



Childfree Phenomenon in Family Behavior: a Study of *Maslahah Al Mursalah* in Contemporary Social Context

Iqlima Amani Rahmatulloh

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Iqlimarahmatulloh@gmail.com

* corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 02 May 2025

Revised: 22 May 2025

Accepted: 26 May 2025

Keywords

Childfree;

Marriage;

Maslahah al mursalah.

ABSTRACT

*The term childfree refers to individuals who deliberately choose not to have children—a decision that has sparked critical discourse in both social and religious contexts. This study explores the underlying motivations behind the childfree decision, examines family behavior patterns among Indonesian childfree couples, and analyzes this phenomenon through the lens of *maslahah al-mursalah* in Islamic legal theory. Employing a qualitative method with a normative-empirical approach, this research is based on field interviews with five members of the Indonesian Childfree Community. Findings indicate that the decision is driven primarily by personal autonomy, health considerations, and economic concerns. Notably, childfree couples exhibit distinct patterns in household role distribution, conflict management, and future planning in the absence of children. From the perspective of *maslahah al-mursalah*, the childfree lifestyle raises complex tensions between individual choice and the foundational aims (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*) of marriage and procreation in Islam. The study contributes to the emerging discourse on how Islamic legal reasoning can engage with evolving social behaviors in contemporary Muslim societies.*

This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA 4.0 license.



1. Introduction

In Islam, procreation is considered one of the fundamental purposes of marriage, serving to preserve lineage (*hifz al-nasl*) and ensure the continuity of the human race.¹ In the view of Islam, the desire to have children is a form of *taqarrub* or self-approach to

¹ A L Ghazali, "Menyingkap Hakikat Perkawinan," Bandung: Karisma, 1998.

Allah SWT, because it reflects harmony with Allah's love for human preservation, seeking the love of the Prophet Muhammad in multiplying proud people in the hope of getting blessings through the prayers of pious children, and obtaining intercession if the child dies when he is still young.²

Marriage is to preserve offspring, form a family as a pillar of society, and establish cooperation between husband and wife in dealing with life. Marriage is also a bond of affection and a means of strengthening family relationships in order to achieve social benefits.³ Nonetheless, Islam reminds that children, as a divine gift, should not be a source of pride, as they are part of the transient adornments of worldly life.⁴ Furthermore, according to M. Quraishy Shihab, having children is an extraordinary gift given by Allah SWT. But with this gift, a great responsibility falls on parents to take care of and educate their children properly. Educating and guiding children is a shared responsibility for both women and men, namely between mothers and fathers.⁵

A recent phenomenon shows a shift in values in society. On the one hand, the rise of early marriage in Indonesia has a negative impact on children's development and deprives them of their basic rights, such as the right to protection, health, education and social life.⁶ On the other hand, especially among urban communities and the millennial generation, there is an emerging trend of *childfree*, which is a conscious decision not to have children, as a reflection of changing views on marriage and the role of the family. This term is relatively new in Indonesia, but this lifestyle has been practiced by a number of individuals and couples, especially in urban areas. *Childfree* lifestyles are generally influenced by economic demands, career pressures, and changing social values, so many consider that having children is no longer a top priority in married life.⁷

The phenomenon of childlessness is not limited to Indonesia, but is also prevalent in countries such as the UK, Australia, Japan and the US. In these countries, the decision not to have children has affected family structures and cultures that previously emphasized the importance of offspring.⁸ However, in a country like Indonesia where religious values and patriarchal culture are still strong, the decision not to have children is often considered deviant. Individuals who choose not to have children are often socially stigmatized, and

² Imam Al Ghazali, "Ihya'Ulumuddin Jilid III, Alih bahasa Moh," *Zuhri, Semarang: CV. Asy Syifa*, 1992.

³ Azzuhaili Wahbah, "Fiqih Islam Wa Adillatuhu," 2010.

⁴ Wahbah Zuhayli, *Al-tafsir Al-munir: Fi Al-'aqidah Wa Al-syariah Wa Al-manhaj* (Darul Fikir, 1991).

⁵ Muhammad Quraish Shihab, "Tafsir Al Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al Qur'an," *Jakarta: Lentera Hati* 12 (2002): 46.

⁶ Sandio Abid Aurian Putra dan Mas Anienda Tien Fitriyah, "Implementation of the Marriage Dispensation: Exploring the Legal and Social Complexities in Preventing Early Marriage," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024): 24–39, <https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v9i1.4592>.

⁷ Victoria M Tunggono, *Childfree & Happy* (EA Books, 2021).

⁸ Nicki Defago, *Childfree and loving it* (Summersdale Publishers LTD-ROW, 2005).

even considered to have failed in their roles as adult men or women.⁹ Social construction in Indonesia strongly emphasizes women's role as mothers, so women who do not have children are considered incomplete or unsuccessful. In addition, the strong assumption that children are the guarantor of old age makes individuals who do not have children considered selfish and socially irresponsible. However, the growing *Childfree* community on social media shows that this phenomenon is not just a trend, but a conscious and organized form of life choice.¹⁰

In Indonesia, several communities have been formed specifically for *Childfree*. From closed communities such as on WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook to open accounts on Instagram (there are three special *Childfree* accounts in Indonesia: @*Childfreelife*.id, @*Childfreeindonesia* and @*Childfreemilenialindonesia*). The emergence of such communities on social media enables childfree individuals to connect based on shared values and experiences, which are used as a place to share stories with each other. In this study, the authors focused on in-depth interviews with the *Childfree* Indonesia community in the telegram application. The *Childfree* Indonesia community on Telegram was formed on December 12, 2020 as a forum for discussion, sharing, and networking for individuals who choose not to have children. The group has 48 members, with around 15 active members. Apart from finding like-minded friends, this community is also used to discuss financial planning, recommendations for suitable nursing homes, and preparation for life in old age without depending on children, by exchanging views and experiences.

The discovery of the *Childfree* issue has been widely discussed before in several scientific works. The first journal written by Baena Vallejo et al.¹¹ highlighted a fundamental change in the concept of family, where childless couples began to be considered as a new family typology. This transformation was influenced by changing gender roles, individualistic values and criticism of the patriarchal system. The general consensus from the results of their documentary study is that consanguinity and procreation are no longer the only basis for family formation; rather, the values of affection and consensus are the main foundations.

Meanwhile, the second journal by Imam Syafi'i et al. (2023) highlights the views of Islamic law, especially from the perspective of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), on the issue of *Childfree*. Through the *istinbāṭ al-aḥkām* approach, this article explains that although NU has not issued an explicit fatwa regarding *Childfree* as a life principle, the approach used still considers maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, especially *hiḏz al-nasl* (preservation of offspring). Substantially, if *Childfree* is made a permanent lifestyle, then this is seen as contrary to the

⁹ Tunggono, *Childfree & Happy*.

¹⁰ Linda Rae Bennett, "Infertility, womanhood and motherhood in contemporary Indonesia," *Intersections*, Maret 28 (2012).

¹¹ Germán Arley Baena Vallejo et al., "Perspectivas investigativas en torno a las parejas sin hijos y su relación con el concepto de 'familia': Un estado del arte," *Interdisciplinaria* 37, no. 2 (2020): 175–94.

main objectives of Islamic law and requires a new collective *ijtihad* that is relevant to the context of the times.

The phenomenon of consumptive behavior among students is increasingly becoming a concern in various academic studies. Fathul Mu'in et al. (2023) in their research showed that modern lifestyles influenced by the digital era, social media, and global interaction patterns influence certain community decisions in adopting life choices such as *Childfree*, which reflects a shift in traditional values, including in consumption and family planning.

In line with this, Siti Nurjanah (2022) highlighted that the *Childfree* phenomenon also reflects a shift in consumptive culture that not only impacts on family structure but also on individual financial priorities, thus indicating that the value of life success is no longer measured by the number of offspring, but rather on personal achievement and life satisfaction.

Jafar et al. (2023) further reinforced this view with the finding that the main reasons couples choose to go *childfree* are economic and health factors. They found that this trend creates new dynamics in Muslim societies, including in terms of spending, household financial management, and social responses to lifestyles that are considered to deviate from the dominant norm.

To date, no study has specifically examined the *childfree* phenomenon in the context of millennial family behavior in Indonesia. This study seeks to address a critical gap in the literature regarding the intersection of Islamic legal reasoning and emerging lifestyle choices among Indonesian millennials. While prior studies have explored the sociological and economic underpinnings of *childfree* decisions, few have examined this phenomenon within the framework of *maslahah al-mursalah* in Islamic jurisprudence. Therefore, this research aims to (1) identify the motivations behind the *childfree* choice, (2) analyze the family behavior patterns of *childfree* couples, and (3) assess the alignment of this lifestyle with the objectives of Islamic law. By doing so, this study contributes to the discourse on Islamic legal adaptability and the transformation of family values in modern Muslim societies.

2. Legal Material and Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a normative-empirical legal research method.¹² The normative aspect analyzes Islamic legal sources—Qur'an, hadith, jurisprudential texts, and the principle of *maslahah al-mursalah*—to examine how Islamic law conceptually responds to the *childfree* lifestyle in the context of marriage. The empirical component complements this by exploring the lived experiences of Muslim

¹² (Susanti 2018)

individuals who consciously choose not to have children. This approach aims to bridge doctrinal analysis with contemporary family behavior among Indonesian millennials.¹³

The research is descriptive-analytic in nature.¹⁴ Data were obtained from the *Childfree Indonesia* community on Telegram, where five married individuals who identify as childfree were selected purposively. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews via WhatsApp, focusing on personal motivations, household roles, religious considerations, and long-term life planning without children. Interview transcripts were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and interpret them within the framework of *maslahah al-mursalah*. This methodological design supports the integration of normative legal reasoning with social realities, allowing for a critical reflection on the adaptability of Islamic legal principles to emerging lifestyle choices.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Conceptual Overview: *Childfree*, Marriage and *Maslahah Mursalah*

The term *childfree* refers to a conscious decision by individuals or couples to live without having children.¹⁵ This voluntary choice differs from involuntary childlessness caused by infertility or health issues. The emergence of this lifestyle among Indonesian millennials, especially in urban areas has sparked social controversy, as it contradicts dominant cultural and religious norms that view procreation as central to marriage.¹⁶ Despite persistent stigma,¹⁷ proponents of the childfree lifestyle assert autonomy over reproductive choices and promote an alternative narrative to traditional expectations.¹⁸

Scholars categorize childlessness into two types: involuntary, due to medical constraints, and voluntary, based on personal preference.¹⁹ In the case of voluntary childfree individuals, various sociocultural and psychological factors play a role. External influences include population pressures, economic insecurity, and exposure to

¹³ (Pasolong 2020)

¹⁴ Dermawan Hendro, "Kamus ilmiah dengan EYD dan pembentukan istilah serta akronim bahasa Indonesia," *Yogyakarta: Bintang Cemerlang*, 2011.

¹⁵ (Tunggono 2021)

¹⁶ Ikhwanuddin Harahap, Erie Hariyanto, dan Fatahuddin Aziz Siregar, "Understanding The Rise of Childfree Marriage: Avoiding Toxic Family, Being Happy and Well Without Children Despite Contradiction With Maqashid al-Sharia," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (2025): 302–29, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v10i1.9984>.

¹⁷ Herdianti Darwis et al., "Analysis of Public Sentiment about Childfree in Indonesia using Support Vector Machine Methods," in *2025 19th International Conference on Ubiquitous Information Management and Communication (IMCOM)* (IEEE, 2025), 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1109/IMCOM64595.2025.10857551>.

¹⁸ Jenuri Jenuri et al., "Fenomena Childfree di Era Modern: Studi Fenomenologis Generasi Gen Z serta Pandangan Islam terhadap Childfree di Indonesia," *Sosial Budaya* 19, no. 2 (2022): 81–89.

¹⁹ (Tunggono 2021)

individualistic or secular worldviews, while internal factors involve mental readiness, mutual agreement between spouses, and formative family experiences.²⁰ This shift challenges the longstanding assumption that parenthood is essential to a fulfilled and legitimate married life.²¹

From the Islamic perspective, marriage holds not only personal and social significance, but also spiritual weight.²² It is traditionally seen as a vehicle for preserving lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), nurturing compassion, and upholding moral order in society.²³ Children are regarded as a divine trust, a source of joy, and a means of extending one's legacy in this world and the hereafter.²⁴ Parenthood is closely tied to the *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* "the higher objectives of Islamic law" which prioritize human dignity, lineage preservation, and societal welfare. Hence, decisions to forgo children are often met with concern regarding their compatibility with these normative values.

To analyze this phenomenon within an Islamic legal framework, the concept of *maslahah mursalah* is applied. Literally meaning "public interest," *maslahah* refers to anything that brings benefit or prevents harm.²⁵ As a tool of legal reasoning, *maslahah mursalah* allows for the derivation of rulings in situations not explicitly addressed in foundational texts, provided they do not contradict established principles. It is primarily invoked in matters of *mu'āmalāt* (social transactions), where flexibility is permitted, and must serve one or more levels of necessity: *darūriyyāt* (essentials), *hājiyyāt* (complementary needs), or *tahsīniyyāt* (refinements).²⁶

Applying *maslahah mursalah* to the childfree lifestyle enables a dynamic and context-sensitive reflection on how Islamic law responds to evolving social behavior. Rather than framing the discussion in strictly legalistic or punitive terms, this approach allows scholars to consider whether the motivations and consequences of the childfree choice align with broader Islamic values.²⁷ In doing so, it opens space for critical

²⁰ Sharon K Houseknecht, "Voluntary childlessness: Toward a theoretical integration," *Journal of Family Issues* 3, no. 4 (1982): 459–71.

²¹ Salman Al Farisi, "Childfree Dalam Perspektif Fiqh al-Aulawiyat," *Maqasid* 10, no. 2 (2021).

²² Ali Yusuf, "Fiqh Keluarga: Pedoman Berkeluarga Dalam Islam," *Jakarta: Amzah*, 2010.

²³ Aidil Aulya dan Ahmad Irfan, "Koeksistensi Hukum Perkawinan Islam di Indonesia: Interpretasi Mahkamah Konstitusi Terhadap Pernikahan Beda Agama di Indonesia," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 109–27, <https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v8i1.4149>.

²⁴ H Abdul Rahman Ghazaly, *Fiqh munakahat* (Jakarta: PREDANA MEDIA, 2019).

²⁵ (Munawwir, 1997)

²⁶ Totok Jumantoro dan Samsul Munir Amin, *Kamus ilmu ushul fikih* (AMZAH, 2005).

²⁷ Siti Nurjanah dan Iffatin Nur, "Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law, and the Social Reality," *Al-Adalah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v19i1.11962>.

engagement with family transformations in Muslim societies, while remaining grounded in the ethical imperatives of the Shari'ah.

3.2. The Practice of Childfree Living from Social and Islamic Legal Perspectives

This section examines the practice of childfree living among married couples in Indonesia by analyzing individual motives, household dynamics, and normative responses from an Islamic legal perspective. The analysis is based on empirical data in the form of interviews with members of the Childfree Indonesia community, which provide concrete insights into the conscious decision to remain childfree and its implications for domestic life. Furthermore, this phenomenon is assessed using the *Maslahah Mursalah* approach as a method of Islamic legal reasoning, to evaluate the extent to which the childfree lifestyle aligns with or deviates from the primary objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). This discussion is organized into three main subsections: individual motivations, household behavioral patterns of childfree couples, and an Islamic legal analysis of this social reality.

3.2.1. Individual Motives for Choosing a Childfree Lifestyle

Based on interviews with five members of the *Childfree* Indonesia community (Telegram), the main motives underlying the decision not to have children are divided into three.

The first factor is personal. Personal or individual factors are fundamental in determining the choice to be childfree. The couple's personal reasons often stem from emotional and psychological experiences that shape their outlook.²⁸ For instance, the first informant experienced childhood trauma due to a lack of parental affection, which fostered fear and disinterest in childrearing.²⁹ Similarly, the third informant expressed concerns about the potential disruptions children might bring to his personal comfort and life goals. For them, a childfree life offers greater autonomy and the freedom to self-actualize.³⁰

The *second* factor is medical factors. Based on the results of interviews with *Childfree* actors, this medical factor was felt by the second and fifth interviewees. Some perpetrators *Childfree* face certain medical conditions that make it biologically difficult to

²⁸ (Amaliyatul Hidayah dkk. 2023)

²⁹ Interview with the first interviewee. Jakarta, March 28, 2022

³⁰ Interview with the third interviewee. Bekasi, 29 March 2022

have children. On this basis, rather than trying fruitlessly and dragging on in sadness, they embrace *Childfree*.³¹

The *third* factor that causes childlessness is economic. The increase in the population in Indonesia has resulted in an increase in the number of unemployed people in the country. This makes some low-income couples decide not to have children because they cannot afford the needs of their children, starting from primary needs, schooling, and others.³² Based on the results of interviews with *Childfree* individuals, this personal factor is felt by the fourth informant. The high cost of living especially in big cities is the main reason some individuals choose not to have children. The lack of adequate social support in childcare also adds to the psychological and financial burden.³³

3.2.2. *Childfree* in Family Behavior and Households

A family does not always have to have children, *Childfree* couples are still considered a family. Although often stigmatized for deviating from the norm, this phenomenon reflects a shift in values towards a more individualistic and egalitarian society.³⁴ *Childfree* marriages remain stable on the basis of communication, equality, and long-term planning. The three patterns of behavior that the author observes are the way conflicts are resolved, the division of husband-wife roles, and the readiness to face old age without children.

Domestic conflicts arise from differing interests and are a natural part of relationships, not something to be avoided.³⁵ Husband and wife disputes and quarrels are generally caused by recurring conflicts, such as jealousy, perfectionism, dissatisfaction, infidelity and economic problems. These conflicts can eliminate comfort and peace in the household.³⁶ Based on the results of interviews with *Childfree*, family conflicts in *Childfree* families still occur, for example in the first informant the dispute was due to financial factors. In the second and fifth sources, the conflict occurred because the in-laws were too interfering in their children's family affairs. The third and fourth interviewees never found any major problems, just differences in nature and thinking. However, without

³¹ Interviews with the second and fifth informants. Yogyakarta, June 14, 2022

³² (Amaliyatul Hidayah dkk. 2023)

³³ Interview with the fourth informant. Jakarta, June 8, 2022

³⁴ Vallejo et al., "Perspectivas investigativas en torno a las parejas sin hijos y su relación con el concepto de 'familia': Un estado del arte."

³⁵ Ali Sati, "MENGELOLA KONFLIK DALAM RUMAH TANGGA; CATATAN KECIL SEBUAH PERNIKAHAN DALAM ISLAM," *Jurnal El-Qanuniy: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Kesyariahan dan Pranata Sosial* 6, no. 2 (2020): 152–65.

³⁶ Hasbuddin Khalid dan Andika Prawira, "A l-Adalah : Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam Evidentiary Strength of Quarrel Through Whatsapp Application in Divorce Cases in Court" 8, no. 2 (2023): 128–41.

the issue of childcare, conflicts tend to be more easily resolved. Cultural adaptation in marriage takes time, courage to express expectations, and tolerance towards the partner. Roles in the family are dynamic and must adjust to the situation. Communication and openness are important to reduce the potential for conflict.³⁷

The role of husband and wife is very important in forming a *sakinah* family, because the balance of rights and obligations of both is the main requirement. In accordance with Article 3 KHI, the purpose of marriage is to create a household that is *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, which depends on the fulfillment of their respective responsibilities.³⁸ Based on the results of interviews with *Childfree*, the roles in the *Childfree* family tend to be equal and negotiated. Generally, to fill the void of not having children, from the first to the fifth informant, both husband and wife work in offices or have businesses. While household tasks are not associated with traditional gender roles, the average husband and wife also cooperate in doing household chores, because for them there is no burden to take care of children. Society often views domestic duties as the responsibility of women, even though wives also work. In fact, household affairs are a shared responsibility. Therefore, husbands and wives need to communicate and agree on a fair division of roles.³⁹

Future planning is a systematic process of achieving goals, involving evaluation and anticipation of future conditions.⁴⁰ This orientation reflects attention to long-term decisions. For families without children, old age is often characterized by dilemmas such as loneliness and uncertainty about emotional support and care.⁴¹ Based on the interviews with *Childfree*, from the first to the last interviewee all decided to save money in case there is no one to rely on later, they will hire a nurse, or return to their family. *Childfree* couples focus more on self-development, career, and retirement savings to anticipate old age without dependence on children. According to some interviewees, having children is not a determinant of welfare in the household, instead having children will add many problems. And uninterrupted charity is not only from children, there are also other forms such as buying assets to be donated.

This phenomenon shows that *childfree* does not mean anti-marriage, but rather an option to undergo marriage in a different format. However, in Islamic law, the absolute decision not to have children is considered to deviate from the ideal purpose of marriage. *Childfree* women are often considered to be against the nature of motherhood. In Islamic

³⁷ Bacaan Mandiri Calon Pengantin, "Fondasi Keluarga Sakinah" (Jakarta, 2017).

³⁸ (Fahmi 2023)

³⁹ Pengantin, "Fondasi Keluarga Sakinah."

⁴⁰ (Kaslam 2021)

⁴¹ Maulita Sari, Muhammad Fuad, dan Meutia Dewi, "Peran dari Orientasi Masa Depan dan Pengetahuan Keuangan pada Perilaku Perencanaan Dana Pensiun Keluarga: Studi Literatur," *JIMP: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Profetik* 1, no. 2 (2023): 63–68.

family law, a couple's decision not to have children is seen as a shortcoming, because children are considered important for the integrity, harmony and social sustainability of the family.⁴²

3.2.3. *Childfree in the View of Maslahah Mursalah*

Maslahah can be interpreted as actions that encourage human kindness. Everything that is beneficial to humans, either in the sense of attracting or producing material and non-material good, or in the sense of attracting and producing benefits and avoiding damage can be categorized as a benefit.⁴³ *Maslahah* has two sides: bringing good and preventing damage. Before applying the theory of *Maslahah Mursalah* to the phenomenon of *childfree* families, it is important to understand the existence of *childfree* and its potential impact if it becomes an urban trend. After that, it will be discussed how Islamic law addresses the phenomenon.

The choice not to have children is generally based on a desire to maintain personal comfort and freedom, i.e. avoiding the responsibility of having children. This attitude contradicts the purpose of marriage in Islam, which is to obtain offspring as successors to the Shari'ah. In addition, another negative impact is that it can lead to the disconnection of generations or biological offspring and a low rate of population growth, which of course has long-term consequences for society. Even on a broader scale being childless will have a very bad impact, for example, the human population in the world will become extinct due to lack of reproduction and population growth.⁴⁴ Economic growth is also affected by population. Too rapid population growth can be economic capital, but it can also be a burden to the country. Conversely, growth that is too slow will cause an imbalance between the productive and unproductive population. Therefore, a controlled population growth would be more ideal.⁴⁵

Of the many possible impacts of *childfree* living, it can be concluded that this principle has the potential to bring more harm than good, especially if it is massively embraced in society. If more and more individuals or couples choose not to have children, then in the long run this could significantly affect the social structure. Furthermore, if this phenomenon grows unchecked, it is not impossible for *Childfree* to become a kind of social disease that destroys the fabric of society, weakens family ties, and threatens the survival of noble values about family and social responsibility. Broadly speaking, there are

⁴² Siti Nurjanah dan Iffatin Nur, "Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law and the Reality of Society," *Al-'Adalah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 1–28.

⁴³ Rachmat Syafei, "Ilmu Ushul Fiqih, Penerbit Pustaka Setia, Bandung, hal. 92," 2007.

⁴⁴ Erfaniah Zuhriah et al., "Childfree, the digital era, and Islamic law: views of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and gender activists in Malang, Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 3 (2023): 1606–26.

⁴⁵ Novrian Pratama, "Childfree dan Dampaknya Bagi Negara," *Diakses pada* 9 (2021).

two aspects of why childfree is against Islamic law. The first is the theological aspect and the second is the Islamic juridical aspect.⁴⁶

First, from an Islamic theological point of view. When couples get married, they usually expect to have children soon. This is because one of the purposes of marriage is to produce good offspring⁴⁷. In this case there is a Qur'anic explanation, that marriage aims to produce noble offspring as explained in al-Qur'an Surah An-Nahl (16): 72.

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ
وَيَنْعَمَتِ اللَّهُ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ

This verse confirms that one of Allah's favors to man is to make him a life partner from his own kind, and to give him children and grandchildren as a continuation of his descendants. In another verse that discusses financial worries in marriage, Allah has promised that His servants will be fulfilled with His bounty, in Surah An-Nur: 32.

وَأَنْكَحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

A *childfree* person who has a background of medical limitations has the advantage of being childfree. On the other hand, being childfree for medical reasons is something that can never be separated from Allah's decree. Allah SWT says in Al-Imran (3): 189.

وَاللَّهُ مَلِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Then the one who gives offspring is none other than Allah SWT. Not men, not women. Among married couples there are those who are blessed with girls and boys. There are also those who are willed by Allah SWT not to be given offspring at all, both male and female. All of that is the decision and will of Allah SWT. Muslim married couples are encouraged to try to get offspring. Whether or not there are offspring is the will of Allah SWT.

Second, in Islamic juridical terms. The intention to have offspring makes marriage an act of worship. Imam al-Ghazali mentions four spiritual values of this endeavor: achieving the pleasure of Allah, making the Prophet happy with a large number of people, obtaining blessings through the prayers of pious children, and receiving intercession from children who died first.⁴⁸ On this basis, when a couple is in good health and has no medical obstacles to having children, they should in principle not prevent offspring from coming.

Nahdlatul Ulama, through the Bahtsul Masail Institute (LBM-NU), has given serious attention to the issue of refusal to have children, especially in the context of the use

⁴⁶ (Aulia 2021).

⁴⁷ Aulia.

⁴⁸ Al Ghazali, "Ihya'Ulumuddin Jilid III, Alih bahasa Moh."

of various contraceptive methods and birth control.⁴⁹ *First*, through Fatwa No. 283 on family planning, LBM-NU asserts that the use of methods such as 'azl (expelling semen outside the womb) as well as the use of contraceptive devices and drugs is categorized as *makruh*, except in emergency conditions. *Secondly*, Fatwa No. 381 discusses vasectomy and tubectomy, which are considered impermissible if they cause permanent sterility. *Third*, in Fatwa No. 382, the LBM-NU states that the use of spiral contraceptives (IUDs) is permissible and equated with 'azl. *Fourth*, Fatwa No. 399 highlights the method of contraception through vaccines based on male sperm. In this case, the LBM-NU states that such vaccination is permissible, because the unclean element is considered to be lost through a scientific process, and the sperm used is obtained through means that do not violate sharia.⁵⁰

The choice not to have children may be relevant to the needs of the couple and the conditions of both parties to be able to sustain the marriage. The decision not to have children is the right of each individual and couple. Despite pronatalist views, the choice should be respected as long as it is based on justifiable reasons.⁵¹ The legal ruling on childfree living varies depending on the underlying motivation. Choosing to be childfree due to economic or social reasons is deemed *haram*, as is the use of permanent contraceptive methods without a valid excuse. A childfree decision based on medical or psychological grounds is temporarily permissible (*mubah*); however, once the cause no longer exists, such a lifestyle reverts to being prohibited (*haram*) due to the absence of a valid Islamic legal excuse.⁵²

Thus, the choice not to have children is incompatible with a religious decree that violates the purpose of marriage. The opinion that choosing not to have children is not prohibited in the Qur'an and hadith is not textually correct. However, this issue falls into the realm of fiqh. Therefore, there must be legal *ijtihad*. The *ijtihad* used in this research is *Maslahah Mursalah*. The goal is to prescribe Islamic law that attracts or brings good and rejects or avoids damage.

In determining the law to make *Maslahah Mursalah* as Islamic law legislation, there are 3 conditions.⁵³ *First*, the benefit is in accordance with the principles that exist in

⁴⁹ Imam Syafi'i et al., "Childfree in Islamic Law Perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama," *Al-Ahkam* 33, no. 1 (2023): 1–22.

⁵⁰ Nahdlatul Ulama, "Ahkam al-Fuqaha'fi Muqarrarat Mu'tamarat Nahdlati al-'Ulama: Solusi Problematika Aktual Hukum Islam Keputusan Muktamar (1926-1999)," *Surabaya: Lajnah Ta'lif Wan Nasyer Jawa Timur and" Khalista" Surabaya*, 2007.

⁵¹ Zuhriah et al., "Childfree, the digital era, and Islamic law: views of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and gender activists in Malang, Indonesia."

⁵² Wahyu Abdul Jafar et al., "The Childfree Phenomenon Based on Islamic Law and Its Respond on Muslim Society," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 November (2023): 389–406.

⁵³ (Jumantoro dan Amin, 2005)

the provisions of *shara'* which *ushul* and *furu'* do not contradict the *nash*. *Second*, the benefit can only be specialized and applied in the social field (*mu'amalah*), not worship. And *third*, *masalahah* is the maintenance of the aspects of *daruriyyah*, *hajiyyah*, and *tahsiniyyah*

The benefit is in accordance with the principles of what is in the provisions of *shara'* which *ushul* and *furu'* do not contradict *the nash*. In this *Childfree* case, the benefit taken is that as humans it is recommended to follow the teachings of Islam, namely having offspring and not being *Childfree*, people who adhere to the *Childfree* understanding then he has violated the provisions of *shara'*. Except for those who have medical limitations. *Ushul* and *furu'-nya* as explained in the previous theological and juridical aspects of Islam.

Maslahah can only be specialized and applied in the social field (*mu'amalah*). Not worship. *Muamalah* will not be separated from human relations (*Hablu min Annas*). Marriage is a physical and mental bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on God Almighty.⁵⁴ In practice, marriage is a series of actions taken to connect a man and a woman in a legal bond, and this is one form of *mu'amalah*. Furthermore, it has been explained about the family behavior of *Childfree* individuals above. Couples who decide to become *Childfree* of course have become a social problem where if left unchecked there will be more and more people who adhere to this principle, as explained above if more and more people adhere to *Childfree* then the impact caused will be even greater both the impact that arises individually and the impact that arises in society.

The *masalahah* in question is the maintenance of the aspects of *Daruriyyah*, *Hajiyyah*, and *Tahsiniyyah*. As Imam As-Syatibi's opinion regarding the level of *Maqashid Shari'ah*. The *Dharuriyyah* aspect is the main goal. If this primary goal is not met, then human welfare in this world and the hereafter will be threatened. This first level includes five aspects: religion, soul, mind, offspring, and property. Furthermore, *hajiyyah* is the second level of human needs. Human safety will not be jeopardized if these needs are not met, but they can cause problems. Islamic law was revealed to alleviate the problem by providing relief or *rukhsah* to mankind. The third, *Tahsiniyyah* is a human need that if not fulfilled will not jeopardize the existence of one of the five basic needs and will not cause difficulties. In simple terms, these needs are only complementary.⁵⁵

The religion brought by the Prophet Muhammad to this earth has at least five purposes, one of which is to preserve offspring. Maintaining offspring, in terms of its needs can be divided into three aspects. The first aspect is *al-daruriyyah* (Primary Needs), The main purpose of *hifz al-nasl* at this level is the preservation of mankind and the

⁵⁴ (Indonesia 2004)

⁵⁵ Ash Shiddieqy dan T M Hasbi, "Falsafah Hukum Islam," (*No Title*), 1975.

regulation of sexual relations within the framework of marriage. This aspect includes: The prohibition of adultery and deviant forms of sexual relations, in order to maintain lineage and human dignity. The recommendation to marry, as an institution to produce and educate legitimate offspring. And laws governing inheritance, lineage, and parental responsibility towards children. *Childfree* is seen as a total rejection of the basic function of marriage in Islam (i.e. regeneration), which is contrary to the primary *maqāṣid*, because by deciding to be *childfree*, there is a *maqāṣid* that will not be fulfilled.

Al-Hajjiyah Aspect (Secondary Needs), This aspect aims to eliminate difficulties and provide convenience in the implementation of the maintenance of offspring. For example: *Rukhsah* (relief) in the law of inheritance or guardianship when certain conditions occur. Setting the age of marriage and mental-physical readiness, so as not to make it difficult for couples to bear and raise children. Ease in adoption or care of orphans, if the couple is unable to have children. If a couple chooses to be *childfree* for legitimate health or psychological reasons, then this can fall into the area of permissible secondary needs to avoid hardship. This option is acceptable *under maqāṣid* if it is accompanied by rational reasons that do not reject the principle of total preservation of offspring.

Al-Tahsiniyyah aspect (Tertiary Needs), as a Muslim/muslimah, tertiary goals include improving the quality of childcare and family harmony. This can be in the form of: Good child education (religious and worldly), giving good names and paying attention to child psychology. As well as realizing a *sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah* family. *Childfree* can be seen as losing the perfecting aspect of household life in the view of Islam, because there is no opportunity to educate offspring as part of worship and improving the quality of the people. However, in this aspect, *childfree* is not considered a sin, only losing one side of glory in *maqāṣid*.

Having children is a gift and a trust from Allah that brings blessings, happiness, and peace to couples. Children strengthen emotional bonds, motivate parents, and are a means of carrying out their role as caliphs on earth.⁵⁶ *The Maslahah* method is used to deal with complex issues such as the *childfree* phenomenon, especially when there is no explicit *nash*. *Maslahah* becomes the basis for determining the law if it meets the conditions: it does not conflict with the Sharia, is relevant to social conditions, and brings real benefits and avoids harm.⁵⁷ So in the author's opinion, the determination of the law regarding the life choice to not have children (*Childfree*) which has been explained previously is in line with the principle of *Maslahah Mursalah*.

⁵⁶ Fathul Mu'in et al., "Childfree in Modern Muslim Communities of Lampung and West Java Provinces: A Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah Perspective," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, no. 2 (2024): 860–77.

⁵⁷ Iqlima Amani Rahmatulloh, "The Childfree Phenomenon in Millennial Era Family Behavior in Indonesia (Study of the Indonesian Childfree Community)" (UIN SUNAN KALIJAGA YOGYAKARTA, 2022).

4. Conclusion (bold, 12 pt)

The increasing popularity of the childfree lifestyle among Indonesian Millennials reflects a significant shift in values regarding the meaning and construction of family life. The decision to remain childfree stems from various factors, including childhood trauma, lifestyle preferences, medical considerations, and economic complexities. Despite the absence of children, many childfree couples maintain stable household lives through equitable communication, flexible role distribution, and strategic future planning.

From the perspective of Islamic law—particularly when analyzed through the lens of *Maslahah Mursalah*—the deliberate and permanent decision to forgo children, especially for non-medical reasons, deviates from the primary objective of marriage, namely the preservation of progeny (*hifz al-nasl*). Children are considered vital to ensuring social continuity and the sustainability of moral and familial values.

Islamic law tolerates childfree choices based on legitimate health or psychological conditions. However, when childfree living becomes a permanent lifestyle grounded solely in personal or economic motives, it is viewed as inconsistent with the objectives of *Maslahah Mursalah*. Therefore, this phenomenon should be approached with both normative principles and a contextual understanding of contemporary socio-cultural dynamics. As a religion that upholds the pursuit of public good (*maslahah*), Islam must offer ethical and jurisprudential responses that are principled yet adaptive to modern life choices, including childfree living.

This study acknowledges its limitations, particularly in terms of the small number of participants and reliance on a single qualitative method—interviews. Future research is encouraged to adopt mixed or comparative methods to enrich the findings. Additionally, there is a need to compare the household behaviors of childfree families with those of conventional families in Indonesia to generate a more comprehensive sociological and legal understanding.

5. References

- Amaliyatul Hidayah, Zidni, Nina Octaviana, Wakhidatur Rokhmah, Program Studi Biologi Fakultas Sains dan Teknologi UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Jl Marsda Adisucipto, dan Program Studi Pendidikan Biologi Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. “Childfree: Mengurangi Populasi Manusia Untuk Kesejahteraan Dalam Pandangan Islam Dan Sosial Sains.” *Konferensi Integrasi Interkoneksi Islam dan Sains* 5, no. 1 (2023): 174–78.
- Aulia, Muhammad. “Childfree: ‘Bagaimana Muslim Harus Bersikap?’” *Lembang: eBook*, 2021.
- Aulya, Aidil, dan Ahmad Irfan. “Koeksistensi Hukum Perkawinan Islam di Indonesia: Interpretasi Mahkamah Konstitusi Terhadap Pernikahan Beda Agama di Indonesia.” *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 109–27. <https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v8i1.4149>.
- Bennett, Linda Rae. “Infertility, womanhood and motherhood in contemporary Indonesia.” *Intersections*, Maret 28 (2012).
- Darwis, Herdianti, Arya Nanda Pratama Pagala, Siska Anraeni, Tazkirah Amaliah, Ihwana

- As'ad, dan Andi Ulfah Tenripada. "Analysis of Public Sentiment about Childfree in Indonesia using Support Vector Machine Methods." In *2025 19th International Conference on Ubiquitous Information Management and Communication (IMCOM)*, 1–8. IEEE, 2025.
<https://doi.org/10.1109/IMCOM64595.2025.10857551>.
- Defago, Nicki. *Childfree and loving it*. Summersdale Publishers LTD-ROW, 2005.
- Fahmi, Zulkifli Reza. "Pembagian Peran Suami dan Istri dalam Membangun Rumah Tangga Sakinah Menurut Syekh Nawawi Al-Bantani." *QANUN: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–20.
- Farisi, Salman Al. "Childfree Dalam Perspektif Fiqh al-Aulawiyat." *Maqasid* 10, no. 2 (2021).
- Ghazali, A L. "Menyingkap Hakikat Perkawinan." *Bandung: Karisma*, 1998.
- Ghazali, Imam Al. "Ihya'Ulumuddin Jilid III, Alih bahasa Moh." *Zuhri, Semarang: CV. Asy Syifa*, 1992.
- Ghazaly, H Abdul Rahman. *Fiqh munakahat*. Jakarta: PREDANA MEDIA, 2019.
- Harahap, Ikhwanuddin, Erie Hariyanto, dan Fatahuddin Aziz Siregar. "Understanding The Rise of Childfree Marriage: Avoiding Toxic Family, Being Happy and Well Without Children Despite Contradiction With Maqashid al-Sharia." *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (2025): 302–29.
<https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v10i1.9984>.
- Hendro, Dermawan. "Kamus ilmiah dengan EYD dan pembentukan istilah serta akronim bahasa Indonesia." *Yogyakarta: Bintang Cemerlang*, 2011.
- Houseknecht, Sharon K. "Voluntary childlessness: Toward a theoretical integration." *Journal of Family Issues* 3, no. 4 (1982): 459–71.
- Indonesia. *Undang-undang perkawinan*. Pustaka Widyatama, 2004.
- Jafar, Wahyu Abdul, Zulfikri Zulfikri, Amin Sadiqin, Usman Jayadi, dan Irma Suriyani. "The Childfree Phenomenon Based on Islamic Law and Its Respond on Muslim Society." *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 November (2023): 389–406.
- Jenuri, Jenuri, Mohammad Rindu Fajar Islamy, Kokom Siti Komariah, Dina Mayadiana Suwarma, dan Adila Hafidzani Nur Fitriah. "Fenomena Childfree di Era Modern: Studi Fenomenologis Generasi Gen Z serta Pandangan Islam terhadap Childfree di Indonesia." *Sosial Budaya* 19, no. 2 (2022): 81–89.
- Jumantoro, Totok, dan Samsul Munir Amin. *Kamus ilmu ushul fikih*. AMZAH, 2005.
- Kaslam, Kaslam. "Model Perencanaan Hidup Seorang Muslim." *Jurnal Ushuluddin: Media Dialog Pemikiran Islam* 23, no. 2 (2021).
- Khalid, Hasbuddin, dan Andika Prawira. "A l-Adalah : Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam Evidentiary Strength of Quarrel Through Whatsapp Application in Divorce Cases in Court" 8, no. 2 (2023): 128–41.
- Mu'in, Fathul, Miswanto Miswanto, Relit Nur Edy, Rudi Santoso, dan Arif Fikri. "Childfree in Modern Muslim Communities of Lampung and West Java Provinces: A Maqāsid al-sharī'ah Perspective." *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, no. 2

- (2024): 860–77.
- Munawwir, Ahmad Warson. “Dictionary-Arab al-Munawwir Indonesia.” *Surabaya: Progressive Library*, 1997.
- Nurjanah, Siti, dan Iffatin Nur. “Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law, and the Social Reality.” *Al-'Adalah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v19i1.11962>.
- . “Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law and the Reality of Society.” *Al-'Adalah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 1–28.
- Pasolong, Harbani. “Metode penelitian administrasi publik.” Penerbit Alfabeta, 2020.
- Pengantin, Bacaan Mandiri Calon. “Fondasi Keluarga Sakinah.” Jakarta, 2017.
- Pratama, Novrian. “Childfree dan Dampaknya Bagi Negara.” *Diakses pada* 9 (2021).
- Putra, Sandio Abid Aurian, dan Mas Anienda Tien Fitriyah. “Implementation of the Marriage Dispensation: Exploring the Legal and Social Complexities in Preventing Early Marriage.” *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024): 24–39. <https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v9i1.4592>.
- Quraish Shihab, Muhammad. “Tafsir Al Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al Qur'an.” *Jakarta: Lentera Hati* 12 (2002): 46.
- Rahmatulloh, Iqlima Amaniy. “Fenomena Childfree Dalam Perilaku Berkeluarga Era Millennial Di Indonesia (Studi Terhadap Komunitas Childfree Indonesia).” UIN SUNAN KALIJAGA YOGYAKARTA, 2022.
- Sari, Maulita, Muhammad Fuad, dan Meutia Dewi. “Peran dari Orientasi Masa Depan dan Pengetahuan Keuangan pada Perilaku Perencanaan Dana Pensiun Keluarga: Studi Literatur.” *JIMP: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Profetik* 1, no. 2 (2023): 63–68.
- Sati, Ali. “MENGELOLA KONFLIK DALAM RUMAH TANGGA; CATATAN KECIL SEBUAH PERNIKAHAN DALAM ISLAM.” *Jurnal El-Qanuniy: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Kesyariahan dan Pranata Sosial* 6, no. 2 (2020): 152–65.
- Shiddieqy, Ash, dan T M Hasbi. “Falsafah Hukum Islam.” (*No Title*), 1975.
- Susanti, Susi. “Analisa Yuridis Terhadap Kepemilikan Alas Hal Milik Dalam Wilayah Hak Pengelolaan di Kota Batam.” *Analisa Yuridis Terhadap Kepemilikan Alas Hal Milik Dalam Wilayah Hak Pengelolaan di Kota Batam*, 2018.
- Syafei, Rachmat. “Ilmu Ushul Fiqih, Penerbit Pustaka Setia, Bandung, hal. 92,” 2007.
- Syafi'i, Imam, Tutik Hamidah, Noer Yasin, dan Umar Muhammad. “Childfree in Islamic Law Perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama.” *Al-Ahkam* 33, no. 1 (2023): 1–22.
- Tunggono, Victoria M. *Childfree & Happy*. EA Books, 2021.
- Ulama, Nahdlatul. “Ahkam al-Fuqaha'fi Muqarrarat Mu'tamarat Nahdlati al-'Ulama: Solusi Problematika Aktual Hukum Islam Keputusan Mukhtar (1926-1999).” *Surabaya: Lajnah Ta'lif Wan Nasyer Jawa Timur and" Khalista" Surabaya*, 2007.
- Vallejo, Germán Arley Baena, Clara Stella García Quintero, María Cristina Duque Restrepo, dan Daniel Stivan Velásquez Muñoz. “Perspectivas investigativas en torno a las parejas sin hijos y su relación con el concepto de ‘familia’: Un estado del arte.” *Interdisciplinaria* 37, no. 2 (2020): 175–94.

-
- Wahbah, Azzuhaili. “Fiqh Islam Wa Adillatuhu,” 2010.
- Yusuf, Ali. “Fiqh Keluarga: Pedoman Berkeluarga Dalam Islam.” *Jakarta: Amzah*, 2010.
- Zuhayli, Wahbah. *Al-tafsir Al-munir: Fi Al-’aqidah Wa Al-syariah Wa Al-manhaj*. Darul Fikir, 1991.
- Zuhriah, Erfaniah, Erik Sabti Rahmawati, Melinda Aprilyanti, Umi Chaidaroh, dan Mufidah Cholil. “Childfree, the digital era, and Islamic law: views of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and gender activists in Malang, Indonesia.” *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 3 (2023): 1606–26.