

AUDIENCE RECEPTION ON YOUTUBE VIDEO ABOUT CHILDFREE

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Abstrak

Fenomena childfree di Indonesia, meski masih dianggap tabu, semakin banyak dibahas, terutama di media sosial. Data dari Badan Pusat Statistik menunjukkan penurunan angka pernikahan menurun 2,1%, yakni sebesar 1,74 juta pernikahan menjadi 1,7 juta pada tahun 2022. Selain itu, tingkat kelahiran juga mengalami penurunan signifikan sebesar 30,64% dalam tiga dekade terakhir. Penurunan ini disinyalir akibat berbagai faktor sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya, termasuk perubahan dalam pandangan mengenai keluarga dan peran perempuan. Fenomena childfree memicu perdebatan sengit mengenai nilai-nilai tradisional yang menempatkan anak sebagai bagian esensial dari keluarga dan identitas perempuan. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana audiens merespons narasi childfree dalam video YouTube "Semua Hal Itu Egois" di kanal Menjadi Manusia menggunakan pendekatan Netnografi dan Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perpecahan pendapat yang kuat. Kelompok pro-childfree mendukung pilihan ini sebagai ekspresi kebebasan pribadi dan bentuk penolakan terhadap peran gender tradisional. Sementara itu, kelompok yang kontra menekankan nilai-nilai patriarki dan agama yang menganggap peran ibu sebagai kewajiban alami perempuan. Perdebatan ini menggambarkan dinamika sosial yang kompleks, di mana pilihan childfree mencerminkan ketegangan antara kebebasan individu dan tekanan budaya yang kuat untuk berkeluarga di Indonesia. Perbedaan interpretasi ini menyoroti betapa dalamnya nilai-nilai tradisional berakar dalam masyarakat Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Childfree; YouTube; Resepsi Audiens; Patriarki; Netnografi; Analisis Wacana Kritis.

Abstract

The childfree phenomenon in Indonesia, although still considered taboo, is increasingly being discussed, especially on social media. Data from the Central Statistics Agency shows a 2.1% decline in the marriage rate, which was 1.74 million marriages, to 1.7 million in 2022. In addition, the birth rate has also experienced a significant decline of 30.64% in the last three decades. This decline is thought to be due to various social, economic, and cultural factors, including changes in views on the family and the role of women. The childfree phenomenon has sparked heated debate over traditional values that place children as an essential part of the family and women's identity. This study examines how audiences respond to the childfree narrative in the YouTube video "Semua Hal Itu Egois" on the Menjadi Manusia channel using the Netnography and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches. The results of the study show a strong division of opinion. The pro-childfree group supports this choice as an expression of personal freedom and a form of rejection of traditional gender roles. Meanwhile,

the opposing group emphasizes patriarchal and religious values that consider the role of mother as a natural obligation for women. This debate illustrates a complex social dynamic, in which the childfree choice reflects the tension between individual freedom and strong cultural pressures to have a family in Indonesia. These differing interpretations highlight how deeply rooted traditional values are in Indonesian society.

Keywords: Childfree; YouTube; Audience Reception; Patriarchy; Netnography; Critical Discourse Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The childfree phenomenon in Indonesia, while still considered controversial and taboo, is increasingly being discussed on various media platforms, especially social media, where unconventional life choices can find a more receptive audience. In a society where cultural and religious values are deeply intertwined with expectations of family life, the decision to remain childfree represents a significant departure from traditional norms regarding marriage and reproduction. The long-held belief that children are essential for fulfilling social, familial, and religious duties continues to dominate public discourse, particularly in a country where family structures are viewed as central to individual and communal identity. According to Indonesian Law No. 52 of 2009, the family is defined as the smallest unit of society, with the presence of children seen as essential to completing this unit (Hanandita, 2022). Within this framework, children are not only viewed as carriers of the family legacy but also as providers of security for their parents in old age (Nauck, 2014; Fahmi & Pinem, 2018).

This strong emphasis on family and reproduction is rooted in both cultural and religious teachings, which position the family as a fundamental building block of society. Islam, which is the dominant religion in Indonesia, places high importance on procreation as a religious duty, and many cultural traditions also support this view. As a result, those who choose to remain childfree often face significant social stigma, as their decision is

seen as counter to these ingrained values. Public discourse tends to frame childfree individuals as rejecting their societal obligations, with women particularly subject to criticism. In Indonesia, motherhood is often viewed as an intrinsic part of a woman's identity, making the choice to remain childfree all the more controversial, especially in the context of a patriarchal society (Sulastri & Rahman, 2022).

At the same time, demographic data stated that broader societal changes are underway. Statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2022) reveal a 2.1% decrease in the national marriage rate, with the number of marriages dropping from 1.74 million to 1.7 million. Moreover, the birth rate has fallen by a staggering 30.64% over the past three decades, signaling a significant demographic shift. These changes are influenced by a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors, including shifting attitudes toward gender roles, marriage, and family planning. The decline in both marriage and birth rates reflects a broader transformation in Indonesian society, where traditional expectations are increasingly challenged by younger generations, who often prioritize personal autonomy, career, and financial stability over familial obligations.

One of the most hotly debated topics within this changing landscape is the decision to remain childfree. In Indonesia, procreation is often viewed as a religious and cultural duty, particularly for women, who are expected to assume the role of mother as part of their natural progression

into adulthood. The childfree lifestyle, which directly challenges these expectations, is often seen as a rejection of core societal values. As a result, discussions about the childfree choice have generated intense debate, both online and offline. This lifestyle, while gaining traction among younger, more digitally connected generations, remains controversial, particularly in rural areas where traditional views on family and reproduction are more deeply entrenched (Sulastri & Rahman, 2022). The rise of this phenomenon has been met with both support and opposition, with proponents framing it as a legitimate expression of personal freedom and opponents viewing it as a threat to cultural and religious norms.

The concept of being childfree is relatively new to mainstream Indonesian discourse, though it has existed globally for decades. The term "childfree" refers to individuals or couples who voluntarily choose not to have children, as opposed to "childless" individuals, who may want children but are unable to have them due to medical or other reasons (Blackstone, 2013). In Indonesia, however, this distinction is often blurred, with childfree individuals frequently facing social stigma, criticism, and pressure to conform to traditional family values. The decision to remain childfree is often perceived as selfish or contrary to religious expectations, particularly in a society where family continuity and the role of children in caring for aging parents are highly valued (Nashiroh & Firmonasari, 2024). Women who choose to remain childfree are often subjected to even harsher judgment, as their choice is seen as a rejection of their natural role as caregivers and nurturers, which are roles heavily emphasized in both cultural and religious teachings.

Several previous studies have explored public reception of the childfree phenomenon, both in Indonesia and internationally. For instance, Nashiroh and Firmonasari (2024) utilized critical discourse analysis to examine how

childfree individuals are portrayed in online discussions, particularly in the comment sections of YouTube videos. Their findings revealed that pro-natalist narratives dominate the conversation, with individuals who choose not to have children often portrayed as selfish or morally deviant. These individuals are depicted as going against strong cultural and religious values that emphasize family and procreation as central to societal well-being. The portrayal of childfree women is especially negative, as they are seen as challenging deep-seated gender roles that position motherhood as a fundamental aspect of a woman's identity. This reflects broader societal discourse in Indonesia, where motherhood is often viewed as central to a woman's sense of self-worth and purpose.

Similarly, Sulastri and Rahman (2022) investigated audience reception of childfree content on social media platforms, finding that public responses tend to fall into three distinct categories: dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings. Dominant readings align with traditional pro-natalist views, where the childfree choice is rejected outright, often framed as selfish or irresponsible. Negotiated readings present a more nuanced perspective, where individuals may accept some aspects of the childfree lifestyle while still upholding traditional values regarding family and reproduction. Oppositional readings, on the other hand, fully support the childfree choice, often framing it as an expression of personal autonomy and freedom from societal constraints. These studies demonstrate the diversity of public opinion on the childfree phenomenon in Indonesia, with debates centering on the tension between individual autonomy and cultural pressure to conform to family norms.

Despite these important contributions, much of the existing research tends to rely on historical data or lacks updated analysis of more recent discussions, particularly those emerging

from newer digital platforms. Most studies focus on traditional media or earlier online discussions, limiting their ability to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of public opinion. Additionally, these studies often overlook the intersection of social media and personal expression, where platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter have become spaces for more open and diverse conversations. As the use of digital media continues to grow in Indonesia, the online landscape provides a unique opportunity to observe how public opinion on controversial topics like the childfree lifestyle shifts over time.

This study seeks to fill that gap by incorporating an analysis of the latest comments on the YouTube video "Childfree by Choice: Semua Hal Itu Egois" from the channel Menjadi Manusia. This video provides fertile ground for understanding how public attitudes toward the childfree phenomenon have evolved, particularly in the context of younger, more digitally connected generations. By integrating Netnography—a method that allows for the study of online communities—and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Fairclough's model, this research aims to provide deeper insights into public perceptions of the childfree phenomenon in Indonesia. Netnography enables a nuanced exploration of online interactions, capturing how users express their opinions, while CDA offers a structured approach to understanding how discourse around childfree is shaped by social power dynamics, cultural norms, and ideological forces.

The main research problem this study aims to address is how Indonesian, particularly those who watched the YouTube video, interpret and respond to the childfree narrative. The interactive comment section of the video allows for a real-time exchange of ideas, making it a valuable source of data for examining how individuals engage with the childfree topic. This leads to the primary objective of the study: to explore the dynamics of public

reception toward this controversial topic through the analysis of YouTube comments. By examining both supportive and critical voices, this research will shed light on how the childfree lifestyle is negotiated within the context of Indonesian cultural, religious, and gender norms.

The purpose of this article is to offer new insights into how audience perceptions of the childfree lifestyle are shaped by social, cultural, and gender contexts in Indonesia. The study will contribute to the existing literature by providing updated data on the evolving nature of public opinion and how new media platforms play a role in shaping these perceptions. Moreover, this article aims to foster a broader discussion about the childfree choice in a society that remains deeply rooted in patriarchal and pro-natalist values. Understanding how these cultural norms are challenged or reinforced in online spaces will offer valuable insights into the future of family structures and gender roles in Indonesia.

Feminism

Feminist theory plays a critical role in analyzing the childfree phenomenon, particularly in challenging traditional gender roles imposed by patriarchal societies. Feminism advocates for gender equality, emphasizing women's right to make independent decisions, especially regarding their bodies and reproductive choices. According to Hidayati (2018), feminism emerged as a movement to address inequalities rooted in community culture and religious interpretations that tend to marginalize women. Feminist theorists, such as Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, have critiqued societal structures that reduce women's value to their reproductive capacities, advocating instead for women's autonomy in choosing their life paths, including the decision to remain childfree. In Indonesia, feminism is particularly relevant because of the societal pressure women face to conform to reproductive roles. The patriarchal system

has traditionally placed women in subordinate positions, with motherhood viewed as a central aspect of their identity. The feminist movement in Indonesia challenges these assumptions, arguing that women should not be forced into reproductive roles but should have the freedom to choose whether or not they want to have children. This reflects a broader understanding of reproductive rights as part of women's human rights.

Patriarchy

The concept of patriarchy is closely related to the feminist critique, focusing on the power dynamics that place men in dominant positions, both in the domestic and public spheres. Patriarchal systems traditionally expect women to fulfill roles as caregivers and reproducers. (Israpil, 2017). In Indonesia, patriarchal norms are deeply embedded in culture, dictating that women fulfill roles as mothers and caregivers, while men are seen as heads of households. Women who choose to remain childfree face social stigma for defying these expectations, as motherhood is often viewed as central to a woman's identity and value. Despite progress in gender equality policies, patriarchal structures continue to limit women's reproductive autonomy in Indonesia.

New Media

Information consumption shapes human mindsets, with the intensity of exposure influencing perceptions of social phenomena. Unlike the past when information was primarily disseminated via newspapers, globalization and technological advancements have led to the rise of New Media, encompassing digital platforms that allow user interaction and content creation (Mubarok, 2022). New Media is characterized by digitalization, which enhances efficiency in producing, storing, and distributing information (McQuail, 2010). Another key trait is interactivity, where users engage in real-time communication through Computer-

Mediated Communication (CMC), breaking social and physical boundaries (McQuail, 2010). Finally, New Media is flexible, adapting to technological developments and enabling dynamic user interactions (McQuail, 2010).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA, particularly the model developed by Norman Fairclough, is used to explore how language and discourse shape power relations in society. In the context of the childfree phenomenon, CDA is employed to analyze how societal expectations and norms regarding reproduction are reinforced or challenged through language, particularly in online spaces like social media. Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, which includes text analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, allows for a deeper understanding of how language reflects and perpetuates societal power dynamics. In this study, CDA is applied to analyze the language used in YouTube comments regarding childfree individuals, revealing how these discussions reflect broader cultural and ideological pressures. Online comments often reproduce patriarchal narratives, positioning childfree individuals as deviant or morally inferior for rejecting traditional reproductive roles (Fairclough, 1995).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore audience reception of the childfree narrative presented in the YouTube video "Childfree by Choice: Semua Hal Itu Egois" from the Menjadi Manusia channel. Qualitative research focuses on capturing and discovering meanings in context through in-depth, case-oriented approaches, making it ideal for understanding complex social processes and interactions within their specific cultural settings (Neuman, 2011, p. 176). Using Netnography, the research collects and analyzes 60 comments from 1.440 comments that are in the video's

comment section as per 30 August 2024, selected through purposive sampling to capture diverse perspectives. The comments are analyzed thematically, identifying key themes to the childfree lifestyle. CDA based on Fairclough's model is then applied at three levels: micro (focusing on language and discourse), meso (examining social interactions in the comment section), and macro (exploring broader societal discourses, including patriarchy and feminism), providing a comprehensive understanding of how the childfree phenomenon is received by Indonesian audiences (Fairclough, 1995)

RESEARCH RESULT

The analysis of 60 YouTube comments on the video "*Childfree by Choice: Semua Hal Itu Egois*" identified 14 thematic groupings that reflect diverse audience reactions to the childfree phenomenon. Each grouping explores different aspects of societal, cultural, and individual perspectives, using Fairclough's CDA at the micro, meso, and macro levels.

Pro-Childfree: Individual Balance and Personal Choice

This group of comments predominantly supports the childfree lifestyle as a legitimate personal choice. Commenters often highlighted the importance of maintaining individual freedom and autonomy, particularly in the context of modern life where many feel pressured by societal expectations. The decision to be childfree is framed as a way to focus on personal growth, career development, and maintaining a balanced life without the perceived burden of parenting. At the micro level, the language used by these commenters frequently included terms such as "freedom," "personal control," and "autonomy," reflecting a discourse of self-determination. Moving to the meso

level, these commenters tended to interact positively with each other, validating and reinforcing the choice to remain childfree as a personal right, thus creating a supportive community. At the macro level, this theme connects to broader societal trends toward individualism, where people prioritize personal well-being and career goals over traditional expectations of family life.

Contra-Childfree: Religious Perspective

Opposition to the childfree lifestyle based on religious grounds was a prominent theme in the comments. In this grouping, many commenters expressed the belief that having children is a religious duty, particularly within Islamic teachings, which emphasize the importance of procreation as a way of fulfilling divine will. Commenters referenced religious texts and principles to argue that choosing not to have children contradicts the natural and moral responsibilities dictated by their faith. At the micro level, these commenters employed religiously charged language such as "God's command," "sinful," and "blessed by children," which reflects their deep-seated beliefs. At the meso level, there was notable engagement between religious commenters and those who supported the childfree lifestyle, often resulting in debates over the moral implications of the choice. This reflects the tension between religious doctrines and modern lifestyle choices. At the macro level, these comments point to the enduring influence of religion in shaping family norms in Indonesia, where religious teachings often intersect with

societal expectations regarding marriage and procreation.

Contra-Childfree: Biological and Natural Perspective

Another opposing viewpoint comes from those who argue that procreation is a fundamental aspect of human nature. Commenters in this group contended that it is a biological imperative for humans to reproduce, and that going against this natural instinct is unnatural. They viewed the decision to remain childfree as defying what they consider a core function of human existence. At the micro level, language such as "natural," "biological duty," and "reproductive instinct" was commonly used, emphasizing the biological determinism behind their arguments. At the meso level, there was minimal debate, as many commenters who adhered to this perspective agreed on the importance of procreation as part of life's natural cycle. At the macro level, this reflects a broader cultural belief that family and children are integral to human identity, a perspective that is deeply rooted in many societies where procreation is seen as both a personal fulfillment and a contribution to the continuity of society.

Gender Perspective: Social Injustice in Childfree Decision

Comments in this grouping focused on the gender dynamics involved in the decision to remain childfree, particularly the social injustices that women face when making this choice. Many commenters argued that women are disproportionately pressured by society to bear children, and that choosing not to do so often leads to criticism and exclusion. The decision to be

childfree was framed as a feminist act, a way of rejecting patriarchal expectations that define a woman's worth by her ability to become a mother. At the micro level, commenters frequently used terms such as "oppression," "patriarchy," and "breaking free," reflecting a discourse of resistance to traditional gender roles. At the meso level, these commenters challenged other users who supported traditional roles for women, advocating for the right of women to make autonomous decisions about their reproductive lives. At the macro level, this discussion ties into broader feminist movements within Indonesia and globally, where there is increasing pushback against the gendered expectations that limit women's choices.

Gender Perspective: Traditional Gender Roles and Social Pressure

This grouping represents the perspective that traditional gender roles, particularly those related to motherhood, are deeply ingrained in Indonesian society. Commenters highlighted the intense social pressure that women face to fulfill these roles, particularly the expectation that all women should become mothers. The decision to remain childfree, according to these commenters, often results in judgment and social alienation. At the micro level, words like "duty," "obligation," and "expected role" were frequently used to describe societal pressures on women. At the meso level, commenters shared personal stories of being pressured by family, friends, and society at large, creating a collective narrative of resistance or resignation. At the macro level, this grouping illustrates the persistent traditional gender norms in Indonesian society,

where motherhood is still considered a fundamental part of a woman's identity, and where deviation from this path is often seen as socially unacceptable.

Gender Perspective: Patriarchy

In this grouping, commenters critiqued the patriarchal structures that shape societal expectations about women's reproductive roles. They argued that the expectation for women to have children is part of a larger system of male dominance that prioritizes the needs and desires of men over women's autonomy. Many commenters positioned the childfree decision as a rejection of patriarchal norms that define women's value by their reproductive capacities. At the micro level, strong terms such as "patriarchal oppression," "male dominance," and "gender inequality" were common, underscoring the critical stance of these commenters. At the meso level, interactions often involved debates with those upholding traditional gender roles, with childfree supporters challenging the assumption that women must conform to these roles. At the macro level, this theme connects to broader societal structures in Indonesia and beyond, where patriarchy continues to dictate gender roles, especially in the context of family and reproduction.

Social Stigma Towards Childfree: Pressure From Family and Society

This grouping focuses on the stigma that childfree individuals face from family members and society at large. Many commenters shared personal experiences of being judged or criticized for their decision not to have children,

particularly by older generations who view procreation as a core societal obligation. At the micro level, terms like "judgment," "stigma," and "criticism" frequently appeared, reflecting the emotional toll of being childfree in a society that places high value on family and children. At the meso level, many commenters found solidarity in sharing their experiences of social pressure, creating a space for mutual support and validation. At the macro level, these comments reflect the broader societal expectation in Indonesia that adulthood and success are closely tied to marriage and parenthood, with deviations from this norm often leading to social ostracism or marginalization.

Economic Perspective: Cost of Living and Financial Well-Being

In this grouping, commenters discussed the financial implications of having children, often citing economic concerns as a key reason for choosing to remain childfree. Many commenters pointed to the rising cost of living, particularly in urban areas, as a major factor in their decision. At the micro level, phrases like "financial burden," "economic responsibility," and "too expensive" were common, highlighting the pragmatic nature of these decisions. At the meso level, commenters frequently supported each other's concerns by sharing their own financial struggles, creating a narrative of childfree living as a rational and responsible choice in a difficult economic climate. At the macro level, this discussion reflects the broader economic challenges faced by many Indonesians, where the increasing costs of raising children, combined with economic instability, lead

many to reconsider traditional family structures.

Social Perspective: Changes in Social and Cultural Values

Commenters in this grouping discussed how social and cultural values in Indonesia are evolving, with younger generations more open to alternative life choices, including the childfree lifestyle. They argued that changing norms around gender roles, family, and individual freedom are making it easier for people to opt out of parenthood. At the micro level, language like "modern values," "cultural shift," and "breaking tradition" was often used to describe these changes. At the meso level, there was a clear generational divide, with younger commenters often challenging the views of older generations. At the macro level, this grouping reflects a broader shift in Indonesian society, where traditional expectations of marriage and parenthood are being increasingly questioned, particularly by younger and more progressive segments of the population.

Social Perspective: Children as an Investment for the Future

Traditional perspectives dominated this grouping, with commenters viewing children as essential for providing financial and emotional support in old age. For these commenters, having children is seen not just as a personal choice but as an investment in the future, ensuring that someone will be there to take care of them in later years. At the micro level, terms like "investment," "security," and "future support" were frequently used to justify having children. At the meso level, commenters who

shared this view often reinforced each other's beliefs, with little debate or contention within this group. At the macro level, this reflects traditional Indonesian cultural values, where children are expected to care for their parents in old age and where the family unit is seen as a primary source of security and stability.

Health Perspective: Mental and Emotional Health

Commenters in this group discussed the mental and emotional strain of parenting, arguing that remaining childfree allows individuals to prioritize their own well-being. Terms like "stress," "emotional burden," and "mental health" were used to explain the decision to avoid having children. Commenters shared personal stories of mental health challenges, offering support and understanding to others who made similar choices. This grouping reflects a growing awareness in Indonesia of the importance of mental health, with an increasing number of people prioritizing emotional well-being over traditional family obligations.

Health Perspective: Inability to Have Children Due to Disease

In this grouping, commenters highlighted the mental and emotional toll of parenthood as a significant factor influencing the decision to remain childfree. Many shared personal experiences or observations about how raising children can create stress, emotional exhaustion, and, in some cases, mental health struggles. Choosing to be childfree was often portrayed as a way to protect one's mental and emotional well-being. At the micro level, words like "stress," "mental health," and "emotional burden"

were frequently used, reflecting a discourse centered around self-care and mental stability. Commenters focused on the idea that not everyone is emotionally equipped to handle the demands of parenting, and that it's a responsible choice to remain childfree if mental health is a concern. At the meso level, interactions among commenters who shared this view were supportive, with many offering empathy and encouragement to those who have made this decision. This created a community where the choice to prioritize mental health was respected. At the macro level, these discussions reflect the increasing importance of mental health awareness in modern society, particularly in Indonesia, where mental health issues are becoming more openly discussed. The childfree decision is thus framed within broader conversations about well-being and quality of life, which have gained more visibility in recent years.

Health Sustainability and Environmental Impact Perspective:

Some commenters approached the childfree decision from an environmental and sustainability perspective. They argued that not having children is a responsible choice given the current state of the world, particularly in relation to overpopulation, resource depletion, and environmental degradation. For these individuals, the childfree lifestyle is framed as a way to reduce one's carbon footprint and contribute to the health of the planet. At the micro level, phrases like "overpopulation," "carbon footprint," and "sustainability" were common, indicating a discourse rooted in ecological awareness.

These commenters positioned themselves as globally conscious citizens, who view the decision not to have children as a form of activism in the face of environmental crises. At the meso level, discussions often included references to broader environmental movements and debates about the ethical responsibilities of individuals in a world facing climate change and resource scarcity. Interactions within this group reflected a shared commitment to environmental sustainability, with many commenters echoing the same concerns. At the macro level, these discussions tie into global conversations about population control, sustainability, and climate action, positioning the childfree choice within the larger framework of environmental ethics. This reflects a growing trend where personal lifestyle decisions, such as choosing not to have children, are increasingly viewed through the lens of their ecological impact.

Political Perspective: Public Policy and State Support

The final grouping revolves around the political dimensions of the childfree decision, with commenters discussing how government policies, such as family planning, healthcare, and welfare support, influence family planning decisions. Many commenters expressed frustration with the lack of adequate state support for families, arguing that the childfree choice is often a rational response to insufficient governmental provisions for parents. At the micro level, terms like "state support," "family planning policy," and "welfare" were used to highlight the role of public policy in shaping

personal decisions about having children. Many commenters noted that the high cost of raising children, combined with limited social safety nets, made the prospect of having children less appealing. At the meso level, discussions often centered on broader political debates, with commenters critiquing the government's role (or lack thereof) in providing adequate financial and social support for families. This led to shared frustration among commenters, with many pointing out the systemic barriers that prevent families from thriving. At the macro level, this grouping reflects the intersection of public policy and personal choice, showing how state interventions—or the lack of them—can shape family dynamics and reproductive decisions. In countries like Indonesia, where welfare systems may not be robust, the childfree decision can be viewed as a response to systemic economic and political constraints.

DISCUSSION

This research set out to explore how Indonesian audiences interpret and respond to the childfree narrative as presented in the YouTube video "Childfree by Choice: Semua Hal Itu Egois" from the Menjadi Manusia channel. The aim was to understand how cultural, religious, social, and economic factors influence public perceptions of the childfree phenomenon. Through thematic analysis and CDA, the study uncovered a wide range of perspectives, demonstrating that the decision to remain childfree is not simply a personal choice but one deeply embedded in broader societal structures.

The key findings of this research indicate that public opinion on the childfree lifestyle in Indonesia is highly divided. On one hand, supporters of the childfree choice emphasize individual autonomy, personal

freedom, and the importance of prioritizing mental health and well-being. For these individuals, choosing to remain childfree is framed as a liberating decision, allowing them to focus on personal goals, career, or environmental sustainability. The micro-level analysis revealed that this group tends to use language associated with empowerment, control over one's life, and responsibility toward global environmental concerns.

On the other hand, a significant portion of commenters opposed the childfree lifestyle, citing religious, cultural, and biological arguments. These opponents often framed procreation as a moral and religious duty, with many referencing Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of having children. From a biological perspective, they argued that parenthood is a natural human instinct, essential for fulfilling life's purpose. The micro-level discourse analysis revealed frequent use of religiously and morally charged language, demonstrating how deeply rooted cultural and religious norms influence attitudes toward family and reproduction.

At the meso level, the social interactions between commenters highlighted the tension between traditional values and modern, individualistic lifestyles. Supporters of the childfree lifestyle often formed a supportive community, validating each other's choices and sharing personal experiences. In contrast, those opposing the childfree lifestyle frequently engaged in debates, defending the role of religion, family, and societal obligations in shaping life choices. These interactions underscore the ongoing conflict between generations and social groups in Indonesia, where progressive and conservative values frequently clash over issues of gender roles, family structure, and personal autonomy.

At the macro level, the research found that broader societal, cultural, and economic factors significantly shape the childfree debate. Religious beliefs,

particularly Islamic teachings, continue to play a dominant role in framing expectations around marriage and procreation. Patriarchal structures, which dictate traditional gender roles, also exert strong influence, with women in particular facing societal pressure to conform to motherhood as part of their identity and duty. Additionally, the research revealed that economic factors, such as the high cost of living and insufficient government support for families, have made the childfree lifestyle a practical and rational choice for many. Economic realities, especially in urban areas, are leading people to reconsider the traditional expectation of having children as a marker of adult success.

Another important finding at the macro level is the growing influence of environmental consciousness. The research shows that an increasing number of individuals, especially younger generations, are viewing the childfree lifestyle as a way to mitigate environmental damage and contribute to sustainability efforts. This environmental discourse is becoming more prevalent in global discussions and is influencing individual lifestyle choices, including in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study successfully addresses the research objectives by providing a nuanced understanding of how the childfree phenomenon is perceived within Indonesian society. The findings suggest that the decision to remain childfree is far more complex than a simple matter of personal choice; it is shaped by a variety of intersecting factors, including religion, gender roles, economic pressures, and environmental concerns. The analysis reveals that while modern values such as individual freedom and environmental responsibility are gaining traction, traditional cultural and religious norms still hold significant power in shaping public attitudes.

This research contributes to the broader academic discourse on the childfree phenomenon, particularly in the context of Southeast Asia, where family and reproductive norms remain deeply entrenched. The study underscores the importance of examining social phenomena such as childfree living within their specific cultural and religious contexts to fully understand the diverse factors that influence individual decisions.

For future research, it would be valuable to further investigate the role of public policy and governmental support in shaping decisions about parenthood. More in-depth exploration of how state policies around family planning, welfare, and healthcare impact both those who choose to have children and those who opt to remain childfree could provide useful insights. Additionally, as social and cultural values continue to evolve, particularly among younger generations, future studies could focus on the changing attitudes toward family and reproduction among digitally connected, globally influenced youth in Indonesia. Understanding how this demographic navigates traditional values alongside emerging global norms will be crucial in understanding the future of family structures in Indonesian society.

In closing, this research highlights the need for a multi-dimensional approach when studying complex social phenomena like the childfree lifestyle. By considering the cultural, economic, religious, and environmental factors at play, this study provides a comprehensive picture of how Indonesian audiences engage with and interpret the childfree narrative. As Indonesia continues to experience rapid social and economic changes, the childfree phenomenon will likely remain a critical area of study, offering insights into the shifting dynamics of family, gender, and personal autonomy in contemporary society.

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