Scientifically Unaccepted Beliefs on Traditional Health Care Using Energy Techniques

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Abstract

Practices that use methods that are not scientifically acceptable, such as psychics and traditional health services, are part of cultures in various parts of the world, tribes, races, and throughout the history of human civilization until now. This research uses a qualitative, phenomenological approach, which is based on the theory of "Scientifically Unaccepted Beliefs" developed by Harvey Irwin. The data collection process was carried out by interviewing individuals who were practitioners of traditional health using energy techniques. Authentication regarding participant practices is carried out by documenting official letters from the government of the Republic of Indonesia that acknowledge these practices. Based on data analysis carried out on the results of interviews with two participants, it is known that there are unique aspects in their lives that support the formation of beliefs about things that cannot be accepted scientifically. The research results also found that each participant had a certain motivation to carry out each service practice using methods that were not scientifically acceptable.

Keywords	*paranormal, traditional healers, scientifically unaccepted beliefs*

INTRODUCTION

In 1692, there was the persecution of hundreds of people and the hanging of 19 women and men in the village of Salem, Massachusetts, United States, because they were accused of practicing witchcraft (Linder, 2009). Then in 1998, in Banyuwangi, Republic of Indonesia, something similar happened, where a number of people suspected of being witch doctors were targeted for murder by a group calling themselves the 'Antitenung Movement' (Kompas.com, 2019). Until recent years, in the Republic of Indonesia there have still been polemics caused by shamanic or paranormal practices, such as the 2019 case of the murder of a father and son in DKI Jakarta involving a witch doctor (Tribunnews.com, 2019), then cases of fraud and murder which was carried out by Dimas Kanjeng, a hermitage leader who claimed to be able to double money with spiritual power in 2016 in Probolinggo (Berita Satu, 2016), and also various other criminal cases.

Despite the fact that paranormal phenomena have not been scientifically proven, belief in the paranormal is a real psychological phenomenon and can be studied scientifically. For this reason, this research was conducted to describe the process of forming certain beliefs in a person so that he or she deliberately offers services to the community using methods that are not scientifically acceptable, as is done by health practitioners using energy techniques in the Republic of Indonesia. Apart from that, this research can also provide an overview of the forms of paranormal beliefs held by these service providers and the impact that these beliefs can have on each of them.

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In order to avoid authentication problems, the participants in this research are people who practice as traditional healers using energy techniques, as recognized by the Republic of Indonesia. This research was conducted to examine each participant's experience in providing services to the community and the process by which they were able to do so. The author uses an interview guide adapted from the SUB causal model.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Scientifically Unaccepted Beliefs

Scientifically Unaccepted Beliefs (SUB) is a concept that is similar to paranormal beliefs, and consists of two components (Irwin, 2009). The first is 'parapsychological beliefs,' these relate to beliefs in psi processes (ESP, PK) and phenomena that appear to depend explicitly or implicitly on such processes (e.g. fortune telling), beliefs in nonmaterial dimensions of human existence, as well as phenomena involving the existence of human spirits (e.g., spirit mediums, astral projection, reincarnation) (Irwin, 2009). While the second is 'belief in black magic,' this refers to belief in magic, spells and so on (Irwin, 2009).

Scientifically Unacceptable Phenomenon

'Scientifically unacceptable' phenomena are phenomena that are considered to exceed 'scientifically recognized' boundaries. Charlie Dunbar Broad, a British philosopher, in 1949 established basic boundary principles in scientific knowledge (Broad, I949).

Traditional Healer with Energy Techniques

Traditional healers using energy techniques can be found in various parts of the world, cultures and religions (Ernst, 2011; Levin, 2011). This is in accordance with the definition of energy healing therapy, which states that this therapy is the distribution of healing energy through a practitioner's hands into the client's body to restore energy balance to normal (Hart, 2012; Levin, 2011). However, based on evidence obtained in previous studies examining energy healing, it is known that this healing method is not effective, and the health condition of the person being healed is no better than if it had not been treated at all (Ernst, 2011). As well as lacking credibility and knowledge of scientific medicine, due to a lack of evidence with a strong scientific basis (Ernst, 2011; Hart, 2012; Levin, 2011), due to a lack of evidence with a strong scientific basis (Ernst, 2011; Hart, 2012; Levin, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research received 11 potential participants, but only 2 continued to the data collection stage. The participant characteristics required in research, according to the phenomenon being studied, are as follows:

a. Men or women who have an STPT (Traditional Health Registered Certificate) issued by the Health Service of the Republic of Indonesia.

b. Or men or women who are authorized by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia to carry out technical assessments of healing methods for someone who wants to register for STPT.

The conditions that made it impossible for the other 9 people to participate in the research were: 3 people did not provide feedback; 3 people were not willing to participate; and 3 other people did not meet the criteria.

Initials	S.N	HY
Date of birth (Current Age)	09-27-1958 (61)	03-14-1953 (67)
Gender	Man	Man
Ethnic group	Java	Indonesia
Religion	Christian	Buddha
Domicile	Bekasi	Bekasi
Education	S3	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Work	Dean	Traditional Health
Health Care Qualifications	Candidate Technical Assessor	STPT
Traditional	Traditional Health	(Health Registered Letter Traditional)
Start Practicing	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Non-formal: Middle school Formal: 2003
Length of Practice	~ 44 Years	Informal: ~ 53 Years Formal: 17 Years

Intra-Participant Analysis

Participant SN

a) Antecedents of SUB formation

SN started to have an interest in training an ability to control a type of energy that was not scientifically acceptable when he was in middle school. "Oh, I've had an interest since middle school." (SN.21)

b) Requirements related to SUB

At first SN began to train the abilities involved with SUB as a means of training to manage his thoughts and emotions, and also to process the energy in his body into energy that was more useful for him. "So, fasting is to prepare yourself to manage your thoughts, manage your emotions. If you manage your thoughts and manage your emotions, those emotions are managed to become useful energy." (SN.78)

c) Other factors forming SUB
   - Sociocultural Factors

   SN, who claims to be of Javanese ethnicity, has internalized the Javanese cultural values held by some of the people in the environment where he grew up. SN also uses several things from Javanese cultural values as guidelines in carrying out energy control exercises. "Well, the concept is why I started fasting at that time

in the sense that people in Central Java said was Tapa Brata. That is primarily fasting first." (SN.75) "Mutih fasting means fasting only by eating rice. Just rice without anything else. Water, yes. Yes that's 3 days, 3 days, 3 days. When 3 days are counted, they are not counted every 3 days. The day must be chosen, there is a calculation. The calculation is 3 days, every day there are 7 days here. Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday. That's 7 days. And we ourselves already have a culture, being born in Java has the Javanese culture that there is a day and there is a market." (SN.75)

- Information Processing Style

  SN admits that he doesn't always use common sense or intuition. The SN will use one of these two ways of processing information depending on the situation. "In relation to the universe, I use my logic. Certain times I use my intuition. So not 100% using logic, not 100% using intuition." (SN.58) "Look at the situation. Depends on my body. Is it rational or not. "Sometimes at certain times I have to follow the dynamics of my body's movements" (SN.59)

- Reality Test Suspension

  When SN is facing an event or problem that he considers needs to be responded to rationally, SN will try to evaluate his response directly. "Oh yes, it's necessary. That's mandatory and we were taught it when we were in elementary school. If there are math calculations, working on problems, I have finished, the teacher will say please check again, check again. That's the re-think part, thinking again." (SN.71)

d) Belief in parapsychological phenomena/black magic

SN has a SUB towards the concept of self-understanding which he obtained through the philosophy of 'kebatinan' teachings which he adheres to. According to his belief, the human entity is actually one unit with the universe, and not a separate part. "So the concept of people learning the concept of mysticism, it has the concept of having a body that acknowledges the basic knowledge that humans are part of the universe." (SN.40)

e) Events that mediate the activation of the SUB

- Personal experience

  There are certain experiences that SN has had so that the SUB within him is activated. Based on SN's statement, experiences that can activate his SUB are events that have the potential or are directly harmful to him. "A young man, I admire that young man. But he thought I was challenging him. Suddenly I was hit and beaten. When I was beaten and beaten, I thank God, thank God, my body is still fit and even the public has two views. Some say my body was beaten to pieces and it hurts, some say I can fly." (SN.36)

- Experience in helping others

  SN, as a traditional healer using energy techniques, started his practice when he was in high school. SN's first experience in providing health services began with helping people in their environment who had certain problems or illnesses.

"People ask me for help, whether they have personal problems or illness problems. I've been doing that since I was in high school. So there are certain people who come to me when they have certain illnesses and so on. You can come to meet me, or come without meeting me, you can do it by telephone." (SN.12)

- Experience in Responding to Social Conflicts related to SUB.
  As a traditional health practitioner using energy techniques, SN was once called a 'shaman' by others, and this person encouraged others not to approach him. SN actually doesn't mind being called a 'shaman,' and condones the actions of the person who incited it. "Most other people. "Don't go near that shaman." I'll just leave it at that. But even though people say it's a shaman, I say I'm a shaman too." (SN.87)

f) Behavioral consequences for active SUB
  - Response to Personal Experience
    For SN, the SUB-related exercises that he carries out can make him feel calm when facing natural disasters. "When I felt an earthquake, I was calm. Because I have studied, including learning to meditate, fasting. It's nothing more than just to calm yourself down. In any situation I can control myself." (SN.38)
  - Responses to Other People's Problems
    When providing assistance to a sick person, as part of his healing practice, the SUB in the SN will be activated and then he will carry out healing using methods and knowledge that are appropriate to the SUB he has. "…the medicine or means that I use are nuanced or related to my spiritual energy. So, by looking at my eyes, or maybe by directing my hand, I emit healing energy..." (SN.12) "We will synchronize or provide stimulus or stimulation so that energy balance occurs. If the energy is lacking, it will grow." (SN.14) "If it turns out that the energy is obtained from food, then I will ask the client to eat something. Taking certain leaves to drink and so on due to lack of energy. If he has excess, I ask the person not to eat certain foods, and I will even ask his attitude, perhaps his sitting posture, sleeping posture, and so on." (SN.14)
  - Response to Social Conflict related to SUB.
    When SN was invited to discuss by someone about the SUB he had, SN felt that he did not need to make other people believe him because the perspective and experiences of the person he was talking to were different from those he had. SN also explained that there was nothing to debate, because knowledge about spiritual energy had actually been studied by many people in foreign countries. "Yes, I don't need to force people to believe. The point of view is different." (SN.146) "If they don't experience it, they don't have the energy, they're debating, just leave it alone. Yes, I said ah, coincidence. I was debated, no problem. Not suitable, not suitable, no problem." (SN.143) "Yes, no one confronted me. They already know everything. Moreover, nowadays people from abroad are learning a lot about spirituality." (SN.86)

Participant HY

a) Antecedents of SUB formation

HY's SUB has begun to form by knowing things that cannot be accepted scientifically since childhood because his older siblings are involved in the paranormal field. Requirements related to SUB.

"...that's the term, uh, brothers... those who are older than me are involved in the world of the paranormal."(HY.27) "Yeah, you know. "There's black magic, people are doing it, people want to do it, so you know." (HY.35)

b) Requirements related to SUB

HY's interest in healing abilities using energy techniques began when he, as a kung fu teacher, tried to heal his students who were injured during training. The energy that HY originally used to hit in kung fu martial arts, he now uses for healing. HY's motivation to train his healing abilities also arises because he feels happy and happy when he sees someone healthy again. "It's usually related to martial arts as a teacher in the past... lots of people were sick, lots of people were injured, I had to heal them." (HY.73)

c) Other factors forming SUB

- Sociocultural Factors

Since childhood, HY has also known about things that cannot be accepted scientifically. In the social environment where he grew up, this was a local culture that was commonly known by local people. "…paranormalism or like shamans or like black magic or like energy fields like that are actually uh… what is it, the term local culture or uh… has been around for a long time. Yes, a keris has something like that in it, right? It's actually been around for a long time; it's been around for a long time. Local wisdom is the term. They already understand. And I know about that." (HY.36)

- Information Processing Style

HY considers that he generally uses logic and intuition when facing certain events or problems. "I can't say intuition or logic. Yes, just combine logic and intuition, that's fine." (HY.41)

- Reality Test Suspension

HY considers that everything can change, therefore even though he already has a certain opinion about something, he will try to consider other opinions that are different from his initial assumption. "Yes. Everything can change. There are people who ask for consultation about how I will end up like this or like this or I get a picture of oh this person will be like this. I said oh, later you will fall into that hole. I won't say you'll walk into that hole..." (HY.47)

d) Belief in parapsychological phenomena/black magic

HY has a SUB related to universal energy. HY considers that certain individuals can have sensitivity to this universal energy and can use it to carry out healing and diagnose sick people. HY also considers that for individuals who have this sensitivity, this type of energy and its control are normal and scientific. "Then, people

who know about energy, there is a lot of energy in the universe, yes, they channel that energy, health energy in the universe, balancing the energy in the bodies of sick people." (HY.7)

e) Events Mediating the Activation of a SUB
- Personal experience
- There are certain experiences that SN HY has had, always trying to stay alert in every situation, assisted by her SUB-related practices such as meditation and contemplation. "Yes, at all times I also have to be constantly alert, I have to be constantly ready. Meditate, reflect, that's all." (HY.58)
- Experience in helping others
  SUB related to the direct influence of thoughts on the material owned by HY can be activated by carrying out healing through visualization on the clients he treats. "You can, for example, visualize something, patient. Healthy healthy healthy. Imagine the patient is healthy, the patient can move freely. That's one form of healing with visualization." (HY.60)
- Experience in Responding to Social Conflicts related to SUB.
  HY had faced opposition expressed by several people from certain community groups, which he classified as 'religious groups.' According to these people, HY's healing method was a practice of black magic. "It can be said that some people believe or not, especially from religious groups. "Wow, I don't want it, it's called dark, mystical, energy, I don't want it."" (HY.85)

f) Behavioral consequences for active SUB
- Response to Personal Experience
  When SUB is related to the direct influence of thoughts on the material owned by HY is activated, HY will try to always pay attention to every word he says to someone, because he believes that what he says can really happen. "When I said eh… I said your fell, fell. I myself work to control speech." (HY.38)
- Responses to Other People's Problems
  When HY faces problems faced by people who need his help, the SUB related to HY's energy control will be activated, and he will carry out healing or treatment methods that suit SUB and also the techniques he has developed so far. "...the energy is channeled to the hands, to treat patients through the Neuro Tendo Stimulation system..." (HY.16)
- Response to Social Conflict related to SUB.
  HY considers that there are several social conflicts related to practices involving SUB that occur because of fraudulent individuals who claim that they are paranormal, even though they only use certain tricks to gain personal gain. "Yes, be careful, there are psychics or people who abuse it. "He doesn't use it, but he uses it for personal gain in bad ways using tricks." (HY.53)

CONCLUSION

1. Based on the discussion of each theme and sub-theme contained in the previous chapter, the research conclusions regarding the description of scientifically unaccepted beliefs (SUB) in traditional health using energy techniques will be explained as follows:

2. The antecedents to the formation of SUB in the two participants emerged from within the first social environment known to them, namely the family. Both parents of each participant do have a SUB and also support their children who are interested in studying things that cannot be accepted scientifically, which in time will form a SUB in their children.

3. The need for both participants to carry out prosocial actions by trying to help deal with the problems of people in their social environment, is a motivation for both participants to continue developing abilities related to SUB.

4. The formation of the SUB that the two participants have and also their training guidelines in developing abilities related to the SUB are influenced by the sociocultural values that exist in their environment, by the way they internalize these social and cultural values. The sociocultural context also provides initial knowledge for both participants in recognizing things that cannot be accepted scientifically.

5. Both participants tended to use an intuitive-experiential information processing style when dealing with various events experienced by each of them, although both participants did not abandon the use of an analytic-rational information processing style.

6. Both participants continued to make efforts to evaluate the responses and assessments they had regarding certain problems or events they had faced in their lives. The SUB that both participants have is clearly reflected in the healing methods they use to deal with disorders or illnesses felt by people who ask them for help. The SUB for both participants is also reflected in certain personal beliefs held by each participant.

7. Experiences that can activate SUB in each participant can be in the form of various problems expressed by people who ask them for help and can also be in the form of certain events faced by both participants in their daily activities.

8. The SUB that is activated in both participants can influence them in responding to or regulating the actions they will take when faced with a particular problem or event.

9. The two participants never tried to make someone believe what they said regarding their SUB, but instead both participants asked anyone who did not believe them to prove it for themselves with experience.

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