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## Psychology of newly married couples in Indonesia: Is it possible to choose childfree by choice or face the gossip of society and family?

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### Abstract

This research was about the phenomenon of Childfree by Choice (CBC) in married couples in Indonesia by viewing their diversity, process, consequence, and child values. It used the concepts of diversity (background), process (the process of determining CBC), and consequences (the consequences of CBC). It described various backgrounds, reasons, enabling factors, and consequences for urban married couples who decide to apply for CBC in Indonesia. The research used a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The data were collected by distributing questionnaires, developing rapport, and conducting interviews with 15 informants. The result of the research showed that in the stage of diversity (background), the majority of the informants were males, employees of private companies, had gotten married for 5 to 10 years, were Muslims, Javanese, S1 (undergraduate degree) graduates, and had earnings of Indonesian Rupiah IDR 10,000,000 to IDR 15,000,000. Most of them gave the reasons that they cared for the negative effects on the environment, which could cause overpopulation and the scarcity of natural resources, and that it is a choice and the right whether a person wants to have children or not. In this stage of the process, there were some considerations in terms of economic condition, health, occupation, etc. During the subsequent phase, it becomes evident that the decision to pursue childlessness by choice (CBC) yielded favorable outcomes, as individuals did not encounter adverse reactions or societal disapproval about their choice. This observation suggests a notable transformation in societal attitudes towards the notion of parenthood.

**Keywords:** Child values for CBC, Childfree by choice, Consequence, Diversity, Process.

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## 1. Introduction

Childfree by Choice (hereafter referred to as CBC) is the term given to a married couple who decides deliberately not to have children. In reality, the CBC is not a new phenomenon. Childfree has been recognized in literature since the 1970s. It is defined as a married couple who does not have children and foregoes them for good [1]. It is, of course, different from childlessness due to an unproductive condition [2, 3], with 40 reasons for a person to choose and decide to apply for CBC [4, 5]. Most people think that CBC married couples are a trend that develops, and it may be one of the indications of modernistic behavior [6] and individualistic behavior, 'from necessity and duty' to 'a choice' not to have children [7]. Those who voluntarily intend not to have children are evaluated badly; they are considered not appropriate psychologically or not able to adjust their lifestyle to their community [8]. They believe that those who have children are "warmer, better, more concerned, and provide more nurturing care" compared with those who have no children, particularly married women who plan to forego children [9].

This phenomenon causes various societal arguments about married couples who do not intentionally want to have children. The emergence of the CBC phenomenon also gives rise to a social construct within society, wherein the notion of CBS marriage is not typically classified as a peaceful and fulfilling union. This is because the concept of a CBC marriage deviates from traditional norms by intentionally excluding the presence of children. This is proved by some of the impacts of the CBC phenomenon. First, it is the negative social stigma given by community members to a married couple who decides not to have children, or childless concept. Married women who decide not to have children are often faced with stigmatization and stereotyped negatively by their friends, relatives, colleagues, co-workers, and neighbors as dysfunctional, greedy, or inhuman women; they are even socially isolated [10-12]. This stigma originally comes from the concept that women should get married and have children so that childfree women are regarded as "others," "selfish," and even "crazy by the community members [13]. Whoever deviates from a norm is usually considered a queer person. These stigmas include an idea that a childless woman is cold-hearted, egoistic, and materialistic [14]. Secondly, these CBC phenomena will cause other effects, such as a change in population structure. Many things will occur when married couples do not want to have offspring. This condition can also influence the dependency ratio, a figure that shows the comparison between the number of non-productive-aged people (under 15-year-olds and people above 65 years old) and the number of productive-aged people (the people from 15 to 64 years old). A high dependency ratio can become an inhibiting factor in the development of developing countries, including Indonesia, because part of the income contributed by productive-aged people has to be expended to fulfill the needs of the younger and older people [15, 16]. Thirdly, the risk that will be undergone by CBC married couples is in the form of pressure and discrimination from relatives, friends, and community members. The pressure may manifest in the form of comments from neighbors who hold the belief that the decision of married couples to forego having children indicates a deviation from societal norms. Besides that, discrimination can also occur in the workplace, which has to be faced by a CBC person. Studies on the CBC generally use psychological approach. Therefore, this research used a sociological approach by viewing diversity, process, and consequences in this CBC phenomenological research as it is proposed by Blackstone and Stewart [17].

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Childfree by Choice Phenomena

CBC is a term that explains an individual or a married couple's decision not to have children intentionally in their wedlock or married life, whether they are biological children, stepchildren, or adopted children. Veevers [18] claimed that the variable of socio-demography influenced individuals to become childless parents, including sequence of birth, family size, mother's occupation, and perceptions of parents' marital happiness [19]. However, it is not a problem of how big or small this group is; the rumors about those who have no children should be recognized and understood by our communities in our consultation scope [14]. Some motives that influence individuals to make decisions as CBC, among others, are the economy, feminism, zero population growth, and experience in life [10]. Other variables, such as culture in Indonesia, are a challenge for CBC because, for some cultures, "having children" is a must. This does not see them as career women or housewives. Like Batak women, who are able to work in the domestic space, public space, and other organizational activities, children are a top priority for them [20, 21]. In several cases that occur in Batak couples, the phenomenon of visiting traditional medicine (*Namalo*) is often done to have children as soon as possible after marriage [22].

### 2.2. Family Change Theory (FCT)

Family Change Theory [23] is an alternative approach that aims to explain how the processes of modernization and globalization can influence a family. Family as the main agent of socialization has the responsibility for the value and practice of culture, and its function is, at the same time, influenced by a bigger cultural context, Trommsdorff [24]. Mayer [25] points out that there are three different ideal, typical models of FCT. First, it is the model of dependent families in cultures of low collective income in which the process of modernization has no strong effect. The model of this family is found in rural areas, and in this model, there are big families who have a high level of fertility and a lot of children. In this case, children are valued economically for emotional reasons; they have the responsibility of taking care of their parents when the latter are getting older. This indicates that personal autonomy is underestimated while hierarchy becomes stronger and patriarchal ideology is even emphasized.

Secondly, the family independence model is a typical rich family with western culture and an individualistic orientation. This type of family model treats nuclear families with a low level of fertility, or they even do not want to have children at all. Autonomy is highly appreciated in this type of family model, and emotional dependency is not relatively emphasized because the social guarantee system is usually provided for old people who are not dependable on their status

in the prosperous countries; having children has changed from an economic asset to an economic responsibility. Therefore, the reason for having children is not relevant anymore. The only remaining reason for having children is emotional; it is a personal will without being influenced by other people.

Thirdly, the synthesis of the two-family models above shows that an interdependent emotional family model, personal autonomy, becomes very important and material interdependency decreases as the result of the process of modernization. Autonomy, especially in women, is no longer considered an obstruction to group function but an asset for success in the modern work environment. In this FCT, there is a project called, Value of Children (VOC) study [10]. It was previously anticipated that, due to societal and institutional transformations, the economic rationale for procreation would diminish. In a contemporary industrial society, the act of having a substantial number of children does not yield economic advantages. From that project, it was found that the economic reason for having children has lost its important meaning in the development, especially in the economic and emotional value contexts. FCT shows that in western culture, family independence model is applicable, as indicated by emotional interdependency, which is relatively low among family members. One way of thinking about the reason why there are social changes and social transformation is that a community and its respective parts have need to adjust to their social and physical environment, or, frankly speaking, to relevant changes in the family environment.

### **3. Methods**

This research used a qualitative research method in the form of data, such as sentences or narration, obtained from the technique of qualitative data collection. It also used the descriptive method. One of the characteristics of a married couple that intentionally wants to live without children or avoid being parents tends to live in big cities [26]. Therefore, the researcher chose urban areas in Indonesia as the research locations. The result of the research showed that there were 15 informants who came from big cities in Indonesia; seven of them came from Jakarta, such as South Jakarta and North Jakarta. Two of them came from Depok; the rest came from Bandung, Bogor, Semarang, and Palembang. The criteria for the informants were as follows: 1) newly married couples; 2) the age of marriage was more than five years; 3) their ages were 25 to 50; and 4) they admitted and applied CBC in their married lives.

The informants were tracked using social media, and one of them was Twitter. This social media was used by many people who applied CBC by writing their opinions about their lives. As a result, the researcher had an easier time finding informants. Personal contacts and rapport development were done intensively to get accurate data [27-31]. Meanwhile, most of the knowledge of CBC was obtained from the informants (46.7%) from social media and from scientific writing or articles from foreign countries (33.3%), and the rest was from movies, etc. The characteristics of the informants were presented to find out the general description about them to be used as the samples of this research; the samples included their sex, their occupation, the length of marriage, their religion, their nationalities, their education, their income per month, their addresses, and the intervals of travelling abroad. It was found that the informants who chose CBC were dominated by women (73.3%). Meanwhile, Ashburn-Nardo [8] points out that the possibility of being uninterested in having children was higher in women than in men. In this research, more women acted as the main determiners in choosing CBC in their lives. 80% of the informants were employees in private companies, 13.3% of them were company owners, 73.3% of them had been married for five to ten years, and 26.7% of them had been married for more than ten years. They were Muslims, Christians, Protestants, and Catholics. Religion teaches its followers to have offspring or children. However, this doctrine does not affect the informants, and they always believe that CBC is the right choice. This is related to the reasons proposed by the informants MM (female, 29 years), CE (female, 27 years), and AS (male, years) that having children is a choice. It means that they can choose not to have children. Therefore, according to them, religion does not have any relationship with their reason for not having any children or CBC. Many of the informants were Javanese; however, the maxim found in this ethnicity was *akehanakakehrejeki* (many children, much fortune) [32]. In the old days, this maxim was probably still relevant because the livelihood of the Indonesian people at the time was farming. It is inversely proportional to the research results, which showed that 80% of the informants were university graduates; 73.4% of them had an income of more than ten to fifteen million rupiahs per month. 93.4% of them had their own houses; only 6.7% of them lived with their parents. 53.3% of them often took trips to foreign countries, and some of them have relatives or friends there, whereas 46.7% of them never go abroad.

### **4. Results**

#### **4.1. Diversity**

Diversity, or social diversity, is a real condition in a society. They are not only groups of individuals that have lived in a certain area from generation to generation but also develop social values and rules that become the guidelines for them to act, behave, and socialize. The interesting thing is that there is more than one group of people who live in one community, based on their cultural background, socio-economic status, etc. Diversity in this research was concerned with the backgrounds of individuals and married couples, which influenced their decision to apply for CBC. Some aspects that were analyzed were the reasons for choosing CBC, the compassion (love and affection) experienced in the childhood felt by the informants, and their purpose to join the CBC community. It was found that 26.7% of them decided to choose CBC because they were aware of environment, pollution, overpopulation, and scarcity of natural resources. 20% of them had social responsibility for their families; 20% of them wanted to enjoy life for themselves; 20% of them wanted to be healthy; and 13.3% of them had financial reasons. The informants, OT (F, 30 years) and VW (F, 45 years), said that their reason to choose CBC was because of a health factor. OT admitted that she had problems with fertility, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), and mental health. Her husband also had the health problem of varicocele. Therefore, the reason of health was

chosen in deciding to apply CBC. Financial problems were also one of the reasons why they decided to choose for CBC. The informants Z (F, 35 years) and SS (F, 39 years) admitted that financial problems were the reason why they chose CBC because they were reluctant to have children. Even though most of the informants were employees of private companies and had good earnings per month (about IDR 10,000,000 to IDR 15,000,000), they were firmly determined to apply CBC in their married lives.

The decision to pursue admission to CBS is influenced by one's childhood. Research has indicated that insufficient parental care and too strict guardianship can influence individuals to opt for a childless lifestyle [33]. However, the findings of this study revealed that 60% of the participants acknowledged receiving sufficient love and affection from their families. Additionally, 13.3% of participants reported negative experiences during their childhood, while the remaining participants disclosed the experiencing abusive treatment during that period. One participant's statement exemplifies this:

*"I don't want to be a monster like my mother was. She was emotional and unstable. Once, my hair was pulled hard, and I was dragged. I was once hit by a knife; since then, I did not want to be like my parents."*

One of them said that her parents did not love her because they were divorced or separated. In reality, however, the factor of lacking compassion is not the only reason to choose CBC.

The phenomenon of CBC, which has become broader and spread to various countries and communities, causes the existence of childfree communities throughout the world. Online childfree groups provide a platform for the exchange of diverse knowledge, validation, and solidarity, while also serving as a possible catalyst for the development of strategies of resistance [34]. Most of the informants (93.3%) joined their communities in order to add friends of the same opinions (26.7%); 20% of them wanted to know how many people had known about CBC; 20% of them needed support; 13.3% of them wanted to know the reasons to choose CBC; 6.7% of them just to pass the time, finding funny relatable memes; and only 6.7% of them did not join their community even though they supported the idea of CBC.

#### 4.2. Process

A process refers to the series of changes or events that take place within a specific period of development. This study focuses on the process involved when a married couple chooses to pursue CBS strategy. In this research, the process of deciding to apply CBC was to find out their consideration to apply it, their participation in determining to choose it, their facing difficulties in the CBC marriage, information given by them to their parents concerning CBC, its positive effect, enabling factor in choosing it, their social relationship with their neighbors, the purpose of not wanting to take care of children, and the source of happiness in CBC marriage.

CBC can be applied in a marriage when it has been agreed upon by the husband and wife, as it was admitted by the informants CE and MM that they decided to choose CBC after it was agreed upon by both of them before they got married. They explained that since they were having an affair, they told each other that they did not want to have children when they got married. It seemed that both of them had the same opinion about not having any children in their married lives, so they agreed to choose CBC. In making the decision to choose CBC, it was found that 73.3% of the married couples made the decision to choose CBC before they got married, 20% of them made the decision after they got married, and 6.7% of them made the decision after one of them and the spouse agreed. The process did not automatically happen, but it was through long and serious negotiation, as explained below:

*"So, in 2017, I met my husband-to-be. I told him that since the beginning, before we got married, I did not want to have children. He did not respond to my statement; perhaps he thought I was kidding because I was much younger than he was (he was six years older than me). But after I told him three times, he responded. In fact, he also didn't want to have children, and he was surprised that he met a girl with the same opinion."*

In the context of marital relationship, it is not uncommon for couples to encounter numerous challenges as a result of opting for CBC. Married couples have various challenges, including but not limited to social pressures emerging from their relatives, and colleagues, as well as the presence of depression or anxiety. Fortunately, as time passes, they are able to settle the difficulties in their own ways. Most of the informants (73.3%) admitted that they could handle them in their own way without the help of other people. 20% of them admitted that in the beginning it was difficult for them, but they could gradually handle it, as they said in the interview below:

*"Usually, relatives and other family members ask us about children, but we tell them about our fertility, which makes it impossible to have any children. Usually, we talked about test-tube babies so that they knew that it took time for us to get offspring. We raised that topic in order to tell them implicitly that being childless was our choice."*

Applying or doing CBC in a marriage in Indonesia causes opposition, so those who want to apply should tell their spouses and other family members about it. The informants AS, LE, RE, AN, and MG admitted that they underwent ease during the process of giving information about decision to apply CBC to their spouses and family members, especially their parents. They felt that whatever decision they made about applying for CBC, the spouses, the parents, and the people surrounding them should support their decision and choice.

Table 1 describes the responses of parents and partners to the CBC decision. From the data above, it is known that 5 informants (33.3%) experienced the convenience of informing their families and partners of this decision; 3 informants (20%) admitted that their partners immediately agreed with this decision; 2 informants (13.3%) admitted that parents felt disappointed with this decision; while other informants felt confused about telling this to their parents and partners (6.7%); there were also informants who told them for health reasons (6.7%). There were also informants who had experiences where their parents did not agree but they still carried it out (6.7%); and the husband's parents did not allow it (6.7%).

**Table 1.**

Giving information to parents and spouses about the decision to apply for CBC.

<b>Giving information about decision to apply CBC to parents and spouses before marriage:</b>	<b>Result</b>
I don't see any problem in telling this decision to my family and spouse.	33.3%
The spouse directly agrees to this decision.	20.0%
Parents feel disappointed with the decision.	13.3%
Feeling perplexed in explaining the decision to family and spouse.	6.7%
We only say we have health problems, especially fertility problems.	6.7%
Parents do not agree, but we go on with our plan.	6.7%
Wife's parents agree, but there is still no response from the husband's parents.	6.7%
Spouse agrees, but the parents do not.	6.7%

With the people's *pronatalis* (pre-childbirth) condition in Indonesia, many parents of the informants feel disappointed with their sons and daughters' decision to apply CBC, as the parents of the informants CE, DI, YC, and TM did to them. For example, the parents of CE often felt bad about their daughter's and husbands apply for CBC. They felt that it was a queer thing, but CE was adamant in her decision and ignored her parents' attitude towards her. After she and her husband applied CBC to their married lives, she admitted that they felt very happy since it had a positive effect on their marriage; their marriage became harmonious. This harmonious marriage was also experienced by the other informants, OT, CE, RE, AN, LA, TM, and VW. According to them, since there were only two persons in their marriages, husbands and wives, their lives became harmonious, and they did not need to take care of children well and think about them; moreover, they believed that children might trigger conflict in the family. They assumed that taking care of children needed special attention so that the children could grow and develop well. One of them said as follows:

*"Actually, we basically do not want to make a big fuss; we only want to be happy. Other people probably think that we are egoistic. That's okay for us. The important thing is that we do not mind their business."*

Therefore, it can be concluded that the positive effect felt by a married couple that applies CBC is harmony; they can feel a warm relationship with each other since there are only two people in the marriage, so the couple can enjoy their lives by themselves. A marriage that applies CBC is also performed based on some enabling factors that support the informants to apply CBC. They admitted that they really wanted to be naturally and completely free in their married lives, as one of them said:

*"We are free to do anything we want to. Actually, we basically do not want to make a big fuss; we want to enjoy ourselves and be happy, freedom in time, career, financial matters, and the future. In the time, we have enough time to enjoy our hobbies, such as travelling, spending quality time, using our spare time, and extra time for both of us. In our careers, we can focus on our jobs. We can also travel abroad frequently for a long time; it can be two weeks. I and my husband also often work overtime. In financial matters, since we forego children or have children, our financial responsibility is only for our future when we are retired and, of course, for our parents. We don't need to save our money for our children and for their future, and thus we can freely enjoy what we have toiled away for ourselves. And the future, yes, because our lives do not depend on the children's needs. We can decide to move to another town or to another country where we can enjoy our future without thinking about children."*

A marriage is usually done to get offspring, but it is impossible if a married couple has a plan not to have any children. For them, becoming parents is a choice that can be made as can be seen in the following Table:

**Table 2.**

Purpose of not being parents.

<b>In our married life, not being parents is one of our purposes because:</b>	<b>Result</b>
A marriage is not done merely to have children.	80.0%
Wanting to change people's perception of a married couple having to have children.	6.7%
Waking up in the morning only to prepare for children's school needs is not a good idea for us.	13.3%

From the [Table 2](#), it can be concluded that the purpose of CBC married couples not being parents is that they think that the purpose of a marriage is not only to have children. Meanwhile, the source of happiness in a marriage is not merely having children. It can come from nieces and nephews, from teaching and learning, from friends, etc. It was found that 53.3% of the informants said that happiness (in a marriage) came from both the married couple that can keep harmonious condition. Another source of happiness felt by the informants OT, MY, VW, and Z was raising and taking care of domestic animals or pets. Many people who apply CBC think that raising pets is the same as bringing up children. They need special attention and treatment when taking care of animals.

#### 4.3. Consequence

Consequence is a term that refers to the result of a person's deed or action. In making a decision, there will be a consequence. The objective of this research was to find out what consequences would be undergone by individuals or married couples who decided to apply for CBC. The consequence is determined by some factors as follows: the decision to

adopt a child, occurrences in the CBC married life, relationships with parents in the pre-and post-CBC marriage, responses of friends to the decision to apply for CBC, and the negative stigma of friends and neighbors.

**Table 3.**

Decision to adopt a child.

<b>Adopting a child is one of our choices</b>	<b>Result</b>
We never think about that.	66.7%
I and my spouse want our child to take care of us in the future.	6.7%
We undergo the influence of our social environment as a negative stigma.	6.7%
We still want to take care of a child that needs love and affection.	6.7%
He can give compassion as an expression of appreciation for me, who gets a lot of privileges.	6.7%
I don't adopt a child.	6.7%

Table 3 explains the informant's response to the question, "Adopting a child can be an option for me and my partner in this decision because.." and the answer choices to be given are: a) extended family court, which did not accept this decision; b) I and my partner's willingness to be able to take care of me and my partner in the future; c) the influence of the social environment such as the negative stigma that is obtained for me and my partner; d) never thought of it at all. Based on the table above, the results of the research data show that the informants (66.7%) answered that they did not consider the decision to adopt a child at all. Additional respondent indicated their want to express affection and appreciation for individuals who have enjoyed numerous exceptional advantages. Furthermore, they expressed a continuous willingness to provide support and assistance to these individuals and their significant others in the forthcoming period.

#### 4.3.1. Decision to Adopt a Child

Most of the informants pointed out that they never thought about decision to adopt children as what was said by one of them as follows:

*"When we are chatting to each other, one of us mentions adoption, etc., but, well, you know, I don't like children and don't want the responsibility. Of course, I don't want to adopt any child, except if childfree is because of health reason or because I am afraid of getting pregnant or giving birth; it makes sense for adoption. My friends and neighbors never talk about adoption, and I will never do it for the reasons I've mentioned above, like my trauma."*

The rest of the informants said that they wanted to give their love, affection, and appreciation for their privileges, and they still wanted someone to take care of them in the future, when they were very old. Therefore, it could be concluded that the informants never thought about adopting children.

#### 4.3.2. CBC Married Life

Happiness is the consequence of the general and emotional conclusion that a person's life is proceeding at an optimum level. Satisfaction in life represents a cognitive decision that, in a balanced, concrete situation in one's life, is beneficial because he can achieve his goal [34]. The responses of the informants are as follows:

**Table 4.**

CBC married life.

<b>Our married life without children</b>	<b>Result</b>
Runs smoothly according to our plan.	60%
We firmly maintain our decision, whatever happens.	33.3%
We sometimes doubt about decisions.	6.7%
We will evaluate our decision after we get married for 10 years.	-

From Table 4, the results of the research data show that nine informants (60%) admitted that their married life was going according to the plan they had set. Other informants (33.3%) also admitted that whatever happened, they would still defend CBC's decision. The rest of the informants admitted that sometimes doubts arose regarding this CBC decision. The data from this research showed that the informants admitted that their married life was proceeding in accordance with what they had planned, as one of them said below:

*"We plan to live together as husband and wife; we save money for travel and for our future; we tried to find an opportunity to get jobs and move abroad. We also plan to be sterile or to do tubectomy (salpingectomy), if it is possible, in a foreign country because, as far as I know, there is no doctor in here who is willing to do it for childfree women."*

Table 5 shows that the majority of informants (66.7%) admitted that their relationship with their parents was mediocre so that it did not cause problems; other informants (26.7%) claimed that their relationship with their parents and extended family remained good, but they were advised to change CBC's decision; and the rest of the informants answered that previously their relationship was good, but after deciding, CBC became tenuous. So, it can be concluded that the informant's relationship with their parents and extended family before and after it can be concluded that the informant's

relationship with their parents and extended family before and after making this decision was mediocre; there was no problem. Making this decision was mediocre; no problem.

**Table 5.**  
Relationship with Parents

<b>Our relationship with parents and other family members before and after we make our decision:</b>	<b>Result</b>
As usual, there is no problem.	66.7%
Our relationship is still good, but they always suggest that we change our minds.	26.7%
Our relationship used to be good, but after we decided to apply for CBC, it became bad.	6.7%

**4.3.3. Relationship with Parents in the Pre and Post CBC**

The data of the research showed that the relationship between them and their parents was proceeding as usual, and there was no problem, as what was said by one of them was as follows:

*“My mother and my close friends support my idea of foregoing kids, although my father sometimes talked about it. Fortunately, my mother always interferes with it. Besides that, my husband’s sister-in-law is the one who did not agree to my idea, while the other family members and relatives did not care about it since my husband is the youngest in the family, so they thought that it was all right if he didn’t have any children.”*

The other informants (26.7%) admitted that their relationship with their parents and other family members was good, although it was suggested that they change their minds about CBC. However, some of the informants said that the relationship between their parents and relatives used to be good, but it then became worse after they decided to apply for CBC. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the relationship between the informants, their parents, and the other family members was generally proceeding as usual without any serious problems.

**4.3.4. Responses of Friends to Decision to Apply CBC**

The response from friends and colleagues indicated that 40% of the informants admitted that they were supported by the idea of applying CBC and that it did not cause any problems and 40% of them always supported the idea of applying CBC. The other 13.3% of the informants admitted that their colleagues supported the idea even though they still suggested the informants change their minds. The remaining informants said that one of the people surrounding them had the right to make suggestions about their decision to forego children as one of them explains below:

*“Some of them who say that I’m not a true religious believer finally agree to disagree after much debate. If they say that I’m missing out on good things in life, it’s OK for me. I believe that everyone has their own happiness. You are happy because you have children; you feel that you have fulfilled what you need in life by having children, and it’s all right for me, too. I will never be happy in my life if I have children, and I feel that my life now is perfect, and I don’t need them to be fulfilled.”*

Therefore, it can be concluded that the informants admit that the people in their vicinity support their idea and never make any problems about it, even though a few of them support the idea after they have known the reasons for the foregoing children.

**4.3.5. Negative Stigma from Surrounding People**

The consequences faced by married couples who live in urban areas of Indonesia and who decide to apply for CBC are also about negative responses or negative social stigmas. The forms of stigma, among others, are as follows:

**Table 6.**  
Negative stigma from surrounding people.

<b>In deciding to apply for CBC, I and my spouse get a variety of negative responses and stigmas from families, friends, and colleagues in the form of:</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Result</b>
We do not receive any negative responses since we appreciate the respective ideas and decisions.	9	60 %
We are given a bad label from families, friends, and colleagues.	3	20%
We get everything mentioned above from families, friends, and colleagues.	2	13.3%
We are isolated or separated from families, friends, and colleagues.	1	6.7%

Based on Table 6, the results of the research data show that most of them admit that they have never received a negative response or stigma from family, friends, and coworkers, only a few of them admit that they are given a bad label from family, friends, and colleagues work. But there are also those who receive stigma or negative responses from the people around them. Every time they do something that is still relatively new, such as CBC, especially for Indonesian people who are pronatalist, of course, they will get a response or stigma that tends to be more negative, but if we are dealing with people who live in urban areas, they tend to be supportive and open with CBC decisions being carried out.

Besides a few of them who admitted that they were given a bad label from their families, friends, and colleagues, they also received negative responses and stigma from the surrounding people as was said by one of them as follows:

*"Some of my mom's friends have said to me that I'm not a true religious believer, and that I don't believe in God because I don't want any children. Some of them even say that I'm missing out on good things in life and that I close the door on good things brought by children in a marriage. However, 90% of them give a positive response. Only a few of them make negative comments by saying that I don't want to be fat which is usually said by men, and my father says that I'm not a responsible person. Well, everything seems to be proceeding as usual."*

From the study on CBC in this area, it was found that there was a shift in values about children for those who decided to forego children. In the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which either parents or their children expect that old people have to be taken care of by their children, taking care of parents becomes a norm. In other words, socio-cultural norms define the role of sons and daughters as nurses for their old parents, which becomes a normal and acceptable thing. However, for married couples that decide to apply for CBC, the informants in this research felt that they do not need to follow the normal and acceptable thing. Having no children or offspring is not a problem for them; it is not related to an old-age pension. They say that they can be taken care of by nurses or they can be sent to an exclusive senior citizen's home, and thus old-age pension does not have any problem for a CBC married couple.

This Family Change Theory also discusses ideal typical family models, one of which is the family freedom model, which explains a typical family with western culture and an individualistic orientation. This type of family model treats a nuclear family with the low level of fertility, or they even do not want to have any children. Personal autonomy is highly respected in this type of family model, and emotional interdependency is not relatively emphasized. Therefore, the reason for having children is not relevant anymore, and the only reason for having them is emotional or a desire from one's self, without any influence from outsiders. This is in accordance with the finding that the reason for deciding to apply CBC is concern about the negative effects of the environment, which can threaten overpopulation and the scarcity of natural resources. This is a form of modernization and globalization. Another reason is that having children is a choice, a freedom, and even not willingness from one's self. It is in accordance with a family independence model, as it has been explained above.

## 5. Conclusion

This research indicated that the diversity or background of the lives of married couples that apply CBC in Indonesia is not always their fundamental factor in deciding to apply it. Religious and cultural factors that suggest a married couple have children do not become an obstacle for them in determining their choice. Meanwhile, the factors of education, adequate earnings, and having one's own house are still considered enabling factors for them to make their choice. The factor of social media plays an important role in finding out the terms, the knowledge, and the self-firmness of choosing CBC. Besides that, the reason for the negative effect on the environment, which can threaten overpopulation and the scarcity of natural resource, still exists. They also argue that foregoing children is a choice that can be made by everyone. Most of them get sufficient love and affection from their families, and they can join with childfree communities because they want to make friends who have the same opinion as theirs.

In the stage of the process of married couples who apply for CBC, it was found that they had strong considerations such as economy, health, occupations, etc., so that they came to a decision to apply for CBC. They did it together before they got married. Various difficulties during the marriage concerning CBC could be handled in their own way, with the help of other people. Generally, they had no difficulty in explaining their intentions about the foregoing children to their families and colleagues. They felt positive effects, such as harmony, in their married lives because there are only two of them in the family. They really wanted to be free in their married lives. They also ignore their neighbors who do not agree with them about CBC, by showing their hospitality towards them. According to them, a marriage is not intended only to have children; it is intended to be parenthood.

The consequence is the result of the action of a married couple in applying for CBC. The consequence faced by the informants in applying for CBC is that they never get negative responses or stigma from their families, friends, and colleagues concerning their choice in applying for CBC. Their relationship with their parents before and after the CBC is proceeding as usual, and there has been no serious problem so far. The life in the CBC marriages is proceeding as usual, in accordance with what they have planned. Their friends and colleagues also support them and do not care about the CBC. Many of the informants do not think about adopting children; for them, children do not have any economic, psychological, or sociological values. Foregoing children is a choice, freedom, and happiness for these married couples.

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