

# The Religious Practices of Indonesian Students Studying in Turkey

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**Abstract:** The practice of religion for Indonesian students studying in Turkey deserves the attention of academics. This is because conditions, student backgrounds, distance and time differences between two countries can be factors in the fluctuations in the practice of religion for students. This research aims to prove whether Indonesian students in Turkey still consistently implement Islamic teachings. This research uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach to obtain in-depth data and information findings. The data collection technique used was interviews. The interview aspect is an important factor for student informants, to explore in detail and in depth about religious practices in Turkey. The research findings show that 1) Indonesian students still practice Islamic teachings while in Turkey, 2) Students use Islamic teachings and values as guidelines for carrying out daily activities and activities in Turkey, and 3) Students believe that religion is the basic motivation and guidance for life. strong and persistent in completing studies in Turkey.

**Keywords:** Practice, Religion, Students

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian students studying in Turkey vary in their religious practices due to various factors, including cultural background, religious beliefs, and their level of social involvement in Turkish society. However, because Türkiye's population is predominantly Muslim, Indonesian students usually find an environment that supports Islamic religious practices. Students who are Muslim will usually pray five times a day at campus mosques or other available places of worship (Siswanto, 2019). They may also engage in activities related to religion, such as studying, reading books, or talking about religion. Likewise, what usually happens is that Indonesian students in Turkey often form Muslim communities or join existing religious groups. This provides an opportunity for them to help each other and share religious experiences.

Students receive social support from members of the Muslim community who share the same religious beliefs and principles. This can help students feel closer to home and feel comfortable in their new environment. Religious communities allow students to share experiences and knowledge about religious practices. This can help them understand and overcome difficulties they may face in the new environment.

The Muslim community in Turkey often holds religious events such as recitations, seminars, and social activities that focus on Islamic values, which gives students the opportunity to engage in religious activities together.

For example, some students may follow religious traditions, such as Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha, by fasting and breaking the fast with the surrounding Muslim community. Furthermore, Indonesian students in Turkey can participate in religious organizations inside and outside school. Student can attend seminars, workshops, or religious events held by organizations.

Workshops can cover a variety of topics, such as religious ethics (Sutarjo, 2023), procedures for worship, or the application of Islamic values in everyday life, which provides an opportunity for students to learn more about their religious practices in Turkey.

Additionally, some religious organizations in Türkiye may hold discussions or events that encourage conversation between religions. This provides an opportunity for students to participate in positive conversations and understand a variety of religious views. Religious organizations can also do good things for society, such as raising funds for charities, visiting orphanages, or other activities.

Some students may incorporate religious studies into their semester curriculum or take additional classes on the Islamic religion to deepen their understanding. Likewise, in general, Indonesian students in Turkey often comply with religious regulations in their daily lives and wear appropriate clothing, such as the hijab for women or other Islamic clothing.

Universities in Turkey offer religious courses or additional classes to students, including Indonesian students. These courses are intended to enhance students' understanding of the Islamic religion or to gain a better understanding of a particular aspect of religious studies (Alvizar, 2023).

Like the Qur'an Understanding Course, students can study Islamic law, moral values, and the historical context of the Qur'an. They can also study tafsir Al-Qur'an, which means the explanation or interpretation of the text of the Koran. Hadith and Islamic History courses, or Hadith and Islamic History courses, can help students gain a better understanding of the life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the development of Islam, and important events in history.

A comparative religious studies course may involve comparing Islam with other religions, providing an understanding of the similarities and differences between religious beliefs. The Islamic Ethics course focuses on Islamic ethics and can help students understand the moral principles and behavior held by Muslims. The Spirituality and Everyday Life course may discuss how Islamic religious teachings can be integrated into everyday ethical and spiritual practices.

Considering the importance of religious activities for Indonesian students in Turkey, it is important to conduct research that discusses in detail their activities while in Turkey. Due to conditions far from Indonesia, it is not possible for students to be able to survive and carry out religious activities in Turkey. Through this research, it is hoped that there will be a clear picture of the forms of religious practice and concepts in carrying out Islamic religious activities wherever they are.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this research is a qualitative research method with a case study approach. In-depth case study of several Indonesian student respondents in Türkiye from the survey who may have unique perspectives or experiences. This can provide deeper insight into the context and elements that influence each student's response (Wiradi, 2020).

The case study approach uses data collection techniques by interviews. Interviews were conducted with five students who were asked in-depth questions to answer a series of research questions conducted. The results of the answers become data that is processed and analyzed so as to obtain significant results for developing knowledge about Islamic religious practices for Indonesian students who are studying in Turkey.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the results of research on five student informants, a picture of the research results can be seen based on questions asked and answered clearly and openly. The researcher asked about the conditions and situation of the socio-cultural and linguistic environment in Türkiye? Hanifah answered that Turkish citizens have good *hospitality* and are friendly even towards foreigners, especially Indonesians. Seeing that young people's interactions in Türkiye are more free and open than in Indonesia. Local residents rarely speak English.

Meanwhile, Abdul answered that Turkish people tend to be blunt in communicating, Turkish food lacks variety, it is quite difficult to adapt because of being an introvert. And Annisa added that she rarely associates with local Turkish residents, but is known to be kind and friendly. Good transportation and easy access to campus and traveling. Many people keep and love dogs on the streets even though they are Muslims and wear the hijab, a sight that is not common in Indonesia.

This was reinforced by Ariq who stated that compared to Indonesia, he once thought that Turkish people were very religious, in fact they were more free and open than in Indonesia. It was a *culture shock* to see a woman wearing a headscarf smoking. Find a very active nightlife, especially in neighborhoods near campus. The neighbors are nice and friendly .

From the informants interviewed, it can be concluded that Indonesian students have different perceptions from what they believed before they left for Turkey. This indicates that you should not be too quick to conclude something that you don't yet know precisely. So this answer is a reinforcement to always learn to adapt appropriately (Suharsono & Anwar, 2020).

The researcher then asked about what the atmosphere of the academic environment in Turkey was like . Hanifah answered The atmosphere of the academic environment in Bursa is different from that in Istanbul where the student body is more diverse. Abdul added Because studying at a branch campus, students' social circle tends to be smaller, academic activities involve a lot of practice because of the level . Meanwhile, Annisa considers that the academic environment is quite conducive for studying because it is far from busy big city centers.

Audrey added that studying Turkish is quite difficult, but assignments are rarely given. It's hard to get along with Turkish students . This is confirmed by the fact that he is able to follow the lecture process even in Turkish, and has quite a lot of Turkish friends on campus .

The researcher continued the question about whether educational institutions in Turkey require students to be able to speak Turkish . Hanifah answered that Turkish is mandatory, but because of the Masters program, there are also lecturers who teach English . This is different from Abdul, Annisa, Audrey, and Ariq who study completely in Turkish.

Then the researcher asked about the family background of students in Turkey . Hanifah admitted that she was born to parents who were also graduates, Muslim, her father worked as a lecturer at the Indonesian Islamic University in Yogyakarta, her mother was a housewife . Meanwhile, Abdul was born to parents who were also graduates, Muslim, his father was a retired employee of BUMN Telkom, his mother was a housewife .

Annisa was born to parents who were also graduates, of the Islamic faith , her father and mother were entrepreneurs in the catering sector . Meanwhile, Audrey was born to a mother who was also a graduate, her father was a high school graduate, she was Muslim , her father worked as a private employee, and her mother was a housewife . Then Ariq was born to parents who studied for master's degrees, were Muslim, his father worked as an Indonesian OJK employee, and his mother was a retired bank employee .

From looking at the background of the informants, it can be seen that they come from educated families and understand how to carry out religious teachings correctly. This matter is an important note that student background is a guide or benchmark for measuring the level of awareness in implementing the teachings of the Islamic religion (Tonasa, 2022).

ask questions about the background of Indonesian students in Turkey . Hanifah answered that she had been an exchange student in Istanbul for 6 months while studying undergraduate, now she has only returned to Turkey for 3 months to study Masters in Bursa. Currently still living in a student dormitory as a YTB scholarship recipient. State High School graduate.

Abdul added that he was in his 6th year in Turkey, studying at his own expense, living with other Indonesian students in a flat owned by Indonesian citizens . Annisa is the same way, she has been in Turkey for 5 years, studying at her own expense, living in a rented house with other Indonesian students, living in Gorukle Bursa but studying at the Inegol campus (covering a distance of 40 K M every day). Abdul and Aniisa with their respective high school backgrounds at Islamic boarding schools .

Audrey also added that she had been in Turkey for 5 years, studying at her own expense, living in a rented house alone. The same thing with Ariq that he is I've been in Turkey for 6 years, studying at my own expense, living in a rented house with other students.

The researcher continued to ask questions about the intentions and goals of students studying in Turkey. Hanifah said that I continued my Masters studies in Turkey because I received a scholarship from the Turkish government, I was more familiar because I had been an exchange student in Turkey. In contrast to Abdul, Annisa and Ariq who chose to study in Turkey based on advice from their parents. Audrey added that her goal was because she was not accepted at a state university in Indonesia, so she chose to study in Turkey based on recommendations from friends and parents.

The researcher continued to ask whether there were any obstacles faced by Indonesian students in Turkey. Each informant answered that the main obstacle to studying in Türkiye was the language problem. Even though he has been studying for a long time, he is not yet fluent in Turkish. This indicates that language skills are the main factor in educational success in Turkey (Lubis, 2018).

The researcher continues to ask if there are obstacles faced, how do Indonesian students deal with them? Hanifah and Abdul answered with the same understanding that they were still studying Turkish, getting used to communicating with Turkish people.

This is reinforced by Annisa, who is sure that she will continue to get used to speaking Turkish. When there are problems with local residents, she asks other friends who are more fluent in Turkish to communicate with her. And Audrey added a method by recording the lecturer's voice while teaching to listen again and correct notes. Therefore, Arif always tries to get used to speaking Turkish, often chats with Turkish people in his neighborhood and friends on campus, using a translator application.

The researcher continued to ask questions about the religious background of Indonesian students in Turkey. Hanifah answered that her parents taught her the knowledge of the Islamic religion and its religious practices from childhood, supported by religious lessons at school and Islamic teaching courses. This was reinforced by Abdul, Annisa, Audrey and Ariq that they attended Islamic boarding schools with more intense Islamic religious lessons and a religious environment, so they were strong enough to carry out daily worship.

Researchers asked informants whether they had a good, strong and competent understanding of religion. Each informant claimed to have a good and strong understanding of religion, obtained from family and school teachings. This shows that family factors are the most dominant in determining and familiarizing every human being with religious experiences (Juanda, 2022).

How Indonesian students practice worship and religious values in Turkey. Hanifah answered that she continues to pray five times a day, fasts in the month of Ramadan, participates in congregational tarawih at the local mosque, takes part in online studies. Abdul also added that he carried out Friday prayers according to the teachings of the Hanafi school of thought in Turkey, and participated in congregational tarawih at the local mosque.

Apart from that, Annisa also participated in the monthly I slam study and discussion group (stopped because her teacher returned to Indonesia). And Audrey has also taken part in halaqah studies. Then Ariq added that he still prays tarawih prayers more often alone at home. From the informants' answers above, it can be concluded that they practice Islamic teachings consistently. There is nothing different and no one has changed, this is because the informants have been accustomed to carrying out worship from an early age.

Researchers also asked informants whether there were any discussions or lectures on religious values for Indonesian students in Turkey. From the answers gathered, everyone said yes and had. This shows that interactions and dialectics of religious scholarship are still ongoing for Indonesian students. This is an important point as a reinforcement and reminder to remain consistent in practicing the Islamic religion.

Researchers also asked how to strengthen the religious values of Indonesian students in Turkey. Hanifah answered that she would continue to maintain and carry out her worship according

to her parents' orders, maintaining her parents' trust . Abdul answered that he did not miss obligatory acts of worship such as prayer, fasting and reciting the Koran. Communicate regularly with parents. Having a foster mother from Indonesia who can remind and advise .

Annisa also added the importance of reminding each other together with friends to worship and practice Islamic values in everyday life . And Audrey also emphasized maintaining the five daily prayers and other acts of worship, improving one's quality in worship, starting from practicing the sunnahs regularly to get used to them. Be present at the recitation if there is one.

This was reinforced by Ariq to continue practicing restraint so as not to be easily influenced by relationships that are contrary to the Islamic religion, not to miss obligatory acts of worship such as prayer and fasting, to always remember the messages and beliefs of his parents while living far from them.

From the answers of the informants above, it can provide strong data and information that students in Turkey are still trying their best to practice Islam and maintain Islamic values in their daily activities. Continuing to carry out this worship is part of consistency in implementing Islamic teachings as a Muslim (Kaputra et al., 2021).

When asked to the informants whether understanding religious values and their practice is capital and provision for Indonesian students in Turkey to survive in completing their education . Each time they said yes emphatically. This is information from research findings that Indonesian Muslim students still use religion as a basis for their activities in the academic world to pursue graduation on their respective campuses.

Researchers also asked whether there were students who chose to drop out, quit and return to Indonesia without completing their education . Hanifah answered that she hadn't found it yet . Meanwhile, Abdul, Annisa, Audrey, and Ariq answered in the same way that several of their friends had stopped studying in Turkey. The reason was because he had not completed his Turkish language education and was also sick.

Furthermore, the researchers also asked whether there were students who persisted and were able to complete their education, whether it was due to their strong understanding of religious values . Hanifah answered correctly because mental and spiritual readiness is very influential in carrying out daily life as a student in a foreign country.

And the final question asked by the researchers to the informants was how much influence the strengthening of the religious values of Indonesian students in Turkey had . Hanifah answered that strengthening and providing religious values is very influential as self-control when socializing in foreign environments. Abdul added that without strengthening religious values, they might have engaged in free sex and other negative relationships.

Meanwhile, Annisa answered that strong religious values can be a benchmark for choosing relationships, especially away from parental control . And Audrey emphasized that the value of religion as a provision for living in a foreign environment, especially far from parents, becomes self-motivation too . Then Ariq answered that it has a very big influence because religious values can be a guide and self-confidence so that you don't get stressed easily, as a form of self-control in socializing.

From the informant's answers above, it indicates that religious values are very influential in becoming a life shield that wards off negative influences and strengthens positive influences in carrying out activities based on Islamic religious law (Hartati, 2021). This is done by Indonesian students in Türkiye consistently and seriously. Thus, it can be a research finding that Islamic religious values among Indonesian students are still well maintained.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In forming religious values for students in Turkey, they need to be constantly reminded and motivated to be consistent. Indonesian students need consistency in upholding Islamic teachings and values wherever they are. Because Islamic teachings and values are able to protect oneself from maintaining religion through worship and also as a protector from bad actions.

The research findings above found information that the religious practices of students in Türkiye are still maintained and well maintained. Although it does not rule out the possibility that there are still some students who have not implemented religious teachings optimally. These findings provide a basis for Indonesian students to continue to work together to invite and remind their fellow students to implement Islamic teachings as well as possible.

In this way, the form and practice of Islamic teachings among Indonesian students in Turkey will still be maintained until they return to their origins. This shows that distance and time are not reasons for abandoning Islamic religious law. Thus, the form of Islamic practice of Indonesian students in Türkiye should be maintained, supported and socialized to the Indonesian people.

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