

## DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN IN POSTMODERN FAMILY STUDIES IN CRETIVOX YOUTUBE BETWEEN YOUNG PARENTS AND CHILDFREE COUPLES

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### ABSTRACT

The childfree phenomenon has become a popular issue in Indonesia recently. Many articles and media content address the topic of being childfree, including the eighth episode of the YouTube account Cretivox. This episode features two married couples with differing perspectives on having children. The purpose of this study is to explore the differences in perspectives on children in the household from the viewpoints of childfree couples and young parents, analyzed through a postmodern family approach. This research employs a qualitative approach and a descriptive method. Data collection involves documents from the Cretivox YouTube account and relevant journal articles. The results indicate that out of five questions posed, four reveal differing views: preparation before marriage, popular statements about children, the urgency of having offspring, and household harmony. For the question regarding children guaranteeing support in old age, both couples agreed to disagree with the statement.

**Keywords:** Childfree, Perspectives, Postmodern Family, Children

### INTRODUCTION

According to Murdock (in Martono, 2021), a family is a social group that lives together and carries out reproductive and economic activities. In its development, the family has several forms, such as a nuclear family, which is a family that only consists of a father, mother, and child; extended family, which is a family member who is counted from the lineage of the father and mother vertically and horizontally; blended family, which is a family consisting of father, mother, biological children, and stepchildren (Martono, 2021). Over time, the pattern of family development has changed following changes in the social system ranging from traditional, modern and postmodern family patterns (Lestari & Pratiwi, 2018).

In postmodern family studies, understanding and recognition of values, morals, and beliefs make tolerance more extraordinary and open to various kinds of changes and differences in life views that provide opportunities to explore freedom and well-being. The concept of the postmodern family has undergone many changes compared to before; the elements of father, mother, and children in a marriage are not always fulfilled (Lestari & Pratiwi, 2018). One of the phenomena that is now emerging and related to the postmodern family concept is childfree. This phenomenon directly or indirectly forms a family by leaving the element of children in it, which has never existed in previous family forms.

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In Indonesia, the child-free phenomenon began to be widely discussed. It became controversial when an influencer named Gita Savitri and her husband decided to be childfree, which she conveyed through her personal social media account (Sapinatunajah et al., 2022). Her statement caused many pros and Negatives regarding child freedom because it contradicted the social construction of Indonesian society (Siswanto & Nurhasanah, 2022). Childfree is a life choice of a person or couple to be free from children throughout their lives, both biological and foster children (Tunggono, 2021).

The choice to be child-free is a conscious and deliberate one over a long period. The term childfree originated in English in the late 20th century. St. Augustine, a maniacal believer, believed that childbearing was immoral because it trapped the soul in an impermanent body (Siswanto & Nurhasanah, 2022). Then, the term childfree began to develop, and it is still used today as an option to live without children. The phenomenon of childfree dates from the 1500s, which was common in rural Europe. Many people decided to be child-free at that time because they were more concerned with their careers, so the desire to have children was put aside, even though they were married (Tunggono, 2021).

In the modern era, child-free has become a lifestyle, not something new and rare, especially in Western countries. Rachel Chrastil revealed that 15 percent or one in seven women over the age of 40 in the United States do not have children. In Germany and the UK, at least one in four couples are reluctant to have children (Tunggono, 2021). Countries in Asia, such as Japan, are also experiencing severe problems due to the increasing childfree phenomenon; the birth rate in Japan continues to decline sharply, with the female fertility rate reaching 1.4 below 2.1, which indicates a decrease in population and the threat of native population loss in the future (Nugroho et al., 2022).

Childfree is not the same as childless; they do not have children due to impossible conditions such as unhealthy physical and biological conditions. Those who are childless want children but are disturbed in reproducing, so it becomes a challenge for couples to have children (Tunggono, 2021). Meanwhile, being childfree is a conscious attitude or decision without any intervention and constraints to decide not to have children, so childfree in some official studies is called Voluntary Childlessness (Siswanto & Nurhasanah, 2022).

Living without children in Indonesia is a problem and a challenge for couples who decide to be childfree because Indonesia is a pronatalist country (supporting the birth rate), as evidenced by the encouragement of families and the social environment to have children immediately after marriage so that many people disagree with this childfree concept (Putra, 2024). It is due to the construction of Indonesian society, which contradicts the values that exist in the childfree phenomenon (Siswanto & Nurhasanah, 2022). With the childfree phenomenon, the family structure has changed from what originally consisted of a father, mother, and child. Now, the form is increasingly diverse with the disappearance of the child figure from a family. The study of the family is increasingly attractive to explore. In its development, there are at least three social changes in society, which include traditional, modern and postmodern times.

Since 2021 until now, many articles and content have appeared on social media discussing childfree. One of the contents that discusses the childfree phenomenon in Indonesia is the Cretivox YouTube channel on episode eight point of view content published on 20 December 2022. In this context, young parents and childfree couples discuss several questions regarding the existence of children in the household. This article seeks to examine the urgency of the existence of children in the household according to childfree couples and young parents who can be seen in cretivox youtube content. This content is interesting to discuss because it looks at the urgency of

the existence of children in the household from two different points of view and then analyzes it using a postmodern family perspective.

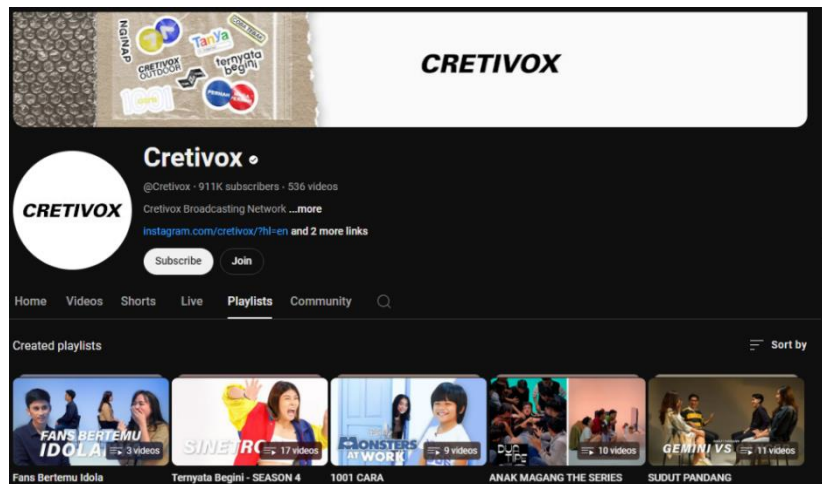


Figure 1. Screenshot of Cretivox Youtube Profile

Fillaili and Martini (2023), in a journal article entitled *Childfree Trend among Post-Married Millennials*, explain that the childfree decision is based on two main factors, including internal factors such as mental unpreparedness, health problems, and past traumas, and external factors including financial conditions and parenting (Fillaili & Martini, 2023). In addition, an article entitled "Community Construction of Children after Marriage" reveals that Indonesian society is still complicated to accept the concept of childfree and people who decide to be childfree must be willing to take the consequences of the surrounding community (Hanandita, 2022). Other research on postmodern families is discussed in a journal article entitled "Changes in Family Structure by Lestari and Pratiwi" (2018), which explains that there are several changes in the characteristics of traditional, modern and postmodern families (Lestari & Pratiwi, 2018).

Based on previous studies, it has been explained that the phenomenon of childfree has been known and applied by some parts of Indonesia, including the factors behind it. In addition, studies on postmodern families have also existed before. However, there is a gap that has not been filled by previous studies, namely regarding childfree from two different perspectives that can be seen on social media, in this case, on the Cretivox YouTube account. Therefore, this article will try to fill that void by conducting a study of the childfree perspective from the point of view of childfree couples, and young parents displayed in Cretivox YouTube content.

The problem in this research is that the pros and negatives that exist in Indonesian society regarding childfree affect thoughts related to the urgency of the existence of children in married couples. The phenomenon of childfree provides renewal in the development of family forms in the postmodern era. The questions in this study are: how are the differences and similarities in perspectives between young parents and childfree couples regarding children? How is the childfree phenomenon analyzed in postmodern family studies?

The purpose of this study is to reveal how different views on children from the perspective of young parents and childfree couples so that this article is expected to be used as a reference in the development of science, especially in the fields of social science, family studies, and population in the future. In addition, this research can provide an understanding of YouTube content from the "Point of View" segment of Cretivox episode eight.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach and a descriptive method. This method is used because this research wants to describe objects scientifically, objectively, and in-depth. (Jamaludin, 2021). Researchers will present phenomena accurately related to social conditions that are sourced from the data obtained. (Sugiyono, 2013). The use of descriptive methods is in accordance with the purpose of this research, which is to describe the childfree phenomenon from two different perspectives obtained from the Certivox YouTube account.

The data collection technique used in this research is the documentation technique, which is the collection of data from documents, archives, or other written materials related to the research phenomenon (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Documents used can be in the form of notes, books, official documents, reference materials involving images, quotations, mass media and other reference materials (Nawawi, 2015). In this research, the documents used to obtain information came from the Cretivox YouTube account and various journal articles relevant to this research.

The data processing analysis used in this research uses narrative analysis. It aims to analyze existing phenomena conveyed in narrative form (Nawawi, 2015). The key informants in this content are this content discusses the views of two married couples, a childfree couple named Kei (36 years old) and Lilia (34 years old) and a young parent couple named Ahmad Fauzi (32 years old) and Audy (25 years old).

The data analysis process is carried out by identifying and describing data, which is divided into three stages, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2013). The first stage of data reduction is through observation of cretivox YouTube content and written documentation. The second stage of data presentation (display) is taking data that is relevant to the research focus to test the validity of the data. In this study, the data is presented in brief descriptions, flowcharts, tables, and relationships between categories. The third stage of concluding is conveyed in descriptive form by describing the phenomena in this research.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Postmodernism is a new idea that rejects or includes the development of an existing idea about the previous theory of thought, which is modernism, which tries to provide criticism of modernism, which is considered to have failed and is responsible for the destruction of human dignity; it is a shift in science from modern ideas to a new idea brought by postmodernism itself (Setiawan, 2018). Postmodernism is a view and a framework of thinking that is always related to attitudes and ways of thinking that will significantly affect the development of human culture. The birth of postmodernism is inseparable from modernism (Awaru, 2021). In the view of postmodernism, the family is a place to train and teach children about moral education and how to think of postmodern humans.

Postmodernism always prioritizes knowledge about art and aesthetics. In addition, postmodernist humans are humans without religion, history, and philosophy but humans who have technology, secular and contemporary (Awaru, 2021). Some changes occur in the development of the family concept. This research will discuss the differences in views regarding childfree, which is allegedly a form of change in family structure in the postmodern era in terms of differences in opinions between families who have children (young parents) and couples who decide to be childfree.

## **RESULTS**

Cretivox is a media company that has a YouTube channel with over 910,000 Subscribers as of May 2024. This account raises many social issues. Cretivox divides its content into several categories

that are packaged in a fresh and contemporary way and do not invite sensitivity in its content so that it attracts a lot of audience attention, especially among young people (Kurniasih & Hastjarjo, 2023). One of the contents published by Cretivox is episode 8's "Point of View" segment entitled 'Mending Punya Anak atau Ga Punya Anak' [Better to have children or not].



Figure 2. Content 'Sudut Pandang' Episode 8's

In the content, it is known that Kei and Liana (a child-free couple) have been married for six years, while Ahmad Fauzi and Audy (young parents) have been married for three years and have two children. In this episode, the speakers were given several questions and answered according to their respective views on the presence of children, which can be explained in the following table.

Table 1. Questions and Answers on Cretivox content

NO	QUESTIONS	CHILDFREE COUPLE	YOUNG PARENTS
1.	What do you think should be prepared before marriage?	Things that must be considered before getting married are having the same life principles, being compatible with each other, and feeling ready to get married.	The thing that must be prepared before marriage is to strengthen the mentality for marriage from both parties (husband and wife).
2.	Agree or disagree with the statement ' Many children bring many sustenance'	DISAGREE. This statement is no longer relevant today. Because Indonesia used to be an agricultural country, children became free labor for their parents in taking care of the rice fields.	AGREED. Having children will motivate us to seek sustenance so that there will be more sustenance for children. One thing that must be remembered when having children is that we must be prepared to be responsible for meeting their needs, so inevitably,

			we have to work for sustenance.
3.	Do you think having offspring is essential?	Not too important. Because there are already so many people today, the responsibility of caring for children is enormous. Not that having children is not essential, but for some considerations, I finally decided not to have children.	For me, it is essential because I (Audy) love children. At least all the knowledge that has been obtained can be passed on to our children later.
4.	Do you think the relationship will be more harmonious with the presence of children?	We do not think so because when we (the couple) are each pursuing our dreams, that is enough. No child can create conflict (quarrel).	Of course, children can bring warmth to the family. When there is a conflict with your partner, children can be the mediator.
5.	Do you think children can be used as a guarantee for the future (when you get older)?	When parents decide to have children, they must develop their potential and give everything. After that, parents should not demand more from their children.	Not really, because parents always want to give the best for their children, even if our children are devoted to us later, it is a bonus from the upbringing that has been given to the child. So do not depend on your children.

Source: Youtube Cretivox

Table 1 shows that childfree couples emphasize the compatibility of vision and mission in marriage preparation. This opinion is because marriage is a lifelong relationship that requires a strong commitment between women and men (husband and wife). When the vision and mission of the couple are the same, harmony in the household will be created. In line with this, in the child-free phenomenon, if one of the couples decides not to have children, then both of them must commit to living without children. As for young parent couples, the essential thing in preparing for marriage is mental readiness, as expressed by Ahmad Fauzi as follows: "The first thing to prepare for marriage is mental readiness. Mainly when we have children, of course, our mentality must have been formed before we get married" (interview in Cretivox Youtube content, uploaded on 20 December 2022).

On the question of the many children and many sustenance statements familiar to Indonesians, these two couples have different opinions. The child-free couple did not agree with the statement and said that it was old-fashioned and a form of exploitation of children to get unpaid labor in rice fields, which was the main livelihood at that time. While the young parent couple argues otherwise, Ahmad Fauzi agrees with the term because children can be a source of motivation in seeking sustenance, so that sustenance will flow more, especially for the needs of children. The urgency of having children, according to childfree couples, is not an important thing, but for various considerations, having offspring is not a priority because there are too many humans

today, and we have a considerable responsibility to care for them. Meanwhile, according to young parents, Audy feels that having children is essential because she likes the presence of children. Besides that, children can also inherit all the knowledge and knowledge they already have.

The question of children and harmony in the household has different perspectives. According to the young parent couple, children can bring warmth to the family because when there is a dispute between husband and wife, children can be the mediator between the two so that the conflict can subside immediately. Meanwhile, according to childfree couples, the dreams that each individual has between husband and wife are essential in running a household relationship. Hence, they think that children will become an obstacle that causes married couples to conflict. The view of children as a guarantee of old age these two couples disagree with this assumption. They are of the view that when parents decide to have children, their job is enough to take care of them until adulthood without expecting anything and consider children who can take care of their old age to be just a bonus for all their upbringing so far, not a necessity that must be lived.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the research results described in the previous section, it is known that the indicators examined in this study discuss preparation before marriage, perceptions that develop in society regarding children, the urgency of having children, the existence of children and household harmony, and children as an investment in old age. This section will discuss these matters more deeply through pre-existing literature and then be analyzed. In addition, this section will also discuss and review the childfree phenomenon in postmodern family studies.

### *Analysis of Research Results*

Marriage preparation is something important for couples who are getting married. This study found that young parents emphasize their mental readiness in preparing for marriage. This opinion is directly related to the responsibilities of a couple (husband and wife) and children in the future (Adyani et al., 2023). As for child-free couples, they emphasize the similarity of life principles between husband and wife because they will not think about children in the future. This standard principle will make couples harmonious.

The perception of the concept of many children's sustenance has long been embraced by most people, especially in Indonesia so that in this case, children can be used as future investments by parents. The article written by (Denada et al., 2022) explains that this meaning can be grouped into two categories, namely material and non-material. Materially, children will provide parents with financial security. For example, when parents send their children to a certain level of education, it gives them hope for a better economy so that in old age, their children will provide primary, secondary, and even tertiary needs (Denada et al., 2022). In addition, non-materially, investment in children can provide happiness and social benefits.

This perception of children ultimately motivates a person to have children (Mufasirin, 2021). In addition to making their parents proud in the future, what the parents have given will be 'returned' when the children grow up. This cycle keeps repeating itself in society in order to maintain or improve the dignity of the family in social life. Young parents also express it in Cretivox content; when they have children, they will be motivated to seek sustenance, so they agree with this perception. Contrary to this, childfree couples disagree with most people regarding the perception of many children's sustenance. They argue that this perception is outdated because it arose when the agricultural sector was the main livelihood of the community at that time, so having many children would help them do the work for free. In retrospect, the child-free couple's thinking is based on a sociological-juridical study of child labor in the present day (Wardhani et al., 2020).

Household harmony is the creation of a peaceful situation among its members based on love. It is able to manage life with full balance (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) both within the family and in relation to others so that its members feel at ease in it and carry out their roles with full maturity of attitude and can go through life with full effectiveness and inner satisfaction (Afiati et al., 2022). Childfree couples and young parents both want harmony in their households. Several aspects of household harmony can be seen in several things, including trust, family time, mutual respect, good communication, and strong bonds between family members. (Afiati et al., 2022). Therefore, the presence or absence of children in a family can be harmonious if these five conditions are fulfilled.

### *The Childfree Phenomenon in Postmodern Family Studies*

In a postmodern family, there are at least three main characteristics, including family as permeable, which means that the family can easily fuse cultural elements between individuals (diffusion) and can change norms or rules that already have a primary purpose; postmodern families have higher politeness characteristics; and the opening of public space and private space becomes more flexible (Awaru, 2021). The permeable family is different from other family patterns, one of which is characterized by a more diverse family structure and looser family boundaries (<https://dictionary.apa.org/permeable-family>, accessed on 13 May 2024). The family structure that initially consisted of the father, mother, and children slowly changed with the modification of an entity that already had a primary purpose.

In postmodern studies, the family undergoes conceptual changes so that there is no ideal family as described in functionalist theory (StudySmarter, 2023). Postmodern views on family are unique to each person and cannot be generalized (Awaru, 2021). Many individuals or couples who live a childfree lifestyle tend to characterize the family in different ways. In this study, it is known that child-free couples do not consider children a priority when running a harmonious household. Instead, children can hinder the ideals of one of the individuals in the couple, which results in conflict. This characteristic is explained in postmodern theory, which says that marriage does not have as many functional goals as before.

Childless families create much stigma in society, one of which comes from religious teachings that assume that married couples do not practice the values of their religion. (Az Zahwa, 2023). This view is not in line with the postmodern concept of family, which views the family as permeable and can change the rules that have become an entity or unity that has the primary purpose. This view means that childless couples can be categorized and accepted as a family form from the perspective of postmodernism.

In the discussion of this research, it is known that the family structure has several changes, one of which is the existence of the child-free phenomenon. Childfree couples openly do not want children based on various factors, mainly related to individual principles regarding the presence of children in the household. At the same time, young parents tend to emphasize the existence of children in traditional and modern family concepts that have not structurally changed from before. This childfree phenomenon is directly or indirectly in accordance with the characteristics of a postmodern family that openly changes a family's rules and functions by leaving the element of children in a household relationship.

However, young parents and childfree couples each have their own goals in running their households. Interestingly, what these couples have in common about children is their disagreement with the perception of most Indonesians that children should take care of their parents when they grow old. Young parents argue that their job is only to teach good moral values to their children later without expecting anything. In line with this, in postmodern family studies,



children's moral education in the culture or concept of postmodernism must be developed so that a family does not only maintain and realize the traditional education model.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, it is known that there are several differences in perspectives on children from child-free couples and young parents in Cretivox YouTube content. These differences include preparation before marriage, and childfree couples tend to emphasize the similarity of vision and mission in establishing a relationship. At the same time, young parents will prepare their mentality in establishing a household, especially when children are present in their lives. Regarding the statement regarding children as a source of sustenance, childfree couples consider that this statement is no longer relevant today. At the same time, young parents agree with this statement as a form of motivation in seeking sustenance for their children. In terms of the urgency of having children, childfree couples consider that the presence of children is not very important in the household.

In contrast, for young parents, the presence of children is something that is coveted on the basis of the pleasure of caring for children. In terms of the presence of children in household harmony, childfree couples consider that children will actually create a rift in the household. In contrast, according to young parents, children will actually strengthen the relationship between husband and wife, especially when there are problems in the household. In addition, there is one similarity between the two, namely regarding children as a guarantee for old age. Both couples agree that children cannot be used as an investment in old age.

This research is expected to enrich literature studies, especially related to family development in the postmodern era. In addition, this article is expected to be helpful in the future and can be used as a reference in making a policy that is relevant to this research. For the following research, it is recommended to examine a more in-depth research focus from other research objects using an appropriate methodology.

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