom.⁴⁴ From a sociological perspective, the phenomenon can be explained through the theory of value conflict, in which society seeks to maintain the traditional moral order while some of its members try to negotiate space for new identities and life choices. These tensions often result in polarization, especially on social media, where debates between those who support and reject childfree are intense and emotional.⁴⁵

Furthermore, the social impact of the childfree phenomenon is also seen in changes in gender dynamics and the concept of household responsibility. In patriarchal societies, women are often identified with reproductive and parenting functions or better known as taking care of domestic affairs only. Women's decision not to have children is often considered contrary to maternal nature and the value of marriage perfection.⁴⁶ In fact, in a modern perspective, these decisions can arise from awareness of mental health, economic conditions, or even environmental considerations. This phenomenon shows a shift in the meaning of women's roles in the family and society. Women are now no longer only positioned as biological mothers, but also as individuals who have full autonomy over their bodies and lives.⁴⁷

However, the childfree option still raises concerns about social sustainability in Indonesian society. In a culture that emphasizes the importance of regeneration, the decision not to have children is often associated with threats to social continuity and

⁴³ Robyn Rowland, "The Childfree Experience in the Aging Context: An Investigation of the Pro-Natalist Bias of Life-Span Developmental Literature," *Australian Psychologist* 17, no. 2 (July 1, 1982): 141–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00050068208255930>; Sukron Ma'mun, Sheikh Adnan Ahmad Usmani, and Ibnu Akbar Maliki, "The Childfree Phenomenon Among Urban Muslims: A Multidisciplinary Examination Of Science And Morality," *Academics: Journal of Islamic Thought* 28, no. 1 (July 3, 2023): 111, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v28i1.6773>; Muhammad Khatibul Umam and Nano Romadlon Auliya Akbar, "Childfree Postmarriage: Justice of Women's Reproductive Rights from the Perspective of Masdar Farid Mas'udi and Al-Ghazali"; Hidayah, "Childfree: Reducing Human Population for Welfare in the Islamic and Social Science View."

⁴⁴ Sufi'y, Muslih, and Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Syariah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era"; Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts"; Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an."

⁴⁵ Gita Faradilla Rizky Nurjannah, "Childfree in an Islamic Perspective (Case Study of Youtube Content Creator Gita Savitri Devi)," *Mu'ashir: The Journal of Islamic Da'wah and Communication* 1, no. 1 (May 30, 2023): 13–28, <https://doi.org/10.35878/muashir.v1i1.734>; Ferial and Muary, "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Perspective of the Batak Community"; Yuli, "Sociological Analysis of Children's Arrangements in Creating Household Harmony"; Yuli and Musgamy, "SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CHILD REGULATION IN CREATING DOMESTIC HARMONY (Comparison of the Views of Imam Shafi'i and Mahmud Syaltut)."

⁴⁶ Erfaniah Zuhriah et al., "Childfree, the Digital Era, and Islamic Law: Views of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Gender Activists in Malang, Indonesia," *Samarah: Journal of Family Law and Islamic Law* 7, no. 3 (September 22, 2023): 1606, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v7i3.17753>; Nursyamsiah Mingkase and Inayah Rohmaniyah, "Gender Construction in Childfree Problematics on Twitter Social Media," *Yinyang: Journal of Islamic Studies of Gender and Children* 17, no. 2 (November 15, 2022): 201–22, <https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v17i2.6486>.

⁴⁷ Rayhan and Afif, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Marriage Perspectives on Marriage."

family values. Generational sustainability is considered not only important in a biological context, but also spiritually and culturally. Children are seen as the successors to the inheritance of values, traditions, and moral responsibility to religion and the nation.⁴⁸ Therefore, people view the childfree decision not only as a personal choice, but as an attitude that has broader social consequences.

In the context of religion, especially Islam, which is the majority religion in Indonesia, the view on childfreedom has a complex dimension. Islam places children as a gift and trust from Allah SWT, as reflected in many verses of the Qur'an, for example in surah Al-Kahfi verse 46 which states that "wealth and children are the jewels of the life of the world." Children are not only a symbol of blessings, but also a means to continue the offspring and charitable deeds that continue to flow for parents.⁴⁹ Therefore, the decision to consciously not have children is often seen as inconsistent with the principles of maqāsid al-syarī'ah, especially the purpose of *hifz al-nasl* (raising offspring).⁵⁰ However, religious views should not be interpreted rigidly, and contemporary Muslim scholars and scholars are beginning to open up a space for discussion about the context and intent behind the decision.

Some scholars argue that as long as the decision to be childfree is taken not because of a rejection of Allah's destiny, but on the basis of rational considerations and certain benefits such as health, economy, or psychology, then the choice can be tolerated within certain limits. This view is in line with Islamic principles that emphasize balance and benefit. Islam not only regulates the rights of Allah, but also prioritizes the rights of man over himself (*haqq al-nafs*).⁵¹ In this framework, childfreedom can be understood not as a rejection of religious teachings, but as a form of social *ijtihad* in the face of the challenging realities of modern life.

However, this moderate understanding has not been fully accepted among Indonesian people who are still very normative in understanding religious teachings. The

⁴⁸ Erik Nakkerud, "Ideological Dilemmas Actualised by the Idea of Living Environmentally Childfree," *Human Arenas* 6, no. 4 (December 5, 2023): 886–910, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-021-00255-6>; Karana and Christanti, "WANITA DEWASA AWAL CHILDFREE: TINJAUAN PSIKOKULTURAL."

⁴⁹ Pipi Arviana et al., "Wealth and Its Management in the Qur'an: A Review of Surah Al-Kahfi Verse 46," *El-Mal: Journal of Islamic Economic & Business Studies* 5, no. 3 (December 2, 2023): 1167–84, <https://doi.org/10.47467/elmal.v5i3.5608>; Torah Afati, Ani Wafiroh, and Muhamad Saleh Sofyan, "EFFORTS OF MARRIED COUPLES WITHOUT CHILDREN IN MAINTAINING DOMESTIC HARMONY (Case Study in Siru Village, West Manggarai Regency, NTT)," *Al-IHKAM: Journal of Family Law, Department of Ahwal Al-Syakhshiyah, Faculty of Sharia, IAIN Mataram* 14, no. 2 (December 28, 2022): 161–84, <https://doi.org/10.20414/alihkam.v14i2.6927>.

⁵⁰ Asa'ari Asa'ari et al., "Considering Death Penalty for Corruptors in Law on Corruption Eradication from the Perspective of Maqāsid Al-Syarī' Ah," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 2 (May 28, 2023): 920, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v7i2.14944>; Kamarusdiana and Farohah, "Reform on The Marriage Age Limit by Jakarta Women's Health Organizations in Maqāsid Al-Syarī'ah Perspective."

⁵¹ Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an"; Uswatul Khasanah and Muhammad Rosyid Ridho, "CHILDFREE PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN ISLAM," *Al-Syakhshiyah: Journal of Law & Family Studies* 3, no. 2 (December 11, 2021): 104–28, <https://doi.org/10.21154/syakhshiyah.v3i2.3454>; Yulia Chandra Safitri, Annastasya Putri Vanya, and Tria Yuniarti Kusuma Bhakti, "Analysis of Childfree Decisions in a Relationship through the Perspective of Reproductive Rights in Religion," *Journal of Tolerance* 1 (2023); Sayful Islam Ali, "CHILDFREE DECISION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MAQASID SYARI'AH JAMALUDDIN ATHIYYAH (Case Study of Childfree Adherents of Victoria Tunggono)"; Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts."

childfree discourse is often simplified as selfish behavior or even considered contrary to nature. This shows the need for more contextual and dialogical religious literacy. A humanist approach to da'wah based on the principles of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* can be a middle way in responding to this phenomenon. Islam as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn* should encourage its people to understand every social phenomenon with wisdom, not just with narrow moral judgment.⁵²

In addition, a moderate approach is also needed so that the community is able to build an inclusive dialogue space, so that childfree is not viewed as a threat to religious values, but must be used as a momentum to re-reflect on the concept of the ideal family in the context of modern society. The family in Islam is not only about biological reproduction, but also about spiritual development, compassion, and moral responsibility.⁵³

In terms of social policy, the government and religious institutions also have an important role in creating a space for dialogue between traditional values and modern choices. Social education that prioritizes tolerance, gender equality, and moral responsibility can help people understand that life choices such as childfree do not necessarily conflict with the noble values of the nation and religion, but rather society needs to be directed to assess a phenomenon based on its intentions, context, and impact on common welfare.⁵⁴

Thus, the childfree phenomenon in Indonesia cannot be seen in black and white. It is part of the social and religious dynamics that mark the process of modernization of Muslim society. On the one hand, it challenges traditional norms and established religious interpretations; on the other hand, it opens up a space for reflection on how Islam and society can adapt to the changing times without losing its fundamental values. A wise and inclusive approach is needed so that the Indonesian people are able to understand the childfree phenomenon as a social reality that needs to be addressed with empathy, not judgment. That way, the principles of justice, benefit, and compassion that are at the core of Islamic teachings can be maintained in the face of inevitable social changes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the childfree phenomenon is a manifestation of modern social and cultural dynamics that cannot be simplified just as a form of rejection of religious values. From the perspective of Islamic law, childfree is in the area of *mubah* as long as the decision is based on considerations of benefits, does not cause harm, and still maintains moral responsibility towards oneself, one's partner, and the community. Psychologically, the decision to be childfree can reflect emotional maturity and self-awareness in managing personal well-being, as long as it is not based on selfishness or rejection of human nature. Meanwhile, in the socio-religious context, this phenomenon requires the ability to balance individual rights with the collective values of religious society. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach that integrates the

⁵² Nisa' et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon in the Review of Maslahah Mursalah (Phenomenological Study of Generation 5.0)"; Khozinatul Asrori, "Choosing Not to Have Children in the Perspective of Hadith and Maslahah," *Law and Justice* 8, no. 1 (December 13, 2023): 81–94, <https://doi.org/10.23917/laj.v8i1.2070>; Fauzan, "Childfree Islamic Law Perspective."

⁵³ Syam et al., "Tashdiq Islamic Perspective on Childfree Decisions: A Study of Evidence and Its Impact in Cultural Contexts"; Sufi'y, Muslih, and Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Shari'ah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era."

⁵⁴ Sufi'y, Muslih, and Khotim, "The Implications of Maqasid Syariah on Reproductive Choice: A Study of Childfreedom in the Modern Era"; Sofuro and Nurrohmah, "Childfree Viewpoints in the Perspective of the Qur'an."

perspectives of Islamic law, psychology, and sociology is essential to understand this phenomenon comprehensively and proportionately. Islam as a religion of rahmatan lil 'ālamīn has legal and ethical flexibility that is able to accommodate social changes without losing the basic principles of its teachings. Thus, the decision to be childfree needs to be placed within a moral framework that emphasizes goodwill, welfare, and spiritual awareness, so that a moderate and scientific understanding of this phenomenon can be the basis for a constructive dialogue between religious values, psychological well-being, and contemporary social realities.

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