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## **Transcultural Studies: Naturalistic and Personalistic on Health and Illness in Jember Society**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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#### **Keywords:**

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The community that adheres to the naturalistic concept assumes that a person suffers from illness due to the influence of the environment, food, lifestyle, and imbalance in the body. Meanwhile, the community that adheres to the personalistic concept assumes that the emergence of illness is caused by the intervention of an active agent that can be a non-human creature (ghost, spirit, ancestor, or evil spirit). This research aims to identify the perception of health and illness of the Jember community based on the theory of transcultural nursing in the scope of personalistic and naturalistic. This research is a descriptive study with a case study and a qualitative type of research. Data were obtained by conducting interviews with in-depth interview guide instruments. There were four main participants in this study and two additional participants. The steps in conducting research are preliminary studies, data collection, and conclusions. This research uses the Colaizzi method analysis technique. The study results show that the community believes that illness is caused by a person's biological condition, which is influenced by environmental conditions, adequate nutrition, lifestyle, body imbalance, and congenital diseases (naturalistic). The treatment method based on the naturalistic concept allows the community to get a cure for their illness by seeking treatment from modern medical health services, such as going to a doctor or buying medicine at a shop. People who understand and comprehend the meaning of illness and the causes of illness will determine their choice of treatment, whether naturalistic or personalistic.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Ancient beliefs refer to traditional beliefs or practices that have existed in a culture for a long time. In healthcare, ancient beliefs can include views on illness, healing, and treatment that may differ from the modern medical approach. Belief and self-confidence are essential in decision-making at every stage of life (Azari, 2023).

Societies that follow the naturalistic concept believe that environmental influences, errors in diet, lifestyle habits, imbalances in the body, and beliefs about changes in body temperature, such as colds and congenital diseases, cause illness. Meanwhile, communities that adhere to the personalistic concept believe that illness occurs due to the intervention of active agents, which can be non-human beings such as ghosts, spirits, ancestors, or evil spirits, or human beings such as witches and sorcerers (Azza & Susilo, 2017).

Society's methods of healing illness are often based on supernatural or occult knowledge,

such as ceremonies and offerings. From a personalistic perspective, these diseases include kesiku, kebendhu, kewalat, nebulizer, keluban, keguna-guna, or the result of other people's actions, disturbances from spirits, and so on. Healing is usually carried out by a shaman or an old man who is considered to have special abilities (Khoiriyah & Nursanti, 2023).

According to Leininger's Transcultural Nursing theory, or the sunrise theory, nursing emphasizes comparative studies and analysis of cultural and subcultural differences by appreciating caring behavior, nursing care, and health and disease values, beliefs, and community behavior patterns (Setyawati & Nursanti, 2023). However, sometimes, the healing methods used by the Jember community are not modern medical treatment, which can result in not healing but worsening health conditions.

This research aims to identify the perception of health and illness of the Jember community based on the theory of transcultural

nursing in the personalistic and naturalistic scope. Previous research conducted by Amisim (Amisim et al., 2020) stated that people who choose traditional medicine will come and use these methods, while others decide to continue to rely on medical treatment. In the end, the community confirmed the implementation of their traditional medicine.

The researcher chose the research location in the Jember area because there are still many rural communities in Jember who believe in non-medical treatments and beliefs that sometimes conflict with medical ones. Based on the background explanation, the author is interested in researching "transcultural studies: naturalistic and personalistic towards health and illness in the Jember community."

**METHOD**

This research is a descriptive, case-based, and qualitative study. Data were obtained by conducting interviews with in-depth interview guide instruments and focus group discussion (FGD) on targets. Four primary and two additional participants participated in this study, which was conducted in Suci District, Jember.

This study used an interview questionnaire containing 10 open-ended questions related to health-illness beliefs and treatment methods carried out by the respondent's family. The informants in this study were the people of Jember, Indonesia. The researcher also created a relationship of mutual trust, given the sensitivity of topics related to health and cultural practices. The researcher was also open and empathetic, avoiding judgments or assumptions that could damage the relationship with the participants. This study has been conducted Ethical Clearance with the number 0116/KEPK/FIKES/XII 2024.

In this research, the research steps that will be carried out are:

- a. Preliminary Study: Identifying the perception of health and sickness in the Suci District, Jember community.  
Outputs and achievement indicators: Description of theoretical basis, perception of healthy and sick, the use of ancient medicine that is not by modern medicine, and the level of public knowledge about disease.
- b. Data Collection: Collecting data related to the perception of healthy and sick based on personalistic and naturalistic transcultural studies.

Outputs and achievement indicators: Community data ready to be processed into research results.

- c. Conclusion: Describing research results.  
Outputs and achievement indicators: Description of research results to identify the perception of healthy and sick in the community based on personalistic and naturalistic transcultural studies.

Primary data is obtained through interviews with respondents. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained through various literature, such as articles, newspapers, books, etc (Azari, 2024). Data is collected using in-depth interview instruments. Researchers use in-depth interview guides to avoid deviating from the research topic (Azari, 2022).

This study uses the Colaizzi (1978) method analysis technique, which includes:

- a. First Stage: Researchers collect data from interviews, both primary and secondary data, then make data transcripts by listening to interview recordings repeatedly and compiling the interview results in verbatim form.
- b. Second Stage: Researchers read data transcripts repeatedly to find significant meanings and mark important statements from participants.
- c. Third Stage: Determining categories. After the categories are determined, researchers group them into subthemes and then group the subthemes that emerge into potential themes.
- d. Fourth Stage: Writing a report. Researchers write each phrase, word, and sentence accurately to describe the data and analysis results.

**RESULTS**

The research was conducted in Suci Village, Jember. Based on the research results, the following characteristics of the respondents were obtained:

**Table 1. Characteristics of Participants**

No	Participant	Gender	Age	Occupation
1	P1 (main)	Female	39	Housewife
2	P2 (main)	Female	19	Student
3	P3 (main)	Female	20	Student
4	P4 (main)	Female	28	Housewife
5	P5 (addition)	Male	55	Religious leaders
6	P6 (addition)	Male	45	Religious leaders

Although the data in this study are quite diverse, in qualitative research, the main focus is not on the number of informants, but on the depth of the interview and the variety of perspectives obtained. By selecting informants who have relevant knowledge or experience, researchers can gain deeper insight into the views of the Jember community on health and disease.

## DISCUSSION

### Perception of health and illness

#### Personalistic

Personalistic perception of illness is related to people's beliefs about supernatural things that affect health. This is as conveyed by P1, namely;

*"people who are taken to a shaman can be cured because of miracles" (P1)*

P1 said that he did not believe in the abilities of shamans. Still, he realized that several individuals recovered after undergoing treatment with a shaman because of miracles or the influence of spiritual beliefs.

Spiritual beliefs can help individuals understand themselves and believe there will be healing after pain. Individuals who have high spiritual beliefs tend to have better health activities. Therefore, spirituality is part of an individual's perception of health and illness (Ariani et al., 2023).

P2 also expressed something similar, namely believing in supernatural things because other people have experienced it, but not based on personal experience. Likewise, P4 said that he had never been to a shaman but realized that some individuals could be cured when they went to a shaman.

*"Yes, I believe because someone has experienced it... maybe it is still carried over from my ancestors" (P2)*

*"Yes, maybe because I am a match for the shaman (suited to the shaman's treatment)" (P4)*

Meanwhile, P3 has a history of undergoing treatment with a shaman when he was little, as explained below;

*"I did when I was little.... I do not believe it or not. Because after drinking that water, the next day my fever went down." (P3)*

The statements of the main participants above are strengthened by the statements of additional participants who are religious figures. The following are their statements;

*"... phenomena that are astral in nature, and we have to believe that there is something astral" (P6)*

Religious figures with higher spiritual knowledge and experience usually believe in supernatural things. In some religions, you have to believe in similar things, so the causes of health and illness are also related to supernatural events.

A person's initial experience receiving treatment is a valuable experience that greatly influences their future. This experience is essential and can determine a person's behavior in the future. If someone is cured of the initial treatment, they will most likely choose the same type of treatment when they get sick (Tanrewali & Wahyuningsih, 2019).

#### Naturalistic

The perception of naturalistic disease arises due to a person's biological condition, which is influenced by environmental factors, nutritional adequacy, lifestyle, body imbalance, and congenital diseases. This is as conveyed by P2, P3 and P4 as in the statement below;

*"sickness is when our body is lacking immunity; if our immunity is perfect, the person will be healthy" (P2)*

*"sickness can usually be from the weather or food" (P3)*

*"sometimes sick because of irregular eating, to be healthy you have to eat regularly" (P4)*

A healthy lifestyle is a practice carried out consciously due to learning, aiming to support the health of yourself and your family (Martin et al., 2023). Therefore, healthy and clean living activities must be carried out consistently until they become habits. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is beneficial for maintaining and improving health, preventing disease, protecting yourself from various health problems, and contributing to improving the quality of health (Made et al., 2021).

To get used to a healthy lifestyle, you can start by consuming nutritious foods like vegetables and fruits and doing regular physical activities. Clean living habits can be started with

simple steps such as washing hands before eating, brushing teeth, cleaning oneself after urinating, bathing, disposing of trash in its place, reducing the use of plastic, and using clean water. Washing hands with soap is one effective way to prevent infectious diseases. Exercising regularly is another vital aspect of improving a healthy lifestyle (Made et al., 2021).

Being healthy is not only about physical health but also about mental health. As conveyed by P1 in his statement,

*"Yes, normal... no disturbances... no jealousy..."*  
(P1)

The statement of the main participant above is supported by the statement of the additional participant (religious figure), namely;

*"lack of exercise, and eating late, there are also liver diseases such as envy"* (P6)

Mental health is an essential component in the concept of overall health. Good mental health allows individuals to understand their potential, deal with everyday stress, work productively, and actively contribute to the community (Azari, 2023). Mental health is an integral part of the definition of health, so the goals and traditions of public health and health promotion can be applied similarly to the mental health field (Kook et al., 2024). Mental health does not only include the absence of mental disorders but is also a crucial aspect for individuals, families, and communities (Azari, 2022b). The mental health approach is multidisciplinary, including promoting well-being, mental health, and disease prevention (Ayuningtyas et al., 2018).

## **Treatment methods**

### **Personalistic**

The treatment method based on the personalistic concept is a method used by the community to get healing from their illness by going to a shaman, witch doctor, and so on.

The study results showed that all participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5) did not believe in shamans or seek treatment from shamans, witch doctors, and the like. This is based on the participant's statement below;

*"Never been there (shaman)"* (P1)

*"trust more to medical"* (P3)

*"do not believe (shaman treatment)"* (P4)

Meanwhile, an additional participant who is a religious figure carries out alternative treatment through prayer, namely;

*"At ruqyah, to kyai Insya Allah can"* (P6)

Rural communities maintain solid traditions and cultures, so it is not uncommon for them to still use alternative treatment methods (Anitasari et al., 2023). On the other hand, modern society, which is generally composed of educated and rational people, is more likely to understand that alternative medicine methods carried out by shamans have no scientific basis and are contrary to the principles of modern medicine that they have known (Fanani & Dewi, 2014).

Researchers assume that there are still a small number of individuals who seek treatment from shamans. Still, most rural communities have begun to abandon non-medical treatments because knowledge can be easily obtained, so supernatural and primitive mindsets are starting to be abandoned. Society believes more in modern medicine than treatment through shamans.

### **Naturalistic**

The community uses the treatment method based on the naturalistic concept to get healing from their illness by seeking treatment from modern medical health services. All main participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5) and additional participants (P5 and P6) in this study sought treatment from a doctor, as in the statements below;

*"taken directly to the doctor"* (P1)

*"taken to the doctor"* (P2)

*"I think it is faster to go to the doctor"* (P3)

In addition to seeking treatment from a doctor, some participants also bought medicine at a shop before finally going to the doctor, as in the statements below:

*"usually buy capsules at the shop"* (P1)

*"Treat yourself, for example, buy medicine at the shop"* (P3)

Alternative medicine is one of the treatment methods that is widely chosen by the community today. This method has been passed

down from generation to generation for a long time. It includes herbal medicine, help from people who are considered innovative or influential in society, and based on religious values. Alternative or traditional medicine is still used by many people, not only because of limited access to affordable formal health facilities but also because of the strength of Indonesian cultural factors that continue to influence belief in alternative medicine (Naftali et al., 2017). Individuals' inherent culture influences their thinking and acting (Putriana, 2022). Researchers assume that many factors influence the treatment methods used by the community, such as the level of knowledge (Setyawati & Nursanti, 2023). People who understand the meaning of illness and the causes of illness will determine their choice of treatment, whether naturalistic or personalistic (Susanto & Sulistyorini, 2018). In addition, access to health services also affects treatment methods. People whose homes are far from health services may not have other treatment options other than going to a shaman or using herbal medicine or concoctions.

## CONCLUSION

The study results show that people believe that illness is caused by a person's biological condition, which is influenced by environmental factors, nutritional adequacy, lifestyle, body imbalance, and congenital diseases (naturalistic). The treatment method based on the naturalistic concept is a way for people to get a cure for their

illness by seeking treatment from modern medical health services, such as going to a doctor or buying medicine at a shop. People who understand and comprehend the meaning of illness and the causes of illness will determine their choice of treatment, whether naturalistic or personalistic.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

**AA:** collected data, prepared an activity plan, and prepared a manuscript; **LF:** analyzed research data and research needs and finances; **INB:** made conclusions, research outputs, and reporting evaluations; **AAA:** writing manuscript.

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