

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Marriage is an inner bond between a man and a woman to achieve a noble goal, namely getting offspring as successors to continue the life cycle in the world. However, not all couples have the goal of getting married to have children, and some couples agree not to have children for the reason of choice now known as childfree.

The phenomenon of childfree is currently a topic of conversation among the public, especially in Indonesia. This conversation resurfaced because an influencer named Gita Savitri stated that she and her husband agreed to be childfree or not have children. She reasoned that not having children made her face look young at the age of 30 and she also did not want her body shape to change and be damaged because of having children. Gita Savitri's statement later became the talk of the people in Indonesia. Some people agree with Gita Savitri's statement, but not a few also disagree with this opinion.

The term childfree itself first appeared in 1901 in the Merriam-Webster English dictionary, and it is interpreted as a lifestyle that a person chooses to be child-free. In the context of the American Euro, the term childfree has been known since the end of the 20th century as an alternative to the mention of 'not having children'.¹ The term

¹ Rudi Adi dan Alfin Afandi, "Analisis Childfree Choice Dalam Perspektif Ulama' Klasik dan Ulama' Kontemporer", *Journal of Law and Syariah*, 81.

childfree emerged because at that time, millions of women around the world who had reached the age of 50 chose not to have children. They argue that having children will only limit freedom, drain financial pockets, be prone to depression and stress so they consider children only as a burden.

The child-free phenomenon has reaped many pros and cons in the community and from various circles, both individuals and groups. One of the effects of the presence of this childfree phenomenon is a change in people's perspective on marriage, which was initially institutional to an individual marriage. This paradigm change then affects the public's perspective on the importance of having children or not. In institutional marriages, child ownership is seen as important because of social expectations and demands. Meanwhile, in individual marriages, the presence of children is not the primary goal because couples are more focused on meeting their love needs and self-development.²

Based on research conducted by Ari Handayani, the proportion of married women aged 15-49 who do not want to have children has experienced instability in recent years. In 2007, the percentage of married women aged 15-49 amounted to 59%, then in 2012 it dropped to 56%. The proportion of men who do not want children also increased from 52% in the 2007 SDKI to 53% in the 2012 SDKI and did not change in the 2017 SDKI.³ World Bank data shows that Indonesia's birth rate has decreased. In 2019, Indonesia's gross birth rate per 1000 population was only 17.75. This data is

² Eva Fadhilah, "Childfree dalam Perspektif Islam", *Jurnal Syari'ah dan Hukum*, 73.

³ Eva Fadhilah, "Childfree dalam Perspektif Islam"....., 72.

strengthened by the results of the population census released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), which shows a decrease in the population growth rate of 0.24% from 1.49% in 2000-2010 to 1.25% in 2010-2020.⁴

The childfree phenomenon is not only felt by Indonesia, but other developed countries such as Europe, China, and Japan are also feeling the impact. Among these countries, the most significant is felt by Japan because the birth rate there has decreased drastically, which is confirmed by a professor of management at Konan University named Maeda Masako. Japan is one of the Asian countries whose birth rate continues to decline yearly, which also causes a decrease in household income, so wives also have to work.

Basically when a couple of men and women decide to get married, usually their goal and hope is to have good offspring. This descent is interpreted by having biological children from the result of a marriage that takes place between a man and a woman. This has also been mentioned in the words of Allah swt. In Surah An-Nisa verse 1 which reads:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۗ﴾

"O man, fear your Lord who created you from the one self (Adam) and He created from him his partner (Eve). From both of them, Allah multiplied many men and women.

⁴Fenomena Childfree di Indonesia, <https://epaper.mediaindonesia.com/detail/fenomena-childfree-di-indonesia>, diakses pada 2 Maret 2023.

Fear Allah who in His name asks of one another and (maintain) family relationships. Indeed, Allah is always watching over you."⁵ (Q.S. An-Nisa/4:1)

In surah An-Nahl verse 72 it is also explained about having offspring which is contrary to childfree.

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

“Allah has made for you a spouse (husband or wife) of your kind, made for you from your spouse's children and grandchildren, and bestowed good sustenance upon you. Why do they believe in the unrighteous but deny Allah's favor?”⁶ (Q.S. An-Nahl/16: 72)

The verse explains the form of grace of the creation of human beings in pairs between a man and a woman, the birth of offspring from the couple through marriage and the prohibition of disbelief against the blessings of Allah. In addition, this verse also explains that the presence of children is one of Allah's blessings apart from good sustenance, and children will one day become caliphs on earth who will continue the continuity of humanity.

Childfree became a hot topic from various perspectives, such as psychology, Islamic law, and the interpretation of the Qur'an. In general, from a psychological perspective, it shows that there is a personal decision of the person who chooses to be childfree, such as due to trauma or other things. From the Islamic law perspective, an opinion allows a child-free program with fiqh-based provisions. However, some call

⁵ Translate by BING Microsoft Translator.

⁶ Translate by BING Microsoft Translator.

childfree haram because one of the goals of marriage is to have children. As for the perspective of Qur'an interpretation, several narratives prohibit the practice of childfree living, but there are also those based on Qur'an interpretation that allow childfree living with several considerations. This shows that there are still differences of opinion regarding the childfree action, both from the community and scientists from various fields.

From the understanding of the mufasssirs, the researcher is interested in researching how people in today's age understand the Qur'an and the science of interpretation, in which case the researcher took the teachers of the Qur'an and Tafsir at the MAPK Martapura school to give a reception on how their views on the childfree phenomenon based on the understanding of the verses of the Qur'an, surah An-Nisa verse 1 and Surah An-Nahl verse 72. The institution chosen is MAPK Martapura because it is one of the religious-based high schools where in addition to religious lessons that are commonly studied, religious sciences from books are also taught in this school. So, religious lessons in the morning are also taught in the afternoon and evening, but with references from books. This is what makes researchers interested in choosing this institution apart from the reasons above, this school is also the only one in South Kalimantan. Then, the researcher chose the tafsir teachers at MAPK Martapura because the researcher wanted to know how the reception of the tafsir teachers who represented as generation Y or the Millennial generation about childfree and its relationship with the Qur'an.

The difference between this study and previous research is in the subject to be studied. In some previous studies, it focused on certain books of tafsir and certain mufassir figures, while in this study it focused on the understanding of the teachers of the Qur'an and Tafsir at the MAPK Martapura school. This study uses a field research method by interviewing teachers of the Qur'an and Tafsir at MAPK Martapura. In addition, this research aims to keep the Muslim community to make the Qur'an the main foundation in dealing with contemporary problems and as one of the references in adding knowledge.

B. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the problems that have been described above, the author is interested in researching and studying childfree in the Qur'an based on the understanding of MAPK teachers, by formulating several problems, namely:

1. What is the view of the Qur'an and Tafsir teachers at MAPK Martapura about childfree?
2. How do teachers understand the Qur'an and interpretation at MAPK Martapura about the meaning of Q.S. An-Nisa/4:1 and An-Nahl/16:72 related to the phenomenon of childfree?
3. What are the main goals contained in Q.S. An-Nisa/4:1 and An-Nahl/16:72?

C. Purpose and Significance Research

Based on the formulation of the problems that have been described, the objectives of this study are:

1. Research Objectives

- a. To find out the understanding of al-Qur'an and tafsir teachers at MAPK Martapura about the meaning of QS. An-Nisa/4: 1 and An-Nahl/16: 72.
- b. To identify the views of al-Qur'an and Tafsir teachers at MAPK Martapura on the concept of childfree.
- c. To determine the purpose of the main message contained in QS. An-Nisa/4: 1 and An-Nahl/16: 72.

2. Significance of the Research

- a. Academically, this research aims to add to the treasures of Islamic scholarship, especially in the field of tafsir science related to issues that are being discussed in the community and can be a topic of discussion regarding childfree in the Qur'anic issues.
- b. This research is hoped to provide motivation and reminders for writers, readers, and the public to be more careful and wise in understanding childfree.
- c. This Research is expected to be one of the references for the community both in terms of academic and non-academic.

D. Operational Definition

To be more directed to this research and avoid mistakes in understanding this research, the author provides an operational definition to explain the meaning contained in the title of this study, including the following:

1. Childfree

Childfree linguistically comes from English, which is taken from two words: "child" and "free". In some English dictionaries, childfree is not a strange thing, as in Macmillan's dictionary defines childfree as used to describe someone who has decided not to have children. As for the Collins dictionary, it is interpreted as having no children, childless, especially by choice.⁷

From some of the definitions above, it can be defined as childfree as the choice or decision of a person or partner that is made consciously to live a life without having children, which follows the definition referred to in this study.

E. Previous Research

In the initial exploration process, the author previously found several studies that used similar themes, which may also be related to each other but with different study objects or focuses. Among these studies are:

1. Undergraduate Thesis with the title, "*Analisis Childfree dalam Website Tafsir di Indonesia (Studi atas Tafsirquran.Id, Tanwir.Id, dan Mubadalah.Id)*". By

⁷ Collins, "Childfree" <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/childfree>, accessed on 11 March 2023.

Muhammad Makhlad, from the Ushuluddin Faculty, Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science Studies Program, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, 2022. In this study, we discussed about three websites, namely tafsiralquran.id, tanwir.id, and mubadalah.id, which put forward a few verses of the Quran, one of which is claimed to be a verse that discusses the ability to bear children and is not allowed in Islam. Related Topics: Faith Faith as a Function of Prayer: Fasting Loyalty Praying without Ceasing Relationship with God Trust Unbelief Weaknesses Beliefs Peace Evolution Forgiveness Pride Youth Wives Purity Husbands Peter Holy Spirit Marriage and Family Law Conflict and confrontation Suffering Servanthood Article two, Muhammad Bayu Dewantara also refused to have children using Qs. al-Baqarah 187, and Qs. Ali 'Imran/14, about having children The Qur'an is also related to the prophet's revelations (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Related Topics: Faith Faith as a Function of Prayer, Fasting, Loyalty Praying without Ceasing Relationship with God Trust Unbelief Weakness Beliefs Peace Evolution Anger Doubt Fear Job Money Men & Womens Law Conflict and Confrontation Trials Peter Holy Spirit Marriage and family love Qs. Saba/37, Qs. al-Munafiqun/9, and Qs. Ali 'Imran/10 are redacted, and the statement of the verse does discuss children and

property but does not discuss childless, so it goes too far if it is associated with the acquisition of childless in Islam.⁸

2. Undergraduate Thesis with the title, “*Analisis Penafsiran Wahbah Zuhaili dalam Tafsir Al-Munir Terhadap Tidak Ingin Punya Anak (Childfree) dalam Berumah Tangga*”. By Ukhti Muthi’ah, from the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Dakwah, Program of Studies in the Science of the Qur’an and Tafsir, Institute of Science of the Al-Qur’an Jakarta, 2022 The study focuses on the analysis of the interpretation of Wahbah Zuhaili in Tafsir al-Munir against childfree in the staircase. The results of this study show that: 1) childfree is a term for people who decide not to have children. Childfree is translated as free children. Some people consider this a selfish decision. Nevertheless, some judge that the decision is not selfish but based on mature and conscious thinking. 2) If childfree is in the view of Wahbah az-Zuhaili, as quoted from the book of Tafsir al-Munir and some hadiths, then the conclusion can be drawn that childfree according to Wahbah Zuhaili law is makruh. Still, the law of childfree can change into a shade based on the presence of a strong cause. For instance, in the case of male or female illnesses, From the above expression, we can explain that his child is a gift from God Ta’ala for his creature. Then God divided His

⁸ Muhammad Makhlad, “Analisis Childfree dalam Website Tafsir di Indonesia (Studi atas Tafsirquran.Id, Tanwir.Id, dan Mubadalah.Id)”, *Skripsi*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Ushuluddin Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, 2022).

grace into four groups, each with only sons, only women, or both kinds of men and women but no children.⁹

3. Undergraduate Thesis with the title, “*Pandangan Al-Qur’an Terhadap Fenomena Childfree*”. By Sha’adan Rizqi Tasyrin, from the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Dakwah, Program of Studies in the Science of the Qur’an and Tafsir, Institute of Islamic Religion of the State of Kediri, 2022 This study describes how the phenomenon of childfree decision is read through the perspective of the Qur’an. From this study, it can be concluded that being childless is contrary to the Qur’an’s precept that every Muslim should marry and that from that marriage; God gave a child with various advantages and disadvantages of having children. The Qur’an reveals that the son of the prophet (peace be upon him) is the prophet (Muhammad). The Qur’an and the Hadith suggest that there should be descendants; these verses are guidelines for all Muslims.¹⁰
4. Undergraduate Thesis with the title, “*Childfree dalam Perspektif Al-qur’an (Kontekstualisasi Ibnu Asyur, Wahbah Zuhaili, dan Quraish Shihab)*”. By Almunawwarah Burhanuddin, from the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Dakwah, Program of Studies in Al-Quran and Tafsir, Institute of Al-Qur’an Science

⁹ Ukhti Muthi’ah, “Analisis Penafsiran Wahbah Zuhaili dalam Tafsir Al-Munir Terhadap Tidak Ingin Punya Anak (*Childfree*) dalam Berumah Tangga”, *Skripsi*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Dakwah Institut Ilmu Al-Qur’an Jakarta, 2022).

¹⁰ Sya’adan Rizqi Tasyrin, “Pandangan Al-Qur’an Terhadap Fenomena *Childfree*”, *Skripsi*, (Kediri: Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kediri, 2022).

Jakarta, 2022 In this study, sources from the books Tafsir al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, Tafsir el-Munīr, and Tafsir al-Mishbah were used. The results of this study show that marriage's sole purpose is to maintain human beings' sustainability; only the three mufasirs differ in placing children among the three goals mentioned in QS. 21 of the Qur'an. In the QS. Al-Nisa' [4] verses 1, the QS. Al-Nahl [16] verses 72, and the QS. Verse 11 of the Quran says: "There are three ways in which a man and a woman are divided among themselves, and they are divided among themselves." There is a marriage shari'ah and the presence of the position of the child described in the Qur'an and the ancestry to increase the number of offspring is proof that the child has an essential role in family life. However, the decision must be considered if a family decides to be child-free based on specific reasons that may make it difficult or complex for a couple if they have children.¹¹

From several previous studies, it was found that several studies also discussed the phenomenon of childfree. The difference with previous studies using the approach of several figures of interpretation scholars and from website interpretations in Indonesia, while the author uses an understanding system from the al-Qur'an and interpretation teachers in the senior high school religious program at Martapura. Then the difference in previous research includes several verses related to childfree, whereas

¹¹ Almunawwarah Burhanuddin, "Childfree dalam Perspektif Al-qur'an (Kontekstualisasi Ibnu Asyur, Wahbah Zuhaili, dan Quraish Shihab)", *Skripsi*, (Jakarta: Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Dakwah Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an Jakarta, 2022).

in this study, the authors focused on two Surah's, namely an-Nisa verse 1 and an-Nahl verse 72.

F. Structure

To get a systematic overview of this research, the discussion arranged in the systematics of writing is as follows:

CHAPTER I: Research Background, Problem Statement, Purpose and Significance of Research, Operational Definition, Previous Research, and Structure.

CHAPTER II: Contains theoretical foundations that include Tafsir in general Q.S. An-Nisa/4:1 and an-Nahl/16:72, understanding, history, reasons, factors of childfree, and the concept of approach using *tafsir maqâshidî*.

CHAPTER III: Contains research methods that include types and research approaches, research sites, subjects and objects of research, data and data sources, data collection techniques and data analysis techniques.

CHAPTER IV: Contains research findings and discussion which includes the presentation of respondents' data, analysis of the understanding of teachers of the Qur'an and interpretation of childfree, understanding of teachers of the Qur'an and interpretation of the content of Q.S. an-Nisa verse 1 and Q.S. an-Nahl verse 72, as well as the views of teachers of the Qur'an and interpretation of childfree in Q.S. an-Nisa verse 1 and Q.S. an-Nahl verse 72 in the review of *maqâshidî tafsir*.

CHAPTER V: In closing, this page presents a conclusion that contains an affirmation of the answer or finding to the problem being researched as well as the suggestions needed to support the perfection of this research.