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Cognitive Dissonance in Health-Seeking Behavior of Indonesian People in The Covid-19 Pandemic*

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Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many people experience cognitive dissonance, including in the process of seeking health. In the Covid-19 pandemic, people have to deal with various kinds of information, thoughts, and beliefs about Covid-19. Having a relevant but inconsistent cognition can create psychological discomfort or dissonance. The feeling of discomfort has made people try to seek health. Indonesian people's health-seeking behavior is unique because of certain beliefs, information, perceptions, cultures, and unique environments in Indonesia. So, this study aims to analyze the cognitive dissonance process that occurs in Indonesian people's health-seeking behavior in the Covid-19 pandemic. This study is a literature study. We use secondary data of literary works, scientific journals, books, articles in the mass media, and statistical data as study objects. The results of this study indicate that the cognitive dissonance theory can be applied to answer the health-seeking behavior of Indonesian people in the Covid-19 pandemic. Many people in Indonesia choose traditional medicine to prevent Covid-19 because it is believed to be a natural treatment, has empirical evidence, and is easy to do independently. Many people in Indonesia choose traditional medicine because it is influenced by hereditary beliefs, culture, and also the variety of information they hold.

Keywords: Cognitive dissonance; Health-seeking behavior; Covid-19; Indonesia; Traditional medicine

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A. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization with glorious information, we have to deal with various kinds of information, thoughts, and beliefs from another point of view. Many beliefs and attitudes from different perspectives can conflict with one another. Based on this, conflicts within a person can occur when facing inconsistent or inconsistent beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. When inappropriate or inconsistent things happen, a person may feel uncomfortable feeling inside.

Festinger (1957) explained in the original theory of cognitive dissonance that if an individual has two cognitions that are relevant but inconsistent with each other, it will cause discomfort.³ In Festinger's theory, cognition is the knowledge that a person may have. Cognition that exists in oneself can be cognition that is relevant or irrelevant to one another. An individual can meet in a condition where there is a mismatch between thought and behavior. The strength of dissonance can be influenced by the dominance of a person's cognition. The cognitions that are considered important and dominant can affect the cognitive dissonance process.⁴ Discussing cognitive dissonance theory and linking it to health-seeking behavior in Indonesia has not been widely used. In our opinion, this is a necessary thing to discuss, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the beginning of 2020, the world was shocked by the coronavirus outbreak (Covid19) which infected almost all countries in the world. WHO, since January 2020, has declared the world into a global emergency related to this virus.⁵ This is an extraordinary phenomenon that occurs on earth in the 21st century. This condition has occurred only during the world war, there has never been any other situation that can cancel these events. As of March 19, 2020, 214,894 people were infected with the coronavirus, 8,732 people died and 83,313 patients who had recovered.⁶

The conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic have made governments in various countries force their citizens to comply with various established health regulations. To reduce the spread of the virus, the government set various emergency regulations. Individuals are asked to comply with behaviors such as staying at home, keeping their distance, washing their hands diligently, and avoiding gatherings in crowded places. Although individual freedom is limited during a pandemic, this has health benefits for individuals and entire communities.⁷

³ Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

⁴ Harmon-Jones, E., Harmon-Jones, C., & Levy, N. (2015). An Action-Based Model of Cognitive-Dissonance Processes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24(3), 184–189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414566449>

⁵ Sebayang, R. (31 Januari 2020). *Awas! WHO Akhirnya Tetapkan Corona Darurat Global*. CNBC Indonesia. Retrieved on <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20200131060856-4-134146/awas-whoakhirnya-tetapkan-corona-darurat-global>

⁶ Aida, N.R. (19 March 2020). *Update Virus Corona di Dunia: 214.894 Orang Terinfeksi, 83.313 Sembuh, 8.732 Meninggal Dunia*. KOMPAS. Retrieved on <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2020/03/19/081633265/update-virus-corona-di-dunia-214894-orangterinfeksi-83313-semuh-8732>

⁷ Fischer, I., Avrashi, S., Oz, T., Fadul, R., Gutman, K., Rubenstein, D., ... Glöckner, A. (2020). The behavioural challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic: Indirect measurements and personalized attitude

Interaction between humans that occurs in pandemic conditions creates a social dilemma. On the one hand, many parties want to interact with other parties because of demands, but on the other hand, they are afraid of contracting the virus when interacting. Considering the existence of certain obligations and demands, many parties are forced to violate the rules. However, a closer look at the Covid-19 pandemic case shows that this is not just a social dilemma. This involves a cognitive dissonance process. A person can be motivated to comply with regulations influenced by beliefs and knowledge about the risks and threats of Covid-19.⁷ However, a person can also not observe certain rules due to the presence of other cognitive elements that are considered more important.

In the Covid-19 pandemic, improving health services is the main key to improving a country's health status. At the individual and community level, understanding common health-related behaviors are important in efforts to improve the quality of public health. A good and detailed understanding of health behavior in the community can explain the various problems that exist. Based on studies in the Indonesian context, health-related behavior in a society is complex because there are various cultural and ethnic differences.⁸ In countries with middle to lower economies, even though there are many formal health services, informal health service providers or non-conventional health service providers are health services that are still widely used.⁹ As in Indonesia, non-conventional health services are also known as alternative or traditional health services. Traditional health services in Indonesia are supported by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia.¹⁰

A recent study reported that Covid-19 has significantly resulted in a large number of psychological consequences. The existence of uncertainty in the Covid-19 pandemic has an impact on physical and mental health in society, especially affecting emotions and cognition.¹¹ The fear of the dangers and the desire not to be infected with Covid-19 then raises an action to reduce psychological discomfort by seeking health based on their beliefs and knowledge. Apart from using a mask to prevent the transmission of the virus, many people in Indonesia believe that the natural ingredients used to make herbal medicine and traditional medicine are very influential in healing and preventing the coronavirus.¹² Therefore, this study aims to analyze how cognitive

changing treatments (IMPACT): The behavioral challenge of COVID-19. *Royal Society Open Science*, 7(8). <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.201131>

⁸ Widayanti, A. W., Green, J. A., Heydon, S., & Norris, P. (2020). Health-seeking behavior of people in Indonesia: A narrative review. *Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health*. Atlantis Press International. <https://doi.org/10.2991/jegh.k.200102.001>

⁹ Sudhinaraset, M., Ingram, M., Lofthouse, H.K., Montagu, D. (2013). What is the role of informal healthcare providers in developing countries? A systematic review. *PLoS One* (8) :e54978.

¹⁰ Department of Health Research and Development Indonesia Ministry of Health. (2013). *Basic Health Research*. Jakarta. Pp. 79–80.

¹¹ Li, S., Wang, Y., Xue, J., Zhao, N., & Zhu, T. (2020). The impact of covid-19 epidemic declaration on psychological consequences: A study on active weibo users. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(6). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17062032>

¹² Aunullah, Irma N. (March 2020). *Belakangan Jamu dan Obat Tradisional Lain Dipercaya Mampu Sembuhkan Virus Corona*. *Pikiran Rakyat*. Retrieved on <https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/gaya-hidup/pr-01351200/belakangan-jamu-dan-obat-tradisional-lain-dipercaya-mampu-semuhkan-virus-corona>

dissonance theory explains the health-seeking behaviors of Indonesian people in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cognitive Dissonance

The theory of cognitive dissonance that was first coined by Leon Festinger is an important theory in the history of social psychology which has an impact on the field of communication. This theory begins with the assumption that each communicator carries various kinds of cognitive elements such as These cognitive elements have a relationship with each other in various situations and conditions.¹³

Cognitive dissonance theory refers to psychologically uncomfortable conditions that happened when attitudes or beliefs conflict with each other.³ Festinger formulates a theory with the assumption that when an individual has two or more elements of knowledge that are relevant but inconsistent with each other, an uncomfortable state will form.¹⁴ Cognitive dissonance theory not only explains that persuasion is not solely the result of instilling beliefs, but also this theory predicts that an influence that is formed is an intrapersonal event. So that the mismatch between one's attitudes and behavior can create a dissonance that can be reduced by changing the cognitive elements in the form of personal beliefs or behavior so that behavior changes occur.¹⁵

Conditions in which relevant but inconsistent cognition are present then create a sense of psychological discomfort or dissonance. The strength of the dissonance that occurs is influenced by various factors such as the dominance of one cognition over another. Then it can also be influenced by the existence of generative cognition. Generative cognition is a cognition that is most resistant to change. This is cognition about a person's behavior, where behavioral conditions are difficult to change, but can also be attitudes or commitments in the future. Festinger theorizes that the magnitude of the dissonance can be calculated with $D / (D + C)$. D is the number of cognitions that are incompatible with generative cognition and C is the number of cognitions that are compatible with generative cognition, with each cognition having a different value in each person.⁴ When a condition occurs where individuals behave not following their beliefs, dissonance will be formed, an individual tries to overcome this with the support of the assumption that each individual prefers a balance between thought and action.¹⁵

Alternative Explanations of Cognitive Dissonance Theory

After the original theory was published, many scientists suggested some alternative explanations about this theory.⁴ In the 1960s, many scientists suggested an

¹³ Littlejohn, S.W., Foss, K.A., Oetzel, J.G. (2017). *Theories Of Human Communication Eleventh Edition*. Waveland Press, Inc.

¹⁴ Harmon-Jones, E., & Harmon-Jones, C. (2007). Cognitive dissonance theory after 50 years of development. *Zeitschrift Fur Sozialpsychologie*. <https://doi.org/10.1024/0044-3514.38.1.7>

¹⁵ Dainton, M., & Zelle, E. D. (2018). *Applying Communication Theory for Professional Life: A Practical Introduction*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

explanation for the reasons (different from Festinger's original theory) that can produce dissonance.¹⁶

Eddie Harmon-Jones thought of a new model of action-based cognitive dissonance. This action-based model refers to the perception and cognition that can cause dissonance are cognitions related to a person's tendency to act. This dissonance is overcome by harmonizing cognition so that effective and non-contradictory action can be realized.¹⁶

The perspective of this action-based dissonance model is the same as the other perspectives. Action-based models argue that perceptions and beliefs can encourage a person to have a certain tendency to act. This model shows that dissonance arises not only because of cognitive conflict, but can also occur when cognition and action implications conflict. This then makes it difficult for someone to act. This model assumes that the most important goal of cognition is to guide one's behavior.⁴

A person's behavior is influenced by his cognition. This cognition can influence action to some degree. However, some cognitions have a direct and persistent impact on actions than others. Then, this cognition causes greater dissonance when facing inconsistent conditions. This dissonance can then make individuals try to align cognition so that behavior can occur. Situations that often lead to dissonance usually involve difficult decisions and require a commitment to action. If individuals are committed to an action, then they will act. That is, they are motivated to behave following their commitments.⁴

Health-Seeking Behavior of Indonesian People

Improving health services is something that must be done if a country wants to improve the quality of its generation. Health knowledge in individuals and society also plays an important role in this. Good understanding of individual and public health will affect the quality of their health. In this case, the government and experts need to have a comprehensive understanding of health behavior in the community, so that it can increase efforts to solve health problems in the community.⁸

Health care in Indonesia is run by two parties, government and private. In Indonesia, the most basic government health service is puskesmas. The level of health services above the puskesmas is government hospitals at the district and provincial levels.¹⁷ Other health care services are private property. Private health care facilities vary widely, from health facilities belonging to non-profit religious charities to personally owned health facilities.¹⁸

¹⁶ Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2009). *Encyclopedia of communication theory*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

¹⁷ Indonesian Ministry of Health. (2016). *Indonesia health profile 2015*. Jakarta. Indonesia Ministry of Health. pp. 25–41.

¹⁸ Hort, K., Akhtar, A.O., Trisnantoro, L., Dewi, S., & Meliala, A. (2011) The growth of non-state hospitals in Indonesia: implications for policy and regulatory options. *Health Policy Health Finance Knowledge Hub*. (12) ;1–17.

Based on studies in the Indonesian context, health-related behavior in a society is complex because there are various cultural and ethnic differences.⁸ In countries with middle to lower economies, even though there are many formal health services, informal health service providers or non-conventional health service providers are health services that are still widely used.⁹ As in Indonesia, non-conventional health services are also known as alternative or traditional health services. Traditional health services in Indonesia are supported by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia.¹⁰

Health-seeking behavior can be described as “steps taken by an individual who perceives a need for help as he or she attempts to solve a health problem”.¹⁹ Widayanti, et al. (2020) stated that health-seeking behavior in various developing countries has been done to explain various related phenomena.⁸ phenomena related to health-seeking behavior are health care, treatment behavior, and help-seeking behavior. In the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, understanding the phenomenon of health-seeking behavior in the community is an important step to form effective action to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

B. METHODS

The method used in this study is a literature study, which is a study that research object is in the form of literary works, journals scientific, books, articles in the mass media, as well as statistical data. The literature will be used to answer the research problems raised by the author in this case is how the cognitive dissonance theory explains the health-seeking behavior of Indonesia people to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. This study was conducted in descriptive analysis, that is providing education and understanding to readers about cognitive dissonance theory and health-seeking behavior in Indonesia. So, the type of data used in this study is secondary data.

First, we looked for main literature on the development of cognitive dissonance theory in the last five years (literature from 2015 to 2020). Second, we are looking for literature linking cognitive dissonance theory and the Covid-19 pandemic. Then we looked for literature on the health-seeking behavior or various health efforts of people in Indonesia in dealing with Covid-19. Finally, we conducted a descriptive analysis that explained the relationship between cognitive dissonance and health-seeking behaviors of people in Indonesia in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.

C. RESULTS

Festinger formulates a theory with the assumption that when an individual has two or more elements of knowledge that are relevant but inconsistent with each other, an uncomfortable state will form.¹⁴ Cognitive dissonance theory not only explains that persuasion is not solely the result of instilling beliefs, but also this theory predicts that an influence that is formed is an intrapersonal event. So that the mismatch between one's

¹⁹ Chrisman, N.J. (1977). The health-seeking process: An approach to the natural history of illness. *Cult Med Psych* 1, 351–377. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00116243>

attitudes and behavior can create a dissonance that can be reduced by changing the cognitive elements in the form of personal beliefs or behavior so that behavior changes occur.¹⁵

In the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, governments around the world constrain their citizens to adhere to health regulations. This is aiming to reduce the spread of the virus. A study by Fischer, et al. (2020) shows that attitudes and risk perceptions about Covid-19 can influence health behaviors in general. To restore stability and eliminate dissonance, people seek to change attitudes or make their behavior appropriate. Which elements of cognition change depends on the strength of the commitment of each element.⁷

The study conducted by Fischer, et al. (2020) is in line with "An Action-Based Model of Cognitive Dissonance Processes" proposed by Eddie Harmon-Jones. A person's behavior is influenced by his cognition. This cognition can influence behavior to some degree. However, some cognitions have a direct and persistent impact on actions than others. Then, this cognition causes greater dissonance when facing inconsistent conditions. This dissonance can then make individuals try to align cognition so that behavior can occur. Situations that often lead to dissonance usually involve difficult decisions and require a commitment to action. If individuals are committed to an action, then they will act. That is, they are motivated to behave following their commitments.⁴

Another study conducted by Wise, et al. (2020), show that the effect of perceptions on the risk of Covid-19 can influence the protective behavior of people in the United States. The perception of this threat is one of the cognitive elements that exist in a person. The existence of this perception is said to have a significant impact on protective behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic.²⁰

There have not been many studies on health-seeking behavior amid the Covid-19 pandemic in the Indonesian context. Whereas the discussion of health-seeking behavior is important to increase the optimization of health policy and to read business opportunities in the health sector. After searching for literature on the health-seeking behavior of Indonesian people, we find works of literature that are relevant and can describe the condition of people in Indonesia in general.

Based on the literature search that has been carried out, the efforts made by people in Indonesia in seeking health and protecting themselves during the Covid-19 pandemic are very diverse. An article in April (about a month since Indonesia was exposed to the coronavirus) on an environmental news site, Mongabay.com, it was reported that herbal plants or what is commonly referred to as empon-empon are in

²⁰ Wise, T., Zbozinek, T., Micheline, G., Hagan, C., & Mobbs, D. (2020). Changes in risk perception and protective behavior during the first week of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. Doi: 10.31234/osf.io/dz428.

great demand by people in Indonesia. People in Indonesia believe that empon-empon can improve their health and reduce the risk of transmission of the coronavirus.²¹

"Herbal plants or commonly called empon-empon are commodities that are much sought after by the community after the outbreak of Covid-19. This plant is believed to be efficacious to increase endurance as an antidote to corona. Traditional herbal medicine made from empon-empon has been a mandatory drink for our parents for a long time ago. Herbal medicine has the property to cure disease and improve body health. Fruits and various plants besides rhizomes also have properties that are no less important for health. Dragon fruit, mangosteen, langsep, also guava for treatment. Moringa leaves, Secang, and honey are useful for immunity. A healthy body will reduce the possibility of disease entering through viruses, bacteria, or germs. People who are used to drinking herbal medicine have good endurance (Riski, 18 April 2020)."

Riski reported that the Mayor of Surabaya, Tri Rismaharini, has established a public kitchen in the courtyard of the Surabaya City Hall since mid-March 2020. Total of 11,000 boiled eggs and about 88 gallons of Pokak (a traditional drink from Madura, East Java. And Pokak is a concoction drink with the basic ingredients of empon-empon) prepared to help citizens and public service workers, so that their health is maintained in the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has also made traditional herbal medicine made from other empon ingredients in great demand on the market.²¹

"What we provide is a potion of empon-empon called Pokak, consisting of ginger, cardamom, lemongrass, cloves, and a mixture of spices. We share it with the residents of Surabaya City, the goal is to educate residents to have a healthy lifestyle by drinking the original traditional drinks of our ancestors, and that can increase endurance (Eddy in Riski, 18 April 2020)."

Mustofa (10 Mei 2020) also conveyed the same thing in an article published by Radarbali.jawapos.com. When the government is campaigning for the prevention of the spread of the coronavirus through social distancing, wearing masks, hand sanitizers and stay at home or work from home (WFH), it is no less important how people independently increase their immune systems, which is often called the system. immune. In the Covid-19 pandemic, it is a challenge for people to maintain a healthy body. One way to increase endurance is by taking supplements and vitamins. However, along with the times, people began to use medicinal plants as an alternative treatment for diseases.²²

"Long before the coronavirus case broke out, the use of traditional ingredients, or what is better known as herbal medicine, is an empirical fact. Potions from our ancestors have been used for decades to prevent and cure various diseases, both infectious and non-infectious (Mustofa, 10 Mei 2020)."

²¹ Riski, Petrus. (18 April 2020). Lawan Corona, Tingkatkan Imunitas Tubuh dengan Empon-empon dan Konsumsi Buah. Mongabay. Retrieved on <https://www.mongabay.co.id/2020/04/18/lawan-corona-tingkatkan-imunitas-tubuh-dengan-empon-empon-dan-konsumsi-buah/>

²² Mustofa, Ali. (10 Mei 2020). Konsumsi Jamu Tingkatkan Sistem Imun di Tengah Covid-19. Radar Bali Jawa Pos. Retrieved on <https://radarbali.jawapos.com/read/2020/05/10/193415/konsumsi-jamu-tingkatkan-sistem-imun-di-tengah-covid-19>

Mustofa (10 Mei 2020) also reported that traditional herbal medicine or jamu is an integrated part of the national health service system that is contained in the health law in Indonesia. Jamu is a part of traditional medicine that applies hereditary ingredients and has empirical evidence. Besides, in the national meeting of traditional drug entrepreneurs, it was stated that herbal medicine is the main choice in improving public health.

Health-seeking behavior that has been reported previously is in line with the health guidelines presented by the Indonesian Ministry of Health. In July 2020, the Indonesian Ministry of Health issued a guidebook entitled "Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19)". In the discussion of preventing transmission to individuals, the government has campaigned for several actions such as²³:

- a. Clean your hands regularly by washing your hands with soap and running water for 40-60 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 20-30 seconds. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unclean hands.
- b. Use personal protective equipment like a mask that covers your nose and mouth if you have to leave the house or interact with other people whose health status is unknown (who may transmit Covid-19).
- c. Maintain a minimum distance of 1 meter from other people to avoid getting droplets from people who are coughing or sneezing. If it is not possible to maintain a distance, it can be done with various other administrative and technical engineering.
- d. Limit yourself to interactions or contacts with other people whose health status is unknown.
- e. When arriving home after traveling, take a shower, and change clothes immediately before contact with family members at home.
- f. Increase endurance by adopting a clean and healthy lifestyle (PHBS) such as consumption of balanced nutrition, physical activity at least 30 minutes a day, adequate rest, including the use of traditional health. The use of traditional health, one of which is done by implementing independent traditional health care through the use of the Family Medicine Garden (TOGA) by making herbal medicine and acupressure.
- g. Manage comorbidities to keep them under control.
- h. Managing mental and psychosocial health.
- i. When sick, apply the ethics of coughing and sneezing. If it continues immediately consult a doctor/health worker.

²³ Indonesian Ministry of Health. (Juli 2020). Pedoman Pencegahan dan Pengendalian Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Revisi Ke-5. Health Ministry of Indonesia

- j. Implement new habit adaptations by implementing protocols health in every activity.

Widayati, et al. (2020) reported that the health behavior of the Indonesian public is complex because Indonesia is influenced by diverse cultural and ethnic cultures.⁸ Likewise, the development of healthcare services in Indonesia is influenced by this diversity. Although conventional health services are widely available, non-conventional or traditional health services are still in great demand. This is because many Indonesians believe that traditional health services can also help with their health problems.

Traditional health service providers in Indonesia are categorized by the Indonesian Ministry of Health into four types of services. The first is biologically based therapy services, namely traditional therapies that use natural herbal ingredients. The second is physical therapy services with tools, such as acupuncture, acupressure, and cupping therapy. The third is physical therapy services without tools such as massage. And the fourth is mind therapy services such as meditation and hypnotherapy.¹⁰

The understanding of health and illness in Indonesia is very much influenced by the socio-cultural background in society. There is a belief about balance and harmony between physicality and religious spirit. When there is a balance between body and soul, a harmonious condition will be achieved. Perceptions of health are also influenced by the existence of six religions in Indonesia: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Some people think that being sick is a destiny from God so they don't try to cure it, because they believe that the loss of pain is also part of destiny.^{8,24} These perceptions and beliefs can influence the health-seeking behavior of the Indonesian people.

How health services are selected in Indonesian society is determined by a variety of complex and mutually influencing factors. These factors include sociodemographic characteristics, the influence of important figures, cultural beliefs, perceptions of disease and disease causes, and perceptions of access to and availability of health services.^{8,24,25} Sociodemographic characteristics such as age, education, to the economic status of a family can influence behavior. Lower middle-income families tend to use traditional medicines to treat illness, the elderly and those in rural areas are more likely to seek traditional medicine. However, other studies have not found a significant relationship between health behavior and sociodemographic conditions.²⁶ This shows the possibility of other factors that have a greater impact on influencing people's choices in choosing health services.⁸

²⁴ Fles, R., Bos, A., Supriyati, Rachmawati, D., Waliyanti, E., Tan, I. B., Haryana, S. M., Schmidt, M. K., & Dewi, F. (2017). The role of Indonesian patients' health behaviors in delaying the diagnosis of nasopharyngeal carcinoma. *BMC public health*, 17(1), 510. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4429-y>

²⁵ Marchira, C. R., Supriyanto, I., Subandi, Soewadi, & Good, B. J. (2016). The association between duration of untreated psychosis in first psychotic episode patients and help seeking behaviors in Jogjakarta, Indonesia. *International journal of culture and mental health*, 9(2), 120–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17542863.2015.1103276>

²⁶ Ahmad, R. A., Richardus, J. H., & de Vlas, S. J. (2012). Care-seeking behavior among individuals with TB symptoms in Jogjakarta Province, Indonesia: a community-based study. *International Health*, 5(1), 51–57. <https://doi.org/10.1093/inthealth/ihs002>

In most Indonesians, seeking treatment for a disease can involve the role and advice of family, friends, and other relations.^{24,26} The advice given by loved ones can encourage a person to visit alternative health care providers to seek health. Perceptions about health in handling crises such as the Covid-19 through groups related to the role of opinion leaders and organizations.²⁷ Religious leaders and husbands also can influence patient's choices.⁸

The existence of ancestral culture in Indonesian society forms a tradition to seek treatment from traditional medical service personnel. This tradition has been passed down from generation to generation and has become a cultural value that is embedded and cannot be ignored.²⁶ Many people also fear the side effects of drugs, dependence on drugs, and do not like various medical procedures.^{8,24}

Many Indonesians believe that traditional medicine is a safe way because it is made from herbs which are natural ingredients. Jamu (a traditional herbal drink) is one of the most popular medical services in Indonesia.²⁸ Apart from herbal medicine, other popular traditional treatments are acupuncture, blood-sucking treatment with animal leeches, traditional bone adjusters, cupping therapy, and coin scratching.⁸

Health-seeking behavior is also influenced by perceptions of a disease and its causes. If the cause of the disease they believe is a medical illness, then they will go looking for a drug according to their symptoms.²⁵ In an article, it is stated that there is a wrong perception about Covid-19, such as assuming Covid-19 is just the common cold, the sun's heat can kill the coronavirus and this virus can be cured by consuming vitamin C.²⁹ This inaccurate perception can affect a person's health-seeking behavior.

Perceptions of health services also influence public health-seeking behavior in Indonesia. Many people do not want to go to public health facilities because they avoid administrative procedures that are considered complicated. Besides, many people think that healthcare professionals' communication styles are incompatible with the patient's feelings and condition.²⁴ On the other hand, many people choose to go to private health workers for various reasons. The reasons, in general, are the trust in certain experts, availability of drugs that are considered effective, and short waiting times.^{8,30}

²⁷ Akhmad, Bachruddin A. (2020). Disparities in Health Communication of the Groups of Mosques in Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia*, Vol. 5 (1), 101-110. <https://doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v5i1.371>

²⁸ Elfahmi, Woerdenbag, H. J., & Kayser, O. (2014). Jamu: Indonesian traditional herbal medicine towards rational phytopharmacological use. *Journal of Herbal Medicine*, 4(2), 51-73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hermed.2014.01.002>

²⁹ Aida, N. R. & Hardiyanto, S. (24 October 2020). 10 Mitos tentang Virus Corona Penyebab Covid-19, Masihkah Anda Percaya?. KOMPAS. Retrieved on <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2020/10/24/160800665/10-mitos-tentang-virus-corona-penyebab-covid-19-masihkah-anda-percaya?page=all>

³⁰ Kreslake, J., Wahyuningrum, Y., Iuliano, A., Storms, A., Lafond, K., Mangiri, A., . . . Storey, J. (2016). The Intersection of Care Seeking and Clinical Capacity for Patients With Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (H5N1) Virus in Indonesia: Knowledge and Treatment Practices of the Public and Physicians. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 10(6), 838-847. doi:10.1017/dmp.2016.81

Consider the condition of someone who is trying to make the difficult decision to adhere to health protocols and drinking jamu in the Covid-19 pandemic. The benefits of adhering to health protocols and beliefs about jamu, such as increased fitness and decreased stress condition, are consonant cognitions. The laziness to adhering health protocols dan dislike the taste of jamu are dissonant cognitions. This dissonance or discomfort motivates the individual to reduce cognitive dissonance. If individuals can reduce dissonant cognition and increase consonant cognition, they are more likely to comply with health protocols and regularly drink herbal medicine. Based on the action-based model, cognition that is following decisions will encourage a person to comply with health protocols and drink herbal medicine, while cognition that is not in line with decisions will have the opposite impact on the individual. So that reducing mismatch is not only done by reducing dissonant cognition, but also encouraging individuals to increase their beliefs and carry out their decisions based on consonant cognition.

However, it turns out that not everyone in Indonesia obeys the health protocols of Covid-19 nor they tries to maintain health by taking herbal ingredients like people in general. It was reported by Buana (2020) that this kind of attitude is influenced by the presence of cognitive bias. Cognitive bias is a type of error in thinking that occurs when people process and interpret information in the world around them.³¹

D. DISCUSSION

This is the first study to understand the health-seeking behavior of Indonesian people in the Covid-19 pandemic by using dissonance cognitive behavior theory. This study shows that discussing health-seeking behavior can be linked to cognitive dissonance theory, but this has not been widely used especially in the Indonesian context. Most of the previous research related to health behavior has only focused on the scope of health without involving cognitive dissonance communication theory. Understanding how dissonance cognitive process, in the health-seeking behavior of Indonesian people in the Covid-19 pandemic, is particularly important to help solve health problems in the community and determine further policies.

In the previous study conducted by Fischer, et al. (2020), it was found that to restore stability and eliminate dissonance, it could be done by changing their perceptions or adapting their behavior to a condition. Which aspects have the possibility to change is influenced by the strength of commitment in each element of cognition. This study used cognitive dissonance theory to explain the health-preserving attitudes of respondents who came from Arab, American, German, Polish, and Israeli. Seeing this, we realize the importance of discussing cognitive dissonance theory in the Indonesian context to understand the health-seeking behavior of Indonesians.

The previous study conducted by Wise, et al. (2020), shows that the effect of perceptions on the risk of Covid-19 can affect the protective behavior of people in the

³¹ Buana, Dana R., (2020). Analisis Perilaku Masyarakat Indonesia dalam Menghadapi Pandemi Virus Corona (Covid-19) dan Kiat Menjaga Kesejahteraan Jiwa. SALAM; Jurnal Sosial & Budaya Syar-i. FSH UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Vol. 7 No. 3 (2020), pp.217-226, DOI: 10.15408/sjsbs.v7i3.15082

United State. The perception of this threat is one of the cognitive elements that exist in a person. But in this research, it does not discuss how the dissonance process occurs in a person when faced with a threat or discomfort feeling in the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study discusses the application of cognitive dissonance theory based on the development of Eddie Harmon-Jones's theory of an action-based model.⁴ We chose this literature because it can explain the health-seeking behavior of Indonesian people. The health-seeking behavior of Indonesians is determined by various internal and external factors.⁸ Internal factors that can influence, for example, are demographic characteristics, individual perceptions, and certain beliefs about the disease and its treatment. Meanwhile, external factors that can lead to health-seeking behavior are suggestions from influential figures, cultural conditions in the environment, and also conditions of health service facilities. These factors are part of a person's cognitive elements. This condition is in line with the assumption of the action-based model, that perceptions and cognitions can influence people to act in specific ways.

This present study examines how cognitive dissonance processes can influence a person's health-seeking behavior in the Indonesian context. Based on the action-based model of the dissonance cognitive process, after making decisions (for example, stay healthy in the Covid-19 pandemic), people have a mindset to do it. This mindset enables a person to make decisions and behave (such as adhere to health protocols and take herbal medicine) effectively. The state in which someone is motivated like this is an action-oriented mindset. Someone will try to do various things to achieve goals.

Based on the action-based model, an action-oriented mindset can increase cognitive-dissonance reduction. In the Indonesian context, traditional medicine systems play an important influence on health-seeking behavior. People value their efficacy, and they are widely accepted. Therefore, in addition to adhering to standard health protocols, many people in Indonesia choose traditional medicine as an option to seek their health in the Covid-19 pandemic.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Following the study objectives contained in the introduction and looking at the discussion of the results that have been obtained, we concluded that the unique health-seeking behavior of Indonesians can be answered by the discussion of cognitive dissonance theory. The process of taking action carried out by Indonesians is unique because it is influenced by various cognitive elements that they have such as belief and knowledge. This study provides an overview of how the process of cognitive dissonance in the health-seeking behavior of Indonesian people in the Covid-19 pandemic. Because this study uses secondary data, further studies are needed to further understand how the cognitive dissonance process occurs in the phenomenon of health-seeking behavior of Indonesian people in the Covid-19 pandemic. The application of this theory also does not discuss in more detail the cognitive biases that can occur in the interpersonal communication process. So that other supporting concept is also needed that can explain

the existence of cognitive biases that can affect the cognitive dissonance process in the application of this theory.

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