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A Review of the Mental Readiness of Married Couples from an Islamic Law Perspective as a Reason for Choosing Childfree

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of childfree, whether temporary or permanent, occurs in modern society due to financial considerations, health issues, and the mental unpreparedness of prospective parents. This phenomenon triggers a legal dilemma because the choice to refuse to have children fundamentally clashes with the principle of preserving offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) in Islam. This study aims to analyze the legal position of Islamic law regarding childfree decisions based on mental readiness and to balance these psychological considerations within the framework of *Maqashid syari'ah*. The research method used is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA 2020 flow that includes the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Data searches were conducted through the Google Scholar database with inclusion and exclusion criteria to filter relevant scientific articles published in the last five years. The results of the literature synthesis indicate that childfree decisions are driven by an accumulation of internal driving factors, while marital readiness and relationship success are largely determined by emotional, mental, and financial maturity, as well as the quality of interpsychological communication between partners. In addition, Islamic law and positive law both show a flexible view and make a strict distinction between the act of temporarily postponing pregnancy and permanently refusing the presence of a child. In conclusion, although permanent childfree without a valid reason is contrary to *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, Islamic law provides relief through the principle of protection of life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), so that a temporary postponement is permitted on the basis of an agreement and permanent sterilization is permitted if it is based on an urgent syar'i reason to prevent greater harm.

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Introduction

The childfree phenomenon is a situation where a married couple decides not to have children, whether for psychological, financial, or health reasons. This phenomenon is in stark contrast to Islamic law, as explained in the Word of Allah SWT, Surah Al-Furqan, verse 74:

وَٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبۡ لَنَا مِنۡ أَزۡوَٰجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعۡيُنٖ وَٱجۡعَلۡنَا لِلۡمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

Meaning: And those who say, "O our Lord, grant us, our spouses and our descendants to be pleasing to (our) hearts, and make us leaders of those who are pious. From this verse, it is explained that having children is one of the main goals of marriage in Islam, especially in looking after offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) (Fauziah, 2026). However, the decision to choose childfree is often made with mental readiness factors so that they feel unable to carry out their responsibilities as a parent to a child.

The growing childfree phenomenon has triggered several problems in marriage. First, some couples choose to adopt a childfree lifestyle citing mental unpreparedness, which fundamentally conflicts with the principle of *Hifz an-Nasl*. Second, prospective parents' psychological concerns and past trauma create fear and a lack of confidence in healthy parenting, leading to the decision to refuse childbearing as a preventative measure to avoid repeating the negative cycle of child neglect (Nallanie & Nathanto, 2024). Third, there is a lack of knowledge about the distinction between temporarily postponing childbearing for reasons of mental readiness and outright refusal (Albab *et al.*, 2026). Therefore, an understanding of Islamic law is necessary to provide clear boundaries and legal certainty regarding the consideration of mental readiness in childfree decisions.

Mental readiness as a reason for childfree is particularly pressing given that Islam emphasizes not only the quantity of offspring but also the quality of the generation produced. In *Maqashid Syari'ah*, fulfilling mental readiness, including emotional and psychological stability, is an integral part of efforts to protect the soul (*Hifz an-Nafs*) and offspring (*Hifz an-Nasl*) (Zein & Ardian, 2026). Forcing prospective parents to assume parenting responsibilities when they are mentally unprepared has the potential to have negative psychological impacts and trigger failure in optimally fulfilling their responsibility to educate their children (Safira & Susfita, 2023). Based on their research discussing psychological factors in general, this study focuses specifically on Islamic legal considerations between individual psychological harm and parental obligations.

While much research has been conducted on childfree from both social and general perspectives, specific research that places mental readiness as the primary reason under Islamic law remains limited. While much of the early literature tends to view childfree as implicit in the law regarding the origin of having children or as merely a reflection of today's modern lifestyle, this study explains that childfree represents a more complex form of value transformation related to autonomy and social structural conditions (Erliza & Arisman, 2026). These differing perspectives have led to conflicting legal conclusions, with some literature absolutely forbidding it for the sake of preserving offspring, while others permit it for specific reasons. Through these legal considerations, the line between temporarily postponing pregnancy and outright child rejection can be clearly distinguished.

The existence of childfree in modern marriage presents complex legal and social dilemmas, such as considerations of mental unpreparedness, psychological concerns, and past trauma of prospective parents, which directly conflict with the fundamental principle of preserving

offspring (*Hifz an-Nasl*) (Sari *et al.,* 2022). On the one hand, forced parenting in an unstable mental state has the potential to trigger the neglect of children's rights and threaten the protection of their lives (*Hifz an-Nafs*). However, on the other hand, uncertainty often persists in distinguishing between the decision to absolutely reject a child and the effort to temporarily postpone pregnancy for the sake of mental readiness (Saepullah *et al.,* 2023). This legal dilemma requires a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to collect and identify Islamic legal literature in a structured manner to address legal certainty objectively.

This study aims to analyze the position of Islamic law on childfree decisions based on mental readiness and considering psychological aspects in a balanced manner in *Maqashid Syari'ah* (Safhira & Norisma, 2026). Based on this objective, this study formulates two main research questions: (1) what is the position of Islamic law on childfree decisions based on the mental readiness of prospective parents, and (2) how to balance these psychological considerations within the framework of *Maqashid Syari'ah* in order to maintain a balance between *Hifz an-Nasl* and *Hifz an-Nafs*? Through these questions, this study is designed to answer the appropriate legal certainty so that it can provide clarity on the boundaries between life protection and offspring preservation.

Method

This study used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify and structuredly synthesize Islamic legal literature regarding the consideration of mental readiness as a reason for choosing childfree. The SLR method was chosen because it synthesizes relevant, transparent, and high-quality literature for analysis (Kusumo *et al.,* 2026). Therefore, this method provides an objective analysis to resolve differing views in previous literature and formulate the legal position of Islam.

The literature database for this study was obtained through keyword variables that align with the research focus. The literature search was conducted by compiling several keywords related to the mental readiness of couples, Islamic law, and reasons for choosing childfree. The articles found were then selected according to predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure they align with the research objectives.

Tabel 1. Strategi Pencarian

Database	Kata Kunci	Tahun	Hasil
Google Scholar	Ketidaksiapan Mental menjadi Orang Tua	2026-2021	6.540
Google Scholar	Pasangan *Childfree*	2026-2021	1.230
Google Scholar	Kesiapan Mental Hukum Islam	2026-2021	16.800

Tabel 2. Kriteria Seleksi

• Inklusi	• Eksklusi
• Membahas fenomena c*hildfree* dari faktor kesiapan mental suami istri	• membahas fenomena c*hildfree* dari faktor gaya hidup modern
• Membahas c*hildfree* dari sudut pandang hukum islam	• Membahas c*hildfree* hanya dari sudut pandang medis
• Membahas kejelasan batasan hukum Islam dalam membedakan tindakan menunda kehamilan sementara dan menolak kehadiran anak secara mutlak	• Hanya membahas kewajiban memiliki anak tanpa menjelaskan perbedaan dari tindakan menunda kehamilan sementara dan menolak kehadiran anak
• Artikel ilmiah yang relevan	• Informasi penelitian tidak memadai
• Publikasi 5 tahun terakhir	• Publikasi telah melebihi 5 tahun terakhir

Article Selection Process

The article selection process was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 framework. PRISMA stands for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, which includes four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. In the identification phase, a comprehensive literature search is conducted using a database based on a combination of predetermined keywords (Nurdiansyah & Veri, 2025). Next, a screening phase is implemented to remove duplicate articles and filter manuscripts based on title and abstract evaluation. Then, researchers test the eligibility of manuscripts that pass the eligibility phase according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Afterward, articles that meet all criteria will be included in the inclusion phase as the primary data source in the study. The final results of the selection process based on the PRISMA 2020 framework produced a number of primary articles deemed most relevant and meeting scientific quality requirements. All articles submitted to the inclusion phase will be reviewed based on key variable groupings that include author identity, year of publication, and the focus of the problem on the childfree phenomenon from an Islamic legal perspective.

Hasil dan Pembahasan

The literature search was conducted using the SLR method with the PRISMA 2020 flow. The initial search began by accessing the Google Scholar database to collect all relevant articles using a combination of predetermined keywords. The search results were then adjusted based on inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the articles focused on an analysis of Islamic law regarding the mental readiness of childfree couples. Articles that met the eligibility criteria were then systematically synthesized to present a literature mapping and outline findings related to considerations of mental readiness and the limitations of Islamic law in couples' decisions to choose childfree.

Tabel 3. Ekstraksi Artikel

No	Penulis/Tahun	Tujuan	Metode	Objek	Temuan
1	(Nazira *et al.*, 2024)	Mengidentifikasi persepsi serta alasan pasangan muda tersebut terhadap konsep *childfree* di tengah lingkungan masyarakat	Kualitatif dengan mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara.	5 orang informan yang terdiri dari 3 orang pasangan suami istri muda (3 istri dan 2 suami) di Kabupaten Bireuen.	Ketiga pasangan memandang konsep *childfree* sebagai solusi logis bagi pasangan yang mengalami keterbatasan finansial, masalah kesehatan fisik, maupun ketidaksiapan mental/psikologis dalam mengasuh anak.
2	(Raudhoh *et al.*, 2026)	Menganalisis dampak keputusan *temporarily childfree* (menunda memiliki anak dalam jangka waktu tertentu)	Kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus.	3 pasangan suami istri di Desa Dangdeur, Kabupaten Subang yang	Keputusan *temporarily childfree* tidak secara langsung menurunkan kesejahteraan emosional

		terhadap kesejahteraan emosional pasangan suami istri di Desa Dangdeur, Kabupaten Subang.		berusia 20–35 tahun.	pasangan. Keputusan tersebut sangat ditentukan oleh kualitas komunikasi interpsikologis antar pasangan.
3	(Maheswari & Wibowo, 2023)	Mengetahui posisi subjek, objek, dan posisi pembaca/penonton dalam pembentukan wacana isu *childfree.*	Kualitatif deskriptif dengan cara observasi dan dokumentasi.	Representasi dan narasi isu *childfree* yang terdapat dalam program *talkshow* Kick Andy episode "*Childfree*".	Keputusan *childfree* umumnya didorong oleh trauma pengasuhan masa lalu, ketidaksiapan mental untuk memikul tanggung jawab orang tua, dan keyakinan bahwa kebahagiaan hidup sudah cukup dirasakan tanpa kehadiran anak.

4	(Rosadi, 2026)	Merekonstruksi makna kesiapan nikah dengan mendefinisikan ulang konsep *baligh* dalam literatur *turats* dari perspektif filsafat hukum mengenai kapasitas subjek hukum.	Penelitian kualitatif studi kepustakaan (*library research*) dengan pendekatan filsafat hukum dan normatif-teologis.	Konsep *baligh*, *rushd*, *ba'ah*, dan *ahliyyah* dalam kitab *turats*, serta korelasinya dengan regulasi batas usia pernikahan di Indonesia (UU No. 16 Tahun 2019 dan PERMA No. 5 Tahun 2019).	Kesiapan nikah menurut fukaha bukan sekadar pencapaian usia biologis (*baligh*), melainkan akumulasi kapasitas subjek hukum yang mencakup dimensi intelektual (*rushd*), emosional, dan finansial (*ba'ah*).

5	(Pratiwi & Kumaini, 2025)	Mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan penundaan pernikahan di kalangan mahasiswa generasi *sandwich.*	Penelitian kualitatif dengan mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara terhadap mahasiswa generasi *sandwich.*	Mahasiswa Universitas Insan Cita Indonesia (UICI) yang tergolong generasi *sandwich.*	Penundaan pernikahan untuk memantapkan kesiapan emosional, mental, dan finansial dapat dibenarkan berdasarkan *maqashid syariah.*
6	*(*Yuda *et al.*, 2026)	Untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis proses pelaksanaan bimbingan pranikah dalam menumbuhkan kesiapan mental calon pengantin di KUA Kecamatan Cikarang Barat, Kabupaten Bekasi.	Penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus.	Pelaksanaan bimbingan pranikah (proses, metode, media, dan materi) serta pengaruhnya terhadap kesiapan mental calon pengantin di KUA Kecamatan Cikarang Barat, Kabupaten Bekasi.	Bimbingan pranikah terbukti memberikan pemahaman mendalam yang membantu calon pengantin mengendalikan emosi/ego, meningkatkan pemahaman agama, menyelaraskan visi-misi, serta menyiapkan mental dalam menghadapi tantangan dan dinamika konflik rumah tangga

7	(Saogi & Reza Saputa, 2025)	Menganalisis keputusan sukarela untuk tidak memiliki anak (*childfree*) dalam kerangka *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*.	Penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan doktrinal-yuridis normatif, empiris, serta filosofis.	Fenomena pilihan hidup *childfree* pada pasangan berumah tangga.	*Childfree* permanen pada dasarnya menyimpang dari tujuan utama syariat dalam menjaga keturunan (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) sehingga hukumnya makruh jika tidak ada alasan syar'i.
8	(Amanda Nuraini et al., 2025)	Menganalisis pandangan hukum Islam terhadap keputusan *childfree* pasangan suami istri dengan meninjau dalil syar'i.	Penelitian kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode studi kepustakaan (*library research*).	Pilihan hidup *childfree* dalam ikatan perkawinan dan penggunaan alat kontrasepsi (temporer vs permanen).	Keputusan meniadakan keturunan secara total (*childfree*) tanpa dasar syar'i bertentangan dengan prinsip *Maqāṣhid al-Syarī'ah.*

9	(Ibrahim et al., 2026)	Menganalisis fenomena keputusan *childfree* dari sudut pandang hukum Islam (*Masail Fiqhiyah*) serta mengidentifikasi dampaknya terhadap struktur sosial dan demografi masyarakat modern.	Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif berbasis studi kepustakaan (*library research*) dengan pendekatan yuridis-normatif.	Keputusan sadar pasangan suami istri untuk *childfree.*	Keputusan *childfree* permanen tanpa alasan syar'i tidak sejalan dengan tujuan utama syariat Islam (*Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*), khususnya pemeliharaan keturunan (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*).
10	(Hidayah et al., 2023)	Menelaah dan memberikan pertimbangan hukum mengenai fenomena *childfree* berdasarkan pandangan Islam.	Penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*) menggunakan pendekatan filosofis.	Pasangan suami istri	Keputusan *childfree* hukumnya diperbolehkan apabila penolakan wujud anak disepakati seperti menunda bersetubuh sementara, sedangkan hukumnya haram ketika mematikan

					sistem reproduksi secara mutlak.
11	(Shaiful Ashik et al., 2025)	Mengidentifikasi motivasi dan nilai-nilai yang membentuk aspirasi untuk hidup *childfree* di kalangan perempuan muda di Malaysia.	Kualitatif dengan cara mengumpulkan data.	6 orang perempuan muda Malaysia berusia 23–24 tahun.	Adanya kekhawatiran atas kapasitas emosional dalam mengasuh anak.
12	(Jafar & Jannah, 2026)	Menganalisis bagaimana ambisi karier memengaruhi keputusan pasangan milenial di Kabupaten Pidie Jaya untuk tidak memiliki anak (*childfree).*	Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap 10 pasangan suami istri milenial.	Pasangan suami istri generasi milenial di Kabupaten Pidie Jaya.	Keputusan *childfree* didorong oleh pertimbangan kesiapan finansial dan kesiapan psikologis/mental sebagai bentuk mencegah kemiskinan dan keterlantaran anak dalam menghadapi ketidakpastian ekonomi modern.
13	(Khoirul Umam Addzaky et al., 2025)	Merekontruksi pemahaman konvensional mengenai konsep *Hifdzun Nasl* (perlindungan keturunan) dalam kerangka *Maqashid Syariah.*	Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif-analitis melalui studi kepustakaan.	fenomena keputusan *childfree* pada masyarakat Muslim modern.	Penafsiran ulang *Hifdzun Nasl* di era modern mencakup kualitas hidup generasi, kesejahteraan mental/psikologis dan tanggung jawab sosial.
14	(Borimnejad et al., 2024)	Mengeksplorasi dan menganalisis secara mendalam alasan yang melatarbelakangi keputusan	Penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis isi konvensional.	Pasangan suami istri usia 30–45 tahun.	ketidakpastian atas kesiapan psikologis diri sendiri untuk membesarkan anak, ketiadaan

		pasangan suami istri berusia 30 hingga 45 tahun di Teheran, Iran, untuk dengan sengaja memilih tidak memiliki anak.			jiwa pengorbanan (*parental dedication*), rasa tidak percaya diri dalam mengasuh anak, serta standar idealis yang tinggi sebelum berani menjadi orang tua.
15		Menganalisis mahasiswa di Indonesia sebagai calon pembuat keluarga dan agen perubahan mengonstruksi secara sosial fenomena *childfree.*	Penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi.	Persepsi mahasiswa terhadap fenomena *childfree.*	Sebagian mahasiswa memandang *childfree* secara positif sebagai wujud kebebasan personal, Sebagian lain memandangnya negatif karena dinilai menolak kodrat memiliki anak.

Tables 1-3 explain the main reasons and motivating factors behind couples' or individuals' decisions to remain childfree, whether permanently or temporarily. These include psychological unpreparedness and past trauma, financial constraints, physical health issues, and the belief in achieving happiness in life. While this may have a positive impact on a couple's internal harmony, this impact also depends on the quality of interpsychological communication and the internal dynamics between the partners.

Tables 4-6 explain that readiness and stability in early marriage are the accumulation of multidimensional capacities encompassing biological, mental-intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and functional-financial maturity. From the perspective of Islamic law and positive law, biological age or a formal minimum age limit alone is insufficient to guarantee the sustainability of a household without being supported by readiness to carry out the responsibilities and roles of husband and wife (Rosadi, 2026). Therefore, strengthening regulations, such as establishing a minimum

age for marriage and judicial guidelines, are protective instruments to assess the maturity of prospective brides and grooms to prevent negative impacts such as domestic conflict, divorce, and neglect of child custody.

Tables 7-10 explain that the phenomenon of permanent childfree decisions fundamentally contradicts the primary purpose of marriage in Islam, namely preserving offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), which is considered a primary need. However, Islamic law is not rigid but rather contextual, such as the use of non-permanent contraception, which is permitted based on mutual agreement and considerations of the public interest (Hidayah *et al.,* 2023). Meanwhile, permanent sterilization, which is generally prohibited, can be tolerated if based on urgent Islamic justifications, such as serious medical conditions or psychological trauma, to preserve the safety of life *(ḥifẓ al-nafs)*.

Tables 11-15 explain that childfree decisions among modern society and Muslim couples are consistently driven by considerations of psychological/mental readiness, emotional capacity, and economic stability to ensure quality parenting and prevent child neglect amidst future uncertainty. Public and academic perceptions are divided between respect for the right to personal freedom and the demands of conventional norms, ultimately fueling a push within Islamic legal thought (*Maqashid Syariah*) to reconstruct the concept of *Hifdzun Nasl*. The goal is not simply quantitative continuity of offspring but also protection of quality of life, mental well-being, and the social responsibility of nurturing future generations.

A synthesis of the results of 15 previous literatures shows the similarity that the decision to be childfree, whether temporary or permanent, is a form of rational response to readiness between couples. The similarities across all of these literatures are rooted in the same internal driving factors, namely financial limitations, physical health problems, psychological unpreparedness, and past parenting trauma. In addition, researchers agree that the harmony and success of the relationship of couples who choose childfree are largely determined by their mental, emotional, and financial maturity, and the quality of their interpsychological communication. The literature of Islamic law and positive law both show flexible and contextual views, although permanent childfree is generally contrary to the *maqashid syari'ah* in preserving offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), Islamic law approves the postponement of childbearing through non-permanent contraception on the basis of agreement and tolerates permanent measures if there is an urgent shar'i excuse such as a serious medical condition or psychological trauma to preserve the safety of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*).

Conclusion

Childfree decisions, whether temporary or permanent, are rational responses driven by psychological unpreparedness, past trauma, financial constraints, and concerns about emotional parenting capacity. While normatively, the decision to be childfree permanently without a valid Islamic excuse contradicts the primary purpose of marriage in Islam, which is to preserve offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), Islamic law and the *maqashid syari'ah* (the principles of Islamic law) still demonstrate contextual flexibility. Islamic law tolerates the temporary postponement of pregnancy to establish emotional readiness and justifies the termination of

reproductive function in urgent circumstances to safeguard the safety of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*). Ultimately, this phenomenon has triggered a renewal of modern Islamic legal perspectives to reconstruct the meaning of *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, shifting from merely quantitative continuity of offspring to emphasizing the quality of life of generations, mental-psychological well-being, and guaranteeing responsibility for childcare.

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