

Statistics of Perception Role Ulama on Smoke-Free Policy: Can Implementation of Banda Aceh City?

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ABSTRACT

Background: Smoking control policies' effectiveness requires all parties' active role. In Aceh, as a region that implements Islamic law, religious leaders and ulama are an important part of the success of a policy, including the smoke-free area (SFA) policy. There is no research yet related to the ulama's involvement and role in Banda Aceh's SFA policy. **Objective:** Therefore, this research aims to examine the citizen's perception of the roles of religious leaders and ulama in supporting SFA policy in Banda Aceh City. A total of 202 respondents were randomly selected to provide their perceptions. **Methods:** This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, comprising a survey of perceptions followed by an in-depth literature review. **Results:** The research findings indicate that out of 202 respondents, 88.00 percent are aware of the Smoke-Free Areas (SFA) policy, with 85.64 percent strongly supporting its implementation. However, concerning the religious leaders' fatwas, only 34.65 percent are well-informed and understand about it. The involvement of religious leaders in policy formulation, dissemination, and monitoring exceeds 50.00 percent, although around 15 percent of respondents perceive a lack of involvement. **Conclusion:** Regarding the presence of smoke-free mosques and Islamic schools, the majority of the participants perceive it as still limited. 16.34 percent believe there are no smoke-free Islamic boarding schools, and 19.31 percent perceive that mosques in Banda Aceh are not yet smoke-free. The community also hopes that religious scholars will show a direct model by refraining from consuming cigarettes themselves.

Keywords: perception, religious leaders, smoke free

INTRODUCTION

Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh province in Indonesia, is a city with strong culture and religious values, especially in the context of Islamic laws. Religious orders and religious leaders or ulama colours citizen's daily activities, whether related to economics, culture or health. However, development and health issues still occur in Banda Aceh, such as the high number of smokers, especially youth smokers.

The high number of smokers in the city of Banda Aceh raises the question of where the ulama stand on this issue. Ulama are expected to pay special attention, either by issuing a fatwa or other recommendation or by setting a

direct example by not smoking. However, understanding the extent to which ulama can influence policy and behavior regarding cigarette consumption remains an important research focus.

The link between religion and health issues has been widely studied (Nonnemaker et al., 2006; Pabbajah et al., 2020; Rosemary, 2009). The role of religious leaders or ulama in the social life of urban communities has also been studied and shown have a strategic role (Abidin, 2017). Research related to the role of religious figures in smoking control policies has become the focus of social and health research (Irshad & Jampes, 2015). Practicing worship has been proven to reduce cigarette consumption or plans

to quit smoking (Alzyoud et al., 2015; Rios & Matias, 2021).

Previous studies show that the success of anti-smoking campaigns is often closely linked to support from local religious and community leaders. Therefore, understanding the public's perceptions and expectations regarding the role of ulama in controlling cigarette consumption can be an important first step in efforts to promote a healthier and more sustainable environment in the City of Banda Aceh.

Examining public perceptions of ulama's role in curbing cigarette consumption in Banda Aceh offers a unique lens into the region's social and cultural dynamics. This analysis not only enriches our understanding but also provides valuable insights for crafting more effective public health policies. By recognizing how the community views ulama as agents of change in reducing smoking, policymakers can design strategies that resonate with local values and norms. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the potential for diverse opinions among ulama themselves, which could pose challenges for a unified approach.

METHODS

Table 1. Survey Questions

Participation Levels	Questions
Issuance of Fatwa or Religious Statements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a fatwa regarding smoking activities 2. Fatwa is in line/per smoke free policy 3. Fatwa prohibits smoking 4. Fatwa suggests creating a place for smokers 5. MPU issues other documents related to KTR policy
Preparation and monitoring of policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ulama are involved in policy formulation 2. Ulama are involved in policy dissemination 3. Ulama are involved in monitoring policies 4. Ulama are involved in policy evaluation
Education and counseling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ulama plays an active role in educating the public regarding KTR policies 2. Ulama plays an active role in educating people about the dangers of smoking 3. Ulama plays an active role in encouraging people to live healthily without smoking
Community Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ulama build a community that cares about smoking policies or the dangers of smoking 2. Appeal from scholars regarding the dangers of smoking or other smoking issues 3. There are smoke-free Islamic boarding schools/religious places 4. There is a smoke-free mosque

Source: survey 2024

This research is quantitative with descriptive statistical data to see the public's perception of the role of the ulama in the smoke-free policy in Banda Aceh City. Data collection was carried out using a survey through the Google Form survey tool and processed using STATA and Excel applications. When the instrument is distributed, a research code of ethics is also attached, emphasizing that it will maintain the confidentiality of the personal identity of the sample respondents. The survey targeted several community groups, namely students, government employees, journalists, academics, activists/CSO members, ulama/religious leaders/students, and the citizens. The research sample was chosen randomly by distributing questionnaires via Google Forms, namely people who live in Banda Aceh City and are over 17 years old.

To get a deeper and broader response, the participants were also divided into three categories:

1. Citizen of Banda Aceh City and activities in Banda Aceh
2. Citizen Aceh Besar Regency but activities in Banda Aceh City
3. Not a citizen of Banda Aceh or Aceh Besar, but activities in Banda Aceh City

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics



This study has the responses of 202 respondents consisting of various groups of people in Banda Aceh City or another city. The largest number of respondents were students at 28.71 percent and the fewest were ulama/religious figures/students at 1.98 percent. Respondents are dominated by the 1981-1996 birth group at 37.62 percent and at least the alpha generation (born 2013 and above) at 0.99 percent. The distribution of male and female respondents is relatively balanced.

Table 2. The Respondent

Respondent	Freq.	Percent
<i>You are...</i>		
Activist of CSO	7	3.47
Academics	39	19.31
Citizen	43	21.29
Government employee	42	20.79
Student	58	28.71
Religious Leaders	4	1.98
Journalist	9	4.46
Total	202	100.00
<i>Born at...</i>		
1946 - 1964	3	1.49
1965 - 1980	51	25.25
1981 - 1996	76	37.62
1997 - 2012	70	34.65

2013 and above	2	0.99
Total	202	100.00
<i>Gender...</i>		
Male	99	49.01
Female	103	50.99
Total	202	100.00
<i>Citizens of...</i>		
Citizens of Banda Aceh City and activities in Banda Aceh	74	36.63
Citizen Aceh Besar Regency but activities in Banda Aceh City	67	33.17
Not citizen of Banda Aceh or Aceh Besar, but activities in Banda Aceh City	61	30.20
Total	202	100.00

Source: survey 2024

Citizen Perception of Smoke-Free Policy

The survey results show that the residents of Banda Aceh City fully support the implementation of the KTR policy even though they have different levels of understanding. As many as 43.56 percent of respondents knew well and 45.05 just knew. There were 9.41 not aware of the KTR policy in Banda Aceh City.

Table 3. The Understanding of Smoke-Free Policy and Fatwa of Band Aceh City

Response	About the Policy		About the Fatwa	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Understand well	88	43.56	70	34.65
Just understand	91	45.05	111	54.95
Hesitate	4	1.98	3	1.49
Do not understand	19	9.41	18	8.91
Total	202	100.00	202	100.00

Source: survey 2024

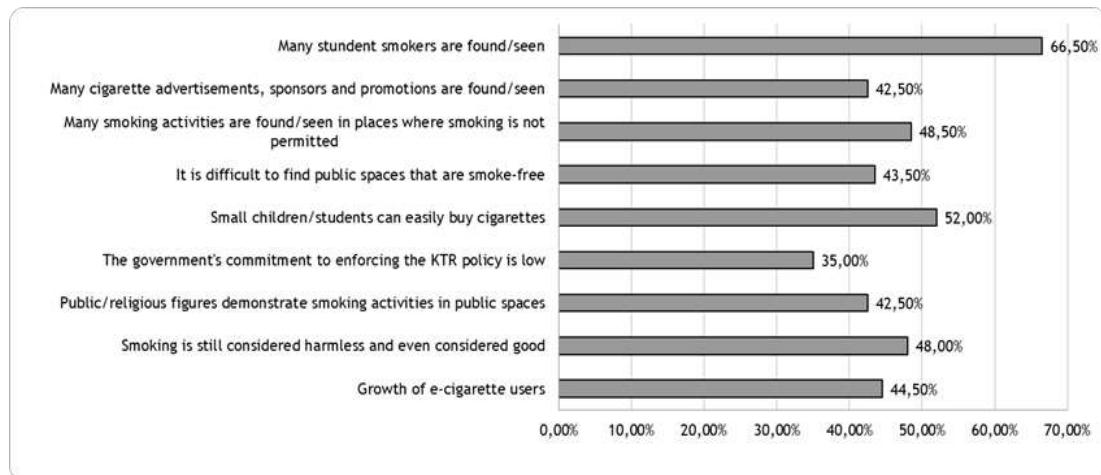
Table 4. The Support of Smoke-Free Policy in Banda Aceh City

Response	Support for Policy		Support for Fatwa	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Fully support	173	85.64	132	65.35
Support	25	12.38	64	31.68
Hesitate	2	0.99	2	0.99
Do not support	2	0.99	4	1.98
Total	202	100.00	202	100.00

Source: survey 2024

The result also shows the strategic issues related to smoking control in the city of Banda Aceh. The most common issue is youth smokers and 66.50 percent

of respondents choose it. Furthermore, respondents also consider the ease with which young children can buy cigarettes and the difficulty of finding smoke-free public spaces as the main issues.



Source: survey 2024

Graph 1. Perception on Issues of Cigarette Controlling in Banda Aceh City

Involvement of Ulama in the KTR Policy Process

The involvement of ulama in a policy is believed to be able to increase the effectiveness of the policy, specifically regarding public acceptance of the policy. More than 47.03 percent of respondents agree that ulama or religious leaders are considered to have been

involved in the policy process at the preparation stage. A similar response also shows for the engagement at, socialization/promotion (47.03 percent) and monitoring/evaluation (19.80). However, there are still people who believe that the ulama is not involved in any policy stages, with an average of response about 10 percent.

Table 5. Perception of Ulama Engagement on Smoke-Free Policy

Response	Policy Formulation		Socialisation and Promotion		Monitoring and Evaluation	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Engage fully	45	22.28	40	19.80	35	17.33
Engage	95	47.03	95	47.03	95	47.03
Hesitate	40	19.80	36	17.82	40	19.80
Don't engage	22	10.89	31	15.35	32	15.84
Total	202	100.00	202	100.00	202	100.00

Source: survey 2024

The Role of Ulama in Education and Counseling on KTR Policy

Ulama or religious leaders have become references in the development of social issues in Aceh. In Table 6, the response indicates that the role of the ulama in educating SF policy, providing

counseling, and making invitations or appeals is in the range of 40 percent. However, there was a group of respondents who considered that ulama had not/did not play a role in their capacity. This response was in the range of 23 to 25 percent.

Table 6. The Role of Ulama on Educating and Counselling SF Policy

Response	On Education		On Counselling		Appealing/Invitation	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Having strategic Role	33	16.34	29	14.36	35	17.33
Having role	84	41.58	82	40.59	82	40.59
Do not have role	48	23.76	50	24.75	51	25.25
Do not know/hesitate	37	18.32	41	20.30	34	16.83
Total	202	100.00	202	100.00	202	100.00

Source: survey 2024

The Role of Ulama in the Tobacco Control Community

Ulama can also get involved in the anti-smoking community. The survey results showed that around 50 percent of

participants thought that the ulama was involved in the community. Not only involved but also giving advice and lectures regarding the dangers of smoking. However, there are still many people who see that ulama are not involved in the community. There are

more than 25 percent of respondents who think that way. It is believed that ulama have a role in influencing society in the city of Banda Aceh, so they must set an example of behavior in complying with and participating in socializing smoke-free areas wherever they are.

Table 7. Engagement of Ulama in SF Community/Organization

Response	Community Engagement		Appealing about The Danger of Smoke		Sermon about The Danger of Smoke	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Many	13	6.44	17	8.42	20	9.90
Few	108	53.47	121	59.90	103	50.99
None	29	14.36	28	13.86	44	21.78
Do not know	52	25.74	36	17.82	35	17.33
Total	202	100.00	202	100.00	202	100.00

Source: survey 2024

Table 8. The Perception on Mosques and Islamic Schools that Smoke-Free

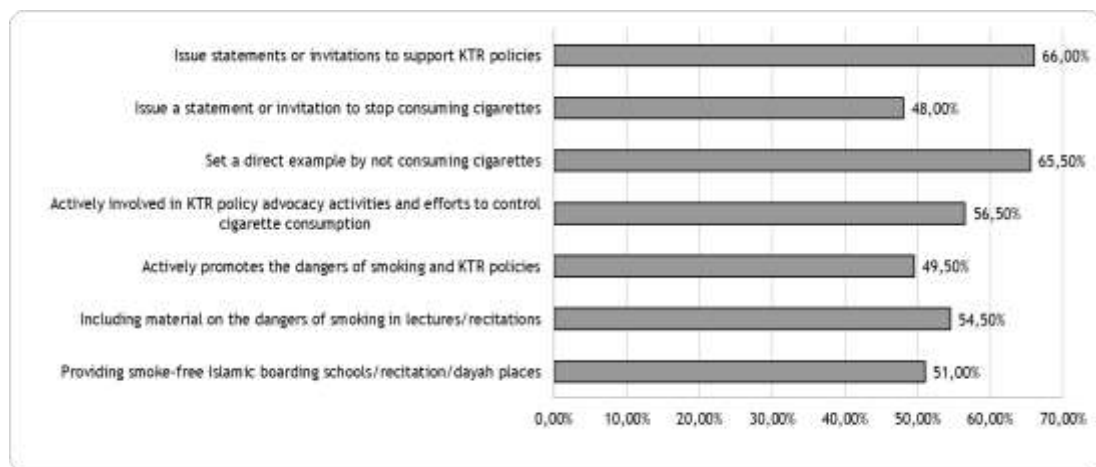
Response	Smoke-Free Islamic School/Quran Center		Smoke-Free Mosque/Praying Place	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Many	38	18.81	45	22.28
Few	75	37.13	86	42.57
None	33	16.34	39	19.31
Do not know	56	27.72	32	15.84
Total	202	100.00	202	100.00

Source: survey 2024

This study also perception mapping regarding the existence of smoke-free mosques and Islamic boarding schools in Banda Aceh City. The survey results showed that as many as 18.81 percent of respondents thought that there were many Islamic boarding schools/recitation places that were smoke free. However, around 27 percent of respondents did not know that there were Islamic boarding schools/recitation places that were

smoke-free. In fact, 16.34 percent thought that there were no smoke-free Islamic boarding schools.

An assessment is also given regarding whether there are already smoke-free mosques. Even though there were responses that thought it existed or was available, there were still 19.31 percent who thought it did not exist, and 15.84 percent did not know.



Source: survey 2024

Graph 2. The Expectation for Strengthening the Role of Ulama in SF Policy

Citizen Expectations on Ulama regarding Smoke-Free Policy

At the end of the survey, this study asked respondents to express their expectations for strengthening the role of the ulama in supporting the smoke-free policy in Banda Aceh. The highest expectation is for the ulama to issue more statements and appeal to the public to comply with Banda Aceh's SF Policy (66.00 percent). Further, the citizens also expect the ulama can be an example by not consuming cigarettes (65.50 percent). The third most important expectation is ulama will be more engaged in KTR advocacy activities and encourage the community not to consume cigarettes (56.50 percent).

Policy awareness is one of the foundations for the success of an SF policy. If the public already knows the existence and points of SF policy, it will be easier to implement it. In this study, we figured out that only 43.56 percent of respondents understand the policy. Likewise, with ulama fatwas, only 34.65 percent of respondents knew them well. This finding is supported by the Aceh Institute's FGD notes with ulama 2023-24 that many Acehese people do not know and are aware of a fatwa from Acehese ulama regarding smoking.

This study finds that the involvement of ulama must be carried out not only at the policy implementation stage but also starting from policy formulation. Research conducted by WHO shows that Religious leaders are key social players. That, without the involvement of ulama, several health policies may not be successful. FGD's notes from the Aceh Institute also state that the involvement of ulama in the smoke-free policy in Banda Aceh has only been intensified in the recent two years since the TC program was conducted by Aceh Institute.

This study finds that the role of the ulama in socializing SF policy and the dangers of smoking has occurred. However, previous research concluded that the role of ulama has not been seen as effective in socializing the dangers of smoking for health and supporting efforts to stop smoking in Banda Aceh City (Rosemary, 2009). There are still differences in views between ulama regarding smoking, causing dualism in society. In another study, a fatwa regarding smoking had limited impact in

Bogor. However, the normative influence of religion is still clearly visible, namely expecting their religious leaders to talk more about smoke-free policies (Byron et al., 2015).

Apart from involvement in policy, ulama is also involved in education and counseling about the dangers of smoking. Education has proven effective in increasing students' interest in quitting smoking (Ismail et al., 2021). Ulama are also involved in the tobacco/cigarette control community so they can contribute directly to the movement. The FGD's notes conducted by Aceh Institute show that ulama is willing to be invited to participate in many activities regarding cigarette controls in Banda Aceh City. Several religious leaders are willing to provide video statements or appeals to people to stay away from cigarettes.

The existence of a smoking fatwa will only be effective if the public has a high awareness (Chabiba, 2021). Fatwas are not necessarily capable of changing people's behavior or attitudes regarding health issues, for example in the case of Covid 19 (Pabbajah et al., 2020). For example, The Indonesian Ulama Council's statement regarding restrictions on worship gatherings was not fully followed by people who continued to worship in mosques and other places.

The role of ulama or religious figures is also seen in the increasing number of Islamic boarding schools/religious places that are already smoke-free. Even though the number is not large, there are already several mosques that are smoke-free because the management enforces KTR in the mosque area. FGD's notes from the Aceh Institute also show that the cleric or mosque administrator will ensure that the mosque follows these rules. Moreover, if there are SF stickers, they will completely prohibit worshipers from smoking in the mosque.

CONCLUSION

Through the research results, it can be concluded that the existence of smoke-free mosques and Islamic boarding schools in Banda Aceh is still limited. It is known that as many as 16.34 percent think that there are no smoke-free Islamic boarding schools, while 19.31 percent think that mosques in Banda Aceh are not smoke-free. The public also hopes that the ulama can set a direct example by

refraining from consuming cigarettes so that it is easier for many people to adapt.

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