
A Feminist Study of the Childfree Trend in Generation Z: A Normative Review

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate feminist perspectives on child-free trends in Generation Z from a normative point of view. The focus is on understanding how feminism sees this phenomenon in the context of individual freedom, gender responsibility, and prevailing social norms. The research methods used are theoretical and qualitative analysis. Data was obtained through a literature study that included articles, books, and documents related to feminism, gender studies, and child-free trends. A qualitative approach was used to explore and analyse feminist views associated with the childfree phenomenon in Generation Z. The results showed that feminist thinking towards the childfree trend in Generation Z reflects the complexity of the relationship between individual freedom and social norms. Feminism stresses the importance of recognizing that the decision not to have children is a legitimate choice for women, allowing them to pursue careers, self-development, and life exploration unfettered by traditional motherhood. Nevertheless, social norms that still reinforce the role of mothers and caregivers sometimes create pressure and stigma against women who choose the child-free path. Novelty/Novelty. This research makes a new contribution to the understanding of the complexity of child-free trends in Generation Z through a normative feminist lens. Her emphasis on the relationship between individual freedom, gender responsibility, and social norms provides deeper insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by women in navigating their life choices in contemporary society.

Keywords: feminism, childfree, gen-z, normative, 'azl.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern context, feminist studies of childfree trends in Generation Z highlight the complex dynamics between individual freedom, gender demands, and social expectations still inherent in women. The phenomenon of childfree, in which individuals choose not to have children, is the subject of an important debate in feminist studies because it reflects the struggle between individual freedom and social norms that sometimes limit women's choices. Generation Z, who grew up in an era increasingly open to diverse identities and life choices, is the focus of the study because it faces unique pressures from social norms that still reinforce women's traditional roles as mothers and primary caregivers [1], [2].

Feminist thinking in this study emphasizes that the decision not to have children is a legitimate and important choice for women to pursue careers, self-development, or life exploration without being constrained by traditional motherhood. However, social norms that still place value on the roles of mothers and caregivers sometimes make women who choose the child-free path perceived as rule-breakers or do not meet social expectations. Therefore, feminist studies of childfree trends in Generation Z from a normative perspective seek to embrace the diversity of women's life choices while questioning how these norms still affect women's freedom and perceptions in modern society [1], [2].

The worldwide feminist movement has experienced significant development from the 18th century to the present. Some so many women want to fight for equal rights and eliminate the oppression of women that occurs due to the patriarchal system or oppression of economic status or position. One relevant condition is the history of discrimination of Arab women in pre-Islamic times. Where the status of women occupies a very low and humiliating territory. Every female child born is considered a disgrace and must be killed. So many women's rights are ignored [3], [4].

Some time recently scientists have been preoccupied with the development of the trend of childfree phenomenon in developed countries in the dimension of modernity. More and more couples around the world are making the concept of childfree one of their life choices, especially Indonesian people in Generation Z. In this case, feminism is an important tool for the birth of the childfree phenomenon that is voiced by many women. However, the choice to live without children is still often debated between the pros and cons due to differences of opinion and viewpoints regarding the presence of children in marriage. This phenomenon is certainly interesting to study more deeply with the normative approach of Islamic law because it is well known that in Islam children are seen as a gift. Not a few scholars mention that having children is the purpose of marriage in Islam. Therefore, this study will discuss how Islamic views on childfree are prevalent in Generation Z [3], [4].

LITERATURE REVIEW

A generation is a group of people who have the same age, year of birth, and place of residence, as well as similar past experiences. They greatly affect the growth of a person. By definition, generation Z is the generation that follows the millennial generation. Those born between 1997 and 2012 are known as Generation Z, and they are also known as Generation Y or millennial generation [5].

The Big Dictionary Indonesian (1997:3324) describes feminism as a women's movement that combines various doctrines of equal rights and demands full equality between men and women. Due to inequality in relations between men and women in society, feminism developed into an awareness and an attempt to eliminate this inequality. In everyday life, the term feminism is often misused simply as a demand for women's emancipation. However, feminism refers to a social movement carried out by both women and men to fight for equal rights for both [6].

The term childfree is still fairly foreign to the ears of the Indonesian people so childfree does not yet have a word that can be translated into standard Indonesian. Childfree comes from American English which consists of two words, "child" which means "child" and "free" which means "free". This word when combined means "child-free". The term childfree refers to the belief that a person chooses to live freely without a child in their marriage relationship or personal life. This thought comes from Western societies, such as France, England, and the Netherlands which have been characterized by this phenomenon since the 1500s, through the thought of not marrying or even having children [7].

Al Islam etymologically means submission. Islam comes from the words "Salima" which means congratulations and "aslama", which means surrender or obedience.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"No! Whoever gives himself completely to God, and he does good, he has merit in the side of his Lord, and there is no fear in them, and they do not grieve." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 112)

From the word, aslama was formed the word Islam. Its adherents are called Muslims. One who embraces Islam means surrendering oneself to Allah and being ready to obey His teachings [8].

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach that is descriptive by describing phenomena that exist or are happening without giving any treatment to the research subject. The method used is the library research method by collecting and analyzing various written sources relevant to the research topic, namely feminist thinking, the phenomenon of childfree in Generation Z, and Islamic perspectives related to it.

Data sources in this study were obtained from written documents such as books, scientific journals, articles, websites, and other literature that discusses the research topic. Data analysis is carried out by content analysis methods used to identify and extract key concepts, main ideas, and important information from each literature source obtained.

Table 1. Research Methods

No	Types of Research	Model and Description
1	Research Methods	Kualitatif
2	Types of Research	study book
3	Nature of Research	Description of Analysis
4	Approach	Data Analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Phenomenon of Feminism and Childfree in Generation Z

The word feminism comes from the word feminine which means to resemble a woman or be feminine or feminine state. In general, feminism is often interpreted as an effort to fight for women's rights to be equal to men's rights by shaping everything as a movement to eliminate low views that are often accepted by women. This feminist thought has a strong connection with its historical background, it is known that this thought comes from the views of Western women who have a dark past and realize the imbalance between women's and men's rights so they demand gender equality. The feminist movement is not a movement that is gathered in a shade, but a way of thinking that refers to the importance of equality [9].

Equality that feminism hopes to cover all aspects of life, such as political, social, sexual, intellectual, and economic issues without any differentiation arising from sex differences. Females can freely manifest themselves perfectly. This thought gave birth to movements that were women's liberation. Understanding from the previous description, a benchmark can be taken to find out the understanding of feminism, namely the awareness of individual women and men on the inequality experienced by women in the form of oppression or blackmail that occurs within the scope of society, family, and workplace, which is accompanied by a movement to change the situation [10].



Figure 2. Child-Free illustration. Source: jurnalinspirasi.co.id

Childfree in literature is defined as making decisions or having a desire and plan not to have children. The child-free decision is a non-coercive agreement between two partners and is not interfered with by others. Still the same as feminist thinking, this is motivated by the Western context where it has become their lifestyle. The term first appeared in the Euro-American context in the late 20th century as an alternative that replaced the mention of a move to eliminate the negativity inherent in the idea of being childless. That way childfree is often juxtaposed with the term childless. These two terms do have the same basis in making the decision not to have children, but the difference is that being childless is not based on voluntary choice but because of health factors [11], [12].

Since the beginning of the emergence of generation theory, there have been five generations known by the public to date. First, the Baby Boomer Generation is the generation born from 1946 to 1964. Second, Generation X is the generation born from 1965 to 1980. Third, Generation Y is the generation born from 1981 to 1994. Fourth, Generation Z is the generation born from 1995 to 2010. Fifth, Generation Alpha is the generation born from 2011 to 2025.

Enter a more detailed discussion on Generation Z. This generation has many names, including iGeneration, Net Generation, or Internet Generation, namely people who live in the digital age. It is contained in the book entitled *Raising Children in the Digital Era* by Elizabeth T. Santosa that the Net Generation is the generation born after 1995 or more precisely after 2000. This generation was born not knowing the time when mobile phones had not yet been produced and when the majority of toys were still traditional but when the internet began to enter and develop rapidly in human life. In a research journal, Gen-Z is a generation that from birth has had interaction with technology, even their upbringing is shared by technology and the internet. A survey conducted by Sladex and Grabinger titled *Gen Z: The First Generation of the 21st Century Has Arrived* revealed most Generation Z have their smartphones and tablets and 100% of them are connected online for more than an hour per day [13], [14].

So from the previous explanation Generation Z can be interpreted as a generation filled by people with birth years starting from 1995 to 2010 where at this time there was a technological development that influenced the state of their generation, technology is not just a tool but has become part of themselves. Has characteristics that tend to like instant things because they have been born side by side with technology and the internet.

History of Feminism

Before the advent of Islam, discrimination against women had existed since the time of Jahiliyah, even during the time of Jahiliyah women were considered a disgrace to

the family and it was a tradition that when a female baby was born she would be buried alive [15].

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ (٥٨) يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ
أُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ (٥٩)

"And when any of them was told of the birth of a daughter, his face was black, and he was very angry. He hid himself from the crowd, due to the bad news he was told. Will he preserve it by enduring humiliation or will he bury it in the ground (alive)? You know, how bad what they decreed." (QS. An-Nahl: 58-59)

The Jahiliyah saw and assumed that women had no freedom for themselves, so they could be exchanged and claimed (sold) like cash and vehicles or even animals for them to use as they pleased. Thus, they did not give privileges to women, even with their own partners men could practice polygamy freely indefinitely. Once Islam came to perfection, women were given full rights and ownership of property [16].

The term feminism was first proposed by Charles Fourier, a French socialist thinker in 1837, beginning with the idea of the importance of educational equality between women and men. In its development, feminism is divided into three waves:

1. The first wave of feminism movement began around the 18th century, namely in Europe and America, Mary Wollstonecraft through her book entitled Vindication of the Right of Woman proposed educational equality between women and men. The idea was set against the backdrop of Europe in the 18th century when married bourgeois and middle-class women had to stay at home and become "pets" who sacrificed their health, freedom, and morality for prestige. They are also hindered from developing their reasoning abilities, arguing that the best thing a woman can do is to pamper herself and please others, especially men and their children. According to Wollstonecraft, education can encourage women to become whole people (personhood) who can determine their destiny. Therefore society should provide equal education to women.
2. Subsequently, the second-wave feminist movement began to move in 1960. The second wave of American feminism was marked by the establishment of several groups that fought for women's rights, namely the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), and the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL). The main purpose of the organization was to improve the status of women by applying legal, social, and other pressure on institutions ranging from the Bell Telephone Company to television networks and major political parties. These groups are better known as the Women's Liberation Group or Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). to raise women's awareness of the oppression of women. Among other second-wave feminists, Betty Friedan, whose work *The Feminine Mystique* (1977), wrote the book based on the fact that most women were unhappy with their limited roles as wives and mothers in the home, where American women in the 1950s had mostly married at a young age. The development of second-wave American feminism was further marked by a critique of the current white feminism (white feminism) carried out by Angela Davis through *Woman, Race, and Class* (1981).
3. Then the third wave of feminism was pioneered by Generation X women or those born between the 1960s-1970s. Known as postmodern feminism and postcolonial feminism, feminists are increasingly expanding the definition of feminism by questioning "what it's like to be a woman". Identity became an important issue in this wave of feminism where women no longer had to adopt the definition of 'beautiful' according to certain standards. As published in Naomi Wolf's work entitled *The Beauty Myth* (1990), where the book criticizes the beauty standards

for women of the United States at the time, just as women who are considered beautiful are those who are tall, white, blonde, or slim. This standard of beauty is then considered a reflection of a patriarchal culture that shackles women's freedom to determine what they want to become. In other words, it is the male conception of beauty that makes women subject to public expectations [\[17\]](#).

Factors Causing the Emergence of Feminist Thought

This feminist thinking emerged as a response to various factors that limit women's autonomy and freedom, including in the context of patriarchal culture, gender inequality, and challenges in education. Below are mentioned some factors of feminist thinking that are the basis of the struggle to achieve equality and justice for women.

1. Female body autonomy

Indonesia's patriarchal culture requires women to marry and have children without considering their options. This causes women to have no freedom in choosing whether they want to have children or not. In addition, women are also responsible for pregnancy, birth, and raising children. Women must perform the roles of wife and mother with no room for other options. Women who are brave in voicing their choice to be childfree are a form of women's awareness of the authority of their bodies. The authority of this body is closely related to feminist thought [\[18\]](#).

2. Gender inequality

The existence of unequal treatment between men and women, both in work, politics, society, and economics, led to the emergence of feminist thought. The principle of freedom should be a right for every individual, regardless of ethnic background, religion, and gender. Many laws are unfair to women for gender reasons. Women who fight for equality are often considered not by the norms that develop in society and are considered to violate nature.

The limitations of women's freedom are further exacerbated when associated with the ideology of a patriarchal society, where men benefit more. The feminist movement emerged as an attempt to fight for equality and freedom for women. Feminists challenge the view that gender differences justify the differential treatment of men and women [\[19\]](#), [\[20\]](#).

3. Education

Women's struggle to achieve equality in education still has many challenges in Indonesia. Although education is the right of everyone, both men and women, women often get unfair treatment, especially in terms of external knowledge and science. Women are often given domestic roles while men have free movement in studying.

If you dig deeper, it can be seen that there are many inequities in the education system. Women are often regarded as sexual objects, while men are considered rational beings. This happens because society still strongly considers the belief that gender determines a person's role in life. Because of the existence of injustice, this encourages women to join the feminist movement to demand equality and justice in the field of Education.

Factors Causing Couples to Choose Childfree

The childfree phenomenon created controversy in society around the freedom to have children. There are several factors individuals or couples choose to childfree, some of which are personal, psychological and medical, economic, philosophical, and environmental factors.

1. Personal (emotional and inner)

Decisions made based on personal reasons are usually influenced by one's inner emotions. This condition is also influenced by several factors such as family, friendship environment, education, work, and other conditions. People who choose childfree for personal reasons

usually have certain conditions that make them refuse the presence of children, both based on their personal experience and observation of the experiences of others [21].

Some people feel that the presence of children can be a burden and hinder their career success. In addition, some dislike children and feel that their presence will only be troublesome. Some choose childfree because they have traumatic experiences in childhood, so they worry that they will not be able to be good parents [22].

2. Psychological and medical (subconscious and physical)

Undoubtedly, parenthood is a difficult task. Everyone has to prepare a lot of things when they become parents. A healthy mentality helps parents and children be happy. Mental health is often a big issue for teenagers. The issue of stress and depression is more often heard from teenagers, so when a child reaches adulthood, many people are traumatized and think about not having children for fear of giving pain to children who are born and make the same mistakes as their parents. To be able to become a parent, mental ability is very important. Couples who choose not to have children experience childhood trauma caused by the family lifestyle and the way they raise children [23].

3. Economy (material)

The economy is the main reason why a person does not or delays having children. Not only do economic factors affect a person's likelihood of not having children, but they also affect the age of marriage, early divorce, and other factors. It is possible that promiscuity and casual sex increased as a result of the lower age of marriage. This is due to the current courtship lifestyle, which leads to many early marriages, abortions, and trafficking of women which is a big problem.

One of the goals of young people's lives today is to improve family finances. This happens because competition in finding jobs is increasing and the available jobs are not proportional to the number of people. Many young people today believe they are unsure or worried they will not be able to meet their own and their partner's living expenses. They also believe that having children will make the cost of living for a family more expensive. Financial maturity is very important for couples who do not want to have children. This contradicts the "many children, many sustenance" statements that we often hear. They believe that the material sustenance necessary to support the child must be prepared from the beginning.

4. Philosophical (principle)

Philosophical or principle refers to the nature of a person's outlook on life. Philosophy includes deep thinking about nature and human existence, including issues such as truth, morality, and the purpose of life. Principles used in everyday life are used to assess whether an action or decision is by the values believed. The right principle is usually based on experience and moral values espoused by a group of people. The absence of children occurring in society is an ideology of the impact of globalization. In recent years, the Indonesian public and media have begun to pay attention to this issue. Women and couples are worried about how having children impacts their careers, freedom, and mental health.

In addition, some argue that several factors can influence a person's decision not to have children: the deteriorating state of the earth, their gradually changing views on having children, and the belief that childbearing will exacerbate overcrowding [24].

5. Milieu

In some populations in a social environment, having thought of not having offspring is caused by several factors such as environmental reality conditions. The majority of parents view children as an investment in their old age, this is because of a belief, that children are obliged to provide for and care for parents in the future. With this in mind, many parents

force children beyond their limits and when they do not match expectations, they will abandon children.

According to some individuals, such treatment and thinking are not worthy of application, such treatment is selfish and rash. Because in some parents, children are not assets of old age, but gifts that have the right to make decisions and set the direction of life goals. In addition, external factors such as the community environment, in these factors play a very significant role in influencing every parent not to have children.

The population is growing rapidly, making it a major culprit in the destruction of nature and the environment. Rapidly growing population growth, can result in a decrease in environmental quality, decreased quality resulting in increased poverty, the amount of waste, and extinct plants due to environmental pollution. Therefore, this increasing population is often used as a reason for someone to choose childfree [25].

The Relationship Between Feminism and Childfree

The idea of childfree is a result of the feminist movement. The problem of child freedom is important to study because it can explain the marginalization of women's rights through gender construction, where women have the innate ability to inherit family lineage and have the open right to decide whether to give freedom to their children. Whether you want to give birth to children or not.

The term childfree became better known in feminist circles in the late 20th century. The term usually comes from the couple's assumption that it is a human right that is personal and cannot be imposed on anyone. Some people who choose not to have children argue that this helps control overpopulation. Some argue that a woman's body belongs to her and no one has the right to force a woman to conceive a child through pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. Feminism is also a passionate movement fueled by oppression and injustice. The object is male, social, political, and economic construction [26], [27].

Quoted in the book *Childfree and Happy*, the words body and woman are used as objects in childfree issues, these are words that are very close to the feminist side. Feminism itself is used to refer to the issue of childfree and the words are very close to feminism. Feminism itself is tied to the position of female subjects in society. Until recently, women were largely placed in inferior positions in society. Women are considered *The Other* whose relationships are always waiting to be defined and interpreted. The position of a woman should not exceed that of a man. As a result, there is a lot of debate, especially among women. Therefore, the use of the words body and woman has a special emphasis on the issue of childfree which is indeed inseparable from the reason why almost most women who embrace childfree are about the position of women and the body of women themselves for this issue.

The issue of women as objects refers to the position of women perceived by informants who are in a position that is intimidated, controlled, and objectified to be controlled and judged through cultural and religious customs. Women are constructed and required to live according to the will and judgment of society. Therefore, when women are objectified to be controlled and judged, some people normalize them.

Because the construction is built in the mind of women and the surrounding environment. However, in the context of childfree, emphasis is placed on the context of sentences that refer to the issue of women's bodies and women as objects to be controlled and assessed, so it can be concluded that Victoria Tunggono seeks to legitimize the thinking of women who do not want to preserve patriarchal culture and make women as intimidated objects. This can be seen from the many sections in the book that continue to emphasize the issue of rejection of the patriarchal system and arguments related to the feminist movement that underlie the decision not to have children [28].

Feminist Law in Islamic Perspective

Islam has never known the term feminism or gender equality originating from the West with various concepts and applications in the form of statements of disapproval of values that tend for men to have a position above women, and fight for women's rights to be equal with men which has been ignored by traditional conservatives. When the feminist movement began to enter the Islamic world, the wider community paid a lot of attention and attention to the thoughts and concepts of the feminist movement that wanted to reconstruct the legal order in Islam, the study of the Qur'an, and hadith that were considered to corner women. Whereas Islam and its teachings are very concerned about the dignity and dignity of Women [29]–[31].

The basic understanding of pessimism in Islamic understanding is different from other understandings. Islam considers feminism not only about the relationship between human beings, but also the relationship between him and the Creator related to divinity and beings who serve themselves to God, and therefore feminism has a close relationship with the Qur'an and hadith as the philosophical foundation of Muslims. Feminism according to the common understanding is only concerned with ways and actions to equate women and men in terms of the acquisition of rights, power, opportunities, and treatment [32], [33].

Feminism demands the elimination of gender traits themselves, namely by eliminating patriarchy and the gap between men and women. One example is separating a woman's body and the process of pregnancy by utilizing the development of advanced reproductive technology. Feminists say that society can escape the shackles of sex, gender, and family systems [34].

The discussion about feminism and gender equality that is currently much discussed has been explained in the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, which means, "O man, verily We have created you from a man and a woman. Then We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know one another. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing." This verse has made it clear that glory is not seen in terms of gender, ethnicity, and race. All men have the same noble position with Allah, the only difference is the piety that is in the heart of each of them [35].

The expected result of feminist thought and movement is the creation of justice, equality, and cooperation between men and women, both at the micro and macro levels. However, it should be noted that Islam has regulated everything fairly through the recognition of the noble position of women in Islam by removing many traditions that discriminate against them. The roles and duties of women have also been established and regulated by Islam, and women's rights in Islam have also been guaranteed [36].

Review of Childfree in Islamic Perspective

Islam is a perfect religion that governs all aspects of human life, both worship and muamalah from the smallest to the greatest. Islam exists as an answer to the problems facing mankind from age to age. To find out the Islamic view of childfree law, then we can study the various thoughts of the faqih in understanding childfree [37].

Childfree in the sense of not wanting to have children forever, namely childfree by choice which is usually motivated by egoism such as a lifestyle of feminist thought in the form of a woman's desire to pursue a career, personal freedom, finance, or disinterest in parenthood is forbidden because it is closely related to cutting off the reproductive system and not wanting to marry. Even Shaykh Ibn Baaz when asked about couples who agree to stop having children (in the sense of already having children) replied: "It is not permissible for them, as long as women can have children, they are not allowed to do so, because the Shari'a requires people to pay attention to children and multiply the ummah." So Muslims who choose childfree choice do not

understand that Western civilization stands on a principle that is contrary to the principle of Islamic civilization. They differ in terms of the outlook on life and the perception of happiness that everyone always strives to realize [38], [39].

Then, if the existing intention of a couple is only to delay pregnancy for a certain period or perhaps to limit offspring (tahdid an-nasl) for a reason that can burden and endanger the couple, the law may be according to scholars, this falls within the realm of fiqh studies included in rukhsah (leniency) studies. This can be an alternative or solution for couples who feel not ready to have children due to various factors. During times of procrastination, married couples can learn from each other to prepare themselves both physically, mentally, and materially to form a happy family with the presence of a baby in their small family [40].

Taqiuddin An Nabhani explains that in Islamic studies, childfree can be qiyaskan with 'azl because it denies the existence of the child before it has the potential to exist. 'AZL (coitus interruptus) is the act of removing the penis from the wife's vagina for a moment when ejaculation will occur so that sperm are scattered outside the vagina.

Imam al-Ghazali in his book Ihya 'Ulumuddin has the view that 'azl the law is permissible, not makruh let alone haram. 'Azl is an act that falls into the category of tarkul afdhal or abandons virtue but does not reach the haram law. Based on this, childfree is done using 'azl the law is permissible but the law will be different when childfree is done by completely and intentionally eliminating the reproductive system because the law of eliminating the reproductive system is haram. This is the opinion of Sayed Abi Bakr in the book I'anatu at Thaalibiin which explains that the use of devices that can break pregnancy from its source or cause permanent infertility is haram. This act is based on tabattul law which should not be done because it is like castration [41], [42].

Tabattul according to al-Qurthûbî is to abandon the pleasures and martyrdom of the world and focus on worshiping Allah. There is a clear prohibition against doing this. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqash radhiallâhu 'anhu said,

رَدَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ بْنِ مَظْعُونٍ التَّبْتُ لَوْ أُذِنَ لَهُ لِأَخْتَصِينَا

"The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had refused 'Uthman ibn Mazh'un to live celibately (tabattul). Had it been allowed, we would have neutered it." (HR. Bukhari no. 5073 and Muslim no. 1402). With this, scholars agree that the prohibition of tahdidun nasl if it is totally like castration that eliminates reproductive function. The thing that some scholars permissible is tanzhimun nasl (regulating birth) [43], [44].

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also said, which Ahmad narrated in his musnad,

عن أنس بن مالك، قال : كان رسولُ الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْبَاءَةِ، وَيَنْهَى عَنِ التَّبْتِ لِحَبِيئًا شَدِيدًا، ويقول: تَزَوَّجُوا الْوُدُودَ الْوُلُودَ؛ إِنِّي مُكَاتِّرُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

"From Anas bin Malik, he said: The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded us to marry and forbade not to marry with a strict prohibition and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, 'Marry a woman who has affection and produces many offspring, for verily I am vying to multiply the people with the prophets on the Day of Judgment.'

From the above hadith, the Muslim ummah is recommended to have many children, and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم loved his people who had many children. Islam advocates this with the intention and purpose of obeying the Shari'a of Allah, and this situation has made the infidels feel threatened and fearful, Therefore, they attempt to prevent it in various ways, such as providing contraceptive pills, encouraging a childfree lifestyle, or implementing birth restriction programs in Islamic countries led by leaders far from Islamic law [45].

Having children is not an obligation for Muslim couples, but having children is human nature since the time before the apostleship of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. It is mentioned and explained in the Qur'an, Allah the Exalted says:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ

"And indeed, We sent several messengers before you (Muhammad) and We gave them wives and descendants. There is no right for an apostle to bring any evidence (miracle) but with God's permission. For every age, there is a (certain) Book." (QS. Ar-Ra'd: 38)

In Ibn Kathir's tafseer it is explained that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the previous apostles were also ordinary people who carried out human activities in general, namely eating, drinking, walking in the market, marrying, and having children. Al-Qurthubi also agrees with this interpretation, he holds that verse 38 of Surah Ar-Ra'd explains that Allah has made the apostles like ordinary people who do what Allah allows for them and the pleasures of the world such as marrying and having children, only what distinguishes them from other humans is the revelation they receive [46].

Based on the above interpretation, it is clear that marriage and having children are human nature in this world. God has given man ample opportunity to enjoy the life of the world together with a good spouse and offspring [47].

The presence of children in a marriage is one of the means to achieve happiness that is highly anticipated by married couples in general. For married couples who do not have children, married life sometimes feels bland. The presence of a child actually gives its own color in a family [48]. God said:

رُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَتَابِ

"It is made beautiful to (the sight of) man the love of what is desired, in the form of women, children, many treasures of the kind of gold, silver, choice horses, cattle, and rice fields. That is the pleasure of living on earth, and it is in God's sight that the good place of return (heaven)." (QS. Ali 'Imran: 14)

Having children is also one of the purposes of marriage. Marriage is one way that can be done to maintain human survival to be able to continue and continue from generation to generation. As mentioned in surah Al-Baqarah verse 187, Allah says:

فَالَا تَنْ بَشْرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

"... So now mix them up and seek what God has ordained for you..."

The preceding sentence of this verse explains the permissibility of interfering with one's wife on the eve of Ramadan, and Shaykh Jalalluddin in his tafseer mentions that the meaning of "seek what Allah has ordained for you" is to obtain children from mixing with one's wife.[49]

Having children also has many virtues including:

1. Children are sustenance from Allah for their parents, and Allah will guarantee sustenance for every child born in the world. Allah the Exalted said:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ حَشِيَّةً إِفْلَاقٍ ۖ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا

"And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. It is We who will give them mercy and also to you." (QS. Al-Isra': 31)

2. Had children including the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as the Prophet Muhammad said ﷺ:

تَرَوُّوْا الْوَدُوْدَ الْوَلُوْدَ فَاِيُّ مَكَاثِرٍ بِكُمْ الْاُمَمَ

"Marry by you a merciful and fertile woman, for I will be proud of your many to the rest of your people." (Hr Abu Dawud: 2052, Al Albany in Jami As-Saheeh: 5251)

3. Children who excuse and salihah are gifts that Allah gives to their parents. Their presence can be a blessing for his family. Parents who can educate their children to be submissive servants can be the cause of sustenance. Because a parent who educates his child well and according to the Sunnah means that he has been devoted to Allah. And Allah says of the fruit of piety:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا . وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

"Whoever fears Allah will surely make for him a way out. And gave him sustenance from an unexpected direction." (QS. At Thalaq: 2-3)

4. A submissive child can elevate his parents in heaven. Prophet ﷺ Said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَيَرْفَعُ الدَّرَجَةَ لِلْعَبْدِ الصَّالِحِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ فَيَقُولُ : يَا رَبِّ أَنْى لِي هَذِهِ ؟ فَيَقُولُ : بِاسْتِغْفَارِ
وَلَدِكَ لَكَ

"Truly, Allah does elevate a preacher servant in heaven.' So he asked, 'O my Rabb, how did this happen?' Allah answered, 'Blessings of your son's istighfar to you.'" (HR. Ahmad, Ibn Kathir said, isnadnya shahih)

5. Children are an investment for their parents who will continue to do good deeds continuously without interruption even though their parents have died and their bodies have been buried in the ground. Children who excuse themselves can become jariyah charity or practice whose reward is not interrupted even though the parents have died. Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ : صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ وَعِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ وَوَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ

"If a person dies, then his practice is cut off except for three things (namely): alms jariyah, knowledge taken advantage of, or prayer of the son who prays." (HR. Muslim no. 1631)

In addition to explaining the virtues of children for their parents, this hadith also contains the meaning of the importance of vision and mission in marriage. Encourage couples to continue learning to educate children well. Surely the virtue of the prayer of the child of Salih is not obtained by those who decide not to have children [50].

Based on the description above, it can be understood that textually there is indeed no verse that discusses the prohibition of childfree. But the decision of childfree is certainly not by Islamic Shari'a, because in Islam many propositions advocate having legitimate offspring from marriage to achieve a marriage that is sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah. Having offspring is a great gift that God gives to his parents. These virtues certainly cannot be obtained by parents who choose to be childfree in their lives [51].

Seeing the reversal that is happening now is quite sad, where married couples reject the continuation of offspring, but same-sex couples such as gays and lesbians are looking for ways to have children. The marriage between a man and a woman

described in Islam can keep people from many things that are haram done outside the legal bond [52], [53].

CONCLUSION

The thought of feminism has sparked movements aimed at improving the dignity and rights of women, thus achieving equality between women and men. This thinking underlies the emergence of the phenomenon of childfree, or the decision of couples not to have children. Discrimination against women has existed since the time of Jahiliyah when they were considered a disgrace to the family. The term feminism was known from the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century, consisting of three major movements. It starts with fighting for the rights of oppressed women, then asks for gender equality, and finally frees women from the social constructs that bind them. The generation that grew up with the Internet, known as Generation Z, received a lot of information through online platforms, so feminist thinking has again become popular among Generation Z. The gender equality movement and the phenomenon where couples choose not to have children are motivated by various factors. Feminism arose because of restrictions on women's bodily autonomy, gender equality, and education. While the childfree phenomenon is based on personal, psychological, medical, economic, philosophical, and environmental factors. The term feminism is unknown from the Islamic perspective, so there is no difference between the roles of women and men because Allah has ordained each role. Islam views that having offspring is human nature. Although not an obligation, the child has a noble position and has many virtues. Childfree in Islam is haram because it contradicts one of the purposes of marriage, which is to have children. As for delaying pregnancy that is temporary for shari'i reasons or limiting offspring, it is permissible.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the main contributors to the study, all authors read and approved the final research, and all authors stated no conflict of interest.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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