

Emancipative Islamic theology and *Hifz Al-Din*: Muslim youth resistance against shamanism

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The resistance of Muslims to shamanism began when lies of the shamans were exposed on social media. Many shamans practise fraud under the guise of religion. Magical objects such as luminous daggers or stones that emit smoke, used by shamans as occult actors are also known to be objects of magic tricks that are sold freely and can be used by anyone. Scholars also continuously preach that Muslims' belief in shamans is forbidden. Therefore, Muslims in Indonesia fear that believing in shamans degrades human dignity and makes worship unacceptable. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that cause the resistance of Muslim youth to shamanism. This study used a cross-sectional design which was conducted by interviewing 3025 Muslim youths who had the desire to highlight shamanism phenomena in North Sumatra. The analysis in this study used a logistic regression test with Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JAPS 16 software). The results of this study indicate that Muslim youths have a high resistance to shamanism. The resistance of young Muslims to shamanism is influenced by emancipative Islamic theology ($p < 0.001$; Exp $[\beta] = 2.504$) and *hifz al-din* [maintaining religion] ($p = 0.001$; Exp $[\beta] = 2.293$). Muslim youths have high resistance to shamanism due to the fear that this culture will reduce the dignity of the human caliphate if it is subject to anyone other than Allah. Muslim youth also have high resistance to shamanism because they are of the view that shamanism makes worship unacceptable to Allah SWT.

Contribution: This article explains the resistance of Muslim youth to shamanism. It also demonstrates how Muslims live in a multicultural society.

Keywords: emancipative Islamic theology; *Hifz al-Din*; Muslim youth; shamanism; resistance.

Introduction

Religion is the result of a long process of human development towards the unseen. Included in this process are primitive religions that adhere to beliefs in spirits that personalise certain objects, such as dynamism, animism, totemism, fetishism and, shamanism. Shamanism is a system composed of various elements of culture and belief, created by people to understand life and come to grips with what is happening around them (Burbar 2022). Shamanism is a culture that exists in Indonesia. This is because of the belief in the power of the unseen world and the practice of magic which is very easy to be seen in various parts of Indonesia (Humaeni 2015a). The sophistication of science and technology in the modern era is not 'strong enough' to defeat shamanism and take over people's trust in solving life's problems (O'Keefe 1982).

The belief in shamans as an element of shamanism is not happening without a reason. Even as a third and later branch of the Middle Eastern monotheistic (cf. 'Abrahamic') faiths, Islam shared a concern for distinguishing between 'remnants of pagan idolatry' and authentic Islamic devotion. Hints of it surface within the Qur'an itself (Weller 2023). Shamanism is believed to be a 'quick' way of solving problems; besides, the shamans themselves are very capable of providing evidence that influences the psychology of society. In addition, society thinks that if hope is dependent on God, humans have no power to command God; if you choose a scientific device, you have to work hard and it takes a long time; but if you use magic power, apart from being fast, humans are considered to have the power to command that magic power, generally, through the figure of a shaman (Singh 2018).

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The shamans as actors of shamanism are also able to survive and adapt to the development of human life (Buyandelgeriyin 1999; Waddock 2018; Watson-Jones & Legare 2018). One form of shamanic transformation in Indonesia is the Association of Archipelago Shamans [Perdunu] (Paraton 2021). This shaman organisation was established to introduce the work of shamans or paranormal and occult sciences to the community, as well as to fight against the negative stigma of shamanic work in the eyes of society. Their first step in educating the public was holding a witchcraft festival.

The shamans in Indonesia have an ambiguous role in society. On the one hand, shamans are admired because they are 'considered' capable of protecting weak people (Muhammad et al. 2021) because one of the reasons why people come to traditional healers is because modern institutions fail to fulfil their promises in terms of social mobility, health, or psychological achievement. On the other hand, shamans are also seen as bad (Humaeni 2015b), because shamanism is seen to be associated with Satan, charlatans, and schizophrenia (Krippner 2002).

One phenomenon that can be observed related to the conflict on the role of the shaman in society is that recently, shamans in Indonesia have introduced spirit dolls that are infiltrated by the spirit of a foetus whose parents have aborted it. Those who support the shaman, consider the shaman as the saviour of the foetus spirit by nurturing it through dolls. Those who reject shamans, consider them as people who cheat and only seek business profits because spirit dolls are sold at high prices.

The discussion about spirit dolls has finally become the focus of various layers of Indonesian society. Islamic scholars reject the adoption of spirit dolls (Bakry et al. 2022). The Government of Indonesia, in this case, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, also considers this occult act as an attempt to demean human dignity, because the shamans provide an explanation that if a spirit doll is adopted it will bring good luck.

The rejection of shamanism or shamanic activities is also evident in the Indonesian society, for example, the rejection of the Association of Archipelago Shamans Association (Perdunu) in Banyuwangi Regency, East Java. This rejection came from various elements of society, from cultural observers, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and the Indonesian Ulema Council to activists and lawyers.

The rejection of shamanism was carried out by raising a petition for the dissolution of Perdunu. It did not stop there because the objectors also warned not to repeat the dark history of the massacre of shamans in Indonesia like in 1998 (Juang, Erviantono & Azhar 2016; Kusairi 2021).

The largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), emphasises the prohibition of

believing in shamans. It is clearly forbidden to believe in all types of shamans that are against the Shari'a, let alone ask for help. Nahdlatul Ulama invites Muslims to avoid contact with the practice of shamanism and divination, and always put their full trust in Allah SWT (Abrar 2022).

Another Islamic mass organisation, namely Muhammadiyah, also rejects shamanic activities. According to Muhammadiyah, in solving life problems, humans can only depend on God, and endeavours must be carried out in dignified ways, namely with science and technology (Zulkarnain 2021).

Meanwhile, the Indonesian Ulema Council has issued MUI *fatwa* number 2/MUNAS VII/MUI/6/2005 concerning Shamanism [*kahanah*] and Divination [*'irafah*]. In essence, according to the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI):

All forms of shamanism [*kahanah*] and fortune-telling [*'irafah*] are unlawful. Publishing the practice of shamanism [*kahanah*] and divination [*'irafah*] in any form is *Haram*. Utilising, using or believing in all shamanistic practices [*kahanah*] and fortune-telling [*'irafah*] is unlawful.

Recently, the Islamic community's rejection of shamanism has strengthened. Many shamanistic practices that were originally thought to be magical, turned out to be mere tricks (Gultom & Bago 2018; Sumaryono 2021). In particular, the shamanic tricks that were wrapped in religious matters. The phenomenon of the Red Magician [*Pesulap Merah*], for example, is currently viral on social media. The Red Magician uncovers the dishonesty of many shamans who practice false alternative medicine, purge witchcraft, and deceit in the guise of religion (Wahyudin 2022). The Indonesian people have also found that shamanic tools such as glowing daggers, smoke coming from the hands, and so on, are sold freely in marketplaces, e-commerce, or online shops.

In fact, there are many criminal cases in Indonesia where the perpetrators are shamans. Such as cases of accumulating money, obscenity under the guise of eliminating disease, and so on (Novita 2016). Many unnatural relationships occur between shamans and society (Herriman 2015), which ultimately lead to the disclosure of numerous shamans and shamanism in Indonesia.

One area of Indonesia that still preserves shamanism is North Sumatra reason being is that this area is a diverse and multicultural region. This can be confirmed in the activities of people's lives. The practice of shamanism is carried out by one person who is considered to have special abilities that other humans do not have (Suharyanto 2015).

North Sumatra Province has a Muslim majority population of 9 522 822 people (63.3%) followed by Protestant Christian population of 4 011 903 people (26.6%) and Catholic Christian population of 1 102 850 people (7.3%) (Nasution et al. 2022). The province is divided into 25 regencies, 8 cities, 325 sub-districts, and 5456 sub-districts

and/or villages, where occult or shamanic activities are still present in almost every village.

In Islamic theology, the first requirement to be a Muslim is to acknowledge that no one has power other than Allah SWT. Therefore, it is unreasonable to have any hope other than in Allah SWT. Islam explains that the caliph on earth is a human being who is directly related to Allah SWT.

One of the meanings of *la ilah illa Allah* is to emancipate human beings. That is, humans are only directly connected to Allah SWT, not to others other than him. Allah has also given humans stable thinking and other potentials. Therefore, humans are commanded to believe in their strength independently (emancipatory Islamic theology). Humans are not justified in surrendering their affairs to supernatural powers such as asking for help from *jinn*s and demons or occult activities in general (Madjid 2019).

Islam also brings the mission of benefit [*al-maslahah*] to humans, in this world and the hereafter. The manifestation of the benefit can be observed if humans guard five things, namely, *hifz al-din* [safeguarding religion], *hifz al-nafs* [safeguarding the soul], *hifz al-'aql* [safeguarding the mind], *hifz al-nasl/hifz al-'ird* [safeguarding offspring and/or honour], and *hifz al-mal* [safeguarding property] (Nasution & Akbar 2021; Nasution et al. 2022).

Islam also did not come to suppress human culture blindly. However, every culture that is included in the *maslahah* category is still justified to be preserved, and of course, those that are contrary to *maslahah* must be corrected (Bolong 2020; Mutawali 2016; Riyadi, Mujahidin & Tasrif 2016).

Methods

Study design and administration

To solve the problem as described in the introductory section, the researchers chose to use a cross-sectional research design. This is because this study intends to analyse variable data collected at a certain point across a predetermined sample population or subset.

The research was conducted to discover the causes of Muslim resistance to occult culture in Indonesia. This research was born in the Province of North Sumatra, Indonesia, in January–October 2022 because North Sumatra is one of the provinces where occult culture or activity still exists.

In terms of contacting potential respondents, researchers announced this on several social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp groups. Thereafter, prospective respondents who were willing and met the criteria of the study, were contacted via WhatsApp. Research respondents were also given a link to the questionnaire through the Google forum. The questionnaire contained the identity and, of course, the research questions.

Participants

The selection criteria for respondents was that the participants were Muslims aged between 17 and 25 years, and currently living in the North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. They have followed the development of shamanism in Indonesia and have the desire to highlight occult or shamanic phenomena in Indonesia. A total of 3 025 Muslim youth respondents who participated in this study have completed all stages of the research.

Measure

Emancipative Islamic theology

The question that arises for emancipative Islamic theology is that shamanism will make humans degrade the dignity of their caliphate. Humans cannot submit to anything other than Allah. Humans face their life problems dependent only on Allah and aim to do so in a dignified way with science and technology (Madjid 2019).

Hifz Al-Din

The questions that exist for *Hifz Al-Din* are that shamanism or shamanic activities are feared to cause human worship which is not accepted by Allah. Humans fall into polytheism, and families from the Islamic religion commit matters such as medicine, weather forecasts, and witchcraft to shamans (Abubakar 2016; Yazid 2017).

Muslim youth resistance to shamanism

This question relates to the desire of Muslim youths to go to a shaman in dealing with life's problems.

Data analysis

This study demonstrates a descriptive analysis of religious-related knowledge in Muslim youth. Furthermore, this study shows a cross-tabulation between knowledge related to religion and community beliefs related to shamanism. The analysis used in this study is the logistic regression test.

Results

Researching the reasons for Muslim youth's rejection of shamanism, before carrying out an analytical test, the researcher conducted a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The results of this study indicate that the results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test show p value > 0.05 , which means that the data in this study show a normal distribution (Table 1).

The results of the logistic regression analysis in this study (Table 2), showed that shamanism makes humans demean their *caliphship* and has an effect on Muslim youth's resistance to shamanism ($p < 0.001$; Exp [B] 2.505). Shamanism makes worship unacceptable to Muslim youth's resistance to shamanism ($p = 0.001$; Exp [B] 2.194). Muslim youths who are

TABLE 1: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.

Variables	Sign	Information
The shamanism makes humans degrade the dignity of their caliphate.	0.482	Test distribution is normal
Nature was created to submit to humans.	0.051	Test distribution is normal
Facing life's problems with science.	0.529	Test distribution is normal
Shamanism hinders human civilisation.	0.486	Test distribution is normal
Shamanism makes worship unacceptable.	0.497	Test distribution is normal
Shamanism has the potential to damage the relationship with God.	0.482	Test distribution is normal
Shamanism has the potential to damage religion.	0.539	Test distribution is normal
Shamanism has the potential of polytheists and <i>sikh</i> [idolatry].	0.539	Test distribution is normal

TABLE 2: Result of Seasonal Youth Resistance to Shamanism.

Variable	Rejection of Shamanism (<i>n</i> = 3025)		
	B	Sign	Exp (B)
The shamanism makes humans degrade the dignity of their caliphate.	0.918	< 0.001	2.505
Nature was created to submit to humans.	0.278	0.342	1.321
Facing life's problems with science.	-0.215	0.493	0.807
Shamanism hinders human civilisation.	0.317	0.021	1.448
Shamanism makes worship unacceptable.	0.786	0.001	2.194
Shamanism has the potential to damage the relationship with God.	-0.397	0.168	0.672
Shamanism has the potential to damage religion.	-0.315	0.215	0.073
Shamanism has the potential of polytheists and <i>sikh</i> [idolatry].	0.056	0.883	1.058
Shamanism is prohibited by religion.	0.100	0.810	1.105

of the view that shamanism makes humans degrade the dignity of their caliphate are 2 505 times likely to have resistance to shamanism. Muslim youths who view shamanism as making worship unacceptable are 2 194 times likely to have resistance to shamanism.

Discussion

The rise in social media about exposing the dishonesty of shamans who practise fraud under the guise of religion (Wahyudin 2022), became the turning point for the strengthening of Muslim resistance to shamanism.

In practice, many shamans also sometimes claim to be able to exorcise evil spirits by touching the body, but in reality, the shaman intends to rape the patient. There are thousands of victims of obscene shamans in Indonesia (Chelsea 2022; Farasonalia 2022). There are also shamans who claim to be able to multiply money, but the money that is handed over to the shaman never returns. Shamans have defrauded believers of billions of rupiah; people who believed in the ability of a shaman to multiply money supernaturally, eventually become victims of fraud (Saputra & Nugraha 2022).

Shamans also often perform rituals to worship many spirits. Especially, shamans predict something that will happen in the future which is still unseen (Widianti, Setyobudi & Yuningsih 2021). With the help of a genie, such as inserting a genie into a certain person's body, shamans also claim to be able to find out things that have been stolen or are lost (Huda 2015).

Currently, shamanic practices are no longer held in secret or in secluded places. Witch doctors have offered their services openly, on television, on social media, and other public media. In fact, shamans often become sources of information and present their shamanic practices on podcasts. This is another reason for the spread of Muslim resistance to shamanism (Iswanto 2022).

The scholars have finally responded to the issue of shamanism. Nahdlatul Ulama scholars explained that it is forbidden for Muslims to believe in shamans, because only Allah can know unseen things. Even if there is someone who claims to be able to understand the occult, it is necessary to understand the person first, is a religious person or an ordinary person who has certain interests? It is also important to note, not all godly people receive inspiration. (Abrar 2022).

Muhammadiyah clerics detail the major disasters against Muslims, if they believe in shamanism. Firstly, the perpetrators and people who ask for the services of shamanism are committing a sin; secondly, shamanism damages religion; thirdly, shamanism is a form of disobedience because Allah and His Messenger have prohibited it; fourthly, the perpetrators include followers of Satan; fifthly, shamans and people who believe in their predictions will not be accepted for their prayers for 40 days; and sixthly, shamanism is an activity that is very dangerous for the perpetrator himself and his family, because the genie whose services are requested to help with the divination process will always ask for ransom [self-interest] from the perpetrator and his offspring (Ilham 2022).

Meanwhile, the Ulema Council of Indonesian stipulates that all forms of shamanic practices and divination are unlawful. Publishing the practice of shamanism and divination in any form is illegal. In addition, exploiting, using, and/or believing in all forms of shamanistic practices and divination are also unlawful (Al-Ghifari & Fakhruddin 2022; Bakry et al. 2022).

The appearance of shamanism through shaman actors on social media has also received criticism from Indonesian clerics, having an effect on the local community around which the practice of shamanism is still rife.

Muslims believe that Islam, which carries theological teachings, requires 'purity of faith' in Allah. The purpose of purity of faith is different from just believing in God. Believing in God may still contain the possibility of believing in others as God's participants in divinity. For example, the Arabs before Islam already believed in Allah. They also believe that it is Allah who created the universe [all the heavens and earth] and sends down rain (Q.S. 43:87). Even so, they cannot be called believers [*al-mu'minun*] and, therefore, also cannot be called monotheism [*al-muwahhidun*]. On the other hand, they are called people who associate with partners or associate with God [*al-musyrikun*], adherents of *Sikhism*, namely the understanding that God has *sharik*

[unions or allies], namely 'persons' who accompany Him in divine matters (Madjid 2019). For example, the Jahiliyyah Arabs, even though they already believe in the existence of Allah who created the heavens and the earth, also mythicise animals such as, certain types of birds called *gharnaq* or *gharaniq*, which are believed to be able to provide help or intercession to humans in communication with God (Khaer & Mubin 2022).

The purity of faith or monotheism requires humans to self-liberate or free themselves from dependence on anything other than Allah SWT. Humans, together with pure monotheism, liberate (emancipate) themselves from various shackles or dependence on creatures. There is a positive correlation between *tawhid* and positive personal values such as true faith, critical attitude, use of common sense (rational attitude), independence, openness, honesty, self-confidence, courage because it is right, and freedom and a sense of responsibility (Nugroho, Warsito & Surwandono 2017).

The essence of *sikh*, according to Nurcholis Madjid, is the same as myth – that myth which elevates something other than God incorrectly so that something has a higher value than the human being himself. In other words, the person who commits *sikh* will automatically place himself [*a priori*], and his dignity and status will be lower than the object being *sikhed*. (Madjid 2019). If someone *sikhs* an object or natural phenomenon, or consults *jinn*s and spirits, as is usually the case in occult or shamanic culture, by cultivating and developing various mythological views of the object, then that person [*a priori*] places himself under the 'power' of the mythological object. This is one of the facts that he has lost his high human dignity and worth. He no longer embodies the free human person, and automatically becomes a slave or servant of the object he glorifies.

Therefore, for the sake of human dignity itself, humans must solely serve themselves only to God Almighty. In his graphic image, man must look up only to the Supreme God, the Creator, and nature must look down (Salsabila, Mulyana & Fananie 2022).

In other words, humans find their complete and integral personality only when they focus their transcendental orientation on God, the One and Only God. On the other hand, for humans, placing themselves and their dignity below others such as the power of a shaman, or, moreover, objects, natural phenomena, *jinn* and spirits, will leave them with an incomplete identity. They will lose their freedom, and the loss of that freedom results in the loss of opportunities and the possibility of self-development to the highest level.

Strengthening the narrative against shamanism was also conveyed continuously by Islamic scholars in various religious activities. Starting from Friday prayer sermons to regular lectures in various mosques. the lectures contained

criticism of Muslims who believe in witch doctors and still cultivate occult practices. The preachers explained that Muslims who still believe in shaman worship are not accepted, as the Prophet Muhammad said, 'Whoever comes to a fortune teller and asks him about a matter, his prayer will not be accepted for forty days' (HR Muslim). And in other *hadiths* such as, 'Whoever comes to a shaman or fortune teller and he confirms his words, then he means he has disbelief in the Al-Quran which was revealed to Muhammad' (Reported by Ahmad).

Research shows that Muslim youths who have an occult cultural view of making worship unacceptable are 2 194 times more likely to have resistance to shamanism. This resistance is deeply rooted in every lecture on shamanism, and is accepted by Muslims in North Sumatra.

The Muslim community wants no shamanic activity involving Muslims. The reason is, shamanism can cause worship not to be accepted (Khalimuratov 2017). In fact, worship is a basic aspect of practising Islam. Worship is part of maintaining religion [*hifz al-din*] (Abubakar 2016; Ahair, Kusrin & Alias 2020; Nasution et al. 2022).

'Don't let there be any more occult or shamanic culture in Indonesia', was the topic that was continuously conveyed. In fact, with a threatening tone, some Muslims were reminded of the massacre of shamans that had occurred in Indonesia in 1998 in Banyuwangi (Jurnalnews.com 2021).

However, it should be noted that Indonesia is a country that has a multicultural society. As a nation whose society is very diverse, of course, there are many different perspectives both in terms of culture and religious issues. In local cultural rituals in many Indonesian regions, for example, sea alms, offerings, cultural festivals, or other cultural rituals are common facts. (Romlah, Purnama & Khofipah 2022). Therefore, extreme attitudes or forcing the will to muzzle other people's beliefs will certainly lead to disharmony and the disintegration of the nation (Abror 2020; Fahri & Zainuri 2019; Junaedi 2019; Nasution & Akbar 2021).

In the study of *maqasid al-shariah*, protecting religion [*hifz al-din*] is indeed an aspect of *daruriah* in Islam. However, the meaning of *hifz al-din* also means the right to have a religion and belief for anyone. The broad meaning of *hifz al-din* includes that everyone is obliged to maintain and protect the rights of others to have a religion and belief according to their choice (Abubakar 2016).

In a similar statement, an expert on contemporary *maqasid al-shariah* studies, Jasser Auda, explained that *hifz al-din* is interpreted as the concept of freedom of faith, or freedom of belief (Auda 2008).

Rasulullah SAW also, never ordered to eradicate shamanism or shamanism in extreme ways. The reason is, the various *hadiths* of Rasulullah SAW only ordered Muslims not to get involved.

Among them, is a *hadith* narrated by Muslim, 'anyone who comes to *'arraf* and *kahin*, then asks him about something, his prayer is not accepted for forty nights' (Al Qusyairi 1993). On another occasion, the Messenger of Allah said, 'Whoever comes to a shaman or fortune teller and he confirms his words, then he means he has *kufir* in the Al-Quran which was revealed to Muhammad.' (Reported by Ahmad). Therefore, *hifz al-din* does not mean holding fast to religion and then suppressing other people's beliefs. Islam highly respects the rights of others in religion and belief (Mujib & Hamim 2021).

Conclusion

North Sumatra, which is inhabited by a multicultural society including cultures that believe in occult, has many young Muslims that still believe in such a thing. Muslim youths have high resistance to occult or shamanic culture due to their fear of letting such culture reduce the dignity of humans who subject themselves to other beings but not to Allah. Muslim youths also have high resistance to occult culture because they view that such culture can make Allah not accept their worship. Strengthening the faith and beliefs of Muslim youth will have a significant impact on resistance to occult or shamanic culture.

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Competing interests

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Authors' contributions

H.N.'s contribution was conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing original draft, visualisation, project administration, writing review and editing. M.S.A.N.'s contribution was investigation, writing original draft, project administration. W.D.'s contribution was methodology, formal analysis and investigation. H.M.'s contribution was conceptualisation, methodology, project administration. A.T.'s contribution was conceptualisation, methodology, validation and data curation. I.E.I.'s contribution was project administration of the manuscript.

Ethical considerations

The ethical clearance letter has been obtained, and the number is: No.385/EC/KEPK.UISU/III/2023.

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Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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