

*Research article*

## Handling the Rain Handler: Cultural and Religious Perspectives on the Indonesia's *Pawang Hujan*

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**Abstract** This study aims to analyze the concept of the *pawang hujan* (rain handler) phenomenon and its connection with the culture and beliefs of the people in Indonesia. Through data collection and analysis from various sources within the last 10 (ten) years consisting of books, journals, and other relevant and supportive sources obtained through Google Scholar and the Google search engine, it is known that the people of Indonesia still believe in the effectiveness of the rain handler's job. Although many people say that the rain handler deviates from religious rules, several others maintain the tradition of preserving Indonesian culture and local wisdom so that these cultural characteristics do not disappear over time. The responses were widely varied as one's views wisely that belief in supernatural things must be gradually eroded for the religious people.

**Keywords** Culture; local wisdom; rain handler; religion; tradition.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country that has various ethnic groups with their own culture. Within these cultures, different norms, values, and traditions regulate human behavior. These norms, values, and traditions are cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation and went hand in hand with human life. These cultures and traditions are socially constructed, meaning these cultural views and ways of life emerge through the adherence of groups, communities, or nations and the reproduction of cultural views (Halualani, 2019).

Traditional culture is usually conveyed orally and in writing occasionally, so it becomes a belief in culture (Kurnia & Marnelly, 2017). A belief practiced by specific communities, which they and their ancestors believe, gradually forms an ideology that is believed to be a real condition of people's lives and shapes the worldview in which

the community lives (Jane & Barker, 2016). Belief is a form of faith in the existence of extraordinary supernatural or supernatural powers that influences the lives of individuals and society (Kurnia & Marnelly, 2017). Praying and worshiping are activities that are usually carried out by a belief. In addition, a belief often creates fear, optimism, resignation, and others from individuals and communities who believe in it. For modern people with concrete, rational, and natural views, beliefs are often assumed to be strange, unnatural and irrational, especially beliefs based on supernatural powers.

One of the concrete manifestations of people's beliefs based on this power is what we call ritual. According to Mudjahirin Thohir, a Professor of Anthropology at Diponegoro University, a ritual is a form of creating or organizing relationships between humans and the supernatural, human relationships with each other and their environment (Hasibuan, 2021). According to Anderson, ritual forms a national ideology where the identity of a community or group of people is constructed through symbols. This ideology closely shapes and encompasses the culture of the Indonesian people, which has existed for a long time and has been passed down from generation to generation to the present day Anderson (2006).

Many Indonesian people still believe in rituals and, eventually, apply them daily. This is because religion in Indonesia, especially Islam, adapts to culture. As stated by Geertz in his book *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, religion is a symbol that permeates and lasts a long time in humans so that a conception of community order is created, and this conception is factually wrapped so that it looks realistic in community life Geertz (1971). That's why rituals, as one form of cultural embodiment, are often associated with a religious or semi-religious ceremony in a community or community group.

One of the rituals that triggers wide discussions among the people of Indonesia is the ritual related to the rain handler, where this weather engineering ritual is used as a form of hope and demand from the community and their beliefs to move the rain when they are going to hold a certain celebration or any outdoor activity (Hasibuan, 2021). Indonesian people consider this tradition as a form of cultural preservation. It makes the ritual of transferring rain or rain handling proof of their devotion to their ancestors. They believe this ritual can keep their lives safe and away from unwanted things (Haniifah et al., 2022). Besides, this tradition is still trusted by the village community. It is still preserved today because of the ancestor's role, who introduced this tradition when holding celebration events so it could run smoothly (Nirmala & Sukarman, 2022).

According to the Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Gadjah Mada University, Heddy Shri Ahimsa Putra, the rain handler's job is to move the rain and drop it elsewhere (Mailoa, 2022). The rain handler is believed to help the surrounding community to hold back the rain and move it to another place or area so that the activities or events are not disturbed or hampered by rain. And belief in this tradition serves to ask for blessings and prayers from ancestors and families who have died so that the implementation of an activity or event runs smoothly without rain disasters (Ashari, 2018).

Literature Researcher at Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Indonesia (FIB UI), Dr. Sunu Wasono said the rain handler has a strong position (Pranita, 2022). The existence of rain handlers and other handlers is very likely to exist because of human efforts to survive or sustain life. In this way, the rain handler exists because there is a human need to respond and deal with natural behavior, especially rain. Some agree, and some question why there is a need for a rain handler even though the technology already exists. Sunu continued that some people still believe in the efficacy of the rain handler. The belief in the rain handler will not just disappear. Moreover, Indonesian society's belief in something supernatural is still very strong. Even people who are very advanced in thought and education still believe in occult things.

Rain handlers have a special position in society because it is part of a tradition, and the community still needs this profession to carry out activities (Kariana et al., 2022). They have high dignity and have their duties and rights, all obtained through good relations with other people in the environment. In the Javanese palace tradition, the rain handler has a prestigious position; for example, at the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace, there is a rain handler who is very well known and has been trusted by the royal family for a long time named Haknyo Ramiyono (Setiawan, 2020). Therefore, the role of the rain handler can be seen where this function is expected from a person or group with a certain status in society. For this reason, many people believe that the rain handler can help them, so it has an important role in the community's daily social activities.

The community's trust strengthens when they see evidence of the success of the rain handlers in driving away the rain (Mailoa, 2022). And this is even more so if the rain handler is proven successful in driving away the rain and providing benefits that are felt not only by the organizers of the activity or event but also by the guests and the community around the activity. The community's encouragement to trust the rain handler has usually been passed down from generation to generation or by word of mouth obtained from the experience of family and close friends because their

knowledge is also passed down from generation to generation (Kurnia & Marnelly, 2017).

This makes the figure of the rain handler so important, especially in the rainy season, because to organize an activity, people hope that the activity or event will run smoothly. In contrast, the arrival of rain is unpredictable. The community will feel overwhelmed and lost if there is no rain handler, whether their activities should be cancelled due to the rains coming. Guests will certainly feel reluctant to go to the activity or event because of the rain, which can get them caught in the rain.

Initially, the rituals were carried out by people in ancient times simply by praying. Still, then it developed into rituals that required materials that were worshiped before God and the Ancestors (Nirmala & Sukarman, 2022). The rain handler uses these tools or objects to connect them with God or their ancestors to fortify them so rain cloud does not break and fall (Junalisah, 2016). The point is that the rain handler ritual uses various objects, such as offerings and spells, in the process. These objects are very important because they have existed for a long time and have been used since the time of our ancestors. And it must be remembered that not all rain handlers use similar and similar objects. The rain handler also usually always recites a spell that is believed to be able to dispel the rain that will fall in a certain place. Mantras are based on gathering energy that can be utilized for certain purposes (Pranita, 2022).

Besides, based on a research conducted by Humayroh (2022), rain handler uses verses from the Holy Qur'an in several areas in Indonesia as one of their rituals. Acculturation between culture and religion occurs because most people in that area are Muslims, making their culture inseparable from religion. They performed two *raka'at* of prayers and recited Qur'anic verses such as Al-Ikhlâs, Yâsin, and al-Baqarah. The rain handler read this with several religious leaders in that area.

A rain handler does not get the knowledge directly but rather by receiving it from a family inheritance, and the person who received the ability and gave the rain handler knowledge has agreed with one another (Arifinsyah et al., 2020). This knowledge is felt through a shift in wind direction and in which direction the clouds shift (Kurnia & Marnelly, 2017). Apart from being passed down from generation to generation, the skill of the rain handler can also be obtained from dreams, where the dream comes from the ancestors who want to send a message to the people chosen by the ancestors themselves (Nirmala & Sukarman, 2022).

The phenomenon of the rain handler has been the talk of many people in recent years because of the action taken by a rain handler named Rara Istiani Wilandari, who

was considered successful in banishing the rain at the Moto Grand Prix (MotoGP), in March 2022, in Mandalika, Lombok Island, Indonesia. For this reason, the author is interested in further analyzing this phenomenon and linking it to the culture and beliefs of the people in Indonesia.

## 2. METHODS

This study was compiled using a literature review method that used a qualitative approach. A literature review is a process of finding, locating, obtaining, reading, and evaluating research literature (Abbott & Bordens, 2018). This research method comprehensively describes the literature review and synthesizes previous research to strengthen the knowledge base (Paul & Criado, 2020). It forms the basis for all types of research, including knowledge development and the creation of policy guidelines (Snyder, 2019). It provides a theoretical description as well as current and past information for research sourced from books, journals, and other documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The literature review plays a fundamental role in uncovering the theory that supports the argument of the paper/article, establishing its boundaries, and defining and clarifying the main concepts to be used in the empirical part of the text (Nakano & Muniz Jr, 2018). The selection of relevant references is very important to obtain high-quality data because the data obtained will affect the results and conclusions of the study (Snyder, 2019). To form a model or conceptual framework of rain handler, culture, and beliefs, the steps taken for this research are defining the theme, determining keywords, collecting and identifying variously related and relevant literature on the theme, and then presenting it.

Data were collected from various sources within the last 10 (ten) years, that is 2013 to 2023, consisting of books, journals, and other relevant and supportive sources obtained through Google Scholar and the Google search engine. Then the literature is analyzed, and important and core concepts are taken according to the context of this research. This is done to build a theoretical background and formulate supporting theories that will be used to develop opinions or arguments. Furthermore, a model or framework was developed to see the relationship between the concepts of rain handler and its correlation with religion and culture in Indonesia. Finally, this research can provide new views on the topic under study. Eight pieces of literature have been identified and are by the research criteria. Eight kinds of literature were analyzed using tables to see the variables examined by each study and the relationship between

the rain handler and its connection with the culture and beliefs of the people of Indonesia.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eight articles were analyzed using a matrix table (Table 1) to see the variables examined by each study and related to the rain handler phenomenon in Indonesia and its relationship with the cultural, beliefs, and religious aspects of the people of Indonesia.

**Table 1. List of literature used as a reference**

No.	Author	Purposes	Results
1.	Ginting & Girsang (2023)	To explain how the existence of the rain handler and its popularity as a culture.	It can be seen that the ritual of rain handler in the appearance of MotoGP is a positive effort to remind that culture as a problem solver has existed for a long time. This positively introduces Indonesian culture to the international community amid such a large global cultural influence.
2.	Amalia & Firmonasari (2022)	Roland Barthes's semiotic approach is used to prove the mythical and mystical elements in the meme related to the rain handler through the meaning of signs.	The elements of myth and mysticism depicted in memes made by people tend to be satire or sarcasm because the ritual performed by the rain handler is considered something that doesn't make sense. Memes that live on social media do not only function as entertainment but also have the potential as a public space for various functions, one of which is as a medium for satirizing and ridiculing.
3.	Setyowati, Suhariyanto & Rahmah (2022)	To find out the opinion of netizens on the momentum of the appearance of the rain handler during the rain-stopping procession, which was broadcast on the Trans7 MotoGP YouTube channel, through an analysis of	The top five major themes that emerged are pride in Indonesian culture, respecting the diversity of customs or local wisdom, appreciating the event's uniqueness, feeling entertained, and expressing cynicism and liking.

		written media content, media attention to issues, figures, completeness of information, including various opinions expressed by netizens.	
4.	Adilang & Kalundang (2022)	To examine the views of the community towards local wisdom, especially the rain handler, in the light of the biblical text from the Gospel of Matthew 22:32.	In responding to local wisdom, the church must reflect on Christ as a patron and role model. So local wisdom values with noble ideas that do not conflict with Christian values can certainly be appreciated.
5.	Sulanjari, Handayani, Mutiah, Djohar & Syaekhu (2022)	To determine the public perception of the rain handler at the Mandalika MotoGP International Circuit.	The public's perception of the rain handler at the Mandalika MotoGP International Circuit is a local wisdom that has existed for a long time and was taught by the ancestors using different spells according to the customs and culture of a region.
6.	Rizky & Nazaruddin (2021)	To examine the social phenomenon of resisting rain by rain handlers in the Sukaramai Village. The local people believe until now that a rain handler has expertise in displacing rain or holding rain so it doesn't fall.	The people of Sukaramai Village, in general, still believe in the existence of a rain handler and still use it in every activity. Even so, some do not use rain handlers because they think rain is a blessing that cannot be refused, and it is illogical to believe in repelling rain in modern times like today.
7.	Arifinsyah, Harahap & Yuliani (2020)	To see whether the use of the rain handler's services deviates from Islamic aqeedah, which ultimately results in acts of shirk against Allah Swt.	The ritual performed by the rain handler deviates from Islamic aqeedah because it uses materials and chants of mantras that are believed to be able to repel rain. This is an act of shirk for believing in and asking for help from others other than Allah Swt by the word of Allah in Q.S. Al-Fatiha verse 5. Lack of religious or educational background as well as cultural factors or community habits, play a very important role in the use of

		rain handler services which continue to be carried out until now.
8.	Kurnia (2017)	To analyze the social phenomenon of belief in the ritual of moving the rain in Tualang District, Siak Regency considers that the position of the rain handler in society is very important.
		The community's trust in the rain handler is still high, and this activity is still used by the people of Tualang District who inhabit the area.

Three articles discuss the Indonesian people's belief in the ability of the rain handler, two articles discuss this phenomenon from a religious perspective, and three articles discuss it from a cultural heritage perspective. The results of the analysis are grouped into three categories and their relationship with the rain handler phenomenon, namely: (1) the relationship between the rain handler with cultural heritage, (2) the relationship between the rain handler with religious aspects, and the last is (3) the relationship between the rain handler rituals with the beliefs of the people in Indonesia.

### 3.1. Pawang Hujan: *Preserving a Cultural Heritage*

In research conducted by Ginting & Girsang (2023), appears that humans have hoped to cooperate with nature and control it since ancient times. One embodiment of this tradition is the appearance of the ceremony of rejecting or calling for rain in several traditional community groups in Indonesia to facilitate their activities and work. The rain handler itself is still attached to this day because it is not easy to eliminate the trust that has been formed for a long time in society. This belief was formed because the culture was born long before religion, and the practice of rain handlers in Indonesia also began long before the arrival of colonialism and imperialism. Indonesian people's belief in spirits and supernatural powers is very difficult to eliminate because it has been passed down from generation to generation Ginting & Girsang (2023).

The Mandalika MotoGP race in 2022 was a clear evidence that the rain handler was responded to as a positive effort because it reminded us of Indonesian culture. The news about the rain handler made West Nusa Tenggara goes viral worldwide, especially related to local wisdom or traditions. This became a promotional event for cultural tourism in that area (Kariana et al., 2022). This fact should be used as a positive



consumption by society in introducing Indonesian culture to the international community amidst the enormous influence of global culture.

The same results were also seen in the research conducted by Setyowati (2022), where many netizens watched the 2022 Mandalika MotoGP event on the MotoGP Trans7 Official YouTube channel and commented on the appearance of the rain handler as a manifestation of pride in Indonesian culture. Netizens unanimously agree in various phrases that the appearance of the rain handler adds to their love for customs, culture, and local wisdom in Indonesia. According to them, the presence of a rain handler has a story of high and unique human interest or something unusual, and even considered entertaining. At the same time, there is a surprise and strange response because this is regarded as an activity out of the ordinary.

According to Sulanjari et al. (2022), even though it is considered a strange activity and beyond reason, most Indonesian people believe in the existence of a rain handler profession which has become a hereditary culture. This local wisdom is held in almost various locations in Indonesia, even though the rituals and prayers are different. This shows that rain handling is a practice that has been going on for a long time and cannot be easily eradicated from people's beliefs. It can also become one of Indonesia's cultural assets to help promote this country even further to the outside.

The fact that the Indonesian government trusts Rara Istiani Wulandari, the Handler of the Rain in MotoGP Mandalika, to carry out this activity against rain proves that this tradition must be preserved. The Indonesian government successfully promotes culture and tourism through the rain handler action at the Mandalika Circuit, West Nusa Tenggara (Kariana et al., 2022). Based on an article written by Hasibuan, it is known that the figure, who is familiarly called *Mba Rara*, works under the auspices of ITDC (Indonesia Tourism Development Corporation) Hasibuan (2021). This state-owned company is also the big boss of the Mandalika Circuit. In addition, *Mba Rara*'s presence to block the rain was also a direct request from the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN), Mr. Erick Thohir (Sulanjari et al., 2022).

At this international event, *Mba Rara* was asked to become a rain handler for 21 working days and received a fantastic fee of around 105 million rupiahs. Apart from being the rain handler at the Mandalika MotoGP event, it turns out that *Mba Rara* was also asked to be the rain handler during the 2018 Asian Games and the AFC U-19 when Indonesian football national team faced Japan (Azanella, 2022). This means that the rain handler profession can be considered as one of the efforts of the Government of Indonesia to promote a local culture that has existed for a long time, which makes their

presence felt again, not only in Indonesia but also internationally (Ginting & Girsang, 2023).

Preserving cultural heritage is necessary, but we cannot omit the fact that some people do not believe in the rain handler profession. The ritual of moving rain from one location to another is considered an embarrassment to the nation, so many people make fun of it, even seeing it as a comedy to be mocked. Even in the case of the rain handler at the Mandalika MotoGP Circuit, many think this is just a marketing technique to attract world attention. Here we can see that the belief in the implementation of tradition as a form of culture inherent in the modern era is actually a contradiction in itself. And often, these beliefs are adapted to modern values and religion in order to remain relevant and enduring.

### ***3.2. How Could the Religion Judge the Rain Handler?***

Here we will see the phenomenon of the rain handler from two religious' sides, Christianity and Islam. According to Adilang & Kalundang's (2022) research, Jesus highly valued local wisdom because local wisdom basically provides a clear understanding of God's way of teaching. In God's Covenant, loyalty to ancestors does not end with their death. Behind this tradition is a portrait of a good relationship between God and the ancestors.

Thus, Christians must be able to emulate Jesus in seeing local wisdom by indirectly judging and declaring that all existing forms of local wisdom, including the rain handler tradition, are wrong and heretical. They must be open and not limit themselves to viewing local wisdom only from one side. Still, they must be able to see it from various perspectives so the direct attitude of refusing without prior study is minimized. They also need to criticize the culture so that elements that are negative and not by the teachings of the Bible must be firmly rejected.

Presumably, this local wisdom of the rain handler can also be seen as a way to contextualize Jesus as the real rain handler. Because unknowingly, Christians have to make peace and be friends with the culture and local wisdom that is abundant in Indonesia.

A different view is conveyed by Arifinsyah et al. (2020). According to the Islam perspective, humans are created as God's creatures and must have strong beliefs to worship God as the Creator of the entire universe. As stated in the Holy Qur'an, Al-Baqarah verses 21-22: "...Allah Swt has created you and those before you so that you are

*pious. (It is He) who made the earth a stretch and the sky a roof for you, and He sends down water (rain) so that He will produce fruits as sustenance for you. Therefore, do not equalize to Allah while you know...*" (Haniifah et al., 2022). The principle is manifested through worship activities that require Muslims to always believe in Allah Swt. If worship has been upheld, everyone has the right to receive favors from Allah Swt because they have obeyed His commands and stayed away from all His prohibitions.

Research by Arifinsyah et al. (2020) shows that one of the blessings of Allah Swt is rain, which is a highly anticipated gift and eagerly awaited for its arrival. However, for some people who want to carry out activities, the arrival of rain is actually considered a catastrophe. Therefore, the human desire arises to avoid rain by carrying out the tradition of using the services of a rain handler as a means for the community so that there are no obstacles in their activities. What is done and believed by the community is an act of deviation from the Islamic creed because that is tantamount to rejecting a blessing sent down by Allah Swt. This belief creates shirk because believing and trusting the rain handler is none other than a creature created by Allah Swt, the creator of the universe and its contents which should be used as a place to complain about all the grievances that are in the hearts of the people.

Arifinsyah et al. (2020) research suggests that it is necessary to deepen knowledge of religious knowledge so that people will always not easily believe in traditional customs or cultural traditions that can undermine their beliefs. People should be aware that only Allah Swt is the place to ask for help.

Research conducted by Adilang & Kalundang (2022) and Arifinsyah et al. (2020) have shown two different views from each religion. However, we must remember that this belief or culture will gradually be lost, eroded by the modernization that is being felt in all circles today. This is not without reason because the development of science and technology has greatly influenced Indonesian society in particular and people in other parts of the world in general. Advances in technology and knowledge affect the paradigm and mindset of society. People no longer believe in superstitions and traditions that are not in accordance with their logical reasoning in thinking.

We cannot deny that there will always be a group of people who still carry out a tradition from generation to generation. On the other hand, there will always be some people who already have advanced modern thinking. This difference will always exist because we are still trying to preserve local wisdom, and meanwhile, this culture somehow clashes with religion.

### ***3.3. Public Responses' and the Quest for Scientific Answer***

The rain handler phenomenon is interesting to discuss, especially when it became a topic of discussion at the 2022 Mandalika MotoGP race event. One of the events in the world's spotlight is the attraction of the rain handler who tries to stop the rain in the middle of the upcoming MotoGP match. This incident elicited various reactions from various communities, both pro reactions to the activities of the rain handler and those against and who showed their dislike.

The research conducted by Amalia & Firmonasari (2022) is one of the studies that discuss the reactions of the Indonesian people and the world in responding to the attractions of the rain handler. They stated that many Indonesian people showed disbelief because it seemed mystical, so they needed to be advised to believe in this tradition more easily. Sarcasm and satirical comments appear to Indonesians who still believe in things that don't make sense. This situation can occur because not all Indonesian people know and understand the rain handlers' traditions and culture, which are inherent in the Indonesian people's identity, and they consider this to be unreasonable. They assumed that the rain stopped was not the result of a rain handler's ritual at that time, but based on the weather forecast showing that the rain would indeed stop. This view shows their distrust that the rain handler has no part in stopping the rain, and this distrust is shown through allusions to the rain handler's attractions that show stupidity and shame.

The response shown by many Indonesian people is in contrast to the reaction shown by the world community. They even showed extraordinary appreciation after witnessing the rain handler's attractions because, for them, Indonesia is a country rich in culture, whether logical or not. Several foreign media and MotoGP Twitter accounts also praised the rain handler's actions which were considered quite successful in their work (Pranita, 2022). The appearance of the rain handler in the middle of the circuit is considered entertaining. It provides its peculiarities for the spectators who witness it directly or through television and social media because this is regarded as an activity out of the ordinary (Setyowati et al., 2022).

It can be seen that the belief in the rain handler does not only exist in a remote community but has also entered the minds of academically educated people where they are people who rely heavily on logic and strategy and have high social status and knowledge. The ritual of calling and rejecting rain is apparently not only known by the people of Indonesia but also abroad, including the ritual of rejecting rain at the opening of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the ritual of calling for rain that took place in

Bihar, India where farmers are shirtless to call for rain, and the refusal of rain which the people of Japan are still doing by hanging Teru-teru bozu dolls hanging outside the windows of the house (Ginting & Girsang, 2023).

Talking about the mindset of some Indonesian people, research from Kurnia & Marnelly (2017) shows that in today's era, where everything must be studied scientifically, there are still people who believe in spirits, supernatural objects, and rituals that cannot be reasoned with common sense because it has existed since our ancestors. The community believes in the rain handler ritual because the position of the rain handler is the role model and reference for the community. Most people believe in the success of the ritual performed by them. The community's encouragement to trust the rain handler has been going on for generations or by word of mouth, which was obtained from the experience of family and close friends.

Meanwhile, people who do not believe in this supernatural power feel strange. A sense of unnaturalness and irrationality arises in the views of individuals and modern society, which are overly influenced by the view that something is believed to exist if it is concrete, rational, natural, or empirically and scientifically proven. In addition, several other reasons cause people to not believe in the rain handler ritual. Research conducted by Rizky & Nazaruddin (2021) shows that people who do not use this ritual are because they think it will violate the will of Allah Swt. They can't reject the rain that comes from Allah Swt, even if it can be rejected; of course, it is certain in a strange way. Another reason is that some people think rain is a mercy from Allah Swt that cannot be refused. And they also argue that it is illogical to believe in repelling rain in modern times like today.

What happened at the Mandalika MotoGP event when the rain stopped during the match was not considered the result of the rain handler's ritual that stopped the rain but based on the weather forecast at that time where the rain would indeed stop (Pranita, 2022). This implies that the rain handler had no part in stopping the rain then. In response to this, the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) spoke up about the presence of a rain handler during the MotoGP race in Mandalika, West Nusa Tenggara. Erma Yulihastin, a Climatology Researcher at the Center for Climate and Atmospheric Research at the BRIN, said that the science used by the rain handler could not be understood logically because this knowledge was built in an era when humans believed in mythological concepts to understand the universe (Pranita, 2022).

Based on those facts, we must be able to respond to this as our effort to maintain traditions and preserve cultural heritage so that the characteristics of ethnicity do not

disappear with the times and our children and grandchildren still know the cultural heritage they have. However, belief in unseen things, such as ancestral spirits, must be eroded because there is a religion we believe in as a guide in our lives. It is undeniable that the presence of rain handlers in Indonesia is a fact that until now has been difficult to avoid. Because the rain handler has been around for a long time since the Hindu-Buddhist era, the pre-Islamic era, and until now. Trust in the rain handler is due to their success in resisting rain which makes people believe and always use the services of a rain handler to repel rain.

As stated by Frazer (1922) in his book entitled *The Golden Bough*, where the process of human civilization led from a belief in magic to a more regular belief in religion and, ultimately, a belief in science. Frazer's thinking is the same as Hegel's view, which states that in the development of mankind, magic preceded the emergence of religion, and the difference between magic and religion is that magic aims to control nature directly. In contrast, religion seeks to prevent it through the intermediary of powerful creatures and is asked for protection from humans. Magic establishes an imposed and arbitrary order, whereas, in science, one's knowledge of how the world operates comes from provable observations.

When looking back at the phenomenon of the rain handler, we have to admit that any party cannot imitate the rain handler's method and can only be done by certain people, but science makes the unreasonable thing become absolutely scientific and can be imitated by anyone. Especially in an era that is already full of technological advances and there are more sophisticated tools to analyze the weather. This development occurred naturally for any society, but science did not end human development. It is also possible that other beliefs will emerge that will replace science.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

It is merely a fact that rain handlers existed since ancient times, long before religion entered Indonesia. The Indonesian people consider rain handlers a role model because this profession is only obtained through a hereditary process. This is one of the reasons why the rain handler is still trusted by the people of Indonesia, especially people in rural areas. Apart from that, there has been much evidence showing the success of the rain handler in rejecting or displacing rain with the aim that an activity can be carried out smoothly and without being hampered. So, it is unsurprising that the public's trust in the rain handler profession is increasing. Coupled with the support from the government, which urges the Indonesian people to be proud of this cultural heritage,

it has increasingly made the rain handler widely known in Indonesia and internationally. The Mandalika MotoGP event proves that the profession of a rain handler has been the talk of the broader community since then.

However, as a religious community, Indonesian people do not forget that the activity carried out by the rain handler by asking for help from spirits to reject and move the rain is very contrary to religious norms, especially Islam. The ritual performed by the rain handler is considered envious by religion and is also regarded as ungrateful for the blessings of Allah Swt, who gives rain as a fortune. And with the emergence of technology that dominates our lives today, people are asked to be wiser in responding to this phenomenon. Preserving Indonesian culture is necessary for the citizens, besides, the practice of handling the rain must be treated carefully.

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