

Conceptual Analysis of Childfree Phenomena in Maqashid Sharia Perspective

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Abstract:

The study analyses the phenomenon of childfree, namely the decision to have no children, through the Syrian Maqashid perspective. The objective of the study is to explore how the concept of child-free is understood and accepted in the context of Syrian Makashid principles, which include the protection of religion (hifz al-din), soul (hifz al-nafs), reason (hifz al-'aql), descent (hifz al-nasl), and property. (hifdz al-mal). The method used is the study of literature, which involves the collection, and exploration of various relevant secondary data sources, including books, and journal articles. The analysis is carried out by highlighting views and arguments in literature and then grouping information based on Sharia Maqashid principles. This research found that child-friendly decisions were driven by various factors such as economics, health, career, and culture. From a social perspective, individuals or couples who choose childfree often face social stigma and pressure, although, in more open societies, this choice is increasingly respected. Economically, the child-free decision provides significant financial benefits, despite concerns about support in old age. From a psychological point of view, this decision can have a positive impact in terms of greater freedom and stress reduction, but also the risk of feeling lonely or regretful later on. The research concludes that the Shariah Maqashid approach provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating child-free decisions, enables Islamic law to adapt to changing times and contexts, and bridges the gap between social reality and religious values.

Keywords: *Childfree, Islamic Law, Maqashid Sharia, Phenomena*

A. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of childfree, or the decision not to have children, has become an increasingly popular trend in modern society. (Siswanto & Nurhasanah, 2022) Various factors have contributed to an increasing number of individuals and couples who consciously choose to live a life without children. One of the main reasons is the shift in priorities and lifestyle, where many people prefer to pursue careers, education, or personal adventures rather than

being bound to childcare responsibilities. (Sunarto & Imamah, 2023) In addition, financial and economic considerations also play an important role, especially amid the rising cost of living and difficulties in achieving financial stability. Another factor driving the child-free trend is concerns about environmental issues and sustainability. Some assume that having children can increase their carbon footprint and negatively impact the environment. Besides, concerns about the increasingly unstable world conditions, both politically, socially, and economically, also influence some people's decision not to have children. (Salahuddin & Hidayat, 2022)

In some cases, child-free decisions are also based on medical or psychological reasons. Individuals with a specific health condition or a history of genetic illness may choose not to have children to avoid the risk of inheriting the disease from the next generation. (Haecal et al., 2022) Meanwhile, some people may experience significant anxiety or fear of pregnancy and childbirth, thus making them choose not to have children. Although the child-free trend is on the rise, the decision is still often seen as controversial and invites social stigma in many societies. However, with the increasing acceptance of alternative lifestyles and increasing awareness of the right of individuals to decide their own life choices, the child-free phenomenon is increasingly accepted and respected as a legitimate and dignified choice. (Nuroh & Sulhan, 2022)

God has not created the law, but the law and the law have been created for a purpose and purpose. (Paryadi, 2021, p. 202) Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah stated that the purpose of shari'ah is the bestowal of servants in this world and the Hereafter. All things are righteous, all things are gracious, and all things have wisdom. (Al-Jauziyyah, 2021) Meanwhile, the social changes facing Muslims in the modern era have raised many serious problems related to Islamic law. On the other hand, the methods developed by the innovators in responding to the problem seem unsatisfactory. (Hamid & Putra, 2021)

In the study of the modernization of the law in the Islamic world, it was concluded that the methods generally developed by the reformers in dealing with the issues of law are still focused on a choice-of-a-kind approach by exploiting the principles of takhayur and talfiq. Maqashid Sharia, or the purposes of Sharia, is one of the fundamental concepts in Islamic law thinking. Maqashid Sharia is an alternative and is widely viewed as a fairly significant methodology of law (Ushul Fiqh). This concept refers to the universal principles and the main values that are the objective behind the establishment of Shariah laws. Maqashid Sharia is meant to bring good things and avoid harm to mankind in the life of this world and the Hereafter. (Rosyidah & Wakaf, n.d., p. 146)

In general, maqashid sharia consists of five main principles known as al-dharuriyat al-khams (five basic things), namely protection against religion (hifdz al-din), soul (hifz al-nafs), reason (hifzd al-'aql), offspring (hifz al-nasl), and wealth (hifdz al-mal). These principles serve as a basis for the establishment of Sharia laws and as a measure in evaluating whether a law or action is consistent with Sharia purposes. The Maqashid Sharia is not merely a theoretical principle, but a conceptual framework that provides practical guidance in the application of Islamic law. This concept enables Islamic law to adapt to changing times and contexts, as well as ensuring that the law remains relevant and capable of responding to new challenges emerging in society. By guiding on the principles of maqashid sharia, scholars and experts of Islamic law can conduct ijtiḥad more contextual and responsive to evolving social realities. The core of the theory of maqashid al-shari'ah is to realize good while avoiding evil, or attract benefit and reject madharat. The term corresponding to the core of the maqashid al-syari'ah is

maslahat because the establishment of the law in Islam must go towards maslahat. (Nizar, 2016)

The study of the childfree phenomenon in the maqashid sharia perspective has significant relevance in the social and religious context. Socially, the phenomenon of child freedom has become an increasing trend in various parts of the world, including in countries with a large Muslim population. The decision not to have children can affect family dynamics, community structures, and even government policies related to populations. Thus, understanding this phenomenon from a more holistic and nuanced perspective becomes essential to bridging the gap between social reality and religious values. (Kurniawan & Hudafi, 2021)

In the context of religion, especially Islam, this study is relevant because it relates to the principles of maqashid sharia which are the core of Islamic law. Maqashid Sharia aims to bring about harm and prevent harm to mankind. By analyzing the phenomenon of childfree through the sharia maqashid lens, this study can provide more comprehensive ethical and spiritual guidance in dealing with complex social issues. The phenomenon of childfree, the choice to live without children, is becoming increasingly relevant in modern social and religious discourse. However, how the concept of childfree is understood and accepted in the context of Sharia Maqashid principles is still less explored. This research aims to explore the phenomenon of childfree, namely the decision to have no children, through the lens of the maqashid sharia or the purposes of the Shariah in Islam. By using the principles of the maqashid as a framework of analysis, this research seeks to understand the dynamics and considerations behind child-free decisions in the context of modern society. Specifically, this research will answer the question of how the phenomenon of childfree can be understood and evaluated through the maqashid perspective of Sharia, especially about the protection of the soul, reason, descent, religion, and property.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

In a previous study conducted by Asep Munawarudin under the title “Childfree Dalam Pandangan Maqashid Syariah” in 2023, this study concluded that having a descendant is not an obligation in Islam, but a right that can be chosen or abandoned with consideration and a sense of responsibility. (Munawarudin, 2023) From the point of view of Islamic law, the absence of a text explicitly prohibiting the practice of 'azl, which is similar to the childfree act, suggests that childfree action is not prohibited. In the framework of the maqashid sharia childfree actions can be accepted in various aspects of ushul al-khamsah, depending on the factors that motivate a person to choose such a decision. The research uses a qualitative approach by analyzing Islamic legal texts and the theory of maqashid Sharia. This research seeks to dialogue discourse about childfree within the framework of as-siriya maqashid. Data was collected from a variety of literature, including the Quran, Hadiths, fiqh books, and contemporary laws and regulations relating to marriage and family in Islam. This approach is used to understand how Islamic law and maqashid sharia judge the childfree phenomenon. The research results show that the decision not to have children or be childfree can be accepted in Islam if it is based on the right reasons and careful consideration. In the context of maqashid sharia, childfree decisions can be accepted if the aim is to prevent disasters or difficulties that may occur to offspring in the future, for example, due to unfavorable environmental conditions or other emergencies. This decision must be taken with a full sense of responsibility and awareness.

Based on the research carried out by Asep and this research there are some similarities and significant differences in conclusions, research methods, and research results. Both studies both conclude that the decision not to have children is not an obligation in Islam, but a right that can be chosen with mature discretion and responsibility. The first study emphasizes that child-free decisions can be accepted in various aspects of *ushul al-khamsah*, depending on the factors driving them, such as environmental conditions or other emergencies. Meanwhile, the second study underlines that childless decisions are becoming more and more acceptable in modern society, despite still facing social stigma, and can provide significant financial benefits.

In terms of research methods, both studies used a qualitative approach, but with different focus. The first study uses the analysis of Islamic legal texts and Sharia Maqashid theory, with data collected from the Quran, Hadiths, fiqh books, and contemporary legislative regulations. On the other hand, the second study uses conceptual analysis methods with Sharia Maqashid approach and explores comprehensive literature on the phenomenon of childfree as well as its interpretation within the framework of the five main principles of Sharia Maqashid.

The results of the first study show that childfree decisions are acceptable in Islam if they are intended to prevent disasters or difficulties that may occur to future offspring. The second study, in addition to emphasizing increased social acceptance of child-free decisions, also shows that from a social and economic perspective, these decisions can provide significant benefits and are increasingly respected as individual rights. Thus, although both studies come from the same theoretical framework, namely the Sharia Maqashid, they both make different contributions to understanding the childfree phenomenon both from the Islamic legal side and from a social and economic perspective.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study uses literary methods to analyze childfree phenomena from the Sharia Maqashid perspective. The study of literature was chosen because it enabled researchers to gather, explore, and synthesize various sources of secondary data relevant to the topic. The first step in this method is to identify and gather literature related to Sharia Maqashid and the child-free phenomenon, including books, journal articles, fatwa, and leading scholarly writings. These resources will be analyzed in depth to understand how Sharia Maqashid principles are applied in the context of decisions to have no children. Data analysis is carried out by highlighting the views and arguments that emerge in the literature, grouping information based on Sharia Maqashid principles: protection of religion, soul, reason, descent, and property. The research will also compare and contrast the various perspectives found in the literature to provide a comprehensive and critical understanding of the childfree phenomenon. Further, the interpretation of the findings will be done using a descriptive-analytical approach to assess the extent to which childfree decisions are acceptable within the Sharia Maqashid framework, as well as their implications for the well-being of individuals and Muslim communities. These methods of literary study are expected to provide a strong theoretical basis and adequate academic validity to answer research questions and the research objectives that have been set.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Child-free and Childless

The term childfree has begun to spread in Indonesian society. Discussions about childfree have emerged in Indonesian discourse and point to married couples. (Rakhmatulloh, 2022) Childfree can be defined as someone who doesn't want and does not plan to have children. The term childfree was introduced in 1972 by the National Organization for Non-Parents. Childfree is different from childless where the condition from the outset chooses not to have children even though the person has economic and biological abilities. Childless refers to couples who want to be parents but can't for biological reasons. (Audinovic & Nugroho, 2023, p. 2) The other difference lies in the psychological and social aspects. Individuals or couples who choose childfree tend to be more satisfied with their decisions and feel no shortage in life. Conversely, childless conditions are often associated with feelings of sadness, disappointment, or even social stigma, especially for those who very much want children but cannot have them for some reason. Therefore, an understanding of the difference between childfree and childless becomes essential to avoid stereotypes or misleading assumptions in society. (Rasyid, 2022)

Couples who decide child-free usually assume that having or not having children is a personal and human right that no one can enforce. The reason most often presented by those who decide to be child-free is pressure on the population. But there is also the argument that this child-free trend is presented alongside the political campaign of body or body politics that assumes that the body of a woman is her own so that no one has the right to impose anything on it including pregnancy and having children. (Khasanah & Ridho, 2021)

In an article written by Susan Stobert and Anna Kemeny, it is mentioned that childfree is a term for a group of people who have a strong desire not to have children based on their own choices. (Audinovic & Nugroho, 2023) Many factors cause a couple to choose not to have children consciously:

- a. Economic factors. Young people today feel uncertain or worried that they will not be able to meet the cost of living of a child who feels too much and too much. For those who choose childfree, financial maturity is a very important factor when it comes to having children. So this is contrary to the common term we've heard all this time "many children, many provisions". For them, the material provision for the life of children does not just come but must be prepared at the outset. (Haganta et al., 2022)
- b. Health factors. Physical and mental health became an important factor in the decision not to have children. Some people may have chronic health conditions or high health risks when pregnant or giving birth, which makes them feel that being a parent is not a wise choice. Besides, some consider their mental health, feeling that the stress and stress that comes with parenting can negatively affect their well-being.
- c. Focus on Career: Not many individuals and couples who focus on career development feel that having children can hinder career success for both husbands and wives. The time and energy it takes to raise children can reduce their chances of succeeding and thriving in their careers. For some people, career achievement and professional goals are top priorities they do not want to be compromised by their responsibilities as parents.
- d. Cultural factors. The presence of a child has been a vital part of Indonesian culture so his presence is expected. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a culture that considers

the presence of childless couples to be burdened with impressive questions about having no offspring so that they finally decide to choose childfree so that the community no longer asks or speaks. (Dahnia et al., 2023)

For these reasons, if many couples choose not to have children will have a significant positive or negative impact on life both socially, economically, and psychologically. Socially, the decision not to have a child can cause a variety of reactions and consequences. Many societies, especially those that highly value family institutions and roles as parents, individuals, or childfree couples often face social stigma and pressure. (Fadhilah, 2021) They may be considered to be deviating from the norm or not fulfilling the social obligation to continue the offspring. It can lead to feelings of isolation or marginalization, especially in a community or family that strongly emphasizes the importance of having children. Moreover, they may experience repeated pressure or questions from family, friends, or society about their decisions. Nevertheless, in a more open and progressive society, the choice to live child-free is increasingly accepted and respected as a legitimate individual right. (Munawarudin, 2023)

From an economic perspective, the decision to be child-free can provide many financial benefits. Without the financial responsibility to raise the child, individuals or couples can save costs that are usually allocated to the child's needs, such as education, health care, food, and other daily needs. These saved funds can be allotted for other purposes, like investment, saving for retirement, travel, further education, or enjoying a more comfortable lifestyle. This decision could also reduce financial pressure and provide greater economic stability. However, there are also concerns about support in old age, as children are often seen as the primary source of support for older parents. Childfree individuals or couples may need to plan more mature retirement and look for alternative social support later on. (Syarif & Furqan, 2023)

Psychologically, the decision to be child-free can have both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, some individuals or couples feel more free and happy with this decision, because they can live lives according to their wishes and priorities without the burden of great responsibility as parents. They have more time and energy for themselves, their partners, and the activities they enjoy. (Sunarto & Imamah, 2023) However, on the negative side, these decisions can also cause feelings of loneliness or regret later on, especially in societies that emphasize the importance of family and offspring. Some people may experience internal stress or doubts about their decisions, especially when seeing friends or relatives who have children. Besides, there is also a risk of social stress and stigma that can affect their mental well-being. (Dahnia et al., 2023)

Maqashid Sharia: Definition and Main Principle

Maqashid al-shari'ah is a word consisting of maqashid and easy-shari'ah. Maqashid is a plural form of the word *maqsid* which means “where to go or intended” or meaning “aims or directions”. (Syarif & Furqan, 2023, pp. 55–56) As for Maqashid in terms (istilahi) According to Yusuf Ahmad Muhammad al-Badwi Maqashid is: *الغايات المحمودة في مفعولاته ومعموراته سبحانه* “Maqashid is the glorious purpose of all the works commanded by God.”. Under the above definition, Abdul Aziz bin Abdurrahman bin Ali bin Rabi'ah mentions that: *المقاصد في الإصطلاح: هي المراد من تشريع الأحكام أو هي ارادة حصول المراد من تشريع الأحكام* “Maqashid is terminologically the purpose of the will of God in the establishment of the law.”. From the above definitions, it can be formulated that maqashid is the desires of God that will be achieved through the creation of the law for mankind. (Suhaimi et al., 2023, p. 155)

The word *asy-shari'ah* means a source of water or the source of life. Shariah is also used as a synonym of the words *din* and *millah* which means all the rules from Allah. (Munawarudin, 2023, pp. 121–122) And when these two words are combined, the meaning of *maqashid al-shari'ah* is the purpose, the goal, or the end result of righteousness by the establishment of the law in mankind. (Munawarudin, 2023) Another definition of *maqasid al-shari'ah* is the final and secret goal, even the values or norms and meanings of establishing a law. According to al-Gazali, the essence of *maqasid al-shari'ah* is an effort to bring benefits and avoid harm by maintaining sharia goals. (Yasin, 2021, p. 177) The objectives of *syara'* itself consist of five things, namely maintaining the integrity of religion, soul, reason, lineage, and wealth. So everything that contains efforts to maintain these five main things is *maslahah* and everything that can eliminate the five is considered *mafsadat*, while rejecting *mafsadat* is *maslahah*. (Sulthon, 2023, p. 43)

a. Maintaining Religion (*Hifz ad-Din*)

Religion is the most fundamental human right because it is related to the beliefs of the heart and the nature of one's identity as a servant of Allah SWT as well as one's fate in the afterlife, namely in heaven or hell. (Jauhar, 2023) To protect his religion, Islamic Sharia orders first: To each one of us to help one another and to do his religion perfectly and fully, to obey all the commandments of the religion, and to keep away from the things that damage the joints of the religious life, and instead to do as many good deeds as possible or shale deeds to obtain the righteousness of God, second: The rulers are obliged to ensure that the Muslims can practise their religion perfectly and in full, and to treat Muslims according to their religion. Religion as a guideline of life which includes three components: *Akidah* (belief or holding of life), *Akhlag* (view of life of a Muslim), *Shari'ah* (The way of life of a Muslim is both a relationship with God and a human being). Those three components must be balanced to realize the life of a Muslim to happiness in this world and the Hereafter. Religion is a guidance for every human being because religion is a teaching and guidance aimed at guiding a man so that he has a good identity. (Sulthon, 2023)

Maintaining orining religion, according to its interests, can be distinguished into three stages, namely: 1) To maintain religion at the *dharuriyyah* level, that is, to maintain and perform religious obligations that are at the primary level, like performing a five-time prayer. If the prayer is ignored, then the existence of religion is threatened. 2) Maintaining religion at the level of *hajiyat*, namely carrying out religious provisions to avoid difficulties, such as plural prayers and *qashar* prayers for people who are traveling. If this provision is not implemented, it will not threaten the existence of religion, but will only make things more difficult for people who practice it. 3) To maintain religion in the priority of *secrecy*, that is, to follow religious guidance to uphold human dignity, while completing the fulfillment of obligations to God, such as closing the *aurat*, both inside and outside the prayer, cleansing the body, clothes, and places. This activity is closely linked to praiseworthy morality. If this is not possible, then it will not threaten the existence of religion nor make it difficult for those who do it. That is, if there is no covering of the *aurat*, one can pray, not to leave the prayer that

belongs to the dharuriyyah group. It seems that closing this aurat cannot be categorized as a compliment, because its existence is essential to the interests of mankind. At least these interests are included in the category of Hajiyat or dharuriyyat. However, following the grouping above does not mean that something that includes the tahsiniyyat is considered unimportant, because this group will strengthen the group Hajiyat and dharuriyyat. (Sulthon, 2023)

b. Preserving the soul (*Hifz al-Nafs*)

The protection of the soul relates to a person's existence, agility, self-reliance, freedom, and health as well as biological and psychological needs as a human being. For this reason, Islamic Shariah prohibits suicide or killing others, harassing others, imposing will on others, assaulting others both physically and mentally, accusing others, spreading blasphemy, and naive others. To maintain the existence of the soul that God has given for life, according to Amir Syarifuddin, man must do many things, such as eating, drinking, covering the body, and preventing disease. Humans also need to strive to do everything possible to improve the quality of life. Every effort that leads to the maintenance of the soul is a good deed; therefore God commanded it to be done. But what can destroy or destroy a soul is an evil deed forbidden by God. (Nasution & Nasution, 2020)

To maintain a soul, according to its level of interest, can be distinguished into three stages: 1) To keep a soul at the level of dharuriyyah, like to meet the basic needs of food to maintain life. If this essential need is ignored, then the consequences have threatened the existence of the human soul. 2) To maintain the soul in the stage of hajiyat, as is permitted to hunt animals to enjoy delicious and halal food. If this activity is ignored, it will not threaten the existence of the human soul, but only complicate its life. 3) Maintaining souls in the level of secrecy, as it establishes the way you drink. This activity is only about politeness and ethics, will not threaten the existence of the human soul at all, nor will it complicate a person's life.

c. Maintaining reason (*Hifz al-'Aql*)

Mind protection is about mind health, freedom of thought, intelligence of mind, thinking right, and creating new creativity. Reason is a divine gift that distinguishes man from animal. Without reason, man is not like an animal. To protect reason, the Islamic Sharia commanded man to think and be a great soul, to think positively with spiritual guidance, and to think about the universe for the sake of progress, well-being, and civilization. Furthermore, the Muslim Sharia prohibits food and drink which undermines the health of reason, negative thinking under the dominion of lust, and thinking for evil. (Sutisna et al., 2021)

Conservation of reason, in terms of its importance, can be distinguished into three stages: First, Conserving reason at the level of dharuriyyah, like it is forbidden to drink alcohol. If this provision is not transgressed, then the existence of reason is threatened. Second, to maintain reason at the level of Hajiyat, as it is recommended to demand

science. If it is not done, then it will not corrupt the mind but will make it difficult for a person about the development of science. Third, in the mind in the level of secrecy, like avoiding imagining or listening to something unfavorable. It's closely related to the label, and it's not going to threaten the existence of reason on the horizon.

d. Caring for offspring (*Hifz an-Nasl*)

For the smoothness of human life, there needs to be a legitimate and clear descent. God has given them the right to have sex, and it is good for them to have sexual intercourse. In this, God sanctifies the marriage of the offspring, as He says in An-Nur (24): 32: Every attempt that leads to the elimination and destruction of the lawful offspring is an evil deed. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: Islam also forbids adultery that is considered to be evil and can disrupt the order of life, obscure the future of the offspring, and bring disaster. In Al-Isra' (17): 32 Further, in Al-Nur (24): 2, Allah establishes the punishment for the disobedient. (Jalili, 2021)

To raise offspring, reviewed in terms of the degree of need, can be distinguished into three stages: (1) to raise offspring in the rank of dharuriyyah, as is ordained by marriage and forbidden adultery. If this activity is ignored, then the existence of the offspring will be threatened. If the husband is not mentioned at the time of the marriage, then the husband will have difficulty, because he will have to pay the divorce. In the case of divorce, if he does not use his marriage rights, the household study is not harmonious. (3) To nurture offspring in a secretive rank, such as the appointment of a minister or a maid in a marriage. This is done to complement the marriage activities. If this is ignored, then it will not threaten the existence of the offspring, nor make it difficult for those who marry.

e. Preserving Treasure (*Hifz al-Mal*)

To sustain life, humans need something that can meet their life needs, such as food, drink, and clothing. For wealth, human beings must be able to obtain it in a good way. Everything that leads to the search for goodness and goodness is a good deed commanded by the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) says: "Everything that leads to the loss of goods is a forbidden evil deed. In this Allah forbids theft, and the punishment for the thief is by the cut, as Allah says in the Maidah (5): 38. (Irwan, 2021)

Thus, if a person is not able to obey the law, he will not be able to do so, and if he is unable to obtain it, he shall not be allowed to take it away from him. If he does not obey him, he is not allowed to do it. If a person does not deserve it, then he will be obliged to keep it in his possession. It's, it's closely related to the ethics of cheating or business ethics. It will also affect whether the sale is legitimate or not because this third rank is also a condition for the second and first ranks.

Childfree Analysis in Sharia Maqashid Perspective

Maqashid Shariah, as a basic framework in Islamic law, aims to human well-being and avoid harm. In the study of the decision to have no children (childfree), Maqashid Shariah

looked at various principles in consideration of the first decision, namely the principle of religious protection (hifz al-din). In Islamic perspectives, marriage and having descendants are often regarded as one way of fulfilling religious obligations and forwarding a Muslim generation. However, the Shariah also provides room for individuals to make life choices based on their circumstances and abilities. (Syarif & Furqan, 2023) If the decision not to have a child is based on legitimate and accountable grounds, such as health considerations, economic factors, or inability to provide an adequate education to the child, it should not be considered a violation of the principle of religious protection. Islam emphasizes the importance of intention and consciousness in worship, and the decision not to have children can be seen as a form of individual responsibility in their obedience and commitment to the teachings of Islam more broadly. In this context, the principle of religious protection can be understood as an attempt to maintain the quality of faith and obedience to the teachings of Islam, not only limited to the quantity or number of believers. Individual decisions based on mature consideration and based on good intentions are acceptable in the Islamic perspective, as long as they do not conflict with the basic principles of Shariah. (Ali, 2023)

Secondly, the principle of protection of the soul (hifz al-nafs) is one of the important aspects of the maqashid sharia to be considered in the study of the decision to have no children. (child-free). Pregnancy and childcare can pose physical and mental health risks for some individuals. In cases where a person's health is threatened or there is a major risk to mental well-being, the decision not to have children can be seen as an attempt to protect their souls. The Maqashid Shariah, which is the primary goal of Islamic law, recognizes that preserving life and health is a fundamental priority. In this context, the child-free decision can be considered in line with the Shariah purpose of protecting souls. (hifz al-nafs). Individuals who have certain health conditions or are susceptible to mental disorders as a result of pregnancy and childcare may consider such decisions as an attempt to maintain their well-being. (Maulia, 2021)

In scientific studies, several studies have shown a link between pregnancy and parenting with physical and mental health risks to the mother. For example, post-partum depression, pregnancy complications, and certain chronic conditions that can worsen as a result of pregnancies. In situations like this, a child-free decision can be a rational and justified choice from the perspective of life protection in Islam. However, health considerations should be based on comprehensive medical evaluations and recommendations from health professionals. These decisions should also be taken with due care and consideration, and should not be based on purely personal preferences or purely social trends. (Nuroh & Sulhan, 2022)

Thirdly, the principle of protection of reason (hifz al-'aql) in the maqashid shariah emphasizes the importance of keeping reason and education. The decision to have no children is often made after mature consideration and a deep understanding of the personal circumstances as well as the surrounding environment. In Islamic teachings, the use of reason and knowledge to make wise decisions is highly appreciated. When the choice to have no children is made based on rational consideration, and adequate information, and not contrary to Islamic principles, it shows respect for reason. Thus, a child-free decision can be seen as a form of intellectual and spiritual responsibility in caring for and nurturing reason. Individuals who decide not to have children for rational reasons, such as financial inadequacy, health conditions, or other priorities in life, can be considered to have applied the principle of protection of reason in making such decisions. This decision is made by considering various

aspects and using common sense to assess the abilities and conditions possessed. (Salahuddin & Hidayat, 2022)

Fourthly, the principle of protection of descendants (hifz al-nasl) is one of the important aspects of the maqashid shariah that focuses on the importance of preserving the survival of offspring and the sustainability of mankind. In Islamic teachings, having children is considered a part of continuing offspring and caring for future generations. Nevertheless, the quality of life and education of children are also crucial aspects of this principle. Having children is not only about quantity but also the quality of life that can be given to them. If a couple feels unable to provide a decent life, adequate education, or a healthy environment for their children, then the decision not to have children can be regarded as an attempt to prevent future difficulties and harm. From the perspective of the maqashid shariah, this decision is acceptable if it is based on valid grounds and is aimed at preventing losses. (Pantow & Nahidloh, 2024)

Fifth, the principle of protection of wealth (hifz al-mal) in the maqashid shariah emphasizes the importance of preserving wealth and economic stability. Having a child requires a huge cost for care, education, and the fulfillment of everyday needs. In some cases, the decision to have no children can be a way to maintain family economic stability and prevent poverty. Maqashid Shariah acknowledges that preserving wealth and preventing poverty is an important goal in life. Therefore, if the child-free decision is taken to maintain the economic well-being of the family, then it can be considered under the principle of Shariah to protect property. Economic stability also contributes to a person's ability to fulfill religious and social obligations better. In Islam, there is an obligation to provide a living for a family, pay zakat, and contribute to social activities. If a person has an unstable economic condition, it will be difficult for him to fulfill those obligations properly. Therefore, a childfree decision with economic considerations can be seen as an attempt to protect property and prevent poverty, so that individuals or couples can focus more on meeting basic needs and other religious obligations first. Nevertheless, this decision must be based on mature consideration and not solely on materialist grounds or reluctance to sacrifice. (Irwan, 2021, pp. 166–167)

Overall, the decision not to have children must be seen within the framework of the welfare of individuals and societies, as well as efforts to prevent harm. Maqashid Sharia offers a flexible and inclusive framework, enabling individuals to make balanced and fair decisions under the main goal of Shariah, namely, to good and avoid loss. In this regard, the Sharia Maqashid principles provide a solid foundation for individuals and Muslim communities to understand and accept childfree decisions as part of their efforts to maintain well-being and adherence to the teachings of Islam.

E. CONCLUSION

From the conceptual analysis of the childfree phenomenon in the Sharia Maqashid perspective, it can be concluded that the decision to have no children (childfree) is a life choice driven by various factors, including economic reasons, health, focus on career, and cultural factors. This decision, although controversial, is increasingly accepted in modern society, especially among the younger generation facing increasingly complex economic and environmental pressures. From a social perspective, individuals or couples who choose to live child-free often face significant social stigma and stress. They may be deemed to be deviating from the norm or not fulfilling their social obligations to continue offspring, which can lead to feelings of isolation or marginalization. However, in a more open society, this choice is increasingly respected as

an individual's right. Economically, the decision not to have children can provide significant financial benefits, allowing individuals or partners to allocate their resources to other investments, such as further education or saving for retirement. However, there are concerns about support in old age, given that children are often considered the primary source of support for parents. From a psychological point of view, a child-free decision can have a positive impact in terms of greater freedom and stress reduction that is usually associated with parenting. However, there is a risk of feeling lonely or regretting later on, especially in societies that emphasize the importance of family and offspring. In the Shariah Maqashid perspective, childfree decisions can be evaluated based on five main principles: protection of religion (hifz al-din), soul (hifz al-nafs), reason (hifz al-'aql), offspring (hifz al-nasl), and wealth. (hifz al-mal). The decision not to have a child must be seen from the extent to which it can meet the purposes of this Shariah. For example, if this decision is taken to maintain physical and mental health (hifz al-nafs), or to maintain financial stability (hifz al-mal), then it could be viewed in accordance with maqashid shariah. The results of the research show that the maqashid shariah approach provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating child-free decisions. The principles of the maqashid sharia enable Islamic law to adapt to changing times and contexts, as well as ensuring that the law remains relevant and capable of responding to new challenges in society. Thus, the phenomenon of childfree can be understood and evaluated in a more holistic and nuanced way, bridging the gap between social reality and religious values.

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