

The *Rajah* Tradition: Cultural Identity and Spiritual Practices within an Islamic Context

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the *rajah* tradition in Kebon Panjang Village, examining its role as both a cultural artefact and a spiritual medium, and understanding how it reflects the intersection between local customs and Islamic values. A qualitative approach with a phenomenological framework was employed, allowing an in-depth exploration of the *rajah* tradition through interviews, participant observation, and literature review. Data were gathered from both primary sources, such as community leaders and practitioners, and secondary sources, including academic articles and books on amulets and traditional practices. The findings reveal that *rajah* serves multiple purposes, including protection, blessing, healing, and authority enhancement. It acts as a cultural bridge between traditional beliefs and Islamic spirituality, illustrating how local customs adapt to fit modern religious frameworks. The study also identifies the dual perception of *rajah* within the community—some view it as a form of Islamic devotion, while others approach it with caution, concerned about potential contradictions with orthodox Islamic teachings. This study provides insights into the sociocultural dynamics of spiritual practices, highlighting the community's pragmatic approach to religious and cultural identity. The findings suggest that *rajah* contributes to social cohesion, emotional support, and cultural preservation, offering a model for similar cultural practices in other regions to adapt in the face of religious and modern influences. This research contributes to the literature on amulets and spiritual artefacts by examining *rajah* within the unique socio-religious context of an Indonesian village, offering a nuanced understanding of how traditional practices coexist and evolve alongside mainstream religious beliefs. The study underscores the significance of *rajah* as both a symbol of cultural resilience and a tool for spiritual assurance.

Keywords: *Rajah*, Sacredness, Tradition.

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INTRODUCTION

Belief is a fundamental element in human life, encompassing rules and instructions that serve as guidelines for daily living (Potabuga, 2020). This foundational role of belief is evident in various forms of faith and spirituality that shape people's actions and decisions. For instance, one significant manifestation of belief in Kebon Panjang Village, Parungkuda Subdistrict, Sukabumi Regency, is the community's enduring faith in *magical powers*. This belief in *magical powers* is not only a means of seeking protection and fortune but also a cultural heritage passed down through generations, reinforcing the community's identity and worldview. The strength of this belief highlights how deeply spiritual practices are woven into the fabric of local society, demonstrating the continuing relevance of traditional beliefs in modern contexts.

The people of Kebon Panjang Village believe that these *magical powers* derived from *rajah* (a form of talismanic writing or incantation) assist them in achieving their desired outcomes. *Rajah*, like other talismans found in cultures worldwide, are often imbued with protective qualities and thought to ward off harm or attract blessings. In medieval Europe, for instance, talismans and amulets were commonly used for protection, believed to possess apotropaic qualities, or powers to repel evil forces (Petrică & Cârciumar, 2022). Similarly, in some traditions, magical potency is believed to increase through the use of inscribed symbols, as seen in the "Botica de los Templarios," where inscriptions in Arabic, Latin, and Castilian were thought to enhance objects' mystical properties, regardless of the legibility of the text (Nickson, 2015).

In the *rajah* tradition, inscriptions are written on the body using Arabic script or on paper that is then dissolved in water for the user to bathe in or drink. The effectiveness of these talismans depends on fulfilling specific conditions, such as *riyadhoh* (spiritual exercises or ascetic practices), aligning with the global belief that rituals can enhance the efficacy of talismanic objects.

Several studies have explored the tradition of *rajah*, a phenomenon preserved among certain Indonesian communities, particularly on the island of Java (Fitri et al., 2023). Various types of *rajah* are still practised, such as *rajah penglaris* (attraction charm), *rajah kulit* (skin inscription), *rajah rompi* (protective vest), *rajah tembang liring* (poetic incantation), *rajah pemagaran* (protective barrier), *rajah sabuk* (belt charm), and *rajah cincin* (ring charm) (Pamungkas, Noupal, Murtiningsih, & Fitriyana, 2022). However, of the many types of *rajah* mentioned, those used in traditional healing are the most common (Ramadhani, Nurdin, Fitria, Dinen, & Kurnia, 2023). This medium of treatment has been known within the community since ancestral times (Meyanti & Andhfani, 2021), when formal medical personnel or medicines were not yet available (Drajat, Mustapa, & Warnisyah Harahap, 2024).

Today, *rajah* is still regarded as an affordable form of healing accessible to all social groups (Sholahuddin, 2022). It is often used as a remedy for both medical ailments, such as smallpox (Salmani, 2022) and non-medical afflictions, such as those thought to be caused by *witchcraft* (Alam, 2022). This use of *rajah* leads people to believe it is a viable solution for overcoming life's challenges (Ula & Prasetya, 2020). Additionally, *rajah* practices are often acculturated with Islamic values, using Arabic script in their inscriptions (Dwiatmojo, 2018).

Based on previous research, it is evident that numerous studies have examined the *rajab* tradition; however, these studies primarily focus on documenting its usage within communities. This leaves a gap in understanding the deeper significance of *rajab*, particularly the sacred values embedded within this practice. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by specifically exploring the sacred dimensions of the *rajab* tradition, investigating how these values are perceived by practitioners and integrated into their spiritual and cultural beliefs.

This research thus seeks to explore the sacred aspects of *rajab* as they exist in the lives of the people of Kebon Panjang Village. It investigates how the local community interprets *rajab* as a means to bridge the *profane* (ordinary, secular) with the *sacred* (holy, revered), and how their belief in *rajab* functions as a unique spiritual conduit in their daily lives. The goal is to understand how the community perceives the sacred nature of *rajab* and how this perception impacts their life practices.

This study is based on the argument that, although *rajab* is fundamentally Arabic writing applied to the body or paper, it holds sacred value for some people, especially in Kebon Panjang Village, that transcends its physical form. According to Mircea Eliade's theory of the sacred and the profane, symbols and rituals that begin as profane can attain sacred status when their spiritual effects are felt by individuals. In this context, *rajab*, though literally a text, is imbued with *magical powers* believed to help individuals achieve particular life objectives. By using *rajab*, people believe they can easily attain desires or goals, such as protection from harm or success in acquiring sustenance. Therefore, this study assumes that *rajab* functions as a transitional medium between the profane and the sacred, reflecting the community's belief in mystical powers in their everyday lives.

METHOD

This research was conducted in Kebon Panjang Village, Parungkuda Sub-district, Sukabumi District, with a focus on the *rajab* tradition as the primary unit of analysis. The study centres on understanding how this community interprets and practices *rajab* as a cultural and spiritual artefact. The unit of analysis is thus the tradition itself and its influence within the local community context.

A qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach was selected for this study to capture the complexity and depth of the *rajab* tradition as experienced by community members. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for studying complex social phenomena, as it allows for a holistic, detailed examination of reality (Moleong, 2017). The phenomenological approach is essential here, as it enables the researcher to explore the meanings and experiences that individuals associate with *rajab*, revealing the cultural and religious significance embedded within the tradition (Connolly, 2002).

Data for this research were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained directly from the field through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, engaging with community members and leaders who are knowledgeable about the *rajab* tradition (Sugiyono, 2019). Secondary data were derived from literature such as books, journal articles, and other relevant texts that discuss themes related to *rajab* and similar cultural practices, allowing for a broader contextual understanding of the topic.

Data collection techniques involved multiple methods to ensure a comprehensive approach. Observations were conducted to directly witness the practices associated with *rajah*, while interviews were carried out with community leaders and practitioners to capture a variety of perspectives on its significance. Documentation, including photos and field notes, was also compiled to support the observational and interview data (Yusuf, 2017).

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which comprises three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, only data relevant to the study's focus were selected and organised. These selected data were then displayed descriptively to present a clear narrative of findings, and, finally, conclusions were drawn by comparing the analysed data with the core concepts of this study (Siyoto & Sodik, 2015). This analytical approach enabled a systematic interpretation of the collected data, aligning it with the theoretical framework and research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *The Practice of Using Rajah in Kebon Panjang Village*

The practice of using *Rajah* by some people in Kebon Panjang Village is something that is commonly found. However, the use of *rajah* is not installed by just anyone but must be installed by an expert who is commonly referred to by them as a wisdom expert. This is because only a wisdom expert knows the meaning and philosophy of the *rajah* itself. Thus it can be said that this wisdom expert will help someone get out of difficulties and downturns in living life. This is as said by the wisdom expert that *rajah* is actually a *wasilah* or a way for someone to get what they want (Hidayatullah, personal communication 2022). However, he also asserted that the most perfect *rajah* is the sentence *lailaha ilallah* because with this sentence a servant can obtain happiness both in the world and in the hereafter. In addition, he also said that the practice of making this *rajah* must fulfil certain conditions.

“The making of this *rajah* is usually done at night after sunset. Meanwhile, the determination in making this *rajah* must follow every corner of the column, direction, and every corner end. Even when the *rajah* is being made, it must be done according to predetermined rules, starting from where we are facing, the moon, and the day. In addition, in writing this *rajah* also does not use just any stationery but must use special stationery such as *zafaran* ink mixed with *misik* oil and using fragrances” (Hidayatullah, personal communication 2022).



Figure 1. Tools for Making *Rajah*

Thus it can be said that the making of the *rajah* must be done in a state of purity, dressed all in white and wearing fragrance as adab when we want to worship. The use of *rajah* is also usually written on the back or on the palm of the hand using tools as shown in Figure 1. In the process of making it, the person who uses *rajah* will feel a side effect on his body in the form of heat. According to the view of wisdom experts, this happens because of the unification process between the *rajah* and the human body. Furthermore, as said by the source that someone who will use *rajah* then there must be a dowry given by the person. The form of dowry that needs to be given by the person who wants to install *rajah* is in the form of fasting or certain *wirid-wirid*.

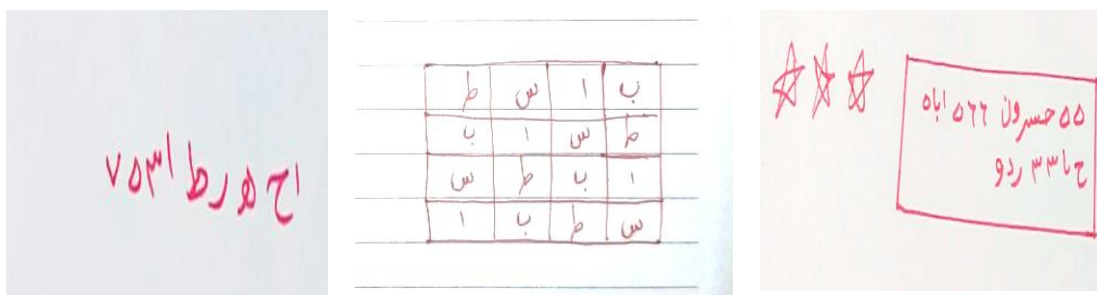


Figure 2. Rajah Forms in Arabic Script

The use of this *rajaḥ* has a meaning as a form of human hope in God. This can be said as a reasonableness considering that God's power cannot be matched by humans. In order to realise this hope, humans make several efforts so that their hopes are granted by Allah SWT. The efforts made by the people of Kebon Panjang Village are by doing *rajaḥ*. In practice, the *rajaḥ* used by the people of Kebon Panjang Village is a *rajaḥ* that is packaged in an Islamic form by including Arabic letters in it as shown in Figure 2. For the surrounding community, they believe that the *rajaḥ* can bring them to the path of blessing in living life in the world. This is because for some people the *rajaḥ* is a kind of prayer that is usually remembered and serves various purposes. The main purpose is to bring the sacred macrocosm to the microcosm world in order to create perfection of life for humans so as to make the profane become sacred. Thus, it can be said that the people of Kebon Panjang Village have a belief in *rajaḥ* that is pragmatic. This is evidenced by the assumption that the burden in life will be reduced if it adheres to the use of *rajaḥ*.

2. People's Views on the Use of Rajaḥ in Kebon Panjang Village

As stated earlier, the use of *rajaḥ* is widely practised by the people of Kebon Panjang Village, Parungkuda Subdistrict, Sukabumi Regency with the aim of rejecting *bala'* or attracting sustenance. However, there are pros and cons from various levels of society towards the use of *rajaḥ*. The pros and cons are not only among ordinary people but also among people who understand religion. This is as said by Aceng that using *rajaḥ* is *sunnah*. This is because the making of *rajaḥ* uses the words of Allah, and Arabic letters. So when there are people who use *rajaḥ*, it is okay (Aceng, personal communication 2022). This view is also corroborated by Syamsul who said that the use of *rajaḥ* by the people of Kebon Panjang Village is in accordance with the basis of religious law. According to him, the *rajaḥ* used by the people of Kebon Panjang Village has followed the law of the majority of salafi scholars who ruled it as *sunnah* and not included in shirk. This is because the writing of the *rajaḥ* contains the words of Allah that can be used as a means to get blessings, ward off danger, and so on (Samsul, personal communication 2022).

So the description above can be said that *rajaḥ* can be used with a note only to get closer to Allah by being the waslah of each letter of the Qur'an. Because basically every letter of the Qur'an contains extraordinary blessings for people who practice it. However, this *rajaḥ* can also be something that is prohibited if it is used as an absolute reliance. This is as also said by Ubed that the use of *rajaḥ*, amulets and the like made with Arabic writings or with the words of Allah with the aim of rejecting danger, bringing rezeqi, and so on, of course this is not allowed because it believes in other than Allah. In addition, he also said that the use of *rajaḥ* is something that is not based on clear evidence or hadith (Ubed, personal communication 2022). From this statement it can be said that if we believe that *rajaḥ* is a medium that can facilitate everything then it can be said to be something that is misguided and weakens our faith in Allah.

In addition to the pro and con views among religious leaders, there are also pro and con perspectives on *rajaḥ* among the general public. For instance, one individual from Kebon Panjang Village stated that the use of *rajaḥ* is strictly prohibited by religion as it contradicts Islamic teachings and is considered a form of shirk (Noneh, personal communication 2022). However, this view was

countered by Mr. Usup, who argued that the use of *rajah* or amulets by the people of Kebon Panjang Village is not considered shirk because these *rajah* are used for positive purposes, such as seeking blessings, requesting healing, and avoiding danger (Usup, personal communication 2022). On the other hand, Mrs. Desi stated that the use of *rajah* has no effect on either moral or spiritual aspects (Desi, personal communication 2022).

From the above explanation, it can be said that there is indeed a debate within the community regarding the use of *rajah*. Some people believe that *rajah* is forbidden as it contradicts Islamic teachings. However, others view *rajah* as permissible and not contrary to Islamic teachings because it is used for good purposes. Ultimately, these differing views are neutralized by the perspective that *rajah* has no impact on either moral or spiritual aspects. It is suggested that if one wishes to have moral strength, learning is the way to achieve it, and if one desires spiritual strength, prayer and dhikr are the solutions.

3. Community Motivation in Using Rajah

The people of Kebon Panjang Village use *rajah* not without reason; there are specific motives or desires associated with it. The following are the motives of the Kebon Panjang Village community for using *rajah*:

Seeking Blessings

The primary motive for the people of Kebon Panjang Village in using *rajah* is to seek blessings. As stated by Mr. Dayari, *rajah* is made from letters of the Qur'an, so one can hope for blessings from the *rajah*. This practice is also followed by prominent companions and scholars who constantly seek blessings from the letters contained in the Quran, hoping it will provide benefits and protection from injustice (Dayari, personal communication 2022).

From the explanation provided by the source, it can be said that *rajah* inscribed with Quranic letters is considered to have many virtues and benefits, allowing one to hope for blessings from these letters. Ultimately, it is hoped that the letters used in the *rajah* will positively impact the spiritual level of its users.

Means of Healing

Besides seeking blessings, *rajah* is also used by the Kebon Panjang Village community as a means of healing. According to the local people, using *rajah* for healing is more effective than going to the hospital. This is also supported by Mrs. Nurlaela, who mentioned that healing with *rajah* does not cause side effects compared to medications prescribed by doctors. Additionally, she noted that treatment with *rajah* is cheaper than visiting a hospital (Nurlaela, personal communication 2022).

From the data, it can be said that, according to the local people, *rajah* is considered more effective for treating illnesses than medical treatments. However, the opinions expressed by the sources are based on ethical values and do not necessarily reflect the scientific effectiveness of healing (medical perspective). The impact of treatment with *rajah* is associated with the creation of tranquility. The perceived advantages of using *rajah* lead the community to believe that the person

who provides *rajah* possesses irrational abilities. This belief leads the community to be influenced and trust that *rajah* is a more effective healing medium compared to other forms of treatment.

Increasing Authority

Rajah is also frequently used by the people of Kebon Panjang Village as a means to enhance personal authority. This is similarly expressed by Mrs. Ida, who has experience using *rajah* to increase her authority. She mentioned that *rajah* for authority is one of the practices that need to be upheld. This is because, as a government employee or leader, one must have authority; otherwise, one will be taken lightly. However, she noted that using *rajah* is not about seeking respect directly, but if a leader possesses authority, others will naturally show respect (Ida, personal communication 2022).

Therefore, it can be said that authority is a capability to establish relationships with others on an emotional and intellectual level. Authority holds significant importance for a leader. Consequently, many leaders use *rajah* as a medium to project their authoritative aura to be respected by those around them.

Rajah for enhancing authority is commonly referred to by the people of Kebon Panjang Village as "*rajah Sulaiman*" This name is attributed to the figure of Prophet Solomon, who was known for his authority and was granted abundant wealth by Allah SWT. The local people believe that one can receive blessings from *rajah* Sulaiman by practicing the instructions given by an expert in the field of *rajah*.

Household Safety

Conflicts within a household are actually quite common in life. Nevertheless, these conflicts should always be avoided and minimized by those who experience them. For the people of Kebon Panjang Village, using *rajah* is one way to prevent conflicts and attain harmony in family life. As stated by Mr. Khoeruddin, the use of *rajah* serves as a means to achieve peace in the household and to protect the family from issues that could damage the relationship, whether from within or outside (Khoeruddin, personal communication 2022).

From the above statement, it can be said that the use of *rajah* is a form of effort to avoid things that could damage the household, such as divorce. However, the use of *rajah* is not merely a physical effort but is also a form of spiritual endeavor.

Attracting Sustenance

As previously mentioned, one of the motivations for the people of Kebon Panjang Village is to attract sustenance. The people of Kebon Panjang Village believe that sustenance comes from Allah. They also believe that sustenance will come to us if we make efforts both externally, through work, and internally, through prayer. However, they view the use of *rajah* as a form of spiritual effort to facilitate the opening of doors to sustenance. As Mr. Syahid stated, *rajah* for attracting sustenance is seen as a form of spiritual effort to open up sustenance

from all directions. Nevertheless, he also noted that each person will receive different results depending on their belief, intention, and external efforts (Syahid, personal communication 2022).

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that *rajah* is one of the means used by the people of Kebon Panjang Village to obtain sustenance. They believe that using *rajah* does not contradict Islamic creed because they also believe that everything comes from Allah. However, they consider *rajah* as a way to open the doors of sustenance. In practice, *rajah* for attracting sustenance is usually held by traders with the hope that their goods will sell well.

From the various motivations for using *rajah*, it can be inferred that the community's belief in *rajah* is essentially a spiritual need. Therefore, in practice, people believe that using *rajah* will help achieve their desires, such as facilitating sustenance, warding off danger, and so forth. Despite this, there are still pro and con views on the use of *rajah*. On one hand, some people do not believe in the sacredness of *rajah*, viewing the tradition as merely profane. On the other hand, some believe in the magical power of *rajah* and consider it to be sacred. In line with this, Mircea Eliade argues that the sacred nature of something heavily depends on the perspective of the users. According to J.G. Frazer, the use of *rajah* falls into magical practices, which are among the earliest human beliefs. The magical power of *rajah* was used by humans to ensure their survival before the emergence of scientific beliefs.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the *rajah* tradition in Kebon Panjang Village, focusing on its use, social perceptions, and underlying motivations. Key findings indicate that *rajah* is a widely practiced spiritual medium, requiring specific rituals and spiritual disciplines (*riyadhoh*) to maximise its effectiveness. The practice is primarily administered by a *wisdom expert* who understands the intricate details and sacred symbolism of each *rajah*. Community views on *rajah* range from seeing it as a means to attract blessings and ward off harm to considering it an Islamic-suited practice, especially given its use of Arabic script and Quranic verses. Additionally, various motivations for using *rajah* were identified, including seeking blessings, healing, authority, household safety, and sustenance. While some community members view *rajah* as spiritually empowering, others are cautious, viewing it as potentially misguided, especially if used as an absolute reliance.

The prevalence of *rajah* in Kebon Panjang Village appears to be deeply rooted in the community's need for a spiritual connection that transcends ordinary means. The use of *rajah* offers an accessible way for individuals to address personal and communal concerns, creating a bridge between the profane and the sacred. This aligns with the theory of the sacred and profane by Mircea Eliade, which suggests that spiritual practices allow individuals to experience moments of sacred transcendence even within mundane contexts. The community's motivation to utilise *rajah* for blessings and protection reflects a pragmatic yet devout approach, emphasising the practice as a complementary path to traditional Islamic worship rather than a replacement. These findings suggest that the community's cultural identity and belief system are critical factors influencing the *rajah*

tradition, as it provides spiritual assurance in ways that conventional practices may not.

This study on the *rajah* tradition in Kebon Panjang Village aligns with and expands upon previous research on the cultural and spiritual significance of amulets in various communities. Similar to how *rajah* is viewed in Kebon Panjang as a medium of protection and blessing, amulets in other cultures also serve protective and healing functions. For instance, Tibetan communities use amulets to protect individuals, animals, and property from diseases and supernatural threats, while in the Banen ethnic group of Cameroon, amulets safeguard individuals and invoke respect and fear among wrongdoers (Johnson & Fongzossie, 2021; Ramble, 2023).

In Muslim communities, amulets containing Quranic verses are employed to address daily challenges, embodying the intersection between religious texts and practical needs (Abidin, Noorhidayati, & Ahmadi, 2023). This parallels the use of *rajah* in Kebon Panjang, which incorporates Arabic script and Quranic references, adding Islamic legitimacy to the practice. Moreover, the cultural identity aspect of amulets is evident in Iranian practices, where Sasanian amulet traditions have evolved to align with Islamic concepts, demonstrating continuity between ancient and modern beliefs (Kiyanrad, 2018).

Amulets also have significant economic and social impacts, as seen in Thailand, where they contribute to both the local economy and the reinforcement of cultural identity through the sale of religious items (Srichampa, 2014). Similarly, *rajah* in Kebon Panjang is not only a spiritual tool but also an integral part of local cultural practices, deeply embedded in the community's social structure. In Nepal, amulets are used as a form of protection for vulnerable individuals, particularly children, reflecting a cultural prioritisation of safety for the most susceptible members of society (Fjeld & Vasstveit, 2023). This protective aspect is also a prominent motivation for the use of *rajah* in Kebon Panjang, where it is believed to ensure safety and harmony within households.

The *rajah* tradition in Kebon Panjang mirrors global practices, showing how amulets and spiritual artefacts adapt to address both universal human needs and culturally specific concerns. This study contributes to existing literature by highlighting how *rajah* serves not only as a protective device but as a bridge between traditional beliefs and Islamic values within the unique socio-cultural context of an Indonesian village.

The findings of this study highlight the *rajah* tradition in Kebon Panjang as a complex blend of cultural heritage, Islamic influence, and spiritual practice, illustrating how traditional beliefs evolve within modern religious contexts. Socially, *rajah* functions as a bridge between cultural identity and religious practice, providing the community with a sense of security and continuity. This interplay between heritage and Islam shows how local customs are adapted to align with prevailing religious ideologies, contributing to the preservation of local identity while reinforcing Islamic values. Historically, *rajah* has roots that resonate with amuletic practices worldwide, showcasing the human tendency to seek protection and assurance through physical symbols of faith. Ideologically, the practice embodies the community's pragmatic approach to spirituality, blending devotion with everyday concerns. This research expands the understanding of how

traditional spiritual artefacts can embody both cultural resilience and adaptability, serving as vehicles for spiritual assurance in a way that speaks to contemporary needs without discarding cultural history.

The *rajah* tradition in Kebon Panjang offers several positive outcomes, notably in terms of psychological comfort, social cohesion, and cultural continuity. By providing a practical means to address personal concerns, *rajah* serves as a source of emotional support, reinforcing communal values and strengthening collective identity. However, potential downsides exist, such as the risk of over-reliance on *rajah* for issues that may require medical or psychological intervention. Viewing *rajah* as a complete solution to physical or emotional ailments could deter individuals from seeking appropriate professional help, possibly leading to unaddressed health or psychological needs. Another potential dysfunction lies in the divergent views on *rajah* within the community, where some see it as part of Islamic devotion while others view it as potentially misguided, which could lead to social tension and ideological fragmentation.

To address these findings, there are several practical recommendations. Health and religious authorities could collaborate with community leaders to develop educational programmes that acknowledge the cultural importance of *rajah* while promoting a balanced approach to health and well-being. Such programmes could provide guidance on when traditional practices might be supplemented with professional medical or psychological support, aiming to prevent any potential harm from over-reliance on *rajah*. Additionally, fostering dialogue within the community about the theological aspects of *rajah* could help reduce tensions between differing religious interpretations, promoting a more cohesive and inclusive understanding of the practice. Finally, documenting and preserving the *rajah* tradition, with an emphasis on its cultural and religious significance, could help future generations appreciate its role in their heritage, encouraging both respect for tradition and adaptation to modern health practices.

CONCLUSION

This study provides new insights into the *rajah* tradition in Kebon Panjang Village, highlighting its complex role as both a cultural practice and a spiritual medium deeply rooted in the community's belief system. The most significant finding is the dual function of *rajah* as both a protective tool and a symbol of Islamic devotion, which reflects a blending of local customs with religious values. Unlike previous research that often focused solely on the functional aspects of amulets, this study reveals the unique role of *rajah* in bridging traditional beliefs and Islamic identity, illustrating how the practice allows the community to retain its cultural heritage while adapting to modern religious contexts.

The primary contribution of this research lies in its exploration of the sacred values attributed to *rajah*, expanding the understanding of how such spiritual artefacts serve as vessels of both cultural resilience and adaptability. This study underscores the importance of *rajah* in promoting social cohesion, psychological comfort, and cultural continuity within the community. Furthermore, it provides a valuable perspective on how traditional practices can

coexist with mainstream religious beliefs, demonstrating the community's pragmatic yet devout approach to spirituality.

However, this study also has limitations. First, it focuses on a single village, which may not fully represent the diversity of *rajah* practices in other regions of Indonesia. Future research could broaden the scope by exploring similar practices across different cultural and religious contexts to assess the variability and universality of *rajah* traditions. Additionally, further studies could examine the potential health implications of over-reliance on *rajah*, particularly for ailments that require professional medical intervention, and investigate ways to integrate traditional practices with modern healthcare approaches. This expanded research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how traditional spiritual practices can harmoniously coexist with contemporary needs.

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