



Trauma Healing through the *Upah-Upah Songgot* Tradition: A Case Study of an Indigenous Community in Indonesia

Winda Alawiyah¹, Hasnun Jauhari Ritonga¹

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

✉ winda0102192078@uinsu.ac.id *

Abstract

The *upah-upah sanggot* tradition is one of the cultural heritages used for the trauma healing process in indigenous communities in Indonesia. This research aims to find out the *upah-upah sanggot* in the Batak toba custom as a post-disaster trauma healing effort carried out by one of the communities in Indonesia. This research uses qualitative methods, using primary and secondary sources. Data collection techniques were carried out by observation and interviews. Interview questions were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman approach and data validity was carried out using data triangulation. The research findings show that the *upah-upah sanggot* custom is carried out in order to restore the spirit of the soul of individuals who feel threatened. Where they the family comes suddenly without notice by bringing food in the form of *dekke* (carp) arsik and rice to entertain families who experience calamity or illness. The process of implementing wage-upah is to gather together with the traumatized person who will usually be presented in the middle of the family who comes then *disurduk* (given) a *dekke na niarsik* (cook arsik) which has been arranged in a drained plate containing rice and Rudang, the *bula-bula* takes a handful of rice to put on the head of the sick and pray to the almighty to restore the spirit of life and healing. Giving a piece of ulos or sarong cloth that is placed behind the sick or the afflicted. After being given ulos, then eat together as well as pray together. *Upah-upah sanggot* in the Toba Batak custom as a post-disaster trauma healing effort according to Batak culture is very effective in providing a spirit of life in obtaining healing. *Upah-upah sanggot* in the Toba Batak custom as a trauma healing effort to be more successful requires the support of professional assistance in the sense that experts are assisted by psychiatrists or counselors.

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INTRODUCTION

Since its birth, Indonesia has been a nation with many different ethnicities, races, religions, customs, tribal languages, and skin colors (Alfindo, 2023; Musayyidi & Arifin, 2021). Indonesia's ethnic and cultural diversity makes it a famous country. This diversity produces various cultures that have a close relationship with humans. In addition, as social creatures, humans interact with each other and develop certain

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customs, which eventually become part of their culture. Customs that have become traditions in an area will come from traditions passed down from generation to generation (Fatonah et al., 2024; Huda & Karsudjono, 2022).

According to the Indonesian Dictionary, customs are behavioral systems that are eternal and passed down from one generation to another as a legacy, so that they are strongly integrated with patterns of community behavior. Custom is an idea in which there are cultural values, institutions, norms, habits and customary laws that are considered normal in an area (Hanafri & Oktapiani, 2013). Customs are created from habits and reflect the soul of a community. The customs that grow in society are closely related to the traditions that exist in society (Gafur et al., 1970). Therefore, each community usually has customs, one of which is the Mandailing Batak ethnic community in Bandar Pulau Asahan District which is called the *upah upah songgot* custom, the designation of wage wages in each region in Sumatra is different, some call it the term *upah upah tondi* (Sari & Tanjung, 2023).

Bandar pulau is one of the villages of Asahan Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia, which consists of several ethnic cultures including Javanese, Batak, and Malay ethnicities (Diskominfo, 2020). Among these ethnicities, the majority is the Toba Batak ethnicity, this ethnicity has a *upah upah songgot* custom. Etymologically, the word *songgot-songgot* means surprise, sudden, or abrupt. The *songgot-songgot* tradition is a traditional Batak tradition that aims to *magelek partondion* (persuade the soul). *Upah upah songgot* or also known as *upah upah tondi* is a tradition to restore the soul or spirit into the body of a sick individual through chanting words of encouragement and advice, carried out by the family without prior notice (Andarmoyo, 2024). In addition, according to Pratiwi & Harahap, (2024) *upah upah songgot* or *upah upah tondi* can also restore the spirit of individuals who believe that people who are sick or experiencing disasters lose their soul spirit, so to restore their soul spirit, the *upah upah songgot* tradition is needed. In the process of *upah upah songgot* are usually given words of wisdom, in the form of advice, encouragement, enthusiasm and motivation to those who are paid wages (Silaban, 2022).

Therefore, according to local residents, this tradition can help a person to recover in overcoming psychological shocks in order to restore *tondi* or spirit into the body of an ailing individual through chanting words of encouragement and advice (Hoefler et al., 2021). This term can be known as Trauma Healing. Trauma healing is an action taken to help others to reduce and even eliminate psychological disorders that are being experienced due to trauma (Salamor et al., 2020). Trauma healing is a process of providing support in the form of healing to overcome psychological disorders such as anxiety, panic, and other disorders caused by poor mental function of individual victims for healing (Siu & Yogiawaty, 2022).

Based on the above expression, it can be related to the phenomenon encountered that many people experience unpleasant events that have an impact on human psychology itself. In this case, wages are an effort made by the surrounding community as a form of healing or encouragement to those affected by the disaster. So that way this research is very interesting to reveal to find out how *upah-upah songgot* in the Batak toba custom as a post-disaster trauma healing effort in the bandar pulau sub-district.

Previous studies have shown that traditional cultural practices can play a role in trauma recovery, as they have protective and therapeutic values (Washington, 2020; Zafila & Purnairawan, 2024). Cultural elements include using any or all of language, traditional foods, spiritual beliefs, history, stories, songs, rituals, and traditional plants. This approach requires an understanding of

cultural dynamics in supporting traumatized individuals and communities, such as populations forced to migrate with limitations in expressing their experiences (Theisen-Womersley, 2021). In relation to tradition in this research, the study of *upah-upah songgot* has significant relevance as a trauma recovery effort. As in previous studies, this tradition not only contains advice, religious and social values that are believed to help individuals heal (Purba & Kemal, 2023), but also has relevance in Islamic counseling guidance (Sari & Tanjung, 2023). Thus, this study expands the understanding of how local values in the *upah-upah songgot* tradition can support individual mental health through spiritual, social, and cultural values (Dardas et al., 2016; Haerudin & Noor, 2022; Malik & Javed, 2021; Snow & Matthews, 2016).

This research also contributes to bridging local and global traditional studies. Internationally, traditional cultural approaches to trauma healing have been researched, with the Sweat Lodge ritual in the Ojibwe community used to aid trauma healing through spiritual connection with ancestors (Mei, 2018). Similarly, the Zar ritual originates from the Middle East and East Africa region, which is a tradition of healing physical and mental trauma (Nurlelah & Mukri, 2019; Taylor & Blake, 2014). The process involves chanting, dancing, drumming and trance states, involving the community as a form of collective healing, especially for women, with supporting elements such as offerings and family involvement.

This research makes a thematic contribution by demonstrating the relevance of the *upah-upah songgot* tradition in the context of culture-based trauma healing. In addition to filling a gap in the literature, this research elevates local Indonesian traditions to the realm of international discussion, demonstrating that traditional cultural practices can be an effective approach in supporting trauma recovery. Based on this background, it is known that healing methods that contain cultural elements in a region can help individuals feel better. This research focuses on a more specific local culture in trauma recovery, namely the application of the *upah-upah songgot* tradition that originates from ethnic cultures in Indonesia. Therefore, this research seeks to examine the local cultural traditions of the Batak toba custom that function as tools in trauma healing.

METHODS

This research uses qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are used to analyze a problem in depth and systematically (Liao et al., 2017; Syafril et al., 2020). This descriptive research is a type of research where researchers investigate a phenomenon of people's lives and ask them to tell their lives about the *songgot wage* custom. This research uses primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are data sources directly provided by informants to data collectors. Meanwhile, secondary sources are obtained from reference materials, journals, ebooks, scientific articles and so on (Abdussamad, 2022).

Data collection techniques are carried out by observation, interviews and documentation studies. The data collection procedure was carried out by first making field observations related to the research location. The research location was carried out in Bandar Pulau sub-district, Asahan Regency, North Sumatra as a research location that uses a fairly varied *songgot wage* tradition, one of which is with the aim of healing. After the observation process, open interviews were conducted with traditional leaders in Bandar Pulau as the main informants. Traditional leaders were chosen because of their role in the implementation of the *upah-upah songgot* tradition and their understanding of the tradition.

In addition, three local people were also selected based on the characteristics needed in this research, namely having been traumatized by something and having participated in the songgot wage tradition by local traditional leaders. The number of informants consisted of four including three informants and 1 community leader (Adat). The instruments used are audio recording devices, smartphones, cameras and notebooks in the form of interview questions. The results of data collection were then analyzed during the research process with the approach according to Miles and Huberman in the form of data reduction, data presentation, and data collection. After that, to strengthen the validity of the data, triangulation of sources, time and techniques was carried out to be scientifically responsible (Engkizar et al., 2023; Hitchcock & Hughes, 2020; Zalnur et al., 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The *upab-upab songgot* tradition is a form of local wisdom that plays an important role in the trauma healing process in indigenous communities in Indonesia. This case study reveals how traditional values can be a relevant solution to overcome psychological challenges in modern life. Based on the data obtained in the field, several themes were discovered as a result of analyzing the data collected through interviews. To gain a better understanding of the function of *upab-upab songgot* in Toba Batak customs, specifically as a method of healing trauma after a disaster, traditional leaders from Bandar Pulau sub-district were interviewed. To provide a more structured overview, the themes identified were summarized.

The first theme related to the definition and purpose of *upab-upab songgot*.
...These wages are a legacy of the Batak toba tribe that has existed in this village since the village was revived. So this wage must be held as a form of gratitude to God. Not only upab-upab songgot, it can also be for marriage, childbirth, promotion, or occupying a new house (informan 1)

The second theme is related to the spiritual meaning.
...One of the meanings is that the person being songgot will recover quickly, and pray to Allah for a quick recovery (informan 2)

The third theme is related to the process of implementing the tradition.
...The implementation process itself is first from the closest family who picks up the rice to his head while saying "sarong ma badan tu tondi, sarong ma tondi tu badan" while placing the sarong on his body, then from other relatives following to pick up the rice until the end of praying and closed with eating together (informan 3)

The fourth theme is related to healing and social support.
...This songgot wage payment can help to heal trauma because when people who are traumatized, lose their spirit in their body or are shocked, this songgot wage payment can restore their body spirit or tondi body back to their body. This songgot wage payment also has a lot of meaning because it is attended by family, friends from the village, so the more people who come, the more their enthusiasm for life increases (informan 4)

It is not known exactly when or in what year the *upab-upab* custom entered Bandar Pulau. However, it is estimated that before the independence of the Republic of Indonesia or before 1945 this *upab-upab* custom existed and was preserved from generation to generation. Initially, the wage-upah custom was brought by the South Tapanuli people of Mandailing and Toba Batak ethnicity. The community moved during the colonial period so that until now the *upab-upab* custom is still implemented and has become a habit of the village community. This was conveyed by the informant as follows.

...This upab upab is a legacy of the Toba Batak tribe that has existed in this village since this village was revived, meaning that it is the responsibility of the community to maintain the culture of the ancestors (informan 1)

Therefore, this tradition is considered a cultural heritage from ancestors

that must be carried out. this tradition is intended as a ritual way of conveying prayers and hopes to God. local traditional leaders reveal the process and meaning of the *upab-upab songgot* tradition, which is intended to raise the spirit of life for individuals who will be waged, because this ritual is attended by the closest people. It begins with the family or community gathering in one room. This was conveyed by the informant as follows.

...The implementation process itself begins with the arrival of the closest family who picks up rice to his head while saying "sarong ma badan tu tondi, sarong ma tondi tu badan" while placing the sarong on his body, then from other relatives following to pick up rice until the end of praying and closed by eating together (informan 1), As for the implementation, usually there are families who come suddenly to the house of the bereaved to pay wages, and it can also be a group of friends from the village who participate and carry out the event without the knowledge of the family affected by the disaster, so it is called songgot wages (informan 2)

Based on this statement, the *upab-upab songgot* tradition is the arrival without prior notice. In terms of terms, *songgot-songgot* is a ritual where the wage-earner prays for the person who is paid *upab songgot* to get good (Hak et al., 2022). This statement illustrates the importance of the element of surprise and spontaneity in the implementation of *songgot wages*, which adds to the impression of sincerity on the part of the person giving the blessing. This tradition combines physical elements such as gathering, picking up rice, draping sarungs and eating together and symbolic meanings with prayers and words for the purpose of receiving blessings to be healed and protected. This ritual is a process of trauma healing as a way of demonstrating a process of providing support to overcome psychological disorders such as anxiety, panic, and other disorders (Siu & Yogiawaty, 2022).

To examine this tradition for trauma recovery, it is known that there are various effects felt for each type of trauma. The first effect is the trauma of losing a family member. The effect felt after being bearded is feeling calmer and helped by the support of family and community (informant 1). Second, car accidents, feeling afraid for 4 years when driving. The effect felt after being *songgot* is that the body feels fresher and the spirit of life has increased again even though it still has memories related to the previous incident. The third is divorce with her husband, feeling worthless and helpless. The effect felt after being *songgot* is feeling support from the closest parties, and increasing the sense of being valued for existence in life (informant 2).

The application of *upab-upab songgot* as a trauma healing effort is an action taken to assist others in reducing and even eliminating psychological disorders that are being experienced due to shock or trauma (Salamor et al., 2020). The condition of trauma experienced is characterized by feeling threatened by danger, both physical and psychological danger, the threat feels real in one's mind, anxiety feels insecure and helpless, and makes the victim feel unable to bear it (Aslan & Thompson, 2021; Putra et al., 2022; Rui & Wang, 2015). This was conveyed by the informant as follows.

My spirit returned with the songgot wages and it was very influential for me and my mental health as well (informant 1), I feel happy and moved because this upab-upab event is only done at certain times or conditions where all the family comes and gives prayers (informant 2), My marriage failed, which led to feelings of being unwanted, but after the songgot, I felt supported and did not feel alone (informan 3)

The interview results show *upab-upab songgot* as a process of providing support, in the form of healing to overcome psychological disorders such as anxiety, panic, and other disorders caused by poor mental functioning of individuals. This is because the arrival of family, friends, or the community,

can play an important role in increasing the resilience of traumatized individuals and demonstrating supportive relationships (Andarmoyo, 2024). Although this tradition is carried out, it is known that healing does not disappear completely, this statement was conveyed by the informant as follows

If you say permanently healed, not really, sometimes I also often imagine the accident at that time (informant 1)

Based on this statement, the healing of post-accident trauma experienced by individuals gradually decreases even though occasionally they still have shadows of events that have occurred before. Therefore, healing in overcoming trauma requires further treatment. Furthermore, the level or type of trauma with this intervention can be chosen according to the recipient's condition.

An overview of the Toba Batak ethnic *Songgot-Songgot* tradition in Bandar Pulau District

Johan Hasselgren in his book "Batak Toba", quoted by Pusptawati in Medan, explains that, "Migration has also been an important development in recent Toba history. Migration from the village to the Pakpak and Simalungun regions occurred around 1900. During the 1920s, rural migration to the Karo region was an important development. With respect to urban migration, their strong educational traditions meant that during the early decades of the century, the Toba moved to towns and cities throughout the Dutch colonial islands, including the Bandar area of Asahan island. The Toba tribe lived from 1907 and by 1917 they were living in around 30 towns. The majority of them were students and traded (Aslan & Thompson, 2021; Putra et al., 2022; Rui & Wang, 2015).

Bandar Pulau is a sub-district in Asahan Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Bandar Pulau was divided into 3 sub-districts in 2008, namely Aek Songsongan, Bandar Pulau, and Rahuning. The sub-district is drained by the Asahan River which has its headwaters in Lake Toba and ends in Tanjung Balai. With an area of 433.42 km² with a human population of 19,934 people, with a Muslim majority with different ethnicities or tribes, there are Batak Toba, Mandailig, Malay, Javanese, Sundanese and so on.

The *songgot* wages custom is carried out to restore the spirit of the soul of individuals who feel threatened. So to restore the spirit of the individual's soul spirit, *songgot* wages are performed. *Upab-upab* is to provide moral encouragement to individuals to be grateful to God and pray and ask to be given health, long life and so on (Imron et al., 2021). In the implementation of *songgot* wages, family or other individuals provide advice, guidance, or motivation to the person being waged (Hak et al., 2022).

The meaning of *Songgot-Songgot* tradition for the Toba Batak ethnicity of Bandar Pulau

Local traditional leaders are aware of the preservation of this tradition to be continued from generation to generation. According to him, this tradition is a form of praying to God. Therefore, the *songgot* tradition in Bandar Pulau sub-district is not only used as a healing effort, but is also used in celebratory events such as marriage, promotion, childbirth, and occupying a new house. Meanwhile, the *songgot* tradition in each region has different meanings, purposes and processes. For example, in Tanjung Balai, this ritual is more often used to refer to ceremonies that aim to ward off disaster or disease (Pratiwi & Harahap, 2024).

This tradition is a manifestation of the social and spiritual values held by the Toba Batak community in Bandar Pulau. It is maintained and preserved to strengthen social relationships, support individual health, and create a connection with ancestors and spiritual forces. The *upab-upab songgot* tradition

is considered not only a ritual practice, but also a healing mechanism that helps people overcome trauma and improve their spirit. The ceremony allows them to get closer to the ancestors and gain blessings and protection. In these ceremonies, people perform prayers and rituals to ask for blessings and spiritual support from ancestors, who are believed to provide strength and safety to those experiencing difficulties. Based on the results of interviews with three people as research informants who are directly involved in the *songgot upab-upab songgot* tradition, it can be seen that the meaning of this tradition is different from one another, including the meaning of togetherness, moral support, and therapeutic effects. The following are the coding results of data acquisition in the field.

The first theme is related to the meaning of togetherness. Excerpts from the interview analysis are as follows.

...The upab-upab songgot tradition reflects the strong value of togetherness in the community, which involves family and friends (informan 1)

The second theme is related to the meaning of moral support. As the following interview excerpt shows.

...The presence of family and friends in the process of carrying out the tradition provides moral encouragement for those who are disonggot, which can also raise the spirit of life (informan 2)

The third theme is related to the therapeutic effect. As the following interview excerpt shows.

...The upab-upab songgot tradition as a trauma healing effort helps to improve the mental health and spirit of life of someone who has been traumatized (informan 3)

The *upab-upab songgot* tradition not only emphasizes religious rituals, but also means solidarity among the Toba Batak ethnic community of Bandar Pulau. This was conveyed by the informant as follows.

...The participation of the closest family and friends who also participated in giving prayers so that it greatly strengthened the relationship (informan 1)

Apart from having a meaning of togetherness, this tradition also provides moral support from family and friends. This statement was conveyed by the informant as follows.

...Because family and friends come, so the more people who come, the more the spirit of life increases (informan 2)

This tradition also has a profound therapeutic effect, especially for healing trauma experienced by a person. This was conveyed by the informant as follows.

...My spirit is back with these upab-upab songgot and it has a huge impact on me and my mental health (informan 3)

The Toba Batak community in Bandar Pulau highly values this tradition. The *Upab-upab songgot* reflect community values such as solidarity, togetherness and respect for ancestors. It is more than just a ritual or a series of traditional ceremonies. The ceremony shows how important community is to maintaining one's physical and mental well-being. Apart from *Upab-upab songgot* is a hereditary tradition, *Upab-upab songgot* also have meaning as a form of solidarity among the Bandar Pulau Toba Batak ethnic community. This tradition is an effort made by the Bandar Pulau Toba Batak ethnic community, apart from being a form of solidarity and support, this tradition is used in helping someone to recover from trauma or illness experienced. According to Batak culture, this tradition is effective in encouraging the spirit of life. Because this tradition contains the value of enthusiasm, prayer value, spiritual value and local culture for enthusiasm in obtaining (Sari & Tanjung, 2023).

The process of implementing the *Songgot-Songgot* tradition of the Toba Batak ethnicity of Bandar Pulau

The process of implementing *upah-upah songgot* is a series of rituals full of meaning and symbolism in the Toba Batak tradition. Local traditional leaders mentioned the process of this tradition which is attended by the closest family, as well as the arrival of villagers without prior notice. The importance of the element of surprise and spontaneity in the implementation of *upah-upah songgot*, which adds to the sincere and sincere impression of the party giving the blessing. Where this ritual also prays for the person being blessed to get good. Furthermore, this tradition is to ask for prayers and hopes to be conveyed to their children so that they are given healing for the illnesses, calamities, disasters experienced (Hak et al., 2022). This was conveyed by the informant as follows.

...As for the implementation, usually there are families who come suddenly to the house of the bereaved to pay wages, and it can also be a crowd of friends from the village to carry out and carry out the event without the knowledge of the family affected by the disaster, so it is called upah-upah songgot. Usually they bring arsik carp or dekke we say here. The implementation process itself is first from the closest family who picks up rice to his head while saying "sarung ma badan tu tondi, sarung ma tondi tu badan" while placing the sarong on his body, then from other relatives following to pick up rice until the end of praying and closed by eating together (informan 1)

The implementation of *upah-upah songgot* is usually from the family who comes suddenly to the grieving family to pay wages, the local community can participate in carrying out and carrying out the event without the knowledge of the family affected by the disaster. In Batak custom, this ritual is usually carried out by the hula-hula (mother's clan group), which in Batak custom is known as the party that gives blessings or *upah-upah*. This tradition is known as *upah-upah songgot* in the Bandar Pulau area. This tradition begins with the arrival of the closest people such as family by picking up rice to the head. What is meant by picking up rice to the head is touching rice to the head of the person being paid *songgot*. Then the hirer utters the mantra "*sarung ma badan tu tondi, sarung ma tondi tu badan*" as a form of prayer which is interpreted as "*the union of body with soul, and soul with body*".

The procession continues with the shaving of the body. The sarong used is a typical Batak traditional sarong itself, commonly known as ulos. It is done repeatedly by the person who hires, then by touching the rice to the head and saying the mantra until it reaches the last hirer. The procession ends with the recitation of prayers and then eating together between the hirer and the *songgot*. If the family faces failures, difficulties, pain, and obstacles, it is hoped that the family can face, find solutions, and solve them well together (Sinambela et al., 2022).

Eating together still contains symbolic meaning and cultural elements typical of the Batak Toba itself. Namely by serving *dekke* or *arsik* carp and rice or glutinous rice and ulos (Purba & Kemal, 2023). *Arsik* carp should not be cut which is served as a symbol of human life as a whole, complete, and perfect during life. Then the hard form of rice has a symbolic meaning of the beginning of life because humans can maintain life and show life must begin by strengthening or strengthening the soul (Ginting & Mufti, 2024). Giving ulos has symbols and prayers.

Based on tradition, ulos means to protect the hired from bad conditions, *pangupah* in the *mangupah* ceremony contributes to providing protection for the life of the hired for the next period, such as to keep giving advice, praying, caring, helping (Pane et al., 2019). Although they have similar definitions, there

are differences in implementation in each region, for example in the Toba Batak ethnic Tomok Village, Samosir District, which is carried out on married couples who do not have offspring, this tradition is used in the event of summoning spirits when an accident occurs, seeing demons, traditional medicine, also used to welcome fishermen who have been at sea for a month or more (Pratiwi & Harahap, 2024). The value of advice and prayers contained in this tradition shows a positive influence on trauma victims (Anugrah et al., 2021; Theisen-Womersley, 2021).

Each implementation process in each region is different, for example in the ethnic Batak Tobak Tomok Village, there is an additional procession with the *hula-hula* party (the mother's clan) to purify themselves who are paid with *utte pangir* (kaffir lime) that has been squeezed into a bowl of water that is applied to the head, then give slaughter or meat to the hiring party, then arsik carp must stay in the house that is disonggot (Sari & Ritonga, 2024). When the banquet is over, the family of the sick person gives something either money, food or other things as a sign that the family appreciates the gift of the *hula-hula* or the bone and gives its appreciation (Hajar, 2017).

Trauma healing efforts through *upah-upah Songgot* in Toba Batak customs

Upah-upah songgot can be used as an alternative for providing trauma healing to individuals. Based on the findings from the community as informants who were disonggot, it is known that the type of trauma experienced by the three of them is a type of situational trauma experienced individually. The types of trauma caused are, Loss of family members, Car accident, feeling afraid for 4 years when driving and Divorce with husband, feeling worthless and helpless. Based on the trauma experienced by the three informants, *upah-upah songgot* can be used as an effort as trauma healing for them, because songgot wages can provide healing, enthusiasm and strength. This statement was conveyed by the informant as follows.

...Of course, this upah-upah songgot can help to heal trauma because when people who experience this trauma lose their spirit in their tonidi (body) or are often said to be takejut (surprised), then this songgot wage can restore the spirit of the body or tonidi to return to the body. This songgot wage payment also has a lot of meaning because it is attended by family and friends from the village, so the more people who come, the more the spirit of the songgotin's life will increase. This songgot custom has been passed down from generation to generation by our ancestors in providing healing to people who are mentally ill. This has really helped us until now and it has been proven that many have recovered and regained their spirit (informant 1).

That *upah-upah sanggot* can be used as an effort in healing trauma to individuals. In line with research (Sari & Ritonga, 2024). shows the songgot wage-upah tradition as a trauma healing process, namely as a process of providing support in the form of healing to overcome psychological disorders such as anxiety, panic, and other disorders. Another study adapted Batak ethnic culture in the trauma healing process, where family gathering or presenting family in the healing process had a good effect on increasing motivation for the elderly. The result is that this method is effective for the elderly at the level of compliance in undergoing treatment (Sirait et al., 2024). Social support provided by presenting the closest people helps in increasing individual resilience (Andarmoyo, 2024). This shows that the presence of community can help recovery.

In modern therapeutic practices, the healing and treatment provided need to adapt existing cultural elements. For example, typical symbols owned in a particular culture. In the *upah-upah songgot* ritual such as sarong, picking up

rice, prayers and eating together in the Toba Batak custom in Bandar Pulau. A similar approach was also used in a study adapting the culture of American Indians, where jewelry commonly used by the tribe was used to cover medical health equipment, giving credence to the trauma healing methods applied (Bassett et al., 2012). Therefore, health care staff, psychologists, psychiatrists and counselors are recommended to study certain cultures in their healing activities (Baharta & Wardaningsih, 2019; Theisen-Womersley, 2021; Zafila & Purnairawan, 2024).

Family and community involvement in healing practices such as upah-upah songgot, which not only provides social-emotional support but also reinforces cultural identity, adds value to the healing process. These rituals play a role in increasing individual resilience in the face of trauma. Adaptations to modern therapies, as mentioned, can incorporate elements of songgot rituals, such as the gathering of loved ones, the giving of advice and prayers and the sharing of a meal. A group-based approach is recommended with the aim of restoring social connectedness and mutual support (Astuti et al., 2022). These rituals are the first step in trauma therapy as they provide a sense of security and social and emotional support to individuals who are grief-stricken as they can provide a sense of security and trust. The use of traditional mantras or traditional chants can be intended as a relaxation technique and help individuals to be more mindful (Cruwys et al., 2020).

Based on this explanation, *upah-upah songgot* can also be seen as a form of psychosocial-based intervention. There are several psychosocial interventions that can be used effectively for post-disaster trauma management including, the skills for life adjustment and resilience, hope intervention, mental health or psychosocial support, psychosocial capacity building, counseling and psychosocial support maneuvers in natural disasters and cognitive-behavioural therapy for post-disaster stress (Shalahuddin et al., 2022). However, interventions that are closely related to culture that can be carried out are the Psychosocial capacity building type. This intervention empowers local communities, drawing on individual strengths and sources of resilience that prioritize families, social groups, and communities with an understanding of existing culture. involves training local people and preparing them to participate in the disaster management process.

In this case, cultural elements in the songgot wage-upah tradition such as the presence of close people and communities can be presented by gathering ethnicities with similar cultural features. For example, shading, mantras, advice, prayers and eating together can be done to allow people to remain socially connected, and create positive conditions for the disaster management process. Social support also remains necessary to reduce tension, especially if the sufferer has a physical illness, where the help of medical professionals such as doctors is essential. Likewise, the role of counselors or psychiatrists is very important in dealing with trauma after a disaster (Li et al., 2023).

Giving prayers in the form of words or repetition of positive sentences can basically provide enthusiasm and motivation in helping individuals heal (Aliwu & Pakaya, 2023). In Islam, efforts to recover from illness must be accompanied by enthusiasm, motivation or encouragement, patience and confidence to be healthy again which can arise and be generated by oneself and the surrounding environment. All of this will make it easier to undergo treatment, both medically and alternatively, not forgetting that it must be accompanied by worship according to the conditions and praying to Allah. These efforts are highly recommended in Islam to help heal. Thus, *upah-upah songgot* can be used as a process of reducing psychological tension, but it cannot

cure trauma completely (Fitriyah et al., 2021).

Prayer and motivation are highly recommended in Islam to support healing. It can be understood that motivation is the collection of power and strength that exists in individuals to encourage, stimulate, move, arouse and give hope to their behavior (Harvey et al., 2014). Motivation can be divided into two parts, namely primary (psychological) motivation and psychiatric or spiritual motivation (Sirbini & Azizah, 2020). In this case, the *upah-upah songgot* tradition is a motivation that comes from others to bring enthusiasm through spiritual direction, spirituality and prayer to the almighty to be given healing.

The songgot wage-upah ritual provides assistance in the form of social support which has been shown to help improve resilience with trauma (Andarmoyo, 2024). The presence of family in this ritual provides emotional support that is very meaningful for people who are traumatized or sick. This provides awareness to individuals that facing trials is not done alone, and the presence of family and friends in this tradition provides a great moral boost for individuals to continue living (Rufaida et al., 2017). Resilience to individual psychological conditions with each other, influencing each other on the ability of individuals to face life's challenges (Fakhriyani, 2021). This ritual plays a role in building individual resilience in facing the realities of life, even though it does not provide total healing, it still contributes to individual behavior to face it more positively. In addition, professionals are still needed in the individual recovery process. Support during the healing process of trauma or illness will be more effective if traditions are combined with medical or psychological treatment.

In comparison, linking the *upah-upah songgot* tradition with the “*melukat*” tradition in Bali shows a similar pattern to songgot wage-upah in providing emotional support through culture-based rituals. The melukat tradition is defined as releasing or doing an activity to release something attached to the body (Hasanah et al., 2019; Putri et al., 2019). This tradition also makes individuals feel more prepared to face life's challenges. The melukat process begins with making offerings to the ancestors, then local traditional leaders read mantras while sprinkling water on the participants' heads, followed by drinking it as a symbol of cleansing from within, then pouring the holy water all over the body as a symbol of thorough purification. Unlike the songgot wage-upah tradition which uses rice as a symbol, melukat uses holy water with the aim of eliminating negativity such as bad luck (Seniwati & Ngurah, 2020). Furthermore, mantra recitation is carried out using water that has been prayed for and given a mantra to drink and then poured all over the body as a form of cleansing. In the songgot wage-upah ritual, the shading of ulos is interpreted to protect the waged from bad conditions.

While the Balinese melukat ritual does not have the element of surprise that the songgot upah-upah does, the similarity between the two rituals lies in their purpose and symbolic meaning which is aimed at physical and mental healing, as well as rejecting all unwanted things. Significantly to invisible healing such as anxiety, fear of loss, helping individuals to deal with life challenges, and others.

CONCLUSION

In *upah-upah sanggot* in the Batak toba custom as an effort to heal trauma in order to be more successful, it is necessary to have the support of professional assistance, meaning experts in their fields in dealing with a problem, if the disaster is a disease then ask for help from medical doctors and so on, if there is post-disaster trauma, a psychiatrist or counselor can help. This

tradition shows the potential to help individuals who experience situational trauma by providing emotional, social, and spiritual support through the presence of family and community. However, while the application of this tradition is more effective for individuals with less severe categories of trauma such as larger and more widespread losses, professional support is still required. The cultural approach of *upab-upab songgot*, which is closely related to building solidarity, as well as providing social support, can still be done in helping to reduce post-disaster trauma such as the cultural-based approach of psychosocial capacity building by utilizing local culture in providing support for community resilience, but expert intervention is still needed to ensure its effectiveness.

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