



Belief in Superstition and Intolerance in Conditions of Uncertainty

Tiara Awanisa Pamardisiwi^{1✉}, Amri Hana Muhammad²

¹Department of Psychology, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Keywords

*Superstitious belief,
intolerance of uncertainty.*

Abstract

The condition of intolerance to uncertainty in individuals arises when there is a possibility of a bad situation or having a risky future. Therefore, many individuals try to reduce these adverse effects that may occur in the future by believing in superstitions. This research will reveal whether there is a superstitious belief in intolerance in uncertain conditions. Data will be analyzed using Pearson Product Moment involving 395 subjects selected through quota sampling. The results showed that there was a relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance of uncertainty with a correlation strength of 0.423. This means that when an individual is in an uncertain situation, it can trigger the presence of intolerance of uncertainty. On the other hand, the presence of superstitious belief is believed to have existed in the individual and tends to be used as a protector in making decisions.

✉Correspondence address:
E-mail: tiaraawanisa01@students.unnes.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Javanese people's belief in cultural values seems inseparable. Even for the Javanese tribe has a book or book containing values that are passed down from generation to generation and known as Primbon. For example, in the book Primbon by Gunasasmita (2009), it is explained that there are characteristics of perpetrators if individuals lose goods according to the day, for example on Friday, the perpetrator of theft has short fingers, dense hair, medium and burly body, but his movements are not flexible. On the other hand, there are also recommendations in determining good days for sacred events such as weddings, namely in the months of Final Jumadil, Ruwah, Besar, and Rajab which have Kliwon Tuesday (Gunasasmita, 2009).

Javanese people who still uphold cultural values derived from ancestors and are used as part of every step and consideration in making plans into their own uniqueness. Moreover, when entering adulthood, Javanese people are also inseparable from changes. Because every individual who begins to enter adulthood is considered to have autonomy and freedom to plan how his future is, and choose to believe or not believe in cultural values that are passed down from generation to generation.

The number of unexpected situations that present along with changes in conditions in early adulthood can lead to the interpretation that the environment is unsafe or threatening so that it requires a series of reactions in order to avoid dangerous assumptions about the situation. This situation refers to a future that is difficult to predict, so it appears to give rise to ambiguous interpretations and taking certain anticipatory steps as a form of defense from possible threats (Grenier et al., 2005). The tendency to perceive a threatening situation and inability to secure in the future until it is responded to through a reaction is referred to as intolerance of uncertainty (Aprodita, 2021).

The impact of intolerance to uncertainty appears in many problems related to the onset of panic, depression, fear, isolation, inhibiting social interaction, worry, and so on related to forms of anxiety (Carleton, 2016; Penney, Rachor, & Deleurme, 2020). Intolerance to uncertainty is also considered a component of the cause of social worry and anxiety that arises in individuals, because the phenomenon of intolerance in uncertainty contains a negative perception of uncertainty that is synonymous with adverse effects so it must be avoided (Istiqomah, Helmi, & Widhiarso, 2022).

Case et al (2004), stated that uncertainty coping strategies can be done with superstitious beliefs because they can relieve stress that arises. For example, activities that cannot be fully controlled such as fishing on the high seas, hunting, or gardening that allow for storms, bad weather, crop failure, or not obtaining satisfactory hunting results, will encourage higher superstitious beliefs such as by performing certain rituals (Case et al, 2004). Based on these various opinions, superstitious beliefs can be used as a way to regain a sense of control and reduce stress arising from uncontrollable circumstances due to uncertainty.

In addition, superstitious beliefs can be used as guides, controllers, or guardians of human behavior from uncertain situations, unpleasant things, and future threats that can increase intolerance to uncertainty (Carleton, 2016). Akova (2011), conveyed the same thing that superstitious beliefs function as a balancer of fear and tension as well as strength and a source of peace for individuals in order to prevent a negative future. Risen (2016), revealed that the emergence of superstitious belief is influenced by cognitive aspects through the view of imagination that suggests the presence of its impact. Superstitious beliefs in modern times have many forms, for example in research conducted by Zivanovic et al (2012), found superstitious beliefs carried out by football, hockey, and basketball athletes doing certain behaviors such as touching the ground of the court before a game which is felt to minimize tension and sensitivity due to emotional pressure that arises.

Therefore, it makes more sense if the study of intolerance to uncertainty is seen through the culture, customary values, and customs of local communities that influence individual thinking and behavior. The variety of behaviours that emerge in the relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance to uncertainty requires research that can see clearly. Therefore, this study would be very good to do to find out whether or not there is the presence of superstitious beliefs related to traditional culture as well as related to the state of intolerance to uncertainty. Researchers suspect that superstitious beliefs may be a strategy associated with levels of intolerance to uncertainty.

METHOD

This study will examine the relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance to uncertainty. Intolerance of uncertainty is an individual condition that is often represented in the form of worry and anxiety caused by not having enough information to make a future safer, giving rise to a series of reactions. The measurement that will be used to see intolerance in the body in individuals is based on two constituent factors, namely prospective anxiety and inhibitory anxiety. The score obtained from the measurement of high intolerance of uncertainty represents the level that the individual has is also high, this is also true and vice versa.

Superstitious belief is a belief in events, activities or rituals, and objects as certain talismans that are believed to be able to have a positive impact or counteract negative impacts through an irrational or irrational mechanism. The measurement of superstitious beliefs is based on three aspects, including belief in a particular event or occurrence, belief in certain rituals, and belief in certain objects or amulets. The higher the score indicates that the level of superstitious beliefs that individuals have is also getting higher and this is also true vice versa.

The process of collecting data on intolerance on uncertainty using a scale based on the research of Carleton, Norton, and Asmundson (2007) named IUS-12 was then carried out a process of translation, adaptation, and validation in Indonesian in the research of Istiqomah, Helmi, and Widhiarso (2022). The constituent factors in the Indonesian version of IUS-12 are prospective anxiety with behavioral indicators, namely negative perceptions of uncertainty, seeking information to reduce uncertainty, and desire for certainty. In addition, the constituent factors of inhibitory anxiety have behavioral indicators of helplessness to face uncertainty and avoid uncertainty.

The collection of superstitious belief data is also used with a scale that uses a combination of aspects with the simplified dimensional theory basis of Delacroix and Guillard (2008), additional aspects of Hannan (2019), and dimensions from the research of Kose, Argan, and Cimen (2015). The aspects used in the scale of superstitious beliefs with Javanese cultural background are belief in certain events or occurrences, belief in certain rituals, and belief in certain objects or amulets.

The research subjects involved were individuals over the age of 18 years and Javanese. The criteria of the study subjects have been considered based on the assumption that the 18-year-old individual has various changes as well as the possession of the full burden of responsibility on himself. In addition, the selection of Javanese criteria is adjusted to research on superstitious beliefs that will be carried out related to Javanese culture. The selection of subjects will be collected through quota sampling set based on Cochran's theory (in Sugiyono, 2019). The total number of subjects obtained was 400 individuals, but the final selection was made to 395 individuals because 5 individuals did not meet the initial criteria that had been determined.

Data that has been obtained, collected, and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment is adjusted because the data is normally distributed after going through the normality assumption test. The results of the analysis of the hypothesis test using the Pearson Product Moment need to produce a significance level of $p < 0.05$ which indicates that there is a relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance to uncertainty.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of 395 subjects involved in the study, 165 (41.7%) were male and 230 (58.3%) were female. The ages of the subjects in the study were spread between 18 – 65 years. In general, superstitious beliefs in Javanese people are in the low category when viewed based on the empirical mean owned at 98.392 and entered into $76.005 < X \leq 101.335$ after a score interval using standard deviation with the theoretical mean. In more detail, the category of superstitious beliefs based on aspects of belief in certain events or events with an empirical mean of 28.787 is in the low category of the form of behavior in which is meant to be actions that are believed to give something, belief in certain rituals has an empirical mean of 42.785 which is in the medium category, and belief in certain objects or talismans has an empirical mean of 26.820 which is in the low category.

The picture of intolerance in uncertainty in general is also included in the high category with an empirical mean of 41.501 and an interval value of $40 < X \leq 48$. On the other hand, when viewed based on the constituent factors in intolerance to uncertainty, it shows that the constituent factors of prospective anxiety have an empirical mean of 25.144 which is included in the group with a high category and inhibitory anxiety which has an empirical mean of 16.357 is also included in the medium category.

The results of the assumption test in the normality test show that the data is normally distributed because it has a P-value of Kolmogorov Smirnov > 0.05 on both variables. Based on this, the hypothesis test will be carried out using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test.

Table 1. Normality Assumption Test Results

Var	Valid	Missing	Mean	Std. Deviation	K-S Asymp.		Min	Max
					Z	Sig. (2-tailed)		
X	395	0	98.392	29.388	0.787	0.566	38.000	190.000
Y	395	0	41.501	8.122	1.127	0.158	12.000	60.00

Further tests were conducted to test the hypothesis using *Pearson Product Moment* with the null hypothesis proposed, namely "There is no relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance to uncertainty" and an alternative hypothesis, namely "There is a relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance to uncertainty". The results that appear after the analysis are as follows:

Table 2. Hypothesis Test Results

Person's Correlations			
		Person's r	p
X	-Y	0,423***	<.001

The results show that the p-value of the Pearson Product Moment is $<.001$ which is equal to < 0.05 or means that the null hypothesis is rejected, therefore the alternative hypothesis that reads "There is a relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance to uncertainty" is accepted. The strength of the relationship described through the correlation coefficient in the analysis is 0.423 which indicates the medium category which means that there is still a belief in certain rituals that are believed to be able to have a positive impact or counteract a negative impact through an irrational or irrational mechanism.

Similar research results were also obtained by Lasikiewicz and Teo (2018), using experimental methods showing that superstitious beliefs in individuals conveyed having a lucky pen felt the ability to control events so as to make stress and anxiety lower than the task given compared to individuals with ordinary pens. Also supported by Case et al (2004), shows that the use of superstitious belief strategies will increase along with the perceived possibility of failure.

This is certainly a new finding because it can be used as a strategy to reduce the portion of intolerance to uncertainty. On the other hand, there are some notes that may need to be known as limitations of researchers conducting research that is considered ideal and perfect, namely first, the different situations and conditions of each subject, so that there is a possibility to answer questions with answers that seem original or not really according to him. Second, regarding belief in superstition, many are influenced by culture and community circumstances, so there are obstacles to finding a suitable theory for the research being carried out, namely on Javanese people. Third, the psychological scale of superstitious belief is used only through visible validity and logical through expert judgment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been done, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between superstitious beliefs and intolerance of uncertainty, where when individuals are in an uncontrollable situation or unable to secure the future, it can trigger the presence of *intolerance of uncertainty*. On the other hand, the presence of *superstitious belief* in the form of a degree of trust that already exists in the individual will tend to be used as a way to secure decisions in order to be able to make a safer situation for the future.

The findings in the study can be used as a basis for future research dealing with intolerance to uncertainty and belief in superstition. In the future, it is hoped that more subjects will be involved with more detailed attributes so that they can be seen in detail. In addition, the use of different methods can be tried to provide variations as well as research to see the picture of superstitious beliefs is expected to be carried out with different cultural backgrounds to be used as comparison material.

REFERENCES

- Akova, S. (2011). The Relationship between Superstition, Metaphors, and Advertising. *Journal Academic Marketing Mysticism Online*, 3(9), 138-156.
- Aprodita, N. P. (2021). Peran Intolerance of Uncertainty terhadap Depresi pada Individu Dewasa Awal. *Humanitas*, 5(2), 179-196.
- Carleton, N. R., Norton, M. P., & Asmundson, G. J. (2007). Fearing The Unknown: A Short Version of The Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale. *Journal of Anxiety Disorder*, 21, 105-117.
- Carleton, R. N. (2016). Into the unknown: A review and synthesis of contemporary models involving uncertainty. *Journal of anxiety disorders*, 39(1), 30-43.
- Case, Trevor I., Fitness, Julie., Cairns, David R., & Stevenson, Richard J. (2004). Coping With Uncertainty: Superstitious Strategies and Secondary Control. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34(4), 848-871.
- Delacroix, E., & Guillard, V. (2008). Understanding, Defining and Measuring the Trait of Superstition. *Selected Proceedings of the IAREP/SABE*. Rome: Luiss University Press.
- Grenier, S., Barrette, A. M., & Ladouceur, R. (2005). Intolerance of Uncertainty and Intolerance of Ambiguity: Similarities and Differences. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 39, 593-600.
- Gunasmita, R. (2009). *Kitab Primbon Jawa Serbaguna*. Yogyakarta: Narasi.

- Hannan, C. E. (2019). Very Superstitious: The Relationship Between Desperation and Superstitious Behavior. Murray State Theses and Dissertations.
- Istiqomah, N. A., Helmi, A. F., & Widhiarso, W. (2022). Translasi, Adaptasi, dan Validasi Skala Intolerance of Uncertainty Short Version 12-item (IUS-12) ke Bahasa Indonesia. *Psikologika*, 27(1), 107-124.
- Kose, H., Argan, M., & Cimen, I. (2015). The Dimensions of Superstitious Beliefs and Behaviors: A Descriptive Quantitative Study on Soccer Fans in Turkey. *International Journal of Global Business*, 8(1), 27-33.
- Lasikiewicz, N., & Teo, W. Y. (2018). The effect of superstitious thinking on psychosocial stress responses and perceived task performance. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 21(1-2), 32-41.
- Penney, A. M., Rachor, G. S., & Deleurme, K. A. (2020). Differentiating the Roles of Intolerance Uncertainty and Negative Beliefs About Worry Across Emotional Disorders. *Journal of Experimental Psychopathology*, 1-22.
- Risen, J. L. (2016). Believing What We Do Not Believe: Acquiescence to Superstitious Beliefs and Other Powerful Intuitions. *Psychological Review*, 123(2), 182-207.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Zivanovic, N., Randelovid, N., & Savic, Z. (2012). Superstitions and Rituals in Modern Sport. *APES*, 2(2), 220-224.