Consuming *Jamu* as Local Wisdom to Fight for Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia

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Abstract

The Pandemic Covid-19 devastated the world economy today. Not only Indonesia has felt the impact, but in almost all countries, even the two superpowers - the United States and China - also witnessed the turmoil in such uncertain situations. Various kinds of speculation arise along with the rapid development of this pandemic around the world. This paper looks explicitly at how Covid-19 can change the world's global map in all aspects, political, economic, social, and cultural. A qualitative method, cultural studies theory, and modernity concept are used as analysis tools. The study identifies the spread of Covid-19 shows the most significant impact of Covid-19 is that there is no longer any distinction between superpowers or small states affected by this deadly virus. The role of local wisdom in combating Covid-19 is one of the best alternatives used by Indonesia and several countries, especially the usage of Jamu as the traditional drink. It is explicitly explained that the conventional concept is a counterweight to modernity. Modernity and tradition must go hand in hand in realizing the welfare of humanity.

Keywords: Corona, jamu, local wisdom, modernity, postmodernism, public communication.

Introduction

An article in an online magazine *Politica* with a comic title, "Coronavirus will change the world permanently, launched on Friday, March 19, 2020, looks very gripping and became a magnet for citizens of the world. This paper shows the conditions of the world, which is currently in pain and grieving have dramatically changed A deadly virus, known as Corona Virus Disease-19 (Covid-19), damages the global order without anyone being able to fight or stop it. What is prioritized is the world community's struggle to decrease the number of victims either the infected or the dead.

The first outbreak allegedly appeared and was revealed in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on November 17, 2019 (Maulana 15). At the beginning of its appearance in Wuhan's city, there were 266 victims infected with Covid-19 last year (Josephine 13). According to the Chinese government data, the spread of this virus is undetectable and undocumented. The government suspects a 55-year-old patient from Hubei province to be the first person to be infected with Covid-19.

So far, arguably, the Covid-19 origin is believed to originate from the consumption of wild animals. Because the characteristics of the Coronavirus resemble viruses in the body of wild animals, one of which is the bat. Wuhan, which was the Coronavirus's initial location, happened to be also famous for its rough animal market (Pramadiba 13). However, this assumption was rejected outright by China. One research stated a pathogenic viral infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Shereen 91-98).

This outbreak then rapidly develops into a pandemic that has been a threat to global citizens. There is almost certainly no country that is immune to the virus that has not yet found an antidote. Two hundred sixteen countries infected with Covid-19. This data was collected from Johns Hopkins University, national public health agencies on April 12, 2020. Definitionally, a pandemic is very deadly and has a genuinely extraordinary impact on world citizens. Moreover, Indonesia has been dramatically affected by Covid-19, with the case fatality rate (CFR) being 8.9% at the end of March 2020 (Setiati 84-89).

Hidayat states that Indonesians' habit of drinking herbal medicine is considered a preventive measure against the Covid-19 virus (Hidayat 1-6). In line with the use of herbal drinks made from these Chinese spices, scientists and doctors have recommended using Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a cure for Covid-19 (Muhammad 28). Hence, studies show that herbal drinks or traditional medicine can increase human immunity. This paper explicitly highlights the morbid world situation from the viewpoint of modernism and postmodernism and contrasted it with the local wisdom: allegedly an exclusive domain for countries of the Far East. The problem of fragmentary, ambiguous, and erratic world conditions marked by high reflexivity levels is said to be a characteristic of postmodern culture.

In this article, the researcher uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research implies processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency (Denzin 41-45). In this research, the researcher stresses the role of local wisdom that *uses Jamu* as the Indonesian traditional herbal to show Nature's power in the current era of modernity. Moreover, it continues to seek the answers to questions about how cultural studies, in their national and local variants, influenced and gave meaning. The researcher also used journal articles, websites, books, and internet sources as data collections: a document-based corpus.

Covid-19 as the Global/Globalized Pandemic

Covid-19 is listed as one of the deadliest viruses and has a widespread impact on global citizens. Johns Hopkins University reports that the United States is ranked as the first country with the highest number of fatalities, almost 22,000 with an infected population of 531,247 according to national public health agencies (BBC 12). Following is Spain that ranked second with a death toll of nearly 17,000 people with an infected population of 166,019, and ranked third in Italy with a death toll of almost 20,000 and with an infected population of 156,363. China itself is ranked 7th with 3,343 fatalities and 83,134 people infected. Indonesia is ranked 37th with a death toll of 373 people and an infected population of 4,241 people. The United States ranks as the country with the highest number of population deaths due to Covid-19, as reported by The *New York Times*: more than 22,000 people with the Coronavirus have now died in the United States. The country's death toll has increased by more than 2,000 in a single day for the first time on Friday and has now surpassed the number of reported deaths in Italy (*The New York Times* 13).

The summarized and continuously updated data makes the Covid-19 pandemic the most terrible killer virus in the history of world civilizations after the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) virus. MERS is a viral respiratory illness that is new to humans. It was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012 and has since spread to several other countries, including the United States. Most people infected with MERS-CoV developed severe respiratory illnesses, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Many of them have died (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2).

The world is "forced" to change and adapt quickly to precarious circumstances with no prior preparation. The increasing number of victims in each country is a strong warning that Covid-19 is not a trivial disease. The debate about the origins of Covid-19 represents the problem of/for postmodernism regarding the possible limits to the modernization process. It also refers to the ongoing uncertainty regarding the content and range of terms in the debates between countries. In particular, the uncertainty of global conditions arises from intellectuals' and authorities' competitive efforts to control the debate. Other objectives are to control the discussion, examine its nature, and regulate 'cultural capital' in the market areas related to postmodernism. The development of the following terms and their meanings can vary due to different intellectual participating regions in the struggle for influence (Featherstone 2-3).

Opposition and debate about which country is the source of the disaster are very close to postmodernism. This global pandemic, which claimed many lives, was very close to postmodern intellectuals and their thoughts, such as Nietzsche. Postmodernism puts forward the view that various fields and specializations in science are the main strategies or agreements in which 'reality' can be shared, primarily due to strenuous efforts to achieve the truth made by social groups in seeking power. This view also explicitly explains the centrality of Nietzsche's thesis: the will to power in contemporary epistemology - where the search for truth always means building strength. Nietzsche's emphasis on the arbitrary nature of the structure of argument and rhetoric language remains an essential part of the deconstructive criticism of postmodernism (Turner 212-215). The Covid-19 pandemic is also interpreted as the hegemonic instability of those in power over the weak. Conflicting states now changed the terms of their relationships to face the viral attacks, secure immunity, and care for infected patients (at least temporarily). Here, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is a good example.

According to Gramsci, hegemony means a situation in which a 'historical block' of the ruling class faction exercises social authority and leadership over junior classes through a combination of power and agreement (Gramsci 76-80). A hegemonic block never stands alone from a single socioeconomic category but is formed through a series of alliances in which a group positions as a leader. Ideology plays a crucial role in allowing group alliances. Today, we see a reversal of Gramsci's concept, and all the blocks are united to fight the stormy Covid-19. Globally, the formation and confirmation of each country's status and identity have changed into a unity to jointly and mutually help overcome the Corona pandemic.

An effective public communication strategy for community behavior change intervention in carrying out health protocols aims to hone and improve volunteers' communication skills throughout Indonesia. It provides education and the right information to the public about Covid-19 and following what Dijkzeul and Moke (673-691) stated, public communication is an activity and strategy aimed at target audiences. Public communication aims to provide information to target audiences and increase awareness and influence attitudes or behavior of such audiences. Public communication refers to a communication campaign, an activity that uses various communication theories and strategies to influence a broad audience in measurable ways. Information disclosure related to Covid-19, especially in Indonesia, is very necessary so that the public gets correct, accurate, and up-to-date information. During the Covid-19 period, public communication is crucial because it relates to data conveyed to the public with comparisons (Muhawarman 97-106). The Indonesian government strives to socialize the health protocol to minimize the increase in patients infected with the Coronavirus.

Local Wisdom versus Modernity

The values of local wisdom tend to be forgotten in the processes of reducing the impact and development of the Covid-19 in nations of the East. Arguably, progress and modernity propel people to simplify habits and problems. These ethical values seem to encourage modern people to put forward wise local ideas and values that are embedded and

followed by community members (Sartini) [17]. Furthermore, local insights are interpreted as a blend of religious values with various man-made values that dominate in a specific area.

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia, various local pearls of wisdom began to emerge. Among them is the movement to consume processed herbs or raw herbs. Drinking herbal medicine as one of Indonesia's ancestral cultural heritages is considered to have a positive effect to maintain and enhance the human body's immunity. Spices are very thick with traditional elements such as turmeric, ginger, and they are processed into drinks with healthful properties called *Jamu*. This classic drink has become one of the favorites for many people during the Covid-19 Pandemic. A movement to consume spicy beverages to help increase immunity was launched. Several rhizomes are believed to boost body immunity, such as turmeric, ginger, galangal, and many other spices produced in Indonesia. The health element, which is the top priority, indicates the emergence of people's awareness about the need to return to Nature. The understanding of the ways and motives for resorting to traditional ingredients is believed to be one of the cultural studies issues that relate to the Indonesian people as an Eastern nation.

"Back to Nature" is a hashtag that was later launched to re-consume *Jamu*, a traditional drink of Indonesian society. In terms of cultural studies, the practice of drinking *Jamu* is a part of the Javanese ethnicity's sovereignty, which is indeed the ethnic majority in Indonesia. The habit of drinking herbal medicine is integral to Indonesia's Javanese ethnic culture, which often consumes *Jamu* as an herbal drink to recover quickly and avoid antibiotics.

Another local wisdom that reflects the Indonesian people's uniqueness is the charity movement, which was initiated by several musicians, such as Didi Kempot, with the headline of the Didi Kempot Charity Concert, a music concert created by several famous singers in Indonesia. This charity concert, which successfully mobilized many people to donate, produced fantastic nominal value. Didi managed to collect donations worth 4 billion rupiahs at the charity concert in just over two hours.

Indonesian's influencer Rachel Vennya has, on the morning of March 24, 2020, collected IDR 6.87 billion through a fundraiser that she set up on Kitabisa.com. The money would pay for medical supplies such as face masks, hand sanitizers, and gloves for healthcare workers at hospitals designated to treat Covid-19 patients. Besides, the money is also distributed to informal workers, such as market vendors, to stay at home during the outbreak. Adib Hidayat, the Editor-in-Chief of *Billboard Indonesia*, has also set up a fundraiser to procure supplies for healthcare workers and was able to raise IDR1.28 billion on Kitabisa. Kompas Gramedia media group is among private companies that have set up fundraisers on Kitabisa, raising IDR443 million [18]. Another local wisdom is shown by Indonesia's top fashion designer, Anne Avantie, who decided to make Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for medical workers in several hospitals in Indonesia. The growth of awareness empathizes with each other and helps entrench stronger bondings among people.

Some actions seeking to help the population at the lowest social stratification, such as online drivers, pedicab riders, laborers, are a medium for human generosity and empathy. Their efforts were embodied in a pressing question: "What can I authentically offer?" The same thing was done by several people abroad. In the earliest days of Coronavirus social distancing, Indonesians have seen inspirational first. Cello master Yo-Yo Ma posts a daily live concert of a song that sustains his fellowmen.

Broadway diva Laura Benanti invites performers from high school musicals to produce shows and send such performances to her. Lin-Manuel Miranda joins the campaign and promises to help as well. Entrepreneurs offer time to listen to pitches. Master yoga instructors teach free classes. People seem to be connected by one common thing: a desire to share based on a sense of humanity. Baker stated that the oversight mechanism was not an invention of modernity itself. However, modernity introduced new, more complex, and broad forms of supervision, including shifting from personal to impersonal control. Thus, bureaucratization, rectification, and professionalization became the core institutional configurations of modernity (Barker)[20].

The pandemic Covid-19 incident seems to have taught humanity the ultimate truth. The human senses respond to the world around engulfed now by turmoil. The images that humans see and feel are the result of a great eye mechanism. According to O'Donnell, the real human experience will record it in memory (Donell)[21].

Communication and Health: Steps to Reduce the Spread of Virus

Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, the WHO Regional Director for Europe WHO/Europe, considers that social distancing and quarantine measures need to be timely and comprehensively. Some of the steps that countries might consider adopting are closures of schools and universities, implementation of remote working policies, minimizing public transport in peak hours, and deferment of non-essential travel. Some approaches, taken by many countries, consist of lockdowns, implementing physical distancing, washing hands, and using hand sanitizers regularly, using masks, and self-quarantine for those indicated as PDP (Patient in Oversight) and ODP (Insider Oversight). Several regulations are suggested by WHO to educate or encourage individuals to take care of their health and protect others. The instruction included following washing hands frequently with water and soap or using hand sanitizing gel, maintaining social distancing (keeping a distance of 1 meter (three feet) between yourself and anyone coughing or sneezing), avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth. Also, it encouraged respiratory hygiene (covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze, then disposing of the used tissue immediately). Infected people are urged to seek early medical care if they have a fever, cough, difficulty breathing; and stay informed and follow the advice given by the healthcare providers, national and local public health authority, or the employer to protect themselves and others from Covid-19 (WHO 12).

The strict lockdowns only allow citizens to leave their homes to buy essential items. In Paris, authorities have even banned most social activities and reduced the number of people out

on the streets. India's government told the country's 1.3 billion residents to stay at home. There are similar restrictions on movements and social contacts worldwide in countries such as Argentina, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa (BBC 12).

In Indonesia, President Joko Widodo, Minister of Education and Culture, and some regional heads have implemented several regulations. They omitted the National Examination for grade 6, 9, and 12 students, dismissing schools from kindergarten to tertiary levels, implementing work shifts for civil servants, advising the companies not to lay off employees, and replacing it with a shift system. Further, they imposed a curfew until 20:00 and banned marriages with parties or gatherings of many people, as well as exchanging family visits during Happy Eid Mubarak.

Large-scale social restrictions include schools and workplaces' closures, regulations on religious activities, and restrictions on activities in public places. Annually, some 20 million people from Greater Jakarta travel to their hometowns to celebrate Eid in a mudik tradition (exodus). Public health experts affirmed that the ceremony could lead to massive Covid-19 contagion on Java, an island of 141 million people, where many regions have far worse healthcare systems than Jakarta (Sutrisno 13).

Jokowi said the government had advised people not to go back to their hometowns for Eid, to contain the virus's spread, which has killed at least 170 people nationwide. However, he stopped short of banning people from doing so. All regulations were intended to break the chain of the spread of the Coronavirus in Indonesia. The government intentionally propagated the slogan "Stay at home", "Work from Home", "Study from Home" to raise awareness of the Indonesian people. Another slogan that also aimed to create awareness comes from medical personnel, doctors, and nurses, who are at the forefront in dealing with the Coronavirus. The slogan said, "I stay at work for you. You stay at home for us." This dictum is an important message for everyone, not only in Indonesia but also throughout the world.

In some countries where the populations do not comply with the WHO recommendations and those of the local governments are the countries with the most victims. It happened in the United States and Italy. Acts of ignorance and disobedience to the recommendation resulted in increasing numbers of victims, both dead and infected, reaching tens of thousands of people. At the beginning of the spread of news about Covid-19, many Italians did not have a high awareness to stay at home and practice physical distancing. As a result, Italy ranked second after China. As of March 10, 2020, the statistics gathered by Johns Hopkins University (JHU) show that there were currently 115,855 cases confirmed worldwide, with the majority reported in China (80,756). However, the second-largest number belonged to Italy, where the number of cases was recently skyrocketed and reached 9,172 (Vaičiulaitytė 2020).

Impact of Covid-19 in the Political, Economy, Technology, and Cultural Aspects

Global chaos occurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic causing tremendous complex changes. These multidimensional and interrelated changes include politics, economics, technology, politics, and culture. Above all, these changes not only hit specific countries but also impacted the meaning of globalization, and questioned the basic concepts of society and culture that have their respective boundaries and specialties. For example, economic problems with recommendations like "Work from Home" and "Study from Home", triggered a massive recession. Many companies could not pay their employees' salaries and finally decided to terminate their employment. People in the lower socioeconomic layer are the most negatively affected by the Corona pandemic. They do not have enough savings, very little income, and also have large families. The rapid spread of the coronavirus and the sharp decrease in the prices of oil and assets have significantly weakened the global economic perspectives. They are creating a severe and extensive credit shock across many sectors, regions, and markets. The combined effects of these developments are unprecedented (Carlsson-Szlezak 3).

The Coronavirus Crisis was unprecedented in its scale and breadth as it represented the biggest challenge for the global economy since World War II. While developed countries have responded with aggressive monetary and fiscal measures, developing countries have taken more prudent policy measures. The extremely contagious Covid-19 is one of the significant challenges that policymakers face. The aggressive shutdown measures to impose social distancing and slow the growth of infected cases in many countries despite the massive imposed economic costs reflected the urgency to contain the pandemic. However, while the situation in developed countries presents tremendous challenges and shocks to their economies, developing countries' policy dilemma in balancing health risks with economic ones is even more acute. The lack of a Social Safety net combined with the millions of day laborers who rely on their day-to-day wages for their survival presented the biggest policy dilemma for developing countries in balancing the importance of controlling virus spread through lockdown versus the imposed economic costs (AT Capital Research 6).

In Indonesia, the government, through the advice of the Minister of Manpower, who provided suggestions for implementing a system shift to employees and reducing working hours, is expected to be the best solution. Hence, despite salary reductions, workers can still receive payroll to reduce the burden of life notably for the middle and lower classes. Most of these changes, especially at the technological level, forced people to adapt quickly to be able to use several online learning media applications. At the level of education, both teachers and students, ranging from elementary school to university level, could conduct online learning methods. Some online applications have become an alternative means of online learning. The Indonesian government provided online learning tools. Some types of online learning, used for students in Indonesia, include Zenius Education, Kemendikbud Learning House, G Suite Education, Microsoft Teams, Quipper School, Ruangguru, Sekolahmu. Education and Culture Minister initiated the latest collaboration with public television broadcaster TVRI to air educational shows

to help students with limited access to the internet to study from home. The material displayed during school hours expects to fill students' activities to remain productive learning at home (Loasana 11).

Politically, the pandemic created novel geopolitical realities globally. The pandemic eased traditional hostilities between countries like Israel and the Palestinians that joined efforts to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic in both countries. The more powerful and hegemonic Israel served its goals or interests against the will of the Palestinians. News about the union of the two countries was reported by Free Malaysia Today News. The onset of the coronavirus pandemic fostered rare moments of unity between Israeli and Palestinian leaders but as the severity of the outbreak has escalated, tensions began to rise (Free Malaysia Today 2).

Power here is inhibiting or controlling and is a zero-sum model (you get it or not at all); it is arranged in a binary power block. According to Bang (123-125), that power is also productive and empowering. Importantly, the Covid-19 crisis has had a tremendous impact on all aspects of human life. The world has changed its shape and systems. Human immunity strives to win the battle against a new virus and the winning weapons are speed, accuracy, and obedience to sanitary requirements.

Conclusion

The pandemic of Covid-19 urges that the principles of modernity and local wisdom must go hand in hand in all countries. Modern humans cannot abandon traditional values in their lives. The creation of sophisticated technology generated humanity's prosperity, however, humans must also continue to respect and balance it with traditional values. Coronavirus provides precious lessons to all humankind, both advanced and developing countries. Sovereign nations can assert their sovereignty claims to find solutions to achieve standard progress, via eliminating the Covid-19 pandemic and its drawbacks.

Scientists are trying to find a useful cure for Covid-19 pandemics in all countries. In the interim, every citizen of this globe can only obey sanitary advice and comply with the rules to avoid the virus. The principles of modernity need to be balanced with local wisdom. The jargon "Back to Nature" has a positive meaning implying that there is a humanist aspect of every policy whether taken by individuals or governments. As such, consuming *Jamu* becomes an action to echo the local wisdom for Indonesian society and positively impacts the immunity, and increases the local product. Humans should take to protect Nature and maintain the balance between the needs of civilization. Equally, this needs to be passed from one generation to another.

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