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Comparative study of the phenomenon of trance and possession based on Western perspective and Islamic psychology

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ABSTRACT

The phenomena of trance and possession are events that occur in various cultures and traditions. In general, both phenomena are characterized by the loss of control of one's body or consciousness. However, views on the causes and treatment of both phenomena may vary between Western and Islamic Psychology perspectives. This study aims to compare Western and Islamic Psychology perspectives on the phenomena of trance and possession. From the Western perspective, the phenomenon is often explained as a medical or psychological condition that can be treated with scientific methods such as drugs and psychological therapies. Whereas in Islamic Psychology, the phenomenon is explained as a manifestation of supernatural powers that affect a person's mental state. This research combines a comparative qualitative and descriptive approach by analyzing literature related to the phenomena of trance and trance from both perspectives. The results show that although there are differences in views between the two perspectives, both recognize the influence of psychological factors in the occurrence of these phenomena. In addition, Islamic Psychology recognizes the existence of supernatural powers that influence the phenomenon of trance and trance-inducing, while the Western perspective tends to reject this view. In conclusion, this study provides an understanding of the differences in views between the Western perspective and Islamic Psychology regarding the phenomena of trance and possession. It also shows that although the views between the two perspectives may differ, they can complement each other and provide a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

Keywords: Islamic Psychology, Sleep Paralysis, Trance

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INTRODUCTION

Trance and Sleep Paralysis are two supernatural phenomena that have long been the subject of concern and research in various cultures and religions around the world. Trance occurs when a person is controlled or possessed by a supernatural entity or spirit, while sleeplessness occurs when a person feels pinned or immobilized while sleeping, accompanied by the sensation of the presence of a figure or entity around them. While both phenomena are often attributed to supernatural influences, there are also scientific explanations related to psychological and neurological aspects. In the case of trance, the phenomenon can be explained by sleep disorders such as sleep paralysis, where the body's muscles remain relaxed when a person wakes up from sleep and experiences sensory hallucinations (Sany, 2022).

However, scientific explanations have not been able to fully account for all aspects of this phenomenon, and many people still view it as an interaction with the supernatural world. Some believe that trance and possession can be caused by the interference of evil spirits or negative energies affecting the individual. Due to the complexity of this phenomenon, a holistic approach is required. This involves scientific research to understand the neurological and psychological aspects involved while respecting and studying the cultural and religious perspectives attached to the phenomenon. Further studies are needed to further our understanding of the supernatural phenomena of trance and possession, by combining scientific approaches and cultural context. By doing so, we can respect individual beliefs and experiences while continuing to deepen our understanding of these phenomena from diverse perspectives (Tjang & Arista, 2017).

The phenomenon of trance and possession has become a topic of interest among researchers and health practitioners. This phenomenon has occurred in various cultures in Indonesia and is considered a form of spiritual disorder. Most people in Indonesia believe that trance is caused by the jinn possessing humans due to the human mind being empty or often referred to as daydreaming. However, this is a perception that is still common in the community and is still a little opaque if studied in a more scientific context (Fadhila Azka, 2023). This study will focus on Western perspectives and Islamic psychology to compare how they view the phenomena of trance and possession. From the Western perspective, the phenomena of trance and possession are often explained as symptoms of psychological disorders. Sigmund Freud, a prominent psychoanalyst, suggested that trance and possession are symptoms of unconscious conflicts coming to the surface. Freud argued that the symptoms are a defense mechanism of the ego to cope with too much pressure. Another view in the Western perspective attributes the phenomena to sleep disorders or anxiety disorders (Budiman, 2022b).

However, in the perspective of Islamic psychology, the phenomena of trance and trance-like states are viewed as jinn or demonic disturbances. Islamic psychology teaches that jinn and demons can disturb humans and cause various spiritual disorders.

Therefore, Islamic psychology emphasizes the importance of strengthening faith and worship to avoid such disturbances (Silalahi dkk., 2022a). In addition, in Islam, there is also one method of treatment taught by the Prophet Muhammad in overcoming trance, namely *Ruqyah*.

Ruqyah or Ruqyah Syar'iyyah, also known as Islamic exorcism, refers to the recitation of Quranic verses and prayers prescribed by Islam. It is considered one of the therapeutic practices in Islam. Ruqyah Syar'iyyah involves the recitation of Quranic verses and saheeh hadiths to seek healing for the sick person. Ali bin Nafi' al-Ulyani has outlined some conditions that must be met for ruqyah to be permissible, including Using the names and attributes of Allah, His words, or authentic prayers originating from the Prophet Muhammad, then Reading in fluent Arabic or using known meanings, after that Peruqyah or the person doing Ruqyah should have the belief that ruqyah has no effect except by the decree of Allah, then at least Peruqyah avoids prohibited practices or innovations in ruqyah, then ensure that the ruqyah practitioner is not a shaman, fortune teller, or soothsayer, and finally avoid prohibited expressions or practices, because Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala does not make something prohibited as a medicine.

There are many benefits associated with practicing Rugyah Syar'iyyah. In addition to gaining rewards, individuals who perform ruqyah will gain peace and tranquility in their hearts and souls, as well as the opportunity to preach (convey the message of Islam). Da'wah is an effort to invite and motivate others to do good. The Ruqyah Syar'iyyah method is simple and affordable, emphasizing the belief that healing only comes from Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala. By adhering to this belief, individuals can perform rugyah without difficulty, by simply putting their trust in the divine power for their healing (Rahmi dkk., 2022). Sleep paralysis is a condition that occurs when a person is unable to move their body or limbs, or speak, despite being fully conscious and aware of their surroundings. This usually occurs during the transition between sleep and wakefulness, either while asleep or while awake. Sleep paralysis can be accompanied by vivid hallucinations, a sense of pressure in the chest, and a feeling of impending doom or suffocation. These experiences can be very distressing and frightening and may cause feelings of anxiety or fear of sleep. Sleep paralysis can occur as a symptom of other sleep disorders, such as narcolepsy, or it can occur independently. It is more common in people who have an irregular sleep schedule or who experience high levels of stress. Treatment may involve addressing the underlying sleep disorder, improving sleep hygiene, or using medication to regulate the sleep cycle (Resmisari & Shalsabilla, t.t.).

Previous studies have shown that trance and possession phenomena occur in various age groups, but are more common in adolescents and young adults. Female santri of Islamic boarding schools are one of the groups that are vulnerable to this phenomenon, as there is a high intensity of religious activities and they live in the same environment as their peers (Budiman, 2022). In addition, the busy activities and rules applied by the dormitory can also sometimes put pressure on students which results in

an unstable emotional level. External factors such as socialization and family problems can also be confirmed as one of the factors that can cause excessive stress in students.

Research related to kesurupun and ketindihan does not mean that it has never been done at all. Like the research conducted by Adebba Ramadhanti Noury. et al (2019). In his research, he explained trance based on the point of view of the scientific and psychological approaches. This is evidenced by the application of the Post-Traumatic Trance Therapy method as a form of Great Intervention Solution or in the study named *Tepak Sirih*. This therapy aims to help individuals who have experienced trance or can overcome the root of the problem that has been experienced and then refreshed so that in situations that can suppress mentally can be manifested in the form of trance behavior through the catharsis process, then create Positive Mood, and reduce anxiety through the relaxation process. The shortcomings of this study lie in its discussion which is fixated on post-trance interventions so that the explanation is too specific resulting in discussions related to perspectives and approaches that are still lacking (Noury dkk., t.t.).

Then the research conducted by Syarifah Irkani (2019) explains the phenomenon of trance from the perspective of a psychologist and a seer. In this study, Irkani explains the issue of trance through the perspectives of two different professions with different bases, but with almost the same conceptual approach. This is because they are both practitioners who deal with mental and mental problems but with different handling processes and under different conditions. If psychologists deal with mental illness in patients who are still conscious, it is different from perukyah who deals with their patients when they are already in the stage of the patient being unconscious. Even these differences have an impact on their point of view in defining what trance is like. If psychologists say that trance is caused by the inner conflict in humans, peruqyah explains that trance is caused by the entry of the jinn into the human body and taking over the body. The shortcoming of this research lies in the general Islamic view which is still explained too briefly (Irkani, 2019).

Then the research was conducted by Stefani et al. (2017). In their research, they discuss ketindihan or often referred to as Sleep Paralysis (SP). Sleep Paralysis (SP) is a condition characterized by the inability to move or speak when starting to sleep or when waking up, with a duration ranging from seconds to several minutes. It occurs when the body's natural paralysis during REM sleep continues into wakefulness. SP is generally associated with vivid and possibly recurrent hallucinations, with a prevalence of 15-40% in the general population. Sleep deprivation and irregular sleep schedules may increase the risk of SP. Some individuals may interpret SP as a paranormal experience due to cultural beliefs. It is also a common feature in type 1 narcolepsy (Stefani dkk., 2017).

The research was conducted by Siswanto et al (2020). This study, explains the issue of possession in a religious context and how to overcome it. Religious beliefs and possession disorders have not been widely discussed in the scientific literature. This study aims to explore the relationship between religious beliefs and possession

disorders, as well as the recovery process. Anthropological literature mainly studies possession from a cultural perspective. However, in the clinical field, it is difficult to find literature that addresses both variables. The method used in this study was a case study with semi-structured interviews to collect data. The criteria for participants were those who had experienced possession disorder according to PPDGJ III at least twice. Six female participants met the criteria. This study shows that there is a relationship between religious beliefs and trance disorders, both in terms of occurrence and recovery efforts. Trance disorder occurs when the belief in the existence of spirits, accompanied by fear, cannot be controlled by the individual. Prayers, incantations, chanting, and other healing practices are commonly used in the recovery process. Emotional factors associated with religious beliefs need to be considered in the occurrence of possession disorders (Siswanto dkk., 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Qualitative methods are needed in this study to explain the results of interviews conducted by researchers. Phenomenological studies depart from the phenomenon of trance that occurs in society, especially occurs in MA Putri Al-Ishlahuddiny Kediri West Lombok students. This study uses two data sources, namely primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are data from interviews conducted with students who have experienced trance. In this case, the author interviewed four people as samples. While secondary data sources are literacy data from the references used (Sugiyono, 2013).

In researching a comparative study of the phenomena of trance and possession based on Western perspectives and Islamic psychology, the suitable research theory used is phenomenological. The phenomenological theory is a theory that studies phenomena or human experiences directly and deeply. This research will study the phenomenon of trance and possession from the perspective of Western and Islamic psychology, so the phenomenological theory is suitable for understanding the experiences and perceptions of individuals towards these phenomena. This research will study the views of both perspectives and compare them to understand the differences and similarities in their views on the phenomenon of trance and possession. In addition, psychological theories can also be used to understand the psychological factors that may influence individuals' experiences of the phenomenon (Pasmawati, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Trance and trance are part of the phenomena of the subconscious that are quite interesting to discuss using a multi-disciplinary approach. One of them is the discussion of phenomena from the perspective of Western psychology and Islam. The following are some of the results of the author's interviews with several female students at MA

Putri Al-Ishlahuddiny Kediri West Lombok regarding their experiences when experiencing trance and trance. One of the data collection methods used in this research is by using interview techniques. The interviews this time were conducted with students who had indeed experienced the phenomenon of trance and trance. More specifically, interviews were conducted with four students. The details are two students who have experienced trance and two students who have experienced trance. The results of the interviews with the four students are as follows.

a. Trance

Based on the results of interviews conducted with several female students through the Zoom application, the author found several things related to the trance experienced by each of these students. The first student with the initials H had experienced a trance while undergoing routine activities in the dormitory. The incident occurred when the routine had finished and entered recess. The student with the initials H said;

"As I recall, before the trance, I was having family problems, as well as some arrears that made me think and daydream. However, when the activity took place I was able to listen and follow the study as usual, but before the activity ended I felt quite sleepy and after that, I don't remember anymore."

Then the results of the second interview were conducted with the Santri with the initials LH. In his case, LH experienced a trance while carrying out activities in the dormitory. The trance occurred shortly before the activity began and managed to cause panic among the students. So the board of teachers immediately intervened in overcoming the trance. Based on this experience, LH explained;

"When the trance occurred, I honestly did not feel anything at that time I felt I was dreaming and in the dream, I was being chased by a black creature and its body size was quite large, and at that moment there was a white light that saved me from the pursuit of the creature and at that moment I realized by coughing. I admit that before I dreamed that my body condition was indeed rather weak because I was experiencing the first day of menstruation."

From the two interviews above we can conclude a view that the two students experienced trance when their physical and mental conditions were down and experiencing fatigue.

b. Sleep Paralysis

Different cases two interviewees above, two interviewees with different cases, namely trance or in the medical world called Sleep Paralysis. The first resource person is a student with the initials R. In the interview he explained;

"When I experienced being trapped, more or less at that time something strange happened to my body. Namely, I couldn't move my body and I couldn't even speak and talk. At that time I was sleeping alone in the room and at that time I

was conscious, I could see, but as I said earlier, my whole body could not be moved. I assumed that maybe this happened because my body was too exhausted."

Then the next interview was with the Santri with the initials I. Santri I explained his experience, namely;

"I once experienced a trance when I was sleeping in a room where the occupant of the room had died due to an accident several years ago. At that time I could not move my body and then I did not make a sound. But strangely I was still conscious and could see. The thing that scared me when I was trapped was that I saw a black figure sitting on top of me and it was very scary to me. I wanted to ask for help but my voice couldn't come out so I cried. But after a while, my friend who slept next to me kicked me in the waist and at that moment I was able to control all my limbs again."

Based on the two interviews related to trance above, it can be concluded that there are two different views on the issue of trance, namely that it is caused by fatigue and that there is a connection with spirits. Through some of the results of the interviews above, the author gets some quite interesting things, this is because the perceptions of each interviewee are quite varied towards the phenomena they have experienced. Starting from the student with the initials H, he admitted that he was unconscious and did not know that he was in a trance because for him it all felt like he was sleeping. He also admitted that he was indeed at a point where he was physically and mentally exhausted. Like Santri H, santri with the initials LH did not realize that he was in a trance, but interestingly, if Santri H was unconscious and felt like sleeping soundly, then it was different with Santri LH. When he felt unconscious he had a dream which for him was a scary dream.

Then later on the phenomenon of trance, the author also found some quite interesting things from the results of interviews with the two informants above. Based on the case experienced by Santri R, he experienced sleeplessness due to fatigue from doing excessive activities that made his body unable to function properly in a short time. However, it is different with Santri I, based on the experience of Santri I, there is a supernatural phenomenon that occurs when he experiences being knocked over. This is because Santri I saw a black shadow figure pressing on his body and making him unable to move and he was unable to ask for help because his voice could not come out.

Discussion

The discussion of trance and unconsciousness in the context of psychology has raised many interesting issues to date. Both in the context of Western psychology and Islamic psychology, the basic ideas are different. But apart from all that, both Western psychology and Islamic psychology can be related to each other in explaining the context of problems that occur in the environment around us.

a. Trance based on Western Psychology

Western psychology has its way of defining the context of trance. Starting from the psychoanalytical perspective to other perspectives, they have their theories about the phenomenon of trance. Sigmund Freud himself explained that trance occurs due to the impulse of the Id that cannot be channeled properly because there is pressure within an individual, resulting in a buildup that causes the ego's reaction to weakening to cause an emotional outburst that occurs spontaneously (Pasmawati, 2018).

This is in line with what was experienced by Santri H that shortly before the trance he was indeed in a depressed condition as a result of the many problems faced by the H center. Meanwhile, according to Barry (2012) explains that trance is a condition of losing personal identity and as if being someone else and doing something that the person has never done normally (Silalahi dkk., 2022b). The meaning of the above explanation is that when a person is in a trance, it is as if that person is not the person. Instead, the person's body seems to have been used by someone else.

Joyana (2014) She explained that life problems also play an important role when an individual experiences a trance. The impact of problems such as stress, depression, and mental fatigue is one of the causes of trance. So it will not be surprising that people who experience problems in life tend to often experience trance (Susanto & Oktaviana, 2020).

b. Ketindihan dalam psikologi barat

Sleep paralysis is a subconscious phenomenon that often happens to a person while they are asleep. The symptoms of sleep paralysis are the inability to move one's limbs and the inability to make a sound. According to Wilson (1925), the phenomenon of sleep paralysis is explained as a temporary physiological disorder or Physiological Cataplexy (Sudais, 2022).

Often associated with scary things, Liskova et al. (2017) explain that sleeplessness can be defined as a person's inability to move when falling asleep or when waking up (Lišková dkk., 2017). Based on the above concept, it explains that sleepiness can occur when going to sleep or waking up. According to Brooks and Peever (2012), sleepiness can occur due to the involvement of neurotransmitters in sleep atonia, causing REM (rapid eye movement) (Sharpless & Kliková, 2019).

Before talking about REM, brain waves also play an active role and can be one of the causes of falling asleep. Based on brain waves, sleep is divided into 4 stages. The stages of sleep according to Perry and Potter (2005) are Non-Rapid Eye Movement 1 (the lightest stage of sleep), Non-Rapid Eye Movement 2 (a deeper stage of sleep), Non-Rapid Eye Movement 3 (the deepest stage of sleep), and Rapid Eye Movement (at this stage dreams occur). Then later, Cheyne (2002) concluded that sleepiness can occur due to abnormalities while sleeping. One form of the disorder is someone who wakes up suddenly before the REM cycle ends (Permata &

Widiasavitri, 2019). One of the causes of sleep disorders occur that the human body experiences a decrease in the quality and quantity of sleep.

The correlation between this theory and what happens in the field is. Some factors cause a decrease in the quality and quantity of sleep caused by several things including disease, environment, fatigue, lifestyle, anxiety levels, motivation, and drugs. So it can be concluded that the student with the initials R experienced sleeplessness because he was too pushing his body to carry out activities so he experienced fatigue and ended up experiencing sleeplessness.

c. Trance in Islamic psychology

According to Islamic theology, the phenomenon of trance is caused by interference from subtle beings that can be seen or cannot be seen. So that from this assumption causes an anomaly in individual behavior that is beyond the individual's control. In addition, from an Islamic perspective, the phenomenon of trance is a condition in which a human being is possessed by a jinn or other spirits (Halimah, t.t.).

Then then the correlation between the theory above and the trance phenomenon experienced by LH students is both related to spirits or jinn. In the case experienced by LH students at the time of experiencing the trance, LH students experienced a dream where in the dream there was a creepy creature and then were driven away by a bright light. Then later when the figure of the creature had disappeared, this LH student began to wake up from his trance.

It can be seen that the presence of creatures in LH students' dreams shows that these creatures are controlling LH's body and are then expelled by a bright light. Ordinary people can also assume that the light in question is an effort to cure LH from the trance. Because according to Salim Ad-Damasyqi (2005), trance is a spiritual disease. Namely, a disease caused by spiritual turmoil accompanied by tension in all limbs and resulting in fainting as if experiencing epilepsy (Afiyatin, 2020).

Susanto (2014) explains that one of the efforts to treat spiritual illness is the ruqyah method. In Indonesian, ruqyah itself is an incantation or mantra which is then associated with the healing process on an Islamic basis. So that in the process it uses verses of the Qur'an in its treatment.

However, when talking about evil spirits or spirits in Demonological studies, Augsburger (1986) explains that the originality and entity of evil spirits come from the implications of social evil or structured evil from a human being to his fellow human beings. The point of Augsburger's explanation above is that evil spirits are believed to be the cause of a human being committing crimes against others. Then the question that arises from this explanation is what evil spirits can make a person commit crimes against others. Based on the study of Islamic theology. Subtle beings categorized as evil spirits enter the human body and control the body according to

their will. Meanwhile, humans who are possessed by their bodies cannot do anything including controlling themselves (Banoet, 2021).

d. Sleep Paralysis in Islamic psychology

Islamic psychology has its way of looking at the phenomenon of sleep paralysis, one opinion explains that sleep paralysis is part of a nightmare experienced by a person. Islamic psychology also argues that every nightmare experienced by humans while asleep is part of Jinn or satan's plan to disturb and cause fear in humans (Diana, 2022).

This is in line with what was felt by the Santri with the initials I who experienced being crushed while sleeping. Namely, he saw a black and large figure pressing on him until he finally felt scared. This is probably what the spirits or evil spirits want, namely fear from humans as if fear is food and entertainment for them.

Moreover, santri I slept in his friend's room, who shortly before that died, making Santri I begin to imagine frightening things so that this then made him hallucinate until he was carried away to dreamland. However, why the trance can disappear when Santri I get a kick in the waist? There is a possibility that the hallucinations and frightening thoughts disappear or are blocked by a stimulus from a sudden kick that causes a spontaneous response resulting in hallucinations and negative thoughts disappearing.

e. A Comparative Study of Western Psychology and Islamic Psychology in Viewing the Phenomenon of Trance and Sleep Paralysis

Talking about comparisons in the field of psychology is indeed an interesting discussion. Especially if the discussion is related to the issue of trance and unconsciousness, which in Western psychology and Islamic psychology have different views on these phenomena.

The comparison between Western psychology and Islamic psychology on phenomena such as trance is based on the theory. If we know that Western psychology uses the basis of theory-making through empirical experience. However, it is only able to answer problems scientifically but is unable to explain mystical problems. Unlike Western psychology, Islamic psychology in determining a theory or concept is based on an approach through the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. As well as being able to answer questions from a scientific nature to the realm of the supernatural world or discussions related to issues where subtle creatures, jinn, and spirits have a relationship in it.

However, the above context raises a new question, if trance occurs in an individual due to the entry of subtle beings into the human body. But what about mass trance? Based on the investigation of Chen et al. (2003), it was found that mass trance is most likely a function of environmental toxicity or infectious disease and used the explanation of demonic possession as a significant source. The diagnosis of mass trance is sustained by different local views, people's beliefs, and media

conversations, which illustrate the blend of culture, tradition, and modern psychiatry in explaining mass trance (Hamzah, 2022).

When talking about the trance experienced by one individual, it can likely be explained in a religious context that the individual is possessed by spirits. However, when talking about mass trance, the potential possibility of occurrence is due to the stimulus experienced by a person when the person is around a person who is in a trance. So that it causes the same response because the person has been stimulated by the person who is in a trance so that he or she also goes into a trance. This mass trance is contagious like an epidemic because in every case the occurrence of mass trance does not occur spontaneously but periodically, starting from one person to almost all experiencing trance.

But why doesn't everyone go into a trance? The answer is that people's mental state is different. So that it becomes an immunity system in humans in warding off the mass trance that is happening in their midst.

CONCLUSION

Research related to trance and possession in the context of Western psychology and Islamic psychology. This has led to a lot of speculation in the community. This is illustrated through several interviews conducted with students who have experienced trance. The author analyzes the phenomenon of trance based on their experiences so that it can be concluded that the explanation related to trance and trance can be explained through the perspective and approach of Western and Islamic psychology so that ordinary people can understand the context of the phenomenon not only through the perspective of Islamic psychology which explains trance in a religious context but can also be explained through a more scientific context.

It can also be seen that the study found four students experiencing the phenomenon of trance and trance with details of two students experiencing trance and two other students experiencing trance. However, their views on what they have experienced have quite fundamental differences when viewed from the perspective of the study of each discipline. Both the perspective of Western psychology and Islamic psychology.

The author believes that in this paper there are still many shortcomings that can be used as a key to developing research out there related to trance and trance through different perspectives and approaches.

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