

# Coping with Negative Attitude Toward Muslim in The Netherlands and Germany: The Role of Religious Moral Values among Indonesian Migrants

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## Coping with Negative Attitude Toward Muslims in The Netherlands and Germany: The Role of Religious Moral Values among Indonesian Migrants

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**Abstract.** Since the terrorist attacks in several countries in Europe, little is known about how Muslims, as a minority group, in Netherlands and Germany cope with the challenges associated with engaging their religious practices in a predominantly nonIslamic context. This study aims to investigate how Indonesian Muslims migrants dealt with the difficulties they faced in their religious practices in a foreign context, and specifically in their communities and in the wider Dutch and German society with its pluralistic spiritual beliefs. Eleven male and female Muslim migrants from Indonesia were recruited to participate in a qualitative interview. In terms of conventional content analysis, their adjustment issues were related to their religious issues, including gender roles both inside and outside of the work place, undesirable practices relating to prayer needs, and consuming halal foods and having to face several social prejudice off the work places and learning rooms. Two types of major adaptation strategies were identified for dealing with such struggles, including religious coping through their Islamic beliefs and moral values. Their major concerns about religious practices (e.g., praying 5 times per day and nawafil prayers) were resolved by communicating their needs directly with their advisors; however, they navigated the gender boundaries in the community through their Islamic beliefs. The practical implications regarding counseling are discussed both in a local and a global context.

**Keywords:** islamic moral values, religious coping, migrants

### INTRODUCTION

The present research examines evidence from a unique data set involving Indonesian muslims migrants samples of the Netherlands and Germany population. It examines how contact and psychological threats relate to prejudice toward Muslims in Netherlands after the 7/7 London bombings.

Muslims are an obvious target of openly hostile prejudice in Western societies (Brown et al., 2012). Testimony from diverse Pew Global surveys proves this argument. In 2005, across European countries, there were high levels of prejudice. For example, 51% of Dutch respondents reported holding unfavorable attitudes toward Muslims (Pew Research Center, 2005). In Pew's telephone interviews in the United Kingdom, 14% of respondents reported feeling unfavorable (Valasco Gonzalez, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008), and by 2008 the proportion had increased to 27% (though these figures include Muslim respondents; Pew Research Center, 2008). (Abrams, Van de Vyver, Houston, & Vasiljevic, 2017).

Over the past decade, a significant number of studies have been conducted to investigate the experiences of minority ethnic groups with Islamic beliefs in North America, Europe, and Australia, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001

The studies, conducted in Western Europe and the United States, have indicated that such groups often experience discrimination and prejudice against their religious practices, and have faced a rise in the level of negative attitudes toward them (Vedder, Wenink, & Geel, 2017).

Since several attacks of terrorist, little is known about how Muslims, as a minority group, cope with the challenges associated with engaging their religious practices in a predominantly non-Islamic context in western Europe, especially Netherlands and Germany.

This study aims to investigate how Indonesian Muslim migrants dealt with the difficulties they faced in their religious practices in Netherlands and Germany, and specifically in their community and their work places and in the wider Western Europe society with its pluralistic spiritual beliefs.

Islamic Moral Religious values as a tool to enhance coping strategies (using Islamic moral religion to deal with

life experiences) involves a range of religiously based cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal responses.

The former involves turning to religion for meaning and support whereas the latter refers to religious struggle and doubt. In general, positive religious coping has been found to be associated with desirable mental health outcomes whereas negative religious coping has been found to be linked to psychological distress (for a review see Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2015).

this manuscript will address the following question: "Can the Islamic moral values response positively toward negative attitude?

muslims migrants face increased levels of prejudice, which is related with poor mental health. This study explores the use of Islamic moral values for mental health promotion and the wellness of Indonesian muslims in Netherlands and Germany.

Thus, the religious practices of Muslims surrounded by non-muslims majority social settings of Netherlands and Germany, a nation with pluralistic beliefs, provide a unique opportunity through which to advance our understanding of human adaptation to diversely complex and unfamiliar environments.

### Muslim Migrants' Adjustment to a Predominantly Non-Islamic Society

In recent studies, international Muslim migrants have expressed their experiences of being discriminated against in the Western countries, on account of their religious backgrounds, raising their concerns about the fears they face as members of a religious minority (Abrams et al., 2017; Vedder et al., 2017).

As part of an international migrants, Indonesian Muslim migrants not only face the common adjustment issues often encountered by other international migrants (e.g., language barriers, homesickness, and social prejudices), but also must learn how to deal with the psychological struggles related to their religious practices in a predominantly non-Islamic society (Chen, Liu, Tsai, & Chen, 2015).

The attitudes of local people toward Indonesian Muslim migrants and immigrants in their host society could have a significant influence on their adaptation. For example,

Indonesian Muslim migrants in Europe especially Netherlands often encounter a lack of understanding, respect or support for their religious practices (e.g., there are no available job schedules to account for their prayer needs).

According to a literature review and a survey concerning religious beliefs in Netherlands and Germany, a large majority of people in Netherlands have pluralistic spiritual beliefs incorporating Christian, Catholics Buddhism, and Confucianism, whereas a relatively small proportion of the population is Muslims. Although the rise in negative attitudes toward Muslims in North America and Europe may not be replicated in Netherlands and Germany Islamic beliefs and practices may be regarded as elements of an unfamiliar religion by some European.

Thus, Muslims may not be accepted and treated with admiration and solemnity, and sometimes they may even face discrimination in Netherlands

However, little research has been conducted to investigate the adjustment issues faced by international Muslim migrants especially Indonesian muslims in terms of integrating in the communities, campuses and the workplaces where most people will have different spiritual beliefs to their own.

Nonetheless, few studies have considered male migrants in such fields in foreign contexts as a minority group that could experience vulnerability to additional negative emotions and stresses

Thus, this study aims to examine the religious adjustments made by male and female Muslim migrants in countries in a predominantly non-Islamic workplaces and in wider society in Netherlands and Germany, because among the growing number of international migrants in Europe many are Muslims from the Middle East, Indonesian, Morocco, and other countries

A group of Indonesian Muslim migrants in Netherlands and Germany was chosen because Indonesia is home to more than 212.7 million Muslims, which is the largest number of any nation (Roudi-Fahimi, May, & Lynch, 2013).

## METHOD

### *The Identification of Research Variables*

The variables being examined in this research are negative attitude and religious moral value. The variables in this research are:

#### 1. Negative Attitude

Negative attitude is an attitude which can cause stress. It is a kind of stress which may result to tendency to run away, to dodge and to think negatively.

#### 2. Moral religious value is part of positive religious coping and belief that god is the almighty and the strongest will help strengthening someone's faith. Someone who holds this belief will try to seek help from mufti or religious figure or another religious support from someone else. In contrast, negative religious coping is indicated with enmity to god and decision not to get in touch with any religious community.

This research is a case study which uses qualitative method. The subject of this research are eleven people, nine from Netherlands and two from Germany. They are Indonesian immigrants who have been living in the Netherlands for at least six months. The subjects have consented to participate in this research.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Result*

This research was conducted in several cities in the Netherlands and Germany. The search of research subject was

done in Amsterdam, Utrecht, Leiden, Ilmenau (Germany) and Den Haag. From 30 people whom the researcher met, there were only 11 people who were fully willing to give complete and detailed information. Thus, the researcher conducted this case study with those eleven respondents. All participants understood that the previous war between Indonesia and Dutch could ignite the intergroup problem (Kteily, Hodson, & Bruneau, 2016; Vedder et al., 2017; Voci & Hewstone, 2017)

#### Case 1

In case number one, the main subject was referred to as "Odo" together with his eight friends. Odo had been living in Utrecht for more than five years. He was a worker and married to Indonesian who had become a permanent resident in the Netherlands. This marriage eased him to get residence and working permit. He had many committed Muslim friends who had strong eagerness to practice and defend Islamic teaching. They met quite rarely, twice a month because his friends lived separately. Some lived in Amsterdam, Den Haag and Leiden. Thus, in order to gather, they need to spend much money. It was because transportation cost in the Netherlands was far more expensive than it was in Indonesia unless they were permanent customer.

Odo often advised his friends when they met. Particularly for those who suffered from stress caused by negative attitudes from the local people. Although, his friends had been living there for years, they still felt acculturative stress very often both in terms of religion and culture. Many Muslim friends who were studying there did not seem to have problems with language but problem with religion was still unavoidable. Thus Odo often gave them some advices mostly concerning how to get along with people around them by practicing moral religious teaching.

Odo recited some verses of Koran in order to remind his friends their obligations toward Allah, community, and family. Save your selves and your family from the hell fire. Those who obey Allah and his messenger, heaven is his place but those who did not will receive suffer and punishment in return. It seemed that the concept of reward and punishment was good enough to motivate his friends to always devote to Allah.

One of Odo important friend is M. M is a good Arabic language reader. He was a good reciter too. He recited Koran and Hadith to his friend very often. The hadith he often recites was from Ibn Majah. Although living in Den Haag, he had a good understanding about hadith. The hadith he recited worked very effectively to help his friend cope religiously. He spoke English and Dutch quite well. It was seen when he was accepted to a college and course program related to his working expertise.

M told the researcher that many of his friends did not have residence permit. Even in many cases, they fake the documents such as passport in order to get back to the Netherlands. He stands before his friends to advise them. A who preached (using Arabic Language) in Jumah prayer with only one congregation stated that all salutations to Allah, who gave us advice, indeed we cannot be in right path if He does not bless us with his mercies and guidance. This was seen as an expression of gratitude which we often see in many psychological research themed gratitude grateful or thankfulness. In his end of his preachment, he prayed for his friends as well as his leader to receive guidance from the almighty.

The obedience to authority was emphasized too. He recited surah an-nisa and said whomever obey Allah and his messenger, heaven will be the reward and whomever disobey him and his messenger and break the rule of Islam, hell will be the punishment. But this obedience needed to be explained alongside hadith they say. It is because obedience to Allah



written in Koran may not be well practiced by all Muslim in the world.

#### Case 2

In case number two, the research subject was referred to as Arif. Arif came to Germany accompanying his wife who studied there. He felt the necessities of holding religious moral in his daily life. Twice a month Arif gathered his friends to study Quran and hadith and try to find the good way to practice religious moral teaching without disturbing people around them.

It is accepted that emotion plays significant role in predicting negative attitude in a community. However, generally, negative attitude will only influence in certain condition. According to this theory, people can feel uncomfortable or clumsy in front of members of other communities mainly when there is significant difference (communities which have conflict history). For instance, Islam is accused of being the cause of conflict and bombing. They call this feeling as anxiety among groups or communities.

### DISCUSSION

8 Odo took his advices from the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. Qur'an and Hadith are very important for the psychological well being for the believers participants (Smither, 2009). When he met his friends in the formal meeting, he always talking about Islamic moral values, and how to put it into practice in Europe, especially in Netherlands. Actually some of his teaching matched with what we found in mudras (Olufadi, 2017). For example: muslims should avoid these immoral 4. havior not to bit bite, Riba' (usury or int 4. st) *suu udzan* Falsely suspecting others i.e., suspicion Encroaching on others privacies without permiss 4. (asaroqoh wal ghosbu. Al maysiru Gambling, attabdz 4. Waste resources e.g., food, money etc. syurbul khomri Use intoxicants like alcohol whether drinking, selling,. Cheating giving alms, feeding 4. ur neighbours . Fulfill your promise Pray for your pa 4. its Speak the truth in every situations. Obedience to parents Turn to God with sincere repentance or taubatannasuthaa Engage in Nawaafil (Optional prayers) Observe Salat (obligatory prayers) Observe at its right time often advised his friends when they met. Particularly for those who suffered from trauma caused by negative attitudes from local citizens or other migrants from different countries. Islamic religious moral values are among his choice to overcome problem. It is shown in the research that the religion has to do with the moral and behavior (Curtis, 2011). 6. ligious moral values are part of positive religious coping (Park et al., 2017; Tongeren et al., 2017). Although, his friends had been living there for years, they still felt stress very often both in terms of religion and culture. Many Muslim friends who were studying there did not seem to have problems with language but problem with religion was still unavoidable. Thus Odo often gave them some advices to deal with it. The advice usually concerning the benefits of religious moral to overcome the stress. Religious moral is always connected with vice and virtue (Ano, Pargament, Wong, & Pomerleau, 2017). One of Odo's friend felt that she was seen as an out group in his community. Being an out group is stressful (Karmali, Kawakami, & Page-gould, 2017).

In positive psychology, talking about reward and punishment, paradise and hell will enhance people's happiness (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Those who obey Allah and his messenger, heaven will be his place but those who did not will receive suffer and punishment in return. It seemed that the concept of reward and punishment was good enough to

motivate his friends to always devote to Allah. Moral emotions that their found in their scripture, are helpful to manage their stress (Hardy, Zhang, Skalski, Melling, & Brinton, 2014).

It is accepted that emotion plays significant role in predicting negative attitude in a community. However, generally, negative attitude will only influence in certain condition. According to this theory, people can feel uncomfortable or clumsy in front of members of other communities mainly when there is significant difference (communities which have conflict history). For instance, Islam is accused of being the cause of conflict and bombing. They call this feeling as anxiety among groups or communities.

According to socio-functional prejudice approach, emotion can give sign to potential treat which can help protecting someone from it. Muslims' prayers helped many Indonesian muslim migrantsto manage their emotion. The most important thing is emotion can contain tendency which stimulate someone to behave in specific manner to neutralize the treat. For instance, disgust is an emotional adaptive response towards treat of infectious disease (Avian influenza, Mouth herpes, HIV). It will stimulate someone to stay away from potential contaminant in order to prevent the danger.

This finding showed that emotion can mediate the threat felt and the behavior of out-group. However, this research focused on one emotional reaction to particular group after which the effect is tested with single variable.

This research is also to examine emotion at the same time in this context. The researcher want to show that minority group (Muslim) can awake some discrete emotion related to symbolic threat and negative stereotype. Besides, this emotion may be the cause of form behavior toward Muslim themselves. We found that some Indonesian migrants who committed to islam and who didn't have different moral values (Davis, Dooley, Hook, Choe, & Mcelroy, 2016).

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### Conclusion

Religious moral values brings benefit to overcome stress caused by negative attitudes among Indonesian Muslim immigrants who live in the Netherland and Germany. The coping used in this research is prayer, observance of sunnah and advice which are related the problem they face. Reciting and understanding Koran and hadith are also included in religious moral values which is part of positive religious coping strategy.

#### Suggestion

For the future research, it is advised that there will be greater effort to understand the life of immigrants more deeply specifically Muslim immigrants who are away from their family and how their positive.

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