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Tausug Folktales: A Reflection of Beliefs in Ghosts

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Abstract: This qualitative study explores Tausug beliefs about ghosts through an analysis of seven folktales collected from the Language Department of Mindanao State University in Tawi-Tawi, Philippines. The findings reveal a nuanced understanding of the supernatural, distinguishing between "living" and "dead" ghosts, and emphasizing the importance of proper burial rituals and community practices in managing interactions with the spirit world. Additionally, the research highlights the interplay between Tausug cultural values, Islamic faith, and the responses to the perceived threats and benefits associated with ghost encounters. Moreover, the study demonstrates that beliefs about ghosts are deeply intertwined with daily life, influencing social interactions and providing frameworks for coping with death and uncertainty. This research offers valuable insights into the Tausug worldview, illustrating the ongoing relevance of folklore in shaping cultural identity within a rapidly changing society.

Keywords: Beliefs in ghosts, ghost, folktales, Tausug, indigenous culture, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite advancements in scientific research that emphasize empirical evidence and factual validation, belief in the supernatural continues to be a significant aspect of human experience across various cultures. One of these prevalent paranormal beliefs is the notion that the soul exists independently of the body and persists beyond death. This idea serves as a central theme in many religious and philosophical frameworks, reflecting a universal human curiosity about the afterlife and what lies beyond physical existence. For instance, a 2013 UK survey revealed that 52 percent of participants expressed belief in the supernatural (Copping, 2013), while a 2015 survey by Chapman University indicated that over 9.7 percent of Americans believe in ghosts (Ledbetter, 2015). These statistics illustrate that such beliefs resonate widely within diverse populations rather than being confined to a select few.

The influence of supernatural beliefs on human behavior and social practices is profound and multifaceted. In many societies, these beliefs serve as a means of coping with the unknown and the existential questions that arise from the human condition (Lane & Harris, 2014; Vail *et al.*, 2012). For example, rituals and traditions surrounding death, mourning, and remembrance often stem from the belief in an afterlife. In cultures where the supernatural is revered, individuals

may engage in practices intended to honor their ancestors or appease spirits, shaping their social customs and moral frameworks (Smith, 2013; Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014). Moreover, the belief in the supernatural often fosters community cohesion, as shared beliefs can create bonds among individuals (Graham & Haidt, 2010; Stroope, 2011). Folklore, Ghost stories, and various religious narratives often function as communal touchstones, enabling social interactions and reinforcing cultural identity (Bronner, 2011; Goody, 2010). In times of crisis or uncertainty, these beliefs may provide comfort, offering explanations for unexplained phenomena and a sense of control in an unpredictable world.

In contemporary society, the fascination with the supernatural remains robust. Popular culture is rife with themes involving ghosts, spirits, and the paranormal, reflected in literature, film, and online media (Baker & Bader, 2014; Kripal, 2011). Ghost stories and horror genres thrive, appealing to an innate curiosity about the unknown and the afterlife while simultaneously exploring human fears and moral dilemmas. This enduring interest suggests that, rather than being obsolete, belief in the supernatural continues to evolve alongside societal changes, adapting to modern contexts while retaining its fundamental elements. Furthermore, the interplay between science and supernatural beliefs is a complex arena of ongoing

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debate. While scientific advancements challenge traditional views, they also lead some individuals to seek meaning in the realms beyond empirical understanding. This collision often results in a richer tapestry of beliefs where science and spirituality coexist, leading people to embrace aspects of both in their understanding of life, death, and existence.

This present study explores the concepts of the Tausug people in Ghosts through their societal narratives. The Tausug are an indigenous ethnic group from the Sulu Archipelago in the Philippines, primarily residing in the provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The term "Tausug" is derived from "tau," meaning man, and "sug," meaning current, collectively translated as "People of the Current," reflecting their historic ties to the sea and navigation. They have a rich cultural heritage marked by vibrant customs, traditions, and a strong Islamic faith, as most of the Tausug practice Islam, which was integrated into their local customs and beliefs. The Tausug possess a rich oral tradition, which includes poetry, epic narratives, and storytelling that convey their history, values, and beliefs. Despite facing challenges such as socio-political unrest and economic difficulties, the Tausug continue to uphold their cultural identity, maintaining practices that reflect their heritage and worldview.

Understanding societal narratives is crucial in appreciating how cultural beliefs shape community identity and social interactions. The urgency of this research arises from the need to document and analyze traditional beliefs that continue to influence the daily lives of the Tausug, especially amidst rapid modernization and globalization. The Tausug, particularly in rural areas, remain deeply influenced by folk religious practices and ancestral beliefs, including rituals such as *pag-kaja*, which seeks to appease ancestral spirits, and *taytih*, involving visitations at the tombs of deceased relatives (Elang, 2005; Kamlian, 1998). The belief in ghosts not only reflects their cultural legacy but also plays a significant role in how individuals navigate life, death, and the supernatural.

While younger Tausug express fear regarding ghostly encounters, many elders exhibit a more familiar attitude toward these apparitions, with some reporting friendships with them. This nuanced relationship raises intriguing questions about how different generations interpret and interact with the supernatural, with some believing that encounters with ghosts may lead to misfortunes. Furthermore, the Tausug perspective diverges from that of other cultures; they often interpret apparitions as manifestations of malevolent forces rather than the spirits of the deceased, framing their beliefs within a broader context of supernatural encounters.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of how Tausug ghost stories reflect broader cultural expressions and beliefs related to the

supernatural. By documenting these narratives, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of the Tausug worldview and the ongoing relevance of their storytelling in a rapidly changing society.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to explore the beliefs of the Tausug people regarding ghosts as expressed through their folktale traditions. A descriptive and interpretative approach was adopted to gather detailed insights into the cultural narratives surrounding these beliefs. This design facilitates an in-depth exploration of the themes associated with Tausug ghost stories.

Seven ghost stories were sourced from the collection of local narratives at the Language Department of Mindanao State University in Tawi-Tawi. The analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, beginning with initial coding to identify recurring themes, motifs, and patterns within the narratives. Codes were developed based on the characteristics and actions of the ghosts depicted in the stories. The coded data were then organized into broader themes that reflect the cultural significance of ghost beliefs among the Tausug people. This thematic approach enabled the identification of commonalities and differences among the narratives and facilitated an exploration of the cultural values and social structures related to these beliefs. The final stage of analysis involved interpreting the identified themes within the context of Tausug culture and worldview.

While this study aimed to offer a rich understanding of Tausug beliefs in ghosts through folktales, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The findings may not be generalizable to all Tausug individuals or communities, as beliefs can vary significantly. Furthermore, the study is influenced by the subjective interpretations of the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved some Tausug ghost stories. There are seven ghost stories analyzed in this study. The Tausug do not have normally titles for their folktales of this nature. Reference to a particular story is made by naming the ghost or the plot or theme. Story telling about ghosts has been a favorite pastime among the people. It is an occasion where the whole family gathers after supper as a way of entertainment. It is also told to scare the children if they sometimes become unruly or are into the habit of staying out late at night.

Characteristics and Actions of the Ghosts in the Folktales

The first story features a ghost with a chilling presence. Initially, she appeared as an inviting figure

standing at her door, seemingly awaiting a friend. However, her voice was deep and hoarse. As the narrative progressed, her appearance became increasingly disturbing. Her unusually soft scalp hinted at decay beneath the surface, and a foul odor, reminiscent of a decaying animal, permeated the air. Her behavior further intensified her haunting nature. She clung tightly to her friend, whispering in a groaning voice that evolved from a plea into a chilling command. Finally, she vanished at the sight of an old man, revealing her uncanny ability to elude those living.

In the second narrative, the former self of the ghost was depicted to be family oriented who spend his time taking care of his grandson. When his spirit returned after his death, it was described as having a decayed face, bearing the marks of a long-ago death. Its skin hung sagging and unnaturally pale, and its eyes were sunken deep within their sockets. On the first night of his return home, the ghost rocked the cradle of his grandchild and attempted to sing lullabies. On the second night, when confronted by his daughter-in-law, he reappeared, enveloped in a swarm of flickering fireflies.

The climax of the story introduced a relentless ghost in pursuit. Its movements mimicked the living, as it mirrored his son's actions while chasing him through the deserted village and into the dark forest. When the son sought refuge in his in-laws' home, the ghost retaliated by throwing dirt at the house before vanishing into the night.

In the third story, the ghost was identified as the corpse of a deceased villager, shrouded in fabric. The transformation into a ghostly entity occurred at night, an event witnessed by a young woman. The ghost's appearance was grotesque; as it sat up, its cold, lifeless hands peeled away the fabric that had wrapped it. Its eyes opened and locked onto the young woman, filled with accusations.

The ghost then ventured from the room to the kitchen, indulging in its former favorite dish—a squash. This transformation was further emphasized when, after feasting, the ghost returned to its place, flashed a cryptic warning, and assumed its guise of lifelessness once more. The subsequent encounter with the young woman escalated as the ghost aggressively haunted her in her home, gripping her neck and choking her.

The description of the ghost in the fourth story appeared as an old woman who teach children how to read a Qur'an. Her initial appearance was marked by a disturbing grimace; her expression was stern and devoid of warmth. Rather than engaging with the children in a teacherly manner, she evoked fear and confusion. As the narrative progressed, the old woman's actions became increasingly peculiar. Her instruction to repeat *Bismillah, kaw, latun kaw*, which means "In the name of Allah,

continue," took on a disquieting tone, blurring the lines between piety and manipulation.

The turning point in the story came when the older boy used leaves from the castor plant as a talisman against the ghost. The ghost retreated when confronted with the leaves. Eventually, her haunting came to an end as the imam performed a cleansing ritual, leaving her in an unconscious state.

In the fifth narrative, the ghost of the traditional midwife manifested as a disquieting figure. Her transformation from a respected midwife to a ghostly entity was marked by the violence of her death. When she returned, her ghost floated through the house of her friend. Upon reaching the living room, she became chaotic and disruptive, throwing objects around.

Visually, the ghost appeared both recognizable and distorted; her features took on an almost translucent quality. The remnants of blood from her demise left a haunting mark, serving as a visual reminder of her brutal end. Her expression oscillated between sorrow and rage.

In the sixth narrative, the ghost was described as an imam, a respected religious leader who transformed into a spectral entity. Upon his return as a ghost, he bore traces of his violent death, with gunshot wounds and blood visible on his spectral form. His appearance was disturbing, marked by features of decomposition; his head rested on his shoulder to prevent the decayed flesh from falling. When the family discovered a hole near his grave, they covered it to prevent his return.

In the last narrative, the ghost initially disguised herself as a small, unassuming black dog. Once she revealed her true form, she appeared as a woman dressed in flowing white, her long hair cascading over her shoulder. As the young man paddled his canoe, the ghost vanished, but the canoe grew heavier. Along the way, he caught fleeting glimpses of the ghost sitting on the prow. Upon arriving at his destination, the ghost disappeared abruptly, leaving behind a distressing scent that filled the air.

The Beliefs of Tausug in Ghost

The folktales of Tausug about ghost depict a haunting experience characterized by a complex set of beliefs about the ghost. Below are some identified beliefs based on the ghost's characteristics and actions:

1. Traumatic or violent deaths can unrest the spirits of the deceased; thus, ghosts return to resolve emotional pain and issues from their lives.

Both ghosts in stories the traditional midwife and the imam involved unexpected, violent deaths—the former resulting from an interpersonal conflict, and the latter from a sudden attack by armed men. The traumatic nature of the deaths disrupts the natural cycle of life and, as such, leaves the spirits of the deceased unmoored. The

midwife's argument with her son-in-law suggests that her unresolved anger and the harsh words exchanged during their altercation linger even after her passing. The very nature of their disagreement can imply that she had important emotional issues or grievances that were never fully articulated or settled, which may compel her spirit to return. Similarly, the imam's death reflects a lack of closure. His violent end may prevent him from reconciling any emotional or spiritual matters he had left unresolved in life. This abrupt cessation of life can signify that the imam did not have the opportunity to address any conflicts or emotional distress—be it related to duty, family, or community. Consequently, the absence of resolution can lead to unrest in the spiritual realm, where the deceased may feel burdened by the circumstances surrounding their deaths.

Such violent deaths resonate within the community, creating a shared sense of loss and fear. Midwife and imam are both figures of authority and respect in the Tausug community, and abrupt deaths of these entities may instigate collective mourning, further complicating the process of acceptance and letting go. The narratives also hint at the critical role of traditional funeral rites and burial practices. In Tausug culture, it is believed that proper rituals must be observed to facilitate the spirit's journey after death. Violent deaths may necessitate additional rituals to address the unrest caused by the trauma.

In the context of Tausug culture, the return of ghosts underscores societal values around familial loyalty, emotional connections, and the importance of rituals that facilitate healing. This belief reinforces that ghosts are not just wandering spirits; rather, they are integral to the ongoing stories of their families and communities.

2. There are two types of ghosts: the living ghosts and the dead ghosts.

Of the seven narratives, stories 1 and 4 present ghosts that are perceived as “living ghosts,” while the remaining stories depict “dead ghosts”. In this context, “living ghosts” refers to spirits that are unaware of their own deaths. The community perceives them as alive because they lack the overt characteristics commonly associated with ghosts. In contrast, the “dead ghosts” display unmistakable ghostly traits, including signs of decomposition and foul odors.

Two narratives showcase the living ghosts engaging in activities akin to those of the living—such as delousing in one story and teaching children in the other. These actions signify their connection to their former selves and their ongoing roles within society. Such behaviors create a sense of normalcy and blur the boundaries between life and death, allowing the community to interact with these spirits without immediate fear. While engaged in everyday tasks, these living ghosts emit subtle indications of their spectral

nature; for instance, the friend's soft scalp and the lingering odor in one narrative serve as unsettling reminders that, despite their active presence in the world, they are fundamentally transformed by their condition. This duality underscores the tension within the belief system: the living ghosts appear vital and engaged yet embody elements that reveal their disconnection from life.

In contrast to the living ghosts, the dead ghosts featured in other narratives demonstrate clear signs of decomposition, such as foul odors and disturbing appearances. This presents a more traditional vision of ghosts, characterized by physical decay and otherworldly traits. These dead ghosts often evoke fear, reverence, or even dread within the community. The stark contrasts between living and dead ghosts influence societal attitudes toward death—while living ghosts may be integrated into communal life, dead ghosts may represent unresolved grief, fear of the unknown, or the haunting memories of those lost.

Collectively, these Tausug stories highlight the importance of recognizing and respecting the boundaries between the living and the dead. Engaging with living ghosts may require acknowledgment and resolution of emotional ties, while interactions with deceased ghosts might necessitate rituals and mourning practices to honor their memory appropriately.

3. Ghosts can exhibit nurturing qualities as well as frightening traits.

In Tausug culture, beliefs about ghosts are complex, embodying a dual nature that encompasses both nurturing and terrifying qualities. Many narratives depict ghosts as grotesque apparitions with decayed faces, evoking fear and horror. This frightening aspect features the inherent human anxiety surrounding death and the unknown. Elements such as the ominous knocking at the door, the barking of dogs, and the rotting figure surrounded by flickering fireflies intensify the atmosphere of dread and suspense.

However, these stories also reveal a more nurturing side to ghosts. For instance, when a spirit engages in acts like delousing a friend or gently rocking a baby while singing lullabies, it reflects the belief that spirits—especially those of deceased family members—can express love and affection toward the living. This nurturing behavior emphasizes the idea that spirits maintain emotional bonds with their loved ones, sometimes manifesting as protective actions or gestures of care for the ones they cherished in life. Through these narratives, the Tausug people convey a rich understanding of the multifaceted nature of spirits, illustrating their capacity to embody both fear and compassion.

4. Ghosts can pose psychological and physical dangers to the living.

Among the Tausug, there is a strong belief that encountering a ghost can result in severe consequences for the living, including illness or even death. This idea is vividly illustrated in one of the narratives, where a young woman, left home alone after a funeral, endures a terrifying confrontation with a ghost that physically assaults her. The ghost's actions—murmuring ominously and tightly grasping her neck—suggest a malevolent presence capable of inflicting harm. Her struggle culminates in her lifeless state, marked by bruises around her neck, underscoring the notion that ghosts are not merely benign entities but can pose serious threats that extend beyond mere psychological fear to actual physical violence.

Similarly, the narrative about the teacher involves a ghost dragging a child, highlighting the psychological impact such unsettling behaviors can have on young, vulnerable minds. This scenario reflects a broader understanding that interactions with ghosts can lead to significant psychological distress among the living, particularly in vulnerable individuals like children.

These narratives underscore the Tausug belief that ghosts can disrupt both the mental and physical well-being of the living. This dual threat encompasses a spectrum of experiences—from the immediate terror associated with a ghost's physical aggression to the enduring psychological effects of encountering strange and disturbing actions. Such beliefs function as cautionary tales, reinforcing cultural perspectives on the spirit world and the potential dangers that may arise from interactions with it.

5. Ghosts can conceal themselves from the living and can transform into animals.

The belief that ghosts are capable of hiding from the living and transforming into animals reflects the fluid nature of spirits. Narratives 1 and 7 emphasize the elusive and transformative qualities of ghosts, illustrating how they can instill fear and fascination in the living. In addition, these abilities of spirits suggest that encounters with ghosts are unpredictable. These beliefs serve as a cultural framework through which the Tausug people interpret and navigate their experiences of the unseen, reinforcing the significance caution in their interactions with the spirit realm.

The two narratives exemplify the ghosts' ability to hide from the living. For instance, in one story, the ghost instant disappearance upon noticing another person approach illustrates its capacity to elude detection. This sudden vanishing evokes a sense of mystery and fear, as it shows that ghosts possess a power over their visibility and presence, marking them as unpredictable entities that can appear and disappear at will. The ghost's retreat may imply a conscious decision to avoid revealing itself, thus reinforcing the tension between the known and the unknown. In another story, the interaction culminates in

the ghost vanishing just as the man dashes into his house, indicating that once again, the spirit can evade the living whenever it chooses. The ghost's sudden absence, combined with the foul odor reminiscent of decomposing animals, adds another layer to the belief. This sensory detail serves as a haunting reminder of the ghost's presence, even in its absence. The odor serves as an ominous signal, suggesting that while the ghost may hide, the lingering effects of its presence are felt, contributing to the emotional weight of her interactions with the living.

Likewise, the last narrative highlights the transformational ability of ghosts, as seen when the man observes a duck that quickly disappears only to reappear as a black dog before transforming into a woman. This ability to shift forms illustrate the fluidity of identities among spirits. This aspect of transformation alludes to Tausug cultural beliefs that animals can serve as vessels or disguises for spirits, allowing them to approach the living without immediate recognition.

6. Rituals and traditional remedies can protect the living against harmful spirits.

The reliance on traditional healers, the use of religious leaders for protection, and the importance of rituals highlight a Tausug cultural framework in which spiritual well-being is taken very seriously. The narratives illustrate how these practices effectively counteract the harmful manifestations of spirits, ultimately restoring peace to both the living and the departed. For instance, in one narrative, a young woman encounters the spirit of her deceased friend, resulting in trauma. The prompt action taken by her parents to consult a faith healer underscores the community's reliance on traditional practices for healing spiritual afflictions. The healer's bath on the body of the young woman symbolizes purification, a common theme across various cultures where water is regarded as a cleansing agent both physically and spiritually.

Similarly, in the fourth narrative, a couple unknowingly entrusts their children to a ghostly teacher, only to discover the dangers once they learn the teacher's true identity. Their desperation compels them to seek assistance from an imam, illustrating the interplay between Islamic faith and local beliefs. The imam's prayers exemplify the use of religious authority and ritual to confront spiritual threats. The successful return of the children reinforces the belief that spiritual entities can be faced and overcome through prayer and the intervention of a healer. This narrative emphasizes that while harmful spirits can pose significant threats, faith and communal leadership act as protective barriers.

Furthermore, in the narrative about the imam, the belief in the possibility of the ghost's return through a hole in its grave reflects deep-seated fears of the supernatural. The family's attempt to block the hole signifies their belief in traditional remedies as effective

safeguards against spirits. This narrative also highlights cultural customs surrounding death and burial, emphasizing the importance of proper rites to ensure peace for the deceased and protection for the living. Together, these narratives illustrate a rich tapestry of beliefs within the Tausug community, where the spiritual realm significantly influences daily life and communal practices.

7. Ghosts may emerge from their graves shortly after burial and continue to do so until a few nights after the seventh-day prayer. After that, they are believed to no longer manifest.

The return of the spirit of the deceased from the grave after burial, continuing until a few nights after the seventh-day prayer, reflects a crucial aspect of Tausug culture by highlighting practices of mourning and remembrance. For example, in one narrative, the ghost appears the very night of its burial, emphasizing the belief that spirits may linger in the physical realm shortly after death, often due to their attachment to the living or unresolved matters. In another narrative, the ghost is described as appearing on the night of the seventh-day prayer, suggesting that the spirit wishes to connect with its relatives and friends during this communal gathering. Furthermore, another narrative depicts a ghost emerging after the seventh-day prayer, indicating that it may still be grappling with unresolved issues from its past life or has yet to fulfill its mission, thereby necessitating a further delay in the physical realm.

The appearance of ghosts signifies a transition from the physical to the spiritual realm. Collectively, these narratives reinforce the notion that the journey to the afterlife is not instantaneous and that unresolved spiritual unrest may require intervention. Such manifestations can evoke fear and anxiety among the living, prompting them to adopt protective measures or engage in additional rituals to assist the spirit in finding peace.

The seventh-day prayers—a Tausug tradition in which relatives and friends gather to share food in a charitable offering for the deceased—are believed to assist the departed in their spiritual journey. This prayer holds significant importance in Tausug culture, serving as a communal moment to remember and move on from those who have passed. Notably, the timing of ghostly manifestations in relation to the rituals performed by the living underscores the connection between the spirit's presence and these rituals, suggesting that such practices can invoke spiritual responses. Ultimately, once these prayers are completed, it is hoped that the spirit can finally find rest, marking an important transition for both the deceased and their family.

8. Tausug beliefs link ghost manifestations to the sinful lives of individuals.

The Tausug belief that ghost manifestations are tied to sinful lives underscores the importance of moral behavior within the culture. This perspective serves as both a reminder of accountability and a guide for individuals to strive for ethical conduct, shaping the values and spiritual beliefs of the community. The implications of this belief foster a sense of moral responsibility that extends beyond one's lifetime, illustrating the link between moral conduct and spiritual fate.

The narrative of the midwife exemplifies these principles. Although she is known for her skills, she possesses a detrimental flaw: her tendency to divulge intimate details about the deliveries she assists. This breach of confidentiality undermines the trust expected in her role and is indicative of a moral failing. When she engaged in a heated argument with her son-in-law and resorted to harsh words, the situation escalated tragically, culminating in her violent death. This incident poignantly demonstrates how her actions throughout her life contributed to her demise.

The connection between the midwife's actions and her ghostly manifestation suggests that unresolved moral failings may linger with the spirit. This reflects the Tausug belief that individuals face consequences not only during their lives but also in the afterlife. Ghost manifestations serve a dual purpose: they provide a framework for understanding spirituality and morality while also acting as cautionary tales for the living. They remind community members of the moral consequences of their actions, encouraging reflection on behavior and the repercussions of leading a sinful life. Ultimately, this belief reinforces the idea that ethical conduct is essential not just for personal integrity but also for maintaining peace in the spiritual realm.

9. When a person encounters a ghost, he should refrain from telling anyone; otherwise, the ghost may haunt him.

The belief that individuals should refrain from discussing encounters with ghosts is deeply rooted in Tausug cultural value of dignity. Their culture strictly prohibits humiliating others by recounting undesirable experiences witnessed about them. Consequently, a ghost manifestation becomes a source of disgrace not only for the deceased but also for their family.

The practice of silence serves multiple purposes. First, it functions as a protective measure; sharing an encounter could attract the ghost's attention or provoke its anger, potentially leading to more intense hauntings. This concept is particularly emphasized in the third narrative, which underscores the importance of respecting the spirits of the deceased. By choosing to remain silent, individuals honor the unresolved issues of the departed, thereby maintaining a level of respect that is crucial in Tausug culture. Additionally, this silence can serve as a psychological coping mechanism for individuals grappling with fear or trauma. It allows them

to manage the emotional weight of their experiences without the added vulnerability that speaking about it could bring.

CONCLUSION

This study delves into Tausug beliefs about ghosts through the analysis of seven folktales, revealing a complex interplay among cultural practices, religious beliefs (primarily Islam), and individuals' experiences with the supernatural. Key findings indicate that Tausug beliefs regarding ghosts are nuanced; they differentiate between "living ghosts," which engage more actively in daily life, and "dead ghosts," which embody more traditional ghostly characteristics. In addition, it highlights the critical role of proper burial rites and rituals in appeasing restless spirits and preserving community harmony. Moreover, individuals who have died violently, particularly those in positions of authority such as imams or midwives, are believed to return as ghosts to resolve unresolved issues or seek justice. This study also emphasizes the importance of maintaining silence after encountering a ghost, as this reflects the community's deep respect for the deceased and their families, serving to prevent further disturbances. Furthermore, the dual nature of ghosts—capable of both nurturing and threatening behaviors—illustrates the complexity of human emotions and the ambiguity surrounding the afterlife in Tausug culture.

This present study provides valuable insights into the Tausug worldview, demonstrating how their beliefs about the supernatural are integrated into their daily lives and social structures. The results of this study provide prospective avenues for further investigation, specifically how these beliefs have evolved in the context of modernization and globalization, offering an opportunity to explore the dynamic nature of the Tausug culture in a changing world.

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