# Baby Massage in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Knowledge Acquisition, Transfer and Preservation

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### **ABSTRACT**

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is in danger due to a number of factors, such as lack of interest from the younger generation, low life expectancy where people die before transferring knowledge to the next generation and not documented. This is due to the fact that IK, in essence, is generally known to have been passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. This qualitative research utilizes the organization's knowledge conversion theory to investigate IK acquisition, transfer, and preservation by traditional baby massage practitioner in Banten, Indonesia with a view to developing a framework to provide an understanding of how IK is obtained, transferred, and preserved by traditional baby massage practitioner. The study applied a qualitative approach in analyzing knowledge transfer by the practitioner. The data were collected through interviews, observation, and document analyzis. The data are analyzed and interpreted thematically according to the research objectives. This study revealed that traditional massage knowledge is obtained through observation, imitation, and practical work. In addition, interface quidance is highlighted as one of the driving forces behind the transfer and acquisition of effective knowledge. The main finding for this research is that the Almighty is believed to preserve this traditional massage knowledge and pass it on to the chosen people. The study concludes that traditional masseurs also preserve their knowledge verbally and generally share and gain knowledge during interactions with prospective successors.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge; Baby massage; Indonesia.

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a nation that is very rich in cultural diversity and local wisdom which is reflected in the thoughts, attitudes, actions, and results of the culture itself (material culture) (Liliweri, 2003). Local knowledge produced by Indonesian people varies greatly from how to dress, build a house, art, and health. Indonesian society which consists of various different tribes and geographies has many cultural products related to health. These cultural products are related to health manifested in the form of product actions through traditional medicine.

Indonesian people have the habit of doing massage to cure diseases caused by a lack of blood vessel function in our body (people often call it a vein). Massage techniques in Indonesia have been around for centuries, where the philosophy of massage is a technique of energizing the body with the aim of facilitating blood circulation which will maintain health and balance the work of the organs of the body. This situation causes the body to avoid health problems. Along with the development of the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends member countries to raise and develop their traditional medicine. Today the world community in terms of maintaining, maintaining and improving health status tends to use methods that utilize the natural ability (back to nature), one of which is massage. (National Herbal Medicine Saintification Commission, 2015)

According to the Reflection Course in its website https://kursusrefleksi.com/sejistorictruktur/, "In Indonesia, Massage has been around for centuries, can be proven in Borobudur stone relief, 8-9 century Buddhist temples in Central Java, where there are carvings depicting massage. Massage has been an integral part of Indonesian culture for centuries, providing health and beauty benefits both inside and outside. The most sophisticated knowledge of healing and massage techniques is found in Java and Bali, where two places evolved from the Majapahit royal tradition. During the Majapahit era, many beauty treatments were developed by queens and palaces, this massage period evolved for relaxation and beauty and for healing. The Majapahit kingdom was destroyed around 1450 after the arrival of Islam, causing many to move to Bali, bringing their healing knowledge. This is why there are so many similarities between Java and Bali in terms of massage and healing massage techniques. Massage techniques in Indonesia if observed look different from India and China due to developments in style and adjustment from generation to generation. For massage, acupuncture and reflexology points can be clearly felt in most massages in Indonesia. Currently, massage from abroad is brought to Indonesia and some combine their traditional massage styles. Massage helps overcome the disease and regain body balance. Massage is a type of traditional massage that is most commonly used for relaxation and relieves the body's feeling by relaxing stiff muscles with a squeezing movement.

Traditional massage is also available specifically for babies. For a long time, massage in babies is believed to have many benefits. Moreover, in premature babies or those born by cesarean section, who can experience shock at birth. According to Lydia Lorenz, the benefits of baby massage (as quoted from Collins, 1998) define massage as an act of rubbing body parts to encourage relaxation. From the literature examined (as quoted from Field 1995, Heller 1997) and practice observation, baby massage seems to have a number of physical and psychological benefits for babies, not pure relaxation. Evidence shows that there are also benefits for mothers and fathers (as quoted from Hart et al 2003) and an important aspect of infant massage is that parents become skilled in touching their babies in a gentle and positive way, so that they become more sensitive to their babies needs. According to Lydia Lorenz (as quoted from Field, 1995) found that babies who were massaged slept better than babies who had not received it, and showed similar findings with premature babies. This researcher found that babies who were massaged slept better and fell asleep faster. We have found that many mothers report that after a baby massage session, their baby sleeps well and many babies have been observed sleeping in the middle of a massage session. Other studies focusing on premature babies and baby massage have highlighted that massage can have a dramatic impact on weight gain (as quoted from Field et al 1986). Field (2001), in a more recent article, shows that research from various traits of research has resulted in similar funding in premature infants and weight gain. The impact of baby massage on weight may be difficult to determine because the baby's growth is influenced by various factors. Massage provides a soothing touch and reminds the baby of feeling comfortable while in the mother's womb. Other benefits of massage for babies, namely sleeping better, eating better, strengthening bonds between children and parents, making babies feel comfortable, improving blood circulation, babies who are often massaged rarely experience colic, make baby's muscles stronger, and babies who often massaged to grow into children more cheerful and happy. In addition, he is rarely emotional and angry. In general, these children rarely have psychological or emotional problems.

Traditional Indonesian massage healers use traditional healing as part of their practice where it uses a diversity of practices, approaches, knowledge, and beliefs that combine plant, animal and mineral medicines. These may include spiritual therapy, techniques, and exercises, which are applied individually or in combination to maintain health in treating diseases or to prevent them (Norizan, 2018)

The willingness and capacity of individuals or communities to share what they know and use what they learn plays an important role for local knowledge to transfer. Therefore face-to-face interactions are the main means of gaining local knowledge from sources of knowledge. Because local knowledge is learned from 'doing' and participation between sources and recipients of knowledge, local knowledge is more successfully inherited if face-to-face interactions occur where knowledge can be exchanged and new knowledge better can improve current practices from identified local knowledge to be developed. Expertise is developed through learning while working, internships tend to practice under the guidance of a knowledgeable teacher for them to become experts in their fields. The more involved a healer is with activities, the better they become smart. (Norizan, 2018)

The traditional knowledge contained in this baby massage technique needs to be maintained considering its benefits for babies. According to the author's observation of what to worry about is the knowledge that will be lost if Nyai Mini experiences illness or death, then there is no more competent baby massage in the village. Therefore, efforts are needed to capture and preserve the knowledge possessed by Nyai Mini into a form that can be transmitted to children or siblings.

In order for scientific heritage to take place well aimed at the next generation, preservation of knowledge is needed. The goal is to save the value of information, save the physical (consumer), prevent the extinction of traditional knowledge, and accelerate the acquisition of information. This study aims to find out how knowledge is obtained by traditional baby massage healers, to determine how knowledge is transferred and assess how knowledge is preserved by traditional baby massage healers in Pondok village. Therefore, this paper attempts to investigate whether traditional massage healers will transfer their knowledge and how knowledge is passed on to the next generation.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional knowledge: Traditional knowledge (TK) is knowledge, skills, and practices that are developed, maintained and inherited from generation to generation in society, often forming part of cultural or spiritual identity. (WIPO, 2010) While no definitions have been received from kindergarten at the international level, it can be said that TK in the general sense includes the content of knowledge itself as well as traditional cultural expressions, including distinctive signs and symbols relating to kindergarten and kindergarten in the narrow meaning refers to such knowledge, especially knowledge that results from intellectual activity in traditional contexts, and includes knowledge, practice, skills, and innovation.

Capturing tacit knowledge: Capturing knowledge is an activity to gather information and knowledge and then create new knowledge. The capture of tacit knowledge can also be defined as the process of capturing individual or organizational experience and expertise and making it available to those in need (Dalkir and Liebowitz, 2011)

Traditional healing: The World Health Organization (WHO), as quoted by Norizan (2018: 1), provides a broader definition of traditional healing as a diversity of practices, approaches, knowledge, and beliefs that combine plant, animal and mineral medicines. This includes spiritual therapy, techniques, and exercises that are applied individually or in combination to maintain health, treat disease or prevent it. Traditional healing has been widely used as prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of extensive diseases. This is a form of alternative health service that is important for a person or community with or without geographical and financial access to modern medicine.

Whereas according to the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1076 / MENKES / SK / VII / 2003 concerning the Implementation of Traditional Medicine, traditional medicine is treatment and / or treatment by means, drugs, and medication that refers to experience, declining skills, and / or education / training, and applied in accordance with the prevailing norms in the community.

Knowledge acquisition: According to Maluleka (as quoted from Pacharapha and Ractham 2012: 725-726) argues that acquiring knowledge can be seen at the individual level, knowledge acquisition can be achieved by three activities, which include sources from organizational knowledge repositories, learning from others and learning from experience. Acquisition and sharing of knowledge during socialization (where tacit knowledge is shared) are mainly done through observation, sharing experiences and imitation, to mention but a few. However, it is important to note that for the acquisition and distribution of tacit knowledge to succeed, opportunities to participate and access to knowledgeable people are needed (as quoted from Koskinen, Pihlanto and Vanharanta 2003).

During externalization, tacit knowledge is externalized, made ready and easier to share and obtain in certain situations. When knowledge keepers provide and share what is in their minds, their tacit knowledge turns into explicit knowledge, which is easier to share and obtain. This knowledge can be externalized in the form of books, manuals, databases, emails, letters, and discussions. Knowledge acquisition between individuals

(masseurs and prospective healers) is mostly through dialogue, which can occur directly between individuals.

Transfer of Knowledge: Transfer of knowledge (KT) according to Maluleka, (as quoted from Garavelli, Gorgoglione and Scozzi 2002: 270) is defined as the process by which knowledge is transmitted to, and absorbed by, users. However, Faust (2007: 1) defines KT as part of KM, which refers to the transmission of explicit, implicit, and tacit knowledge from one person or organization to one or several people. Explicit knowledge can be transferred through the interaction between the source and the recipient, personalized communication and the recipient's observation of the knowledge used. The recipient's practice facilitates the transfer of tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is contained in documents that are not personal and standard and are designed to be applicable to a wide range of contexts and users (Nonaka 1994). According to Maluleka, (as quoted from Szulanski, Ringov and Jensen 2016: 305) as a result, transfer methods that allow private communication, such as personnel transfers or informal visits, are better able to ease the exchange of tacit knowledge. The main aim of the knowledge transfer process is that the recipient appears with an identical interpretation of the message to the one intended to be delivered . However, it is important to note that the transfer of information can be affected negative or positive by different factors. The reliability of the source and ability of the recipient to absorb knowledge are the main factors that can influence knowledge transfer (Argote and Ingram 2000: 161).

Preservation of knowledge: The IAEA has formalized the definition of preservation of knowledge to state "the process of maintaining an organizational system of knowledge and capabilities that protects and stores perceptions, actions and experiences from time to time and secures the possibility of recall for the future." that preservation of knowledge is a process of efforts to maintain and maintain the knowledge and skills of an organization from the threat of extinction or loss of knowledge, so that it can be used for the future in the interests of organizational progress and development.

SECI Model for capturing tacit knowledge: Dalkir (2011) explains Nonanka's Theory, regarding several models in knowledge preservation activities, namely:

- a. Socialization is a model of knowledge preservation in the form of conversion from hidden knowledge into hidden knowledge again. This activity can be carried out through face-to-face interaction, imitation, or training activities.
- b. Combination is a conversion from explicit knowledge or has been documented in the form of explicit knowledge as well.
- c. Externalization is the conversion of knowledge from hidden forms of knowledge to documented knowledge
- d. Internalization is the conversion of knowledge from documented forms of knowledge to hidden knowledge.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employed a qualitative research approach in analyzing knowledge transfer by the practitioner. This approach is in consistency with the purpose of the study which aimed at describing the process of transfer knowledge from tacit into explisit knowledge from traditional massage practitioner. One practitioner was included in the study. The practitioner was were deliberately selected because unlike other practitioner. The data collection through a literature review, observation and interviews directly at the target location research. Observations made directly at the practitioner's house. Observation was performed three times, namely on 21th September, 12th and 26th October 2018. Direct observations conducted to obtain data and information on how the practitioner do baby massage through her skill in traditionally, before the interview, a literature review was conducted to support field facts. Data were collected using face to face interview . Initially a practitioner was afraid to be interviewed but the author explained the intent and purpose of the interview, then the practitioner was willing to be interviewed after the practitioner's daughter helped explain the purpose and purpose of the interview. Data were analysis involved identification of themes and concepts based on research questions. Succinct summary of the findings has been also presented using figures statements. Data analysis was conducted by reduction data, presentation of data, and conclucion. The data was interpreted using SECI Model.

# **RESULTS**

**Nyai Mini traditional baby massage:** Tacit knowledge which is a research study using SECI Model is a knowledge of traditional baby massage Nyai Mini. He was born in Jakarta, 88 years old. Nyai Mini is a baby massage healer who has been running for 30 years in Pondok Bahar Village, Banten. He has worked as a masseuse since he was young (when he had 1 child). Patients who come come from various regions around. Initially Nyai Mini massaged from house to house, which is through a call, but along with the older age which limits his movements, massage is only done at home.

Meanwhile, the knowledge of massage was revealed to be quite mysterious. She claimed that his knowledge he got from his grandmother through choice. She said:

"nenek ngomong sama saya 'lo dah bisa nih...tadihan nya dah bisa, lo dah megang elmu nya, taktik nya gini gini gini' Ga pke diunjukin begini begini caranya"

This choice is intended not all grandchildren can inherit their knowledge. Only someone who is diligent in worship such as prayer, sunnah fasting, and sunnah prayer. She said:

" itu begituan dipilih mana yang rajin puasa mana yang rajin solat, nah ilmu nempel tuh. Ga sembarangan asal nempel tuh ilmu. Kita kudu rajin ibadah"

Similarly, she also uses verses from the Qur'an in her healing practice or what she calls 'jampe'. It is believed that whatever her family said will be true when they said. Therefore, she uses his ability to provide prayers and prayers for people who come for treatment at very low costs. He does not charge for services. The reason is that he only wants to help people with his abilities.

From this, we observed that his ability to massage people managed to gain the trust of the people who came for treatment. People are more confident when they hear from others they trust and seek treatment for massage as word of mouth is a powerful and easy-to-trust tool because it is built on trust for someone to receive the information they get.

**Knowledge acquisition**: Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory of knowledge conversion organizations place knowledge acquisition in the first three models of the model, namely socialization, externalization and combination. During socialization, tacit knowledge is the main type of knowledge acquired. This type of knowledge is known to be obtained through guidance, observation, collaboration, discussion, practice and imitation. This shows that the prospective traditional massage healer learns to grasp the veins, prepare herbs (massage oil), handle patients, and many other functions through observation and imitation. In order for this knowledge to be obtained to the maximum, it requires face to face contact that often occurs. Based on observations, prospective traditional massage healers (the next generation) are children of masseurs who are given full attention. During this period prospective traditional massage healers will be under the guidance of a masseur who oversees everything they do and learns how they do things.

When externalizing, candidates can express the knowledge they have acquired over time, especially through observation and practical work. These observations show that over time, traditional massagers allow candidates to demonstrate how much knowledge they have gained by allowing them to feel the tendons first when they have clients, prepare herbs for clients and do many other functions by themselves. Externalization is usually followed by a combination.

During the combination, traditional masseurs change the explicit knowledge gained from observation and work practices and then incorporate and integrate into existing knowledge that they may acquire at an early age, or maybe they get by themselves to form new knowledge. During work practices massagers and candidates share many things. Traditional masseurs and prospective traditional massage healers mostly discuss issues around healing patients and how they deal with certain things. Massagers share knowledge about prayers or 'jampe' that are needed for healing. During the work practice the candidates will gain knowledge and combine it with their existing knowledge which brings new knowledge.

**Knowledge transfer**: Knowledge transfer refers to the transmission of explicit, implicit and tacit knowledge from a person or organization to another person or several other people. According to Maluleka, tacit knowledge, (as quoted from Szulanski, Ringov and Jensen, 2016) is the view that through interaction, knowledge sources can articulate their own perspectives and express implicit rules and assumptions, so that externalization of hidden tacit knowledge is difficult to communicate, while knowledge recipients can internalize it gradually ". The interaction between would-be traditional massage healers and massagers makes it possible to share and transfer such tacit knowledge informally and spontaneously. Explicit knowledge can be transferred through interactions between the source and the recipient, personalized communication, or the recipient's observation of the knowledge used. The transfer of explicit knowledge

between candidates and massagers mostly occurs during informal meetings and visits that they always have. During the observation it was seen that massagers preferred to teach and transfer their knowledge to candidates who respected and were able to follow instructions. The process of transferring knowledge requires patience also from knowledge carriers and sometimes, massagers are asked to show the same thing repeatedly.

Based on observation, prospective traditional massage healers see the process from the beginning to the end of the massage. For starters, oil for massage is given a prayer or jampe first so that the massage process runs smoothly at the will of the Almighty. Massagers also share knowledge about babies to pay attention to all the signals issued by the baby. This signal can be a signal whether he likes your massage or not. Immediately stop the massage if the baby starts crying because it's a sign that he feels someone is sick in that part. Then there needs to be an optimal massage action in the area. If the baby doesn't cry, he feels comfortable.

**Knowledge preservation**: Tacit knowledge is in people's minds and must be maintained for that. Therefore it must be acquired first. After acquisition, traditional masseuses integrate this knowledge into their existing knowledge base. This is what Nonaka calls a combination (1994). Knowledge gained through training is combined with the knowledge transferred to massagers as they are young to form their own personal tacit knowledge. Once this knowledge is integrated or combined with their existing knowledge base, it must now be internalized.

Internalized knowledge is then preserved in the human mind for future use. However, the preservation process is a little different when it comes to explicit knowledge. According to Maluleka, (as quoted from McMahon 2015) explicit knowledge is ready to be codified into a real form, namely, documentary material that can be stored in various media. This knowledge is easily stored in places such as libraries, archives, museums or other information handling institutions.

Massagers highlight that it is important that they continue their knowledge through biological children under their wings, sharing all their experiences to ensure that their knowledge is carried over to the next generation. However, they warn that, it is not guaranteed that the ancestors will choose that person to take over from them because they can decide other people. While others have begun the job of teaching someone in the family, others have left the task to their ancestors because they believe that healing powers are controlled by ancestors. The results show that massagers believe that it is the ancestor's responsibility to preserve traditional healing knowledge. They believe that ancestors kept knowledge secure until they identified someone who was worthy so they could continue. During the acquisition and transfer of knowledge, the masseuse assists the candidate with some advice to carry out what is obligatory and the sunna to be carried out in Islam. This includes prayer and fasting, this helps in getting closer to the Almighty.

Knowledge gained through socialization, externalization and combinations is internalized into a personal knowledge base for conservation (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995). Traditional healers are known to maintain their personal knowledge and only

make it available to those who decide to teach either as massagers or maybe family members they want to share their knowledge with. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) argue that documenting knowledge helps individuals internalize their experiences, thereby enriching their tacit knowledge. Books, articles, and any other form of documentary documentation, allow the transfer of explicit knowledge to others, thus helping them experience other people's experiences indirectly. Knowledge of traditional healing is generally known to be preserved orally. But respondents strongly believe that the Almighty is responsible for maintaining traditional healing knowledge.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although traditional massage is one of the health care systems in Indonesia, there is little understanding of how this knowledge is acquired, transferred and maintained. From the evidence gathered, this study concluded that healers achieved traditional healing knowledge from their ancestors. In order for someone to communicate with their ancestors, they must have a call that will enable them to access traditional healing knowledge through their ancestors. Massagers are responsible for mentoring candidates. Acquisition and transfer of knowledge of traditional masseurs occurs during socialization and externalization, while knowledge gained through socialization, externalization and combinations is internalized for preservation. This knowledge can be maintained through documentation or verbally depending on the method preferred by the masseuse.

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