

Promoting Religious Moderation, Focusing on Education to Strengthen
Social Stability in Indonesia in the context of COVID-19 - **CONVEY Indonesia**

Policy Brief Series

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This Policy Series is made as part of CONVEY Indonesia project conducted by PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia.

Convey Indonesia is aimed to promote peace in Indonesia and prevent extremism with violence and radicalism through a set of research, surveys, policy advocacy and public interactions based on the potency of religious education. CONVEY Indonesia project covers issues on tolerance, diversity and nonviolence among youth.

Young People and Covid-19: Believing in Diversity, We Are Strong - Believing in Hoax, We Fall



The Problems of Youth and COVID-19 In Indonesia

This CONVEY PPIM Policy Brief will answer the question of what responsive policies can be taken by the government in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic regarding youth and education?

In many catastrophic events, including pandemics, ample evidence shows that disasters affect religion and vice versa. Religion is used to deal with problems (Inglehart & Norris, 2011), both at the individual and group levels. However, the response of religious scholars in responding to disasters is often not similar. In Indonesia, the government's restrictions on activities in houses of worship, as explained in Government Regulation (PP) No. 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), are protested by some groups of people because they believe that this is intended to weaken people's faith.

During the pandemic, where students run distance learning (PJJ), internet and social media penetration has increased. This includes the consumption of religious information in cyberspace. This is one of the doors for spreading religious fundamentalism and recruiting extremist groups (Avis, 2020; Naseer, 2020; Kerchove, 2020).

The Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) conducted a survey called "Young People and COVID-19: Believing in Diversity, We Are Strong—Believing in Hoax, We Fall".

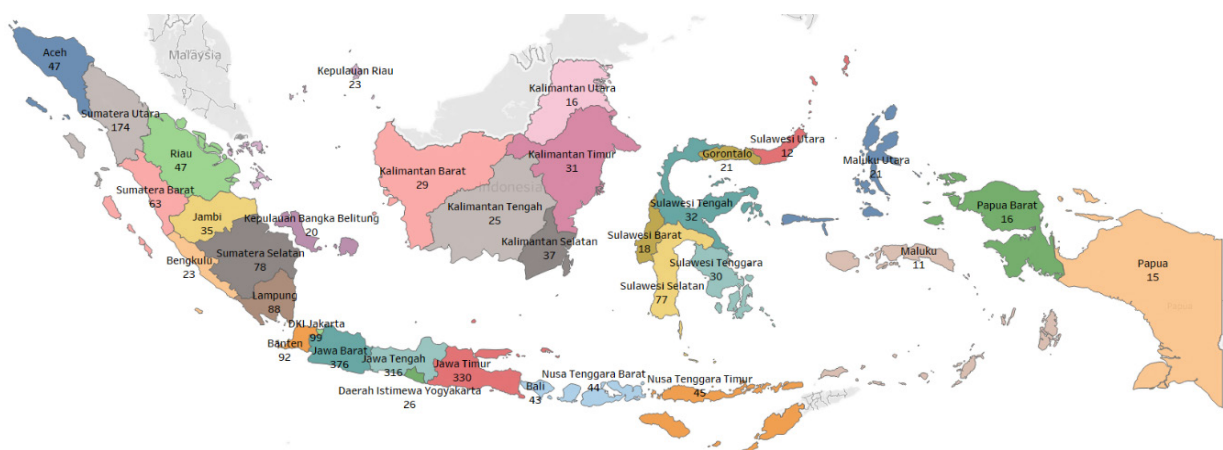


Figure 1. Sample distribution for the 2021 Indonesian Student Survey

Research Methodology



ANALYSIS UNIT

Indonesian senior high school students from different religions



SAMPLE

3031 students and **2358 (passing attentional checker)**



LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE

Margin of error 2,02%
Level of Confidence by 95%



QUALITY CONTROL

Two questions for Attentional Checker



THE PERIOD OF SURVEY

September 1–
October 7, 2021



DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics and Regression Analysis

This survey was conducted nationally in 34 provinces with a probability sampling technique to represent Indonesian students. Data collection is carried out from September 1 to October 7, 2021, simultaneously in all research areas.

The target population includes all active students from various backgrounds in secondary schools under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. From the target sample of 3510 students, the realization of the sample reached 3031 students, with a response rate of 86.35%. Data quality assurance is carried out by checking the attention test results of two attentional checker items. Therefore, the analysis was only carried out on a sample of 2358 students who passed the attention test. With a final sample size of 2358, the analysis results contain a margin of error (MoE) of 2.02% with a 95% confidence level.

The Condition of Indonesian Youth

How do schools play a role in developing students' religious views, especially regarding pandemics, science, and disasters? Do Indonesian students have an adequate scientific view of what happened? Are Indonesian students able to sort out information in hoaxes and believe it? Does this affect their response to healthy behavior, complying with health protocols and vaccinations? These are some things that become essential notes regarding the condition of young Indonesians.

First

The health response in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic among young people still needs to be improved. The following is data on compliance with health protocols.

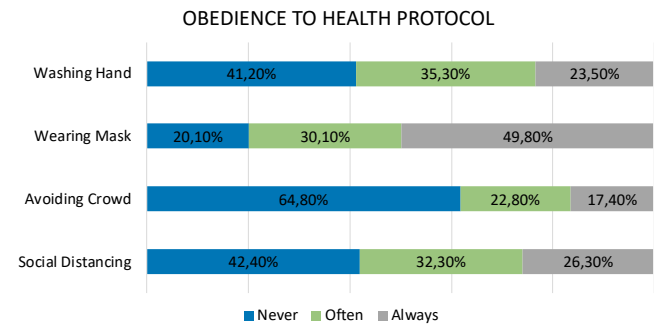
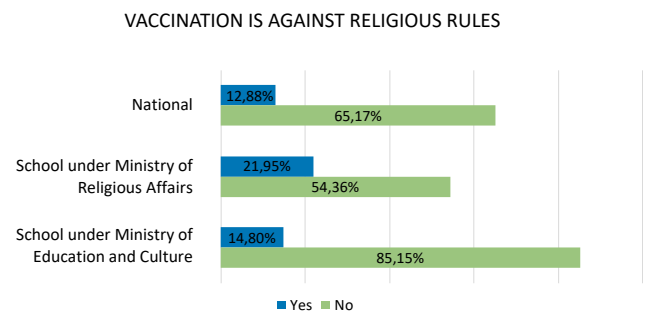


Figure 2. Description of obedience to health protocols for Indonesian students

Around 21.1% of students have not been consistent in wearing masks. Even more worrying figures were found in students' obedience to recommendations for washing hands with soap, avoiding crowds, applying social distancing, and undergoing vaccinations. The proportions of respondents who still ignore the recommendation to wash their hands and avoid crowds are 41.2% and 64.8%, respectively. In addition, 41.4% of respondents stated that they still have difficulty implementing social distancing.

In terms of vaccination, this survey shows that until the beginning of October 2021, the vaccination program among secondary students only reached 47.4% of students. Detailed vaccination data for school students under the Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Religious Affairs can be seen in the following figure:



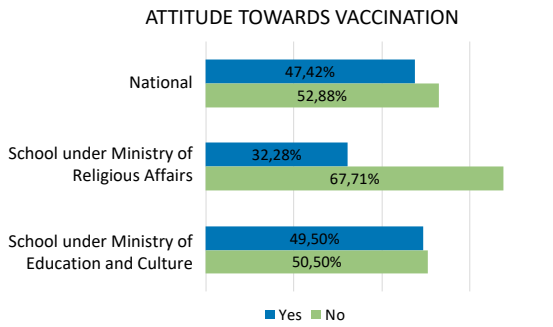


Figure 3. Vaccination and Views of Indonesian Students on Vaccination

From the picture above, it can be seen that many students still need to be vaccinated. Further analysis showed that religious factors directly or indirectly affected student compliance in carrying out health protocols and vaccinations. Around 12.9% of respondents stated that vaccination is against religious teachings.

Second

The condition of Indonesian students regarding trust in hoaxes is shown in the following table:

Questions:

1. Covid-19 is just common flu declared dangerous for the benefit of certain parties
2. Hospitals intentionally claim patients are infected with Covid-19 to get incentives
3. Covid-19 is a biological weapon of developed countries to weaken developing countries

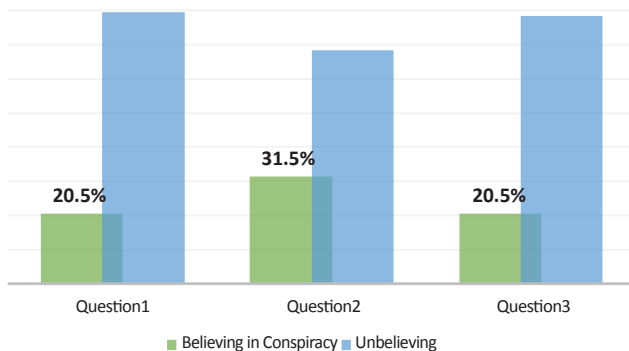


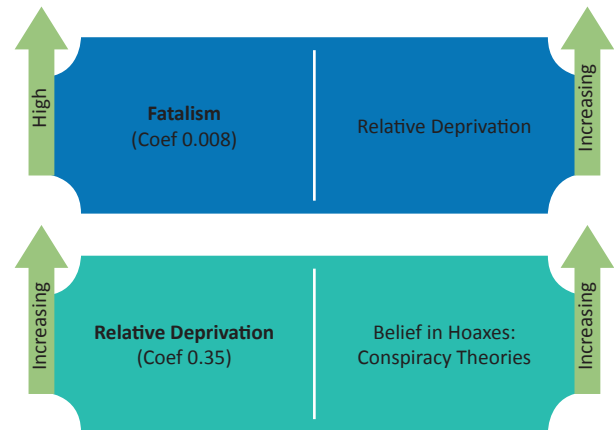
Figure 4. Belief in Conspiracy Theory of Indonesian Students

The survey results show that around 20% to 30% of respondents believe hoaxes or conspiracy theories related to COVID-19. For example, around 31.5% of respondents believed rumors that hospitals intentionally turned patients into COVID-19 patients to get costs for handling or handling COVID-19 patients provided by the government.

The results of the analysis on belief in hoaxes or conspiracy theories have a negative impact on student compliance in carrying out health protocols and healthy living behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. The higher the trust in hoaxes is, the lower the obedience to health protocols, healthy living behaviors, and vaccinations will be.

Third

Regarding the fatalism view of Indonesian students, the PPIM 2021 survey results show that as many as 39% of students believe that the COVID-19 pandemic is a punishment from God. In addition, about 48% of respondents have a fatalistic attitude, and even they believe that human efforts do not mean much because God has determined everything, including health.



Controlled by variables of religions, parent income, and the perception of the fatalism of Covid-19

Figure 5. Correlation among Fatalism, Relative Deprivation, and Belief in Hoaxes

Regarding fatalism, the analysis results show that the fatalist view has a negative effect on healthy living behavior. Those with fatalist views also have a higher tendency to believe hoaxes or conspiracy theories.

Fourth

Indonesian students have a perception of group relative deprivation. Referred to the notion of relative deprivation from Ted Rober Gurr in the book "Why Men Rebel" (1970), relative deprivation is a gap which occurs and is perceived between the value expectation (value expectation) and the value ability (value ability) (Gurr, 1970). Perceptions of relative deprivation among religious groups also positively affect belief in hoaxes or conspiracy theories. Those who think that their

religious group is more economically disadvantaged than other religious groups have a higher tendency to believe in hoaxes or conspiracy theories than those who do not have this perception of relative deprivation.

Fifth

The trend of Islamism among Indonesian Muslim students shows that support for Islamism positively affects belief in hoaxes or conspiracy theories. Supporters of Islamism have a higher tendency to believe in hoaxes or conspiracy theories about COVID-19 than those who disagree

with the views of Islamism. The students' view of Islamism is higher for students who are active in religious activities at public schools/Islamic schools than those who are less active in religious activities.

The trend of findings generated through student surveys on Islamism in 2017 and 2021 in senior high school students in Indonesia shows the findings that we need to pay attention to. In 2017 and 2021, Islamism among Muslim students has relatively no significant decline. The following are the results of comparing the 2017 and 2021 data on Muslim student respondents.

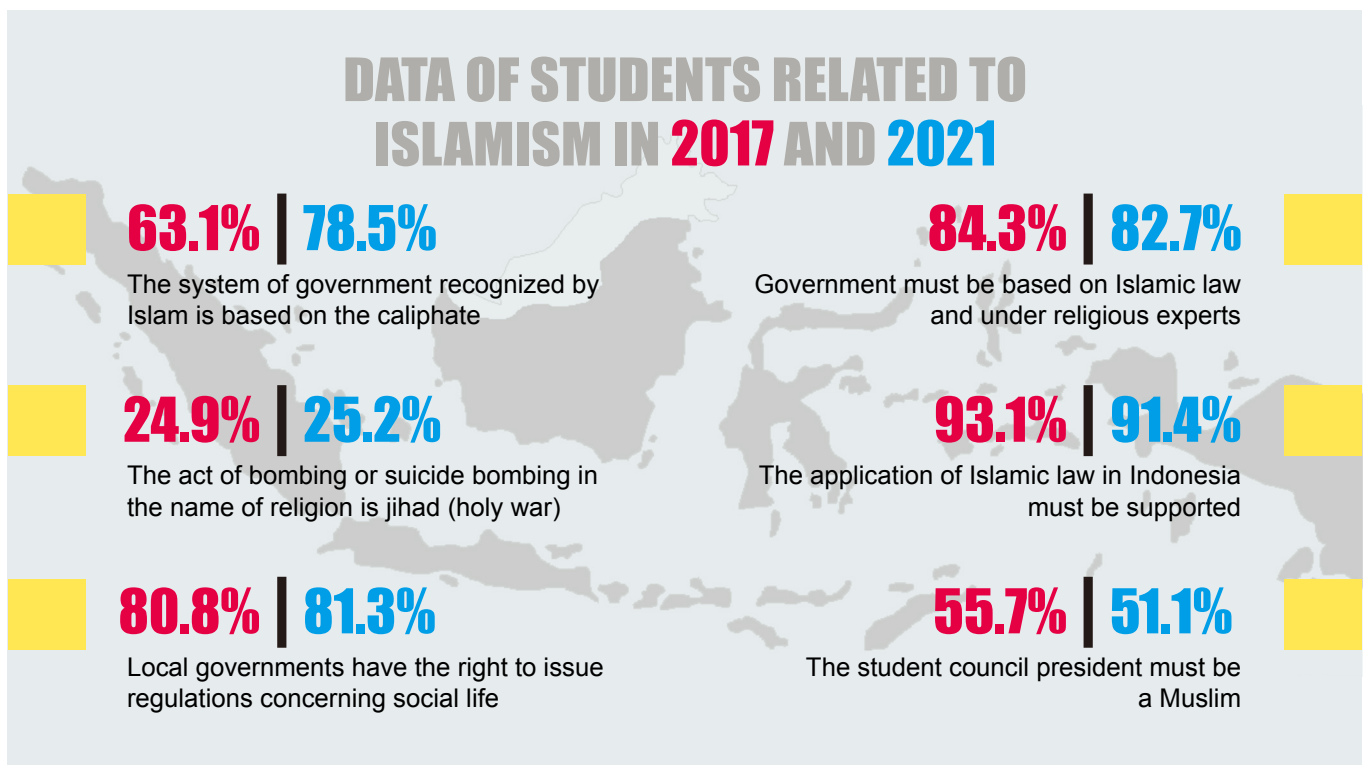


Figure 6. Islamism Trends of Muslim Students 2017 and 2021

Recommendation

Considering the influence of religious factors on students' discipline to health protocols and vaccination programs as well as healthy living behaviors, the government and schools need to involve Kiyai, Ulama, Ustadz, priests, monks, or other religious leaders to participate in reminding students and the public about the importance of health protocols and vaccinations to eliminate the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of religious leaders is also needed to prevent the spread of hoaxes or conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and minimize perceptions of group relative deprivation.

In the long term, systematic efforts to overcome the perception of relative deprivation among religious groups need serious attention from the government, schools, and the wider community. The perception of relative deprivation becomes fertile ground for the spread of hoaxes or conspiracy theories, negatively impacting joint efforts to overcome the pandemic.

Based on the mapping of various issues related to religion and the pandemic to Indonesian students, the following are several recommendations that can be offered:

1. The government, schools, and communities must make efforts to improve student compliance with health protocols and vaccination programs so that the COVID-19 pandemic can be immediately overcome. This survey indicates that school support positively impacts student compliance in carrying out health protocols. In the short term, schools collaborate with the government need to improve the facilities and infrastructure needed to enforce health protocols among students. In the long term, efforts and programs to improve the ability to think scientifically, think probabilistically, and think critically are one of the scholarly output targets for Indonesian students.
2. Regarding the intervention on hoaxes and feelings of relative deprivation in students, digital literacy strategies are needed for students. Students' awareness about the importance of health protocols and vaccinations to end the pandemic must also be increased. Valid information about Covid-19 needs to be promoted so that students are not easily confused by hoaxes or conspiracy theories.
3. The high level of Islamism requires the planned intervention of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture with strategic programs, such as revitalizing school religious activities and increasing collaborative work with different groups. Programs such as live-ins can be initiated for collaboration purposes with certain outputs that high school students can achieve. For example, live-ins for various high school students can be promoted to improve elementary students' reading comprehension skills, basic mathematical reasoning, or ready-to-use skills in the frontier, outermost and least developed regions or other forms of output that also enhance problem-solving in education.
4. The students' attitude toward Islamism, which is also influenced by extracurricular activities related to spirituality, also needs to get the attention of the public schools/Islamic schools. Planned and strategic interventions are needed for religious activities. For example, the ministries provide alternative guides for religious programs that include introducing the concept of diversity from various religious/belief backgrounds, genders, regional origins, and students' economic levels through student problem-based projects. The strategy can also be done by providing incentives for religious activities collaborating with different religious/belief groups. Incentives can be given to supervising teachers or religious administrators in public schools/Islamic schools.
5. One strategy to reduce the perception of student relative deprivation is the need to optimize internet facilities for students throughout Indonesia in order to reduce inequality among Indonesian students. In addition, there is a need for policies that involve social media influencers to reduce exposure to various social inequalities and economic aspects.



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Gedung PPIM UIN Jakarta
Jalan Kertamukti No. 5 Ciputat Timur, Tangerang Selatan, Banten 15419 Indonesia
Tel: +62 21 7499272 | Fax: +62 21 7408633 | E-mail: pmu.convey@gmail.com | Website: <https://conveyindonesia.com>

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