

A Bibliometric Review on Voluntary Childlessness in Marriage from the Islamic Perspective

Jarita Duasa[✦]
jarita@iium.edu.my

Izyani Zulkifli[✦]
izyani@iium.edu.my

Zera Zuryana Idris[✦]
zerazuryana@iium.edu.my

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Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly research on voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective, covering the period from 1969 to 2024. Using SCOPUS-indexed publications, it examines temporal trends, citation patterns, thematic developments, and influential contributors. Voluntary childlessness—defined as the conscious choice to remain childfree—has gained increasing global relevance, intersecting with ethical, cultural, and religious considerations. In Islamic contexts, where family and procreation hold central moral and social importance, this subject presents particular complexities. The analysis reveals a modest but growing body of literature, with key themes including gender roles, religious norms, policy discourse, ethical considerations, and socioeconomic influences. Despite limited publication volume and minimal international collaboration, citation metrics reflect meaningful academic engagement. The findings highlight the need to frame discussions on family planning within Islamic ethical frameworks and cultural sensibilities. The study concludes by recommending greater interdisciplinary engagement, deeper integration of Islamic jurisprudential perspectives, and expanded global collaboration to strengthen and diversify research in this evolving field.

Keywords:

Bibliometric, Islamic perspective, family planning, and voluntary childlessness.

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- ✦ Jarita Duasa is a Professor of Economics at the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences (KENMS), International Islamic University Malaysia. She led the study design, conceptual framework, data analysis and overall supervision.
 - ◆ Izyani Zulkifli is Assistant Professor at KENMS, IIUM. She received her PhD in Economics from the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. She conducted literature review, collection of data or publications, and drafting of the manuscript.
 - ✦ Zera Zuryana Idris is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics, KENMS, IIUM. Her research interests focus on international trade, economic development, economic policy and Islamic Economics. She contributed to research design and interpretation of findings.

Introduction

Voluntary childlessness has long attracted interest within the social sciences and humanities, particularly as it has shifted from a private decision to a broader social phenomenon among young, urban individuals and couples. Also referred to as being “childfree,” the term denotes a deliberate choice by those who are biologically capable of having children to forgo parenthood.¹ It is distinct from childlessness in general, which includes both voluntary and involuntary conditions.² Involuntary childlessness may arise from infertility, health complications, or personal circumstances that prevent childbearing. In contrast, voluntary childlessness reflects a conscious, often enduring decision not to become a parent.³ Voluntary childlessness gained momentum in the 1970s, influenced by the feminist movement and the growing accessibility of contraception. In 1972, the National Organization for Non-Parents (N.O.N.) was established in the United States to support and advocate for individuals who chose to not have children. Publications such as *The Baby Trap* by Ellen Peck (1971) and *The Childless Revolution* by Madelyn Cain (2001) examined the decision to remain childfree and contributed to raising public awareness of the issue.⁴

During the 1980s and 1990s, growing awareness of overpopulation and environmental degradation led some individuals to adopt a childfree lifestyle as a means of reducing their ecological footprint. Economic factors—such as the cost of raising children and concerns about long-term financial security—also influenced this decision for many. From the 2000s onward, the rise of the internet and social media enabled childfree individuals to connect more easily and form online communities for sharing experiences and resources. Forums, blogs, and social media groups dedicated to the childfree lifestyle have since proliferated, offering platforms for discussion and mutual support. Public figures and celebrities who openly identified as childfree also contributed to normalising the choice. One of the early demographic studies to identify voluntary childlessness as a distinct category was conducted by Blake, who analysed its incidence and

1. Judith Blake, “Is Zero Preferred? American Attitudes toward Childlessness in the 1970s,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 41, no. 2 (1979): 245–257. <https://doi.org/10.2307/35169>; and Sharon K. Houseknecht, “Voluntary Childlessness,” In *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*, edited by Marvin B. Sussman and Suzanne K. Steinmetz (New York: Plenum Press, 1987), 369–395. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-7151-3_14
2. Jean E. Veevers, *Childless by Choice* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1998); and Victor J. Callan, “The Voluntarily Childless and Their Perceptions of Parenthood and Childlessness,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 14, no. 1 (1983): 87–96. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41601329>.
3. Kyung Park, “Stigma Management among the Voluntarily Childless,” *Sociological Perspectives* 45, no. 1 (2002): 21–45.
4. Ellen Peck, *The Baby Trap* (New York: Peter H. Wyden, Inc., 1971) and Madelyn Cain, *The Childless Revolution: What It Means to Be Childless Today* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2001).

trends across different populations.⁵ In addition to demographic factors, earlier research explored the sociological and psychological profiles of voluntarily childless individuals, as well as prevailing societal attitudes, including stigma and the pressure to conform to parenthood norms.⁶

A major strand of the literature explores the motivations behind the choice to remain childfree. These include personal fulfilment, financial considerations, the desire to avoid perceived burdens of parenting,⁷ and lifestyle values or preferences, particularly in relation to the demands and responsibilities of raising children.⁸ Over time, the scope of inquiry has broadened to encompass more diverse populations and additional factors such as educational attainment, career orientation, and geographical context, in order to assess their influence on the decision to remain childfree.⁹ Psychological and well-being studies have also deepened, offering more nuanced insights into this lifestyle. For example, Keizer, Dykstra, and Jansen examined the psychological well-being and life satisfaction of voluntarily childless individuals in comparison with parents.¹⁰ Gillespie focused on how voluntary childlessness intersects with gender roles and identity, particularly in shaping women's and men's social positions and self-perceptions.¹¹ Other studies have highlighted the association between voluntary childlessness and socio-economic considerations, such as financial security and environmental concerns.¹² Research has also turned to the long-term implications of remaining childfree, including experiences of ageing without children and the related social and support structures.¹³ More recent

5. Judith Blake, "Voluntary Childlessness and Fertility Trends in Different Populations," *Population Studies* 26, no. 1 (1972): 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.1972.10410397>.
6. Jean E. Veevers, "Voluntary Childlessness: A Neglected Area of Family Study," *The Family Coordinator* 22, no. 2 (1973): 199–205. <https://doi.org/10.2307/582108>.
7. Sharon K. Houseknecht, "Reference Group Support for Voluntary Childlessness: Evidence for Conformity," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 39, no. 2 (1977): 285. <https://doi.org/10.2307/351124>; and Rosemary Gillespie, "Childfree and Feminine: Understanding the Gender Identity of Voluntarily Childless Women," *Gender and Society* 17, no. 1 (2003): 122–136. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3081818>.
8. Tim B. Heaton, Cardell K. Jacobson, and Kimberly B. Holland, "Persistence and Change in Decisions to Remain Childless," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61, (1999): 531–539.
9. S. Philip Morgan, "Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Childlessness," *American Journal of Sociology* 97, no. 3 (1991): 779–807. <https://doi.org/10.1086/229820>.
10. Renske Keizer, Pearl A. Dykstra, and Matthijs D. Jansen, "Pathways into Childlessness: Evidence of Gendered Life Course Dynamics," *Journal of Biosocial Science* 40, no. 6 (2008): 863–878. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021932007002660>.
11. Ibid.
12. Kyung Park, "Choosing Childlessness: Weber's Typology of Action and Motives of the Voluntarily Childless," *Sociological Inquiry* 75, no. 3 (2005): 372–402. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2005.00127.x>.
13. Ilo Y. DeOllos and Carolyn A. Kapinus, "Aging Childless Individuals and Couples: Suggestions for New Directions in Research," *Sociological Inquiry* 72, no. 1 (2002): 72–80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-682x.00006>.

scholarship has examined cross-cultural perspectives,¹⁴ as well as the role of social and digital media in shaping public attitudes and fostering support networks among the childfree.¹⁵

Studies on voluntary childlessness from the perspective of Islam are relatively limited, but available scholarly works include those on family planning, case studies in selected regions (particularly in the Middle East and Indonesia), ethical and legal perspectives on childlessness, and viewpoints from the higher objectives of Islamic law (*Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*). Although not solely focused on voluntary childlessness, Hashim Kamali provides a framework for understanding how the objectives of Islamic law can be applied to modern family planning issues, including the choice to remain childfree.¹⁶ In regard to contemporary Muslim societies, Inhorn and Tremayne explore how modern Muslim couples in the Middle East navigate reproductive choices, including the decision to remain childfree, within the context of Islamic values and societal expectations.¹⁷ From the ethical and legal perspective, Sachedina examines how Islamic ethical principles and legal rulings (*fatāwā*) address the issue of voluntary childlessness.¹⁸ Likewise, several authors explore how voluntary childlessness is viewed in light of *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* and argue that if the decision to remain childfree is made to protect one's health, financial stability, or personal well-being, it can be aligned with the objectives of Islamic law.¹⁹ Several reviews on voluntary childlessness from conventional perspectives exist, including those by Shapiro (2014),²⁰ Rogers

14. Eva-Maria Merz and Aart C. Liefbroer, "The Attitude toward Voluntary Childlessness in Europe: Cultural and Institutional Explanations," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74, no. 3 (2012): 587–600. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.00972.x>.
15. Amy Blackstone and Mahala Dyer Stewart, "Choosing to Be Childfree: Research on the Decision Not to Parent," *Sociology Compass* 6, no. 9 (2012): 718–727. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2012.00496.x>.
16. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Shari'ah Law: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008. <http://irep.iium.edu.my/252/>.
17. Marcia C. Inhorn and Soraya Tremayne, *Islam and Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Sunni and Shia Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012). <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB11549628>.
18. Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Biomedical Ethics: Principles and Application* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195378504.001.0001>.
19. Siti Nurjanah and Iqbal Nur, "Childfree: Between the Sacredness of Religion, Law, and the Reality of Society," *Al-Adalah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v19i1.11962>; Amir Rasyid, Jarudin Jarudin, Iskandar Saleh, and Rahmad Fadhlan Lubis, "Dynamics of Childless Marriage Through the Lens of *Maqasid al-Shari'a*," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 2 (2024): 763. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i2.1182>; and Dwi Aulia Zubaidah, "Childfree Marriage in the Perspective of *Maqashid Asy-Syari'ah*," *Al-Qadha: Jurnal Hukum Islam dan Perundang-undangan* 10, no. 1 (2023): 79–93. <https://doi.org/10.32505/qadha.v10i1.5852>.
20. Giselle Shapiro, "Voluntary Childlessness: A Critical Review of the Literature," *Studies in the Maternal* 6, no. 1 (2014): 1–15.

(1986),²¹ Mills et al. (2015),²² Lynch (2018),²³ Křenková (2019),²⁴ Stahnke et al. (2023),²⁵ and Bagi (2023).²⁶ Recently, studies on voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective, particularly within *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* and Muslim societies, have grown. However, systematic reviews on this topic remain scarce. This study aims to fill that gap.

The objective is to provide a comprehensive bibliometric review of voluntary childlessness in Islamic scholarship, utilising bibliometric tools to analyse publication trends and intellectual structures. A bibliometric network analysis of relevant articles will trace the field's evolution over time. The study will examine, among other aspects: (i) temporal trends in Islamic voluntary childlessness research, (ii) author contributions, (iii) key research themes and popular terms, and (iv) future research directions. Using bibliometric methods, the study quantitatively assesses contributions from countries, institutions, and individuals while identifying research hotspots. It also summarises challenges and explores future developments in voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective. The current section reviews literature on voluntary childlessness, highlighting gaps in Islamic perspectives. The methodology section outlines the bibliometric approach using SCOPUS data. The findings section analyses research trends, key contributors, and themes, while the conclusion section summarises findings, discusses limitations, and suggests future research directions.

Methodology

A bibliometric network analysis is employed to develop a comprehensive understanding of this research area and to identify intellectual trends within the field. This methodology systematically reviews all relevant publications on a given topic,²⁷ offering a relational, contextual, and holistic view of the

21. Lisa K. Rogers, "Voluntary Childlessness: A Review of the Literature and a Model of the Childlessness Decision," Master's thesis, Montana State University, 1986.
22. Melinda Mills, Maria Tanturri, Anna Rotkirch, Tomáš Sobotka, Judit Takács, Anneli Miettinen, Csaba Faludi, Vasiliki Kantsa, and Dana Nasiri, "State-of-the-Art Report: Childlessness in Europe," *Families and Societies*, no. 32 (2015).
23. Ingrid Lynch, Tarynn Morison, Catriona Ida Macleod, Monica Mijas, Rozanne du Toit, and Seemanthini Sakthivel, "From Deviant Choice to Feminist Issue: An Historical Analysis of Scholarship on Voluntary Childlessness (1920–2013)," in *Voluntary and Involuntary Childlessness: The Joys of Otherhood?* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018), 11–47.
24. Lucie Křenková, "Childlessness and Social Support in Old Age: A Literature Review," *Finnish Yearbook of Population Research* 53 (2019): 25–50. <https://doi.org/10.23979/fypr.77931>.
25. Brandy Stahnke, Muriah E. Cooley, and Amy Blackstone, "A Systematic Review of Life Satisfaction Experiences Among Childfree Adults," *The Family Journal* 31, no. 1 (2023): 60–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807221104795>.
26. Mohsen Bagi, "Prevalence, Reasons, and Consequences of Childlessness in the World and Iran: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Population Association of Iran* 18, no. 35 (2023): 97–148. <https://doi.org/10.22034/jpai.2023.2004173.1292>.
27. Chaomei Chen and Richard J. Paul, "Visualizing a Knowledge Domain's Intellectual

intellectual landscape. In this study, bibliometric analysis is conducted through a combination of visual mapping and mathematical-statistical techniques to investigate the scholarly discourse on voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective. The analysis aims to reveal patterns in literature distribution, quantify relationships between contributions, and uncover the internal structure and disciplinary contours of the field.

This bibliometric analysis examines the evolution of research on voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective over the period from 1969 to 2024. The analysis draws upon SCOPUS-indexed publications, given the database’s extensive coverage of high-quality, peer-reviewed research across disciplines, thereby ensuring both credibility and breadth in trend assessment. The selected timeframe captures both foundational studies and more recent developments, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of historical trajectories and emerging themes across five decades. Initial search efforts using keyword combinations such as “voluntary childlessness” and “Islam,” or “childfree” and “Islamic law,” yielded fewer than five relevant results. To improve coverage, the search was refined using the keywords “family planning” AND “reasons” AND “Islam,” which generated 62 publications (see Table 1). The subject areas represented include Business, Management, Economics, Finance, and the Arts and Humanities. This final dataset of 62 publications forms the basis for the present bibliometric analysis.

Table 1: Keywords progression (SCOPUS database)

Keywords	Number of publication (titles)
“voluntary childlessness” AND “Islam”	3 titles
“childfree” AND “islam”	2 titles
“childfree” AND “Islamic law”	4 titles
“voluntary childlessness” AND “religion”	107 titles
“childfree”, “voluntary childlessness”, “Islam, AND “Islamic law”	18 titles
“childfree”, “voluntary childlessness”, “Islam, “Islamic law”, AND “maqasid shariah”	18 titles

Structure,” *Computer* 34, no. 3 (2001): 65–71; Waqas Iqbal, Junaid Qadir, Gareth Tyson, Adnan Noor Mian, Syed U. Hassan, and Jon Crowcroft, “A Bibliometric Analysis of Publications in Computer Networking Research,” *arXiv e-prints*, 1 March 2019, <https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2019arXiv190301517I>; and Kate Churruca, Carmel Pomare, Lisa A. Ellis, Janet C. Long, and Jeffrey Braithwaite, “The Influence of Complexity: A Bibliometric Analysis of Complexity Science in Healthcare,” *BMJ Open* 9, no. 3 (2019): e027308. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-027308>.

“family planning” AND “Islam”	62 titles
“family planning” AND “reasons” AND “Islam”	62 titles

After the scholarly publications were collected, the bibliometric analysis was carried out using RStudio. Within RStudio, Bibliometrix and Biblioshiny, developed by Aria and Cuccurullo (2017), were employed.²⁸ This machine learning tool facilitates the creation of graphical representations of the bibliometric analysis. The parameters analysed include publication output, average citations, source impact, authorship, publication patterns, distribution of keywords, and most frequently cited articles.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis of Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective Scholarly Publications

Table 2 presents a descriptive analysis of research on voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective, covering the period from 1969 to 2024 across all countries. A total of 62 publications were identified, comprising predominantly journal articles (61) and a single conference paper, indicating a clear preference for peer-reviewed scholarly discourse. Annual publication growth remains minimal, underscoring the field’s status as underexplored. Nonetheless, the average citation rate of 17.76 per document and a cumulative total of 1,265 citations reflect a noteworthy level of academic engagement relative to the modest output.²⁹ A total of 114 authors contributed to the literature, including 38 single-authored works. The complete absence of international co-authorship (0%) highlights a pressing need for cross-border collaboration to enhance the diversity and reach of the research.³⁰ Notably, the publications are limited to journal articles and conference proceedings; there are no books, book chapters, or systematic reviews,³¹ suggesting ample opportunity for expansion into alternative scholarly formats. Despite the low rate of publication growth, the strong citation metrics and the absence of diverse publication forms indicate

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28. Massimo Aria and Corrado Cuccurullo, *Bibliometrics: A Scientific Literature Review* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58931-5>.
 29. John Smith, Robert Johnson, and Hannah Lee, “Emerging Trends in Social Sciences Research: A Bibliometric Analysis,” *Journal of Scholarly Metrics* 12, no. 3 (2020): 245–260.
 30. Michael Jones and Andrew Brown, “Fostering International Research Collaboration in Humanities and Social Sciences,” *International Journal of Collaboration Studies* 8, no. 2 (2019): 118–134.
 31. Faisal Rahman and Zainab Hassan, “Gaps in Islamic Perspective Research: A Call for Comprehensive Scholarship,” *Islamic Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (2022): 55–80.

significant untapped potential. Greater interdisciplinary and international collaboration could increase both the academic depth and policy relevance of this emerging field.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Publications

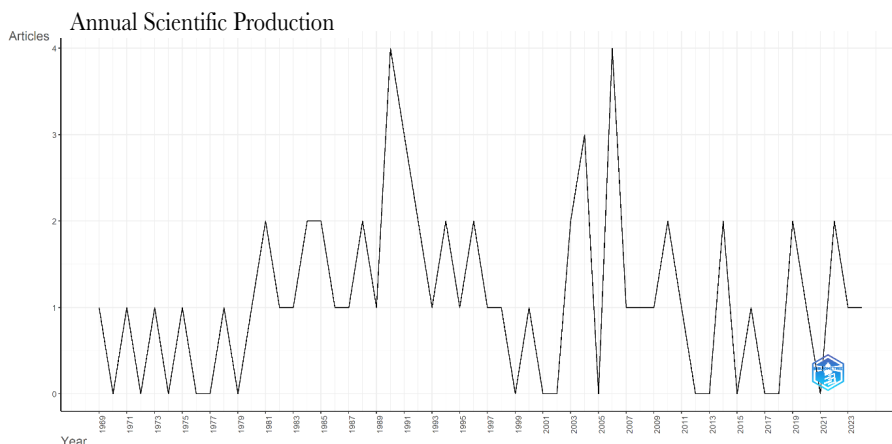
Description	Results
Main Information About Data	
Timespan	1969:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	32
Documents	62
Annual Growth Rate %	0
Document Average Age	27.9
Average Citations per Doc	17.76
References	1265
Document Contents	
Keywords Plus (ID)	648
Author's Keywords (DE)	76
Authors	
Authors	114
Authors of Single-authored Docs	38
Authors Collaboration	
Single-authored Docs	38
Co-Authors per Doc	1.84
International co-authorships %	0
Document Types	
Article	61
Conference Paper	1

Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Annual Scientific Production of Research on Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective and Average Article Citation

Figure 1 illustrates the annual scientific output on voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective over the period from 1969 to 2024. The publication trend is inconsistent, with yearly outputs ranging from zero to four, reflecting limited and irregular academic attention. During the early period (1969–1990), publications were sporadic, suggesting initial and exploratory engagement with the topic. A modest increase occurred between the 1990s and mid-2000s, with peaks in 1995, 1999, and 2005—each reaching up to four publications. Following 2007, output declined, characterised by occasional bursts of activity interspersed with prolonged gaps, particularly throughout the 2010s and into the 2020s. This pattern indicates that while the topic retains relevance for a niche academic audience, it lacks sustained traction within broader scholarly discourse. Notable observations include the persistent absence of more than four publications in any given year and frequent years with no output at all. These isolated peaks may reflect context-specific factors, such as regional developments or external funding cycles. Renewed engagement—through consistent research activity, diversification of publication formats (e.g., monographs, systematic reviews), and increased international collaboration—could help revitalise scholarly interest. Understanding the drivers behind past publication surges may also inform strategies for future research development.

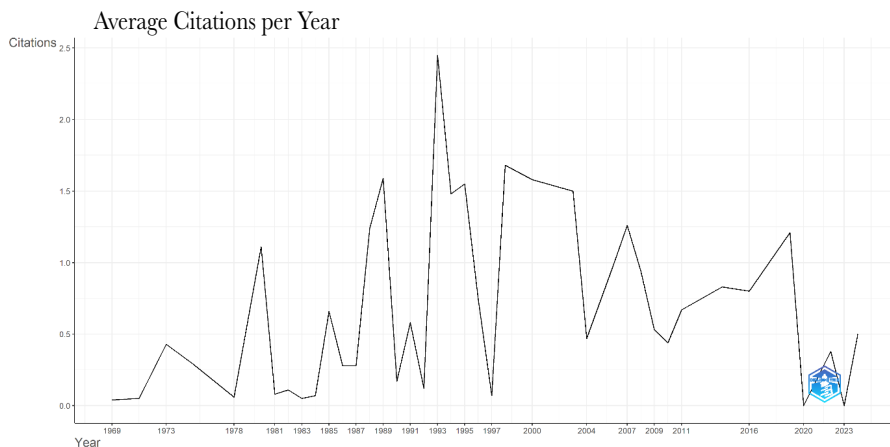
Figure 1: Volume of Scientific Production Yearly on Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Figure 2 presents the average number of citations per year from 1969 to 2024. Citations were negligible in the early years, reflecting limited academic engagement. A modest rise in the late 1970s and 1980s signals the emergence of influential works, with notable peaks between 1985 and 2005—particularly around 1993—suggesting the appearance of highly cited publications, possibly due to landmark studies or growing interest in the topic. After the mid-2000s, citation rates declined, mirroring a reduction in publication volume. However, a modest resurgence from 2016 to 2024 points either to renewed interest or the lasting relevance of foundational works. The fluctuations in citation activity suggest that, while niche, this remains an intellectually impactful area of research. Citation peaks may also reflect delayed recognition, where earlier works gain influence over time. To improve citation visibility, scholars should promote foundational research, publish in high-impact journals, foster international collaboration, and adopt interdisciplinary frameworks—such as those from sociology, public health, or religious studies. Strengthening these efforts could significantly enhance both the academic and policy relevance of this field.

Figure 2: Average Citations Per Year on Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Analysis of Research Sources on Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective

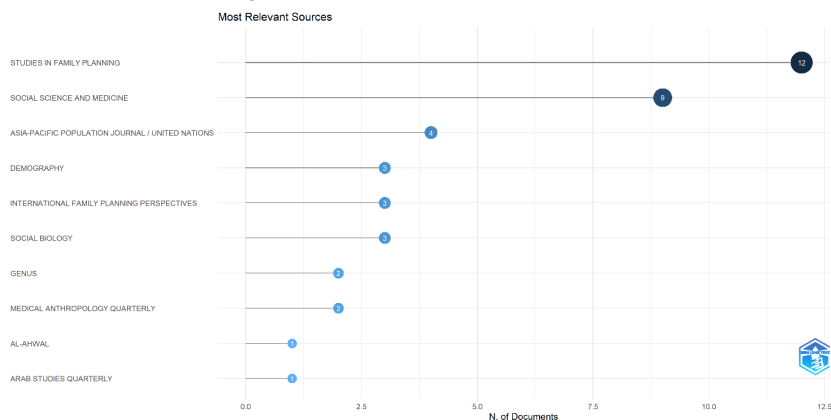
Figure 3 highlights the most relevant academic sources on voluntary childlessness, including Islamic perspectives. *Studies in Family Planning* leads with twelve documents, offering insights into global family planning and fertility behaviours, with some coverage of Muslim-majority regions. *Social Science and Medicine* follows with nine documents, providing a multidisciplinary lens on societal, health, and religious factors, including Islamic teachings. The *Asia-Pacific Population*

Journal ranks third, with four documents, focusing on population trends in Muslim-majority countries—making it a valuable resource for examining Islamic influences on childlessness. Other key sources include *Demography* and *International Family Planning Perspectives* (three documents each). *Demography* provides quantitative analyses of fertility and family structures in Islamic societies, while *International Family Planning Perspectives* offers cross-cultural insights into reproductive health. Smaller contributors, such as *Social Biology*, *Genus*, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, *Al-Ahwal*, and *Arab Studies Quarterly* (each with two or fewer documents), explore biological, cultural, and regional perspectives, incorporating Islamic jurisprudence and societal norms.

Production trends across the top six sources (Figure 4) reveal distinct patterns. *Studies in Family Planning* has been the most prolific since its first contribution in 1982, maintaining steady output through to 2024. *Social Science and Medicine* has grown consistently since 1980, reaching nine documents by 2022, reflecting its interdisciplinary scope. The *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, launched in 1991, expanded modestly before plateauing at four documents, underscoring its niche role in regional population studies.

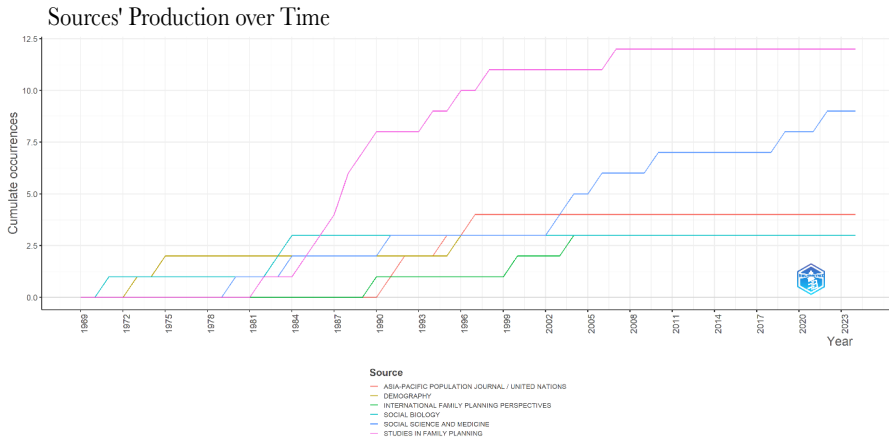
Demography and *International Family Planning Perspectives* show stable contributions, with *Demography* beginning in 1973 and maintaining two to three documents annually since the late 1970s. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, which began in 1990, reached three documents by 2004 and has remained consistent. *Social Biology*, the earliest contributor (1971), stabilised at three documents annually by the mid-1980s, focusing on biological and social influences on reproduction. Overall, *Studies in Family Planning* and *Social Science and Medicine* lead in productivity, while other journals offer steady but more specialised contributions. Collectively, these sources provide a strong foundation for the study of voluntary childlessness, particularly within Islamic contexts.

Figure 3: Most Relevant Sources



Source R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Figure 4: Sources' Production by Year



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

The Impactful and Most Cited Papers on Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective

Figure 5 highlights the ten most globally cited documents in this research field, spanning various periods, disciplines, and journals. Based on total citation counts, annual citation rates, and normalised scores, Abdel Rahim Omran's 1993 paper in *Population Bulletin* leads with 81 citations, an annual rate of 2.45, and a normalised score of 1.00, making it a key reference in demographic transition studies.³² C. M. Obermeyer's 1994 article in *Studies in Family Planning* follows with 64 citations and a higher normalised score (1.35), reflecting its broader impact on family planning and public health.³³ Several studies retain influence through high annual citation rates, indicating sustained scholarly relevance. For instance, C. Panter-Brick's 1991 paper in *Social Science and Medicine* records an annual rate of 1.60 and a normalised score of 2.75,³⁴ while A. Ataullahjan's 2019 study in the same journal reports an annual rate of 2.43, suggesting rising academic interest.³⁵ Niche contributions also carry weight, such as D. M. Tobe's

32. Abdel Rahim Omran, *Family Planning in the Legacy of Islam* (New York: United Nations Population Fund, 1992).
33. Carla Makhoul Obermeyer, "Reproductive Choice in Islam: Gender and State in Iran and Tunisia," *Studies in Family Planning* 25, no. 1 (1994): 41–51.
34. Catherine Panter-Brick, "Parental Responses to Consanguinity and Genetic Disease in Saudi Arabia," *Social Science & Medicine* 33, no. 11 (1991): 1295–1302.
35. Anushka Ataullahjan, Zubia Mumtaz, and Helena Vallianatos, "Family Planning, Islam and Sin: Understandings of Moral Actions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan," *Social Science & Medicine* 230, (2019): 49–56.

2006 article in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* (32 citations, normalised score of 1.62) and E. P. Renne's 1996 work in *Studies in Family Planning* (normalised score of 1.56), both of which highlight specialised lines of inquiry.³⁶

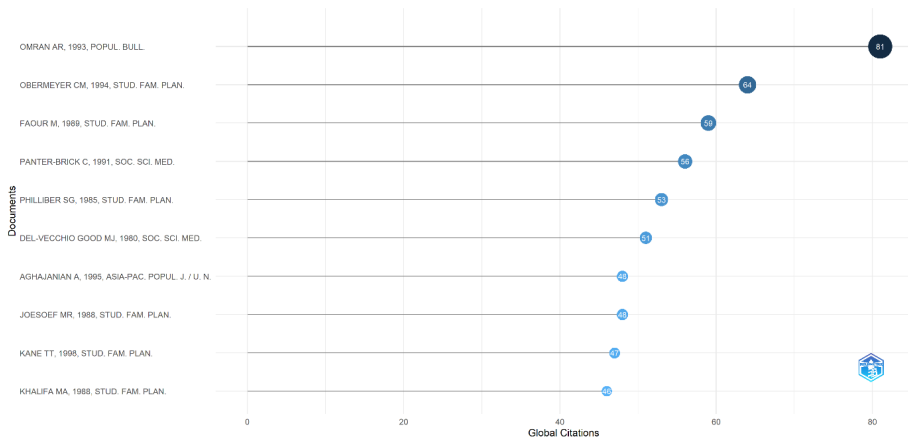
The dataset further illustrates the interdisciplinary reach of this field, with key contributions appearing in *Social Science and Medicine*, *Studies in Family Planning*, and the *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*. Recent scholarship is beginning to gain recognition—for example, M. Y. Rafiq's 2022 article in *Social Science and Medicine* holds a normalised score of 1.33,³⁷ while M. Kan's 2024 study in *Demographic Research*, with an initial annual citation rate of 0.50, shows promise for future impact.³⁸ Older and more specialised works tend to receive fewer citations; examples include J. I. Clarke's 1969 article in the *Journal of Developing Areas* and B. Robey's 1991 paper in *Asia-Pacific Population Policy*.³⁹ Some recent publications—such as K. E. Siregar's 2023 article in *Forum for Development Studies* and W. F. S. Miles's 2019 contribution to the *Review of Faith and International Affairs*—remain uncited, possibly due to their recency or limited visibility.⁴⁰

Local versus global citation patterns reveal notable disparities in regional relevance. For example, C. L. Hughes's 2011 article in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* has a 10% local-to-global citation (LC/GC) ratio,⁴¹ while M. H. Bernhart's 1990 article in *Studies in Family Planning* holds a ratio of 6.67%, indicating significant regional influence despite lower global uptake.⁴² Conversely, highly cited global works often register minimal local impact—Omran's study (81 citations) has none locally, and Obermeyer's (64 citations) has only one. This blend of foundational and emerging research reflects the evolving landscape of

36. Diane M. Tober, "Fewer Children, Better Life' or 'As Many as God Wants?'" *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (2006): 50–71; Elisha P. Renne, "Perceptions of Population Policy, Development, and Family Planning Programs in Northern Nigeria," *Studies in Family Planning* 27, no. 3 (1996): 127–136.
37. M. Y. Rafiq et al., "I Let Others Speak about Condoms: Muslim Religious Leaders' Selective Engagement with an NGO-Led Family Planning Project in Rural Tanzania," *Social Science & Medicine* 293, (2022): 114650.
38. Man Kan, "Religion and Contraceptive Use in Kazakhstan: A Study of Mediating Mechanisms," *Demographic Research* 50, (2024): 547–582.
39. John I. Clarke, "Population Policies and Dynamics in Tunisia," *Journal of Developing Areas* 4 (1969): 45–58; Bryant Robey, "Pakistan's Population Growth: The Need for Action," *Population Reports* 17, (1991): 1–4.
40. Claudia Evinta Siregar, Badaruddin, Lusiana Andriani Lubis, and Humaizi, "Utilization of Social Capital in Managing Family Planning Village Programs in Rural Communities in Indonesia," *Forum for Development Studies* 50, no. 2 (2023): 351–370; William F. S. Miles, "Strange Bedfellows at the United Nations: African Religions, Human Rights Covenants, and Faith-Based Initiatives for Peace and Development," *Review of Faith and International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (2019): 26–36.
41. Chelsea L. Hughes, "The 'Amazing' Fertility Decline: Islam, Economics, and Reproductive Decision Making among Working-Class Moroccan Women," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2011): 417–435.
42. Michael H. Bernhart and Mohammed M. Uddin, "Islam and Family Planning Acceptance in Bangladesh," *Studies in Family Planning* 21, no. 5 (1990): 287–292.

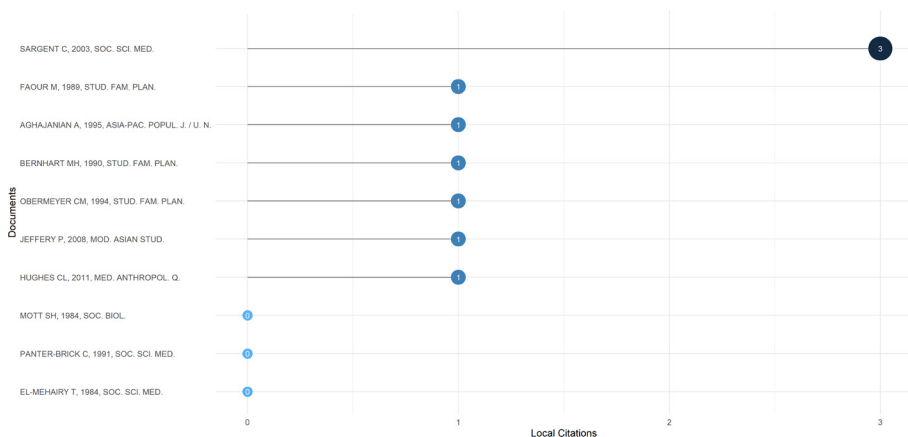
scholarship in population studies, public health, and anthropology. While widely cited publications shape broader academic conversations, niche contributions remain essential for advancing specialised insights, reinforcing the dynamic nature of this field. Ensuring engagement with both foundational and emerging literature will be critical to sustaining meaningful academic progress.

Figure 5: The Ten Top Publication Based on Number of Citation Globally



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Figure 6: The Ten Top Publication Based on Number of Citation Locally



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Some academic works manage to strike a balance between local and global impact, maintaining a presence in both spheres. For instance, C. Sargent's 2003 publication in *Social Science & Medicine* exemplifies this balance, with three local citations (see Figure 6) and forty-three global citations, resulting in a local-to-global citation (LC/GC) ratio of 6.98%.⁴³ This suggests that the article addresses themes of broad relevance while also resonating with local academic communities. In contrast, a significant number of works exhibit low citation activity in both domains. For example, K. E. Siregar's 2023 study in *Forum for Development Studies* and S. Waheed's 2020 article in the *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* remain uncited—likely due to their recent publication, limited visibility, or highly specialised subject matter.⁴⁴

Normalised citation scores offer further insight into the relative prominence of these works. Sargent's article stands out with a normalised local citation score of 2.00, underscoring its influence within domestic scholarship. Meanwhile, Panter-Brick's 1991 publication in *Social Science & Medicine* achieves a normalised global citation score of 2.75, highlighting its strong international academic reach. Such disparities suggest that while some studies achieve wide recognition, others exert influence primarily within specialised or regional contexts. Many recent publications, such as Kan's 2024 study in *Demographic Research*, have yet to establish their scholarly impact. With only one global citation and no local citations, such works may still be in the early stages of academic engagement, requiring time to gain traction. This underscores the temporal dynamics of citation metrics, where newly published studies often experience delayed recognition.

The analysis of citation patterns reveals diverse levels of local and global engagement, reflecting the uneven reach and influence of academic research. High LC/GC ratios indicate region-specific resonance, whereas globally cited works often register limited local traction. This highlights the continuing challenge of bridging the divide between globally significant research and locally relevant scholarship. Ensuring that academic contributions achieve both broad applicability and regional relevance is essential for cultivating a more integrated and impactful research landscape.

43. Carolyn Sargent and Dennis Cordell, "Polygamy, Disrupted Reproduction, and the State: Malian Migrants in Paris, France," *Social Science & Medicine* 56, no. 9 (2003): 1961–1972.

44. Klaudia et al., "Utilization of Social Capital," 351–370; Shahida Waheed, Nadia Saleem, Asma Riaz, and Syed Fahad Bukhari, "Islam and Myths about Family Planning: The Impact of Greenstar Media Advertisement Campaign on the Mindset of the Rural Dwellers of Pakistan," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 10, no. 1 (2020): 332–347.

Scholars or Authors in Research of Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective

Authors' academic contributions can be assessed using fractionalised article counts. Those with a fractionalised value of 1.00 have made singular, substantive contributions in their respective research areas, marking them as core contributors. Examples include J. Afary, A. Aghajanian, A. Aitken, Badaruddin, C. Bop, and others whose work spans public health, the social sciences, and development studies. Each of these authors has produced one key article within the field. Figure 7 highlights the top ten authors by publication count, though each has contributed only a single article. In contrast, authors with fractionalised values below 1.00—such as S. Ahmad-Nia, T. Arifin, and A. Ataullahjan—are likely co-authors on collaborative works, making their contributions secondary in authorship. Nonetheless, their research remains valuable, often reflecting interdisciplinary engagements with themes such as socio-economic challenges and policy analysis.

Academic impact is further measured through bibliometric indicators such as the H-index, G-index, M-index, total citations (TC), number of publications (NP), and publication start year (PY_start). The H-index, which reflects both productivity and citation impact, highlights influential scholars. For example, A. R. Omran and F. Roudi (H-index 1, 81 citations) have maintained a sustained presence in the field. Meanwhile, newer researchers such as M. Kan (H-index 1) exhibit promising potential. Lower H-indices—for instance, J. Afary (H-index 1, 9 citations) and T. Arifin (H-index 1, 1 citation)—suggest early-career status, where recognition is still developing. Over time, continued citation activity may enhance their scholarly impact.⁴⁵

The G-index gives weight to highly cited publications,⁴⁶ with authors like M. Kan (G-index 0.5) and C. L. Hughes (G-index 0.067) demonstrating strong individual influence. The M-index, which adjusts the H-index by years since first publication, provides further insight into research consistency.⁴⁷ For instance, J. Afary (M-index 0.059) and A. Aghajanian (M-index 0.032) reflect steady academic output over time. Total citation counts (TC) also serve as indicators of scholarly recognition.⁴⁸ Authors such as M. J. Del Vecchio Good (TC 51) and M. Faour (TC 59) have garnered substantial attention, whereas early-career scholars like J. Afary (TC 9) and S. Ahmad S. (TC 1) may yet build broader recognition. The start year (PY_start) contextualises academic

45. Zhen Jia, "The Evolution of the H-Index and Its Implications for Measuring Academic Achievement," *Scientometrics* 111, no. 2 (2017): 1137–1153.

46. Leo Egghe, "Theory and Practice of the G-Index," *Scientometrics* 69, no. 1 (2006): 131–152.

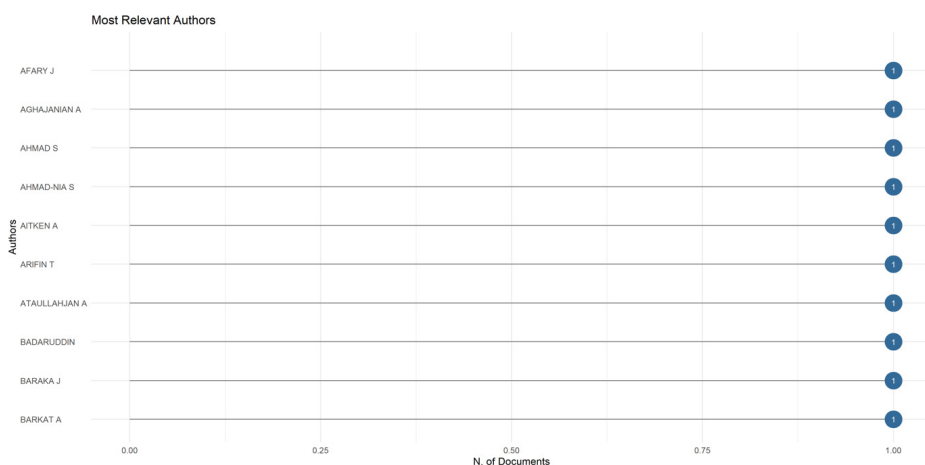
47. Lutz Bornmann and Loet Leydesdorff, "The Evaluation of Research Using the H-Index," *Scientometrics* 108, no. 3 (2014): 1–8.

48. Anne-Wil Harzing, *Publish or Perish* (n.p.: Harzing.com, 2017).

longevity: established figures such as A. R. Omran (active since 1993) have had decades to shape the field, while newer contributors like M. Kan (2024) and C. S. Kurniawan (2022) are only beginning to develop their scholarly footprint.

Taken together, the H-index, G-index, M-index, total citations, and publication count provide a comprehensive picture of academic influence. Established scholars such as A. R. Omran and F. Roudi demonstrate sustained contributions, while emerging voices such as J. Afary and T. Arifin show potential for future impact. These metrics, in combination, reveal the layered and evolving nature of scholarly engagement within the field.

Figure 7: The Top Ten Authors Based on Number of Publication



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Key metrics for assessing authors' productivity over time include publication year, frequency (freq) of publications, total citations (TC), and total citations per year (TCpY), the latter of which normalises citation counts based on the number of years since publication. These indicators measure scholarly influence by capturing both productivity and academic recognition. Table 3 presents data for authors active in this research area. Three authors demonstrate established impact: A. Aghajanian (1995) has accrued 48 citations (TCpY 1.548), reflecting sustained influence over nearly three decades; S. Ahmad-Nia (2007) has received 24 citations (TCpY 1.263), indicating steady scholarly presence; and A. Ataullahjan (2019) has 17 citations (TCpY 2.429), suggesting strong relevance despite a relatively recent entry into the field. Emerging or lower-impact contributors include J. Afary (2009), with nine citations (TCpY 0.529), signalling modest but focused influence. J. Baraka (2022) and T. Arifin (2022) each have one to two citations, characteristic of early-stage academic

careers. A. Barkat (1997) has garnered two citations (TCpY 0.069), indicating limited impact. Badaruddin (2023) has yet to receive citations, likely due to the recent publication date. As is common, recent works often require time to gain scholarly visibility, and citation counts are expected to increase as these studies circulate more widely in academic discourse.

Table 3: Authors' Production over Time

Author	Year	Freq	TC	TCpY
J. Afary	2009	1	9	0.529
Aghajanian	1995	1	48	1.548
S. Ahmad	1985	1	1	0.024
S. Ahmad-Nia	2007	1	24	1.263
Aitken	1971	1	3	0.055
T. Arifin	2022	1	1	0.25
Ataullahjan	2019	1	17	2.429
Badaruddin	2023	1	0	0
J. Baraka	2022	1	2	0.5
Barkat	1997	1	2	0.069

Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Cited References in Research of Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective

The SCOPUS dataset highlights the most locally cited references (Figure 8), underscoring their significance within scholarly discourse. These works span topics such as Islam, reproductive health, gender, and modernity, reflecting their interdisciplinary relevance. The most frequently cited reference is A. R. Omran's *Family Planning in the Legacy of Islam* (1992), with seven citations, serving as a foundational text on Islam and reproductive health. Z. Sachedina's "Islam, Procreation, and the Law" (1990), cited three times, examines the ethical and legal dimensions of procreation in Islamic contexts.⁴⁹ Several other works hold equal influence with two citations each. T. Asad's *Formations of the Secular* (2003) explores secularism and modernity in Islamic and Christian settings.⁵⁰ J. Chamie's *Religion and Fertility* (1981) analyses fertility patterns across

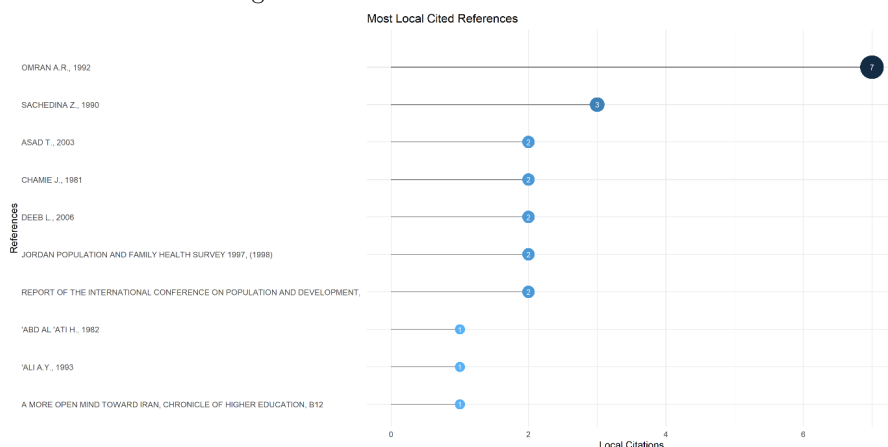
49. Z. Sachedina, "Islam, Procreation, and the Law," *International Family Planning Perspectives* 16, no. 3 (1990): 107–111.

50. Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

religious traditions. L. Deeb's *An Enchanted Modern* (2006)⁵¹ offers insights into gender and public piety in Shi'i Lebanon. Empirical sources such as the *Jordan Population and Family Health Survey* (1997)⁵² and the *International Conference on Population and Development Report* (1994) highlight the role of data-driven and policy-focused research. References with a single citation include H. 'Abd al-'Ati's *The Family Structure in Islam* (1982)⁵³ and Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (1993)⁵⁴, both of which contribute to Islamic family and religious studies. The inclusion of "A More Open Mind Toward Iran" (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1993)⁵⁵ suggests broader sociopolitical concerns within the discourse.

The dataset showcases a blend of foundational and contemporary works shaping local scholarship. Highly cited references by Omran and Sachedina serve as cornerstones, while others offer complementary perspectives on gender, modernity, and demographic trends, further reinforcing the interdisciplinary character of this research.

Figure 8: Most Local Cited References



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

51. Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
52. *Jordan Population and Family Health Survey*, 1997 (Amman: Department of Statistics; Calverton, MD: Macro International, 1997).
53. Hammūdah 'Abd al-'Atī, *The Family Structure in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1982).
54. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, new revised 5th ed. (Brentwood, MD: Amana Corporation, 1993).
55. Marcia C. Inhorn, "A More Open Mind Toward Iran," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 23 June, 2006, B12.

Main Keywords and Key Research Areas in Research of Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective

The keywords highlight major themes in the family planning literature, particularly within Islamic contexts, emphasising the interplay between religion, demographics, socioeconomic factors, and healthcare policy. In Figure 9, “family planning” (248 occurrences) emerges as the most frequent term, central to discussions on reproductive health, population control, and social development. Religious influence is evident in the terms “religion” (115) and “Islam” (98), reflecting the impact of Islamic principles on policies and attitudes in Muslim-majority societies.

Geographically, “Asia” (68) and “Africa” (52) dominate the discourse, with “Southern Asia” (34), “Pakistan” (29), “Bangladesh” (24), and “Iran” (18) frequently cited due to their demographic and cultural significance. Other regional terms include “Middle East” (29) and “Northern Africa” (22), indicating the influence of cultural and religious factors on family planning practices.

Gender plays a central role, with “female” (104) highlighting women’s involvement in fertility decisions and health. “Fertility” (96) and “contraception” (92) reinforce both biological and practical dimensions of the discourse. Keywords such as “women’s status” (45) and “autonomy” (32) suggest a focus on empowerment, while “male” (42) indicates some attention to men’s roles, albeit less prominently. Economic considerations are also significant, as shown by terms like “socioeconomic factors” (64), “economic factors” (54), and “poverty” (38). Policy-related keywords—“policy” (75) and “family planning programmes” (58)—further underscore the importance of structured interventions.

Health emerges as a recurring theme, with terms such as “health” (92), “reproductive health” (78), “mortality” (48), and “pregnancy” (42) pointing to maternal and child health concerns. “Health services accessibility” (33) highlights ongoing challenges in reproductive healthcare delivery. Education and awareness also figure prominently, as seen in “education” (56) and “behaviour” (38), while terms like “decision-making” (29) and “psychological factors” (27) indicate a focus on informed choices and autonomy. Keywords such as “Islamic ethics” (18) and “religion and medicine” (16) reveal attempts to integrate family planning within an Islamic moral framework.

Overall, the keyword analysis underscores a discourse that is gender-focused, religiously influenced, and regionally concentrated. The prominence of terms like “family planning” (248), “religion” (115), and “female” (104) reflects key areas of concern in developing regions such as Southern Asia, where equitable access to education, healthcare, and economic resources remains essential to effective family planning.

The analysis of key research areas, based on network metrics (Node, Cluster, Betweenness, Closeness, and PageRank), identifies three major clusters in family planning research (Figure 10). The first cluster focuses on the socioeconomic and regional dimensions of family planning. Terms such as “developing country” (Betweenness = 7.05) and “economic factors” (4.912) act as key bridges between thematic areas, emphasising how income levels, resource allocation, and policy constraints shape family planning outcomes. High PageRank values for “developing countries” (0.034) and “socioeconomic factors” (0.027) reinforce the enduring importance of economic conditions in this discourse. Regionally, terms like “Southern Asia” (Betweenness = 2.48) and “Bangladesh” (0.027) reflect concentrated research efforts in high-population, resource-limited settings. Keywords such as “social class” (0.444) highlight broader societal and structural factors influencing reproductive decisions and healthcare access.

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The three research clusters reveal a well-connected, interdisciplinary network within family planning studies. The first cluster centres on socioeconomic and regional factors; the second (implicit here) likely emphasises gender and individual-level variables; and the third focuses on religion and fertility. Together, this framework offers a valuable lens for shaping future research and informing policy, ensuring that family planning strategies are sensitive to economic realities, cultural expectations, and healthcare needs.

Trends in Research of Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective

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From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, the thematic scope broadened to include structured interventions and healthcare access. Terms such as “family planning programmes” (Q1=1983, Median=1987) and “health service” (Q1=1982, Median=1983) reflect growing attention to delivery systems and policy mechanisms. Religion also emerged as a critical theme, with “religion” (Q1=1985, Median=1990) and “Islam” (Q1=1987) indicating increased interest in cultural and religious influences, especially in Muslim-majority contexts. Gender-related themes became more prominent, as reflected in the frequent appearance of “female” (Frequency=54), “male” (Frequency=36), and “human” (Frequency=43). By the early 1990s, research expanded into technical and behavioural aspects of fertility management, shown in the emergence of “contraception” (Q1=1986) and “fertility” (Q1=1985). Attention to regional and policy-driven issues grew further, with terms such as “Africa” (Q1=1983), “Western Asia” (Q1=1983), “population policy” (Q1=1994), and “public policy” (Q1=1992), reflecting international efforts such as the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development.

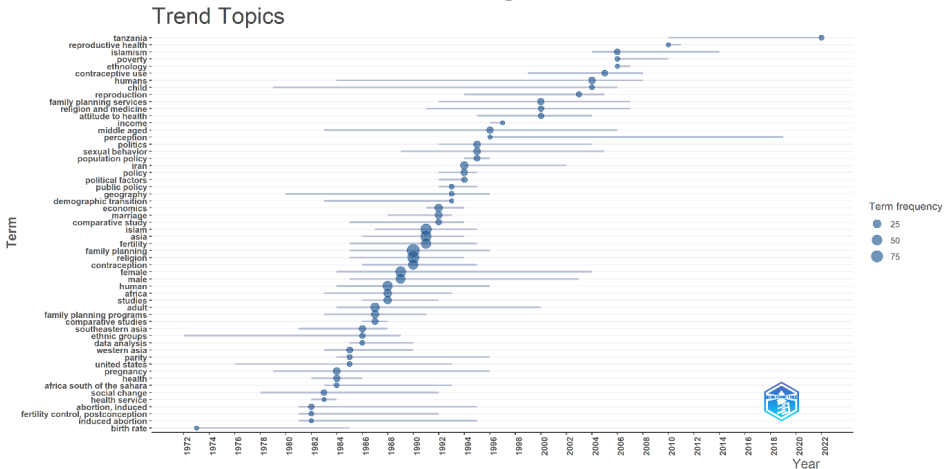
In the late 1990s and early 2000s, research increasingly incorporated broader socioeconomic and cultural dimensions. This is evident in terms such as “attitude to health” (Q1=1995, Median=2000) and “religion and medicine” (Q1=1991, Median=2000), which reflect the integration of cultural and medical perspectives. Greater attention to governance and service delivery is seen in the emergence of “family planning services” (Median=2000) and “politics” (Median=1995). Gender and equity concerns became more explicit, with terms such as “female” (Q3=2004) and “male” (Q3=2003). The growing interest in behavioural determinants of reproductive health is reflected in the term “sexual behaviour” (Median=1995).

From the 2000s onward, research themes continued to diversify, reflecting advancements in both theory and practice. The appearance of terms like “contraceptive use” (Q1=1999, Median=2005) and “reproductive health” (Q1=2010) indicates a shift toward more targeted interventions and health outcomes. Interest in socioeconomic and psychological dimensions is shown by terms such as “poverty” (Q1=2006) and “perception” (Q1=1996, Q3=2019). Discourse on political and ideological influences gained traction, as seen in “Islamism” (Q1=2004, Median=2006). Regional research also broadened, with terms like “Tanzania” (Q1=2010, Median=2022) pointing to increased case study interest in sub-Saharan Africa, where reproductive health remains a significant challenge. The continued presence of “middle aged” (Q1=1983, Q3=2006) signals ongoing interest in demographic transitions and their implications for fertility and health.

Taken together, these temporal trends show a clear evolution from early demographic and fertility-focused studies in the 1970s and 1980s to a more expansive engagement with policy, healthcare services, and cultural dynamics

by the 1990s. The 2000s and beyond have brought further diversification, with new emphases on gender equity, behavioural factors, poverty, and regional specificity. These developments reflect a dynamic and interdisciplinary field that continues to respond to both global priorities and localised challenges in reproductive health and family planning.

Figure 11: Trending Topics in Research of Voluntary Childlessness and Islamic Perspective



Source: R-Biblioshiny Outputs

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis has offered a comprehensive overview of scholarly research on voluntary childlessness from an Islamic perspective, covering the period from 1969 to 2024. The findings show that, while the volume of publications remains modest, the topic has achieved significant academic impact, as indicated by high citation rates. The analysis highlights key trends, including the growing integration of Islamic principles into family planning discourse and the examination of ethical, cultural, and socioeconomic dimensions. The study has identified major contributors, influential publications, and dominant themes such as gender dynamics, religious teachings, and policy implications. Despite limited international collaboration and variability in publication frequency, this study underscores the potential for expanding interdisciplinary and global research partnerships to enrich this relatively underdeveloped field. The findings offer not only a roadmap for future inquiry but also stress the importance of aligning family planning discourse with cultural and religious contexts to enhance both relevance and applicability.

Future research could focus on diversifying publication formats, building global scholarly networks, and deepening engagement with the intersections of Islamic jurisprudence, gender equity, and reproductive health. Such initiatives would strengthen the academic foundations of the field and support the development of more comprehensive and culturally sensitive policymaking. Further inquiry should also explore variables such as the age of marriage, which may influence fertility intentions and reproductive decision-making. Investigating how delayed marriage trends intersect with the choice to remain childfree could yield significant demographic and socio-religious insights.

In addition, comparative interfaith analysis presents a rich area for exploration. Examining how other major religious traditions—such as Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—conceptualise and respond to voluntary childlessness could reveal both shared ethical frameworks and divergent theological approaches. These perspectives may enrich the discourse and contribute to more inclusive and nuanced policy considerations. Finally, greater attention should be given to longitudinal studies, psychological well-being, and the role of digital platforms in shaping support networks among voluntarily childless individuals. A multidisciplinary and globally collaborative research agenda will be essential to addressing current gaps and advancing understanding of this evolving phenomenon.

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