



RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION ABOUT MARKOBAR LOCAL WISDOM

Abdul Haris¹, Firmansyah², Anri Naldi³, Deshinta Arrova Dewi⁴, Tribasuki Kurniawan⁵

¹Faculty of Islamic Studies, Medan Area University, Medan, Indonesia.

²Faculty of Islamic Studies, Medan Area University, Medan, Indonesia.

³Faculty of Islamic Studies, Medan Area University, Medan, Indonesia.

⁴INTI International University, Malaysia.

⁵Post Graduate Program, Bina Darma University, Palembang, Indonesia.

Email: abdulharis@staff.uma.ac.id

Abstract: Purpose this study aims to analyze religious expressions, effective strategies, the relationship between communication, advice, social, and spiritual values, and religious values in the local wisdom of *Markobar* through a cultural ecology approach as an effort to form prosperous families in Mandailing Natal. Design/methods/approach this research used a qualitative ethnographic approach, which involves observation, interviews, and documentation with community leaders, religious leaders, and families in Mandailing Natal. A focus group discussion (FGD) involving cultural, religious, and academic figures was then conducted as a final cross-check of the research data. The collected data was analyzed using a cultural ecology study. Findings religious expression in the local wisdom of *Markobar* is based on the *dalihan na tolu* (*mora, kahanggi, anak boru*) system and *burangir na hombang*, which are the main requirements for *Markobar* in planning and implementing horja events. *Markobar* is an effective strategy in establishing prosperous families in Mandailing Natal due to the role of village, traditional, and religious leaders. *Markobar* contains spiritual and religious messages that align with Islamic teachings, such as *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* as well as Islamic values and guidance. This tradition serves as a medium for preaching and strengthening religious values in Mandailing society. Research implications/limitations the qualitative design limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the Mandailing Natal context. This research is also limited by the subjective interpretations of informants and the focus on specific local traditions, which may not be representative of wider cultural variations. Originality/value – This study provides new insights into the role of religious expression in local wisdom as a foundation for family welfare in Mandailing Natal. This study offers fresh perspectives on the significant role of religious expression embedded in local wisdom as a key foundation for promoting family welfare in Mandailing Natal, exploring how deeply rooted cultural and spiritual values contribute to the socio-economic stability, unity, and overall well-being of families within this region, while also emphasizing the importance of preserving these traditions in the face of modernization.

Keywords (English): Religious Expression, Local Wisdom, *Markobar*, *Dalihan Na Tolu*, Cultural Ecology, Prosperous Families, Mandailing Natal



INTRODUCTION:

Mandailing Natal is characterized by a close interaction between religious expressions and the local wisdom of *Markobar*. This interaction is not merely a form of communication, but also a medium for internalizing moral, social, and spiritual values that play a vital role in the lives of the people and have become traditions in the formation of prosperous communities and families in Mandailing Natal. This study aims to analyze religious expressions in the local wisdom of *Markobar* through a cultural ecology approach in Mandailing Natal. Analyzing local wisdom of *Markobar* is an effective strategy in forming prosperous families in Mandailing Natal. Analyzing the relationship between communication, advice, social, and spiritual values, and religious values, in forming prosperous families for the younger generation of Mandailing Natal.

The structure of this paper begins by explaining the purpose, importance of this topic, and the background and urgency of the research. It continues with a literature review, methodology, data analysis, and discussion of the results. It concludes with conclusions and recommendations. The reason for choosing this topic is to fill the gap in research on the role of religious expression in the local wisdom of *Markobar* as a strategy for establishing prosperous families in Mandailing Natal, as well as to offer a new perspective in developing a harmonious family model based on culture and religion.

The contribution of this research to the development of science is the compilation of a mapping of religious values contained in the *Markobar* tradition, both from spiritual, moral, and social aspects, based on field data and literature studies. The implementation of an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the *Markobar* tradition, family resilience, and the challenges of modernization through a cultural ecology approach, which is expected to produce a new understanding of cultural-religious dynamics in the local Mandailing context. The formulation of a strategy for preserving the *Markobar* tradition based on community, education, and technology, as an adaptive and sustainable effort that is in line with the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The theoretical contribution achieved in the form of the development of cultural ecology studies in local religious studies, as evidenced through scientific publications or research reports.

In general, religious expression includes the manifestation of beliefs through practices, rituals, symbols, emotions, and material objects that have religious significance. This expression is not only limited to acts of worship, but also includes emotional experiences such as joy, fear, or hope that are specifically related to religion (Ferran, 2019),(Shah, 2021). In addition, religious expression can be manifested in the form of art, language, and objects used in religious practices (Godlove, 2018),(Whitehead, 2020),(Bosman, 2020). The meaning and form of religious expression are highly dependent on the social, cultural, and historical context. Each religious tradition has a unique way of expressing its beliefs and values, so religious expression is very diverse and dynamic (Dahl, 2019). Local wisdom is a collection of values, knowledge, and customs that arise from the life experiences of local communities in interacting with their natural, social, and cultural environments. These values include honesty, mutual cooperation, empathy, tolerance, and responsibility, which are the foundation for the formation of individual and community character (Sakti et al., 2024),(Uge et al., 2019),(Miranti et al., 2018),(Hidayati et al., 2020),(Suwito Eko et al., 2020),(Setiawan et al., 2017).



Markobar, as a form of storytelling in traditional forums, not only emphasizes communication but is also rich with moral, spiritual, and social messages that strengthen family and community harmony. *Markobar* emphasizes the importance of morality, knowledge, respect, and rationality (the AHLI HORAS model) in every utterance. *Markobar* is delivered with gentleness, polite word choice, and calming intonation, reflecting religious values such as compassion, justice, and responsibility (Zulkarnain et al., 2021),(Nasution et al., 2021). *Markobar*, as local wisdom, is often marginalized, even though it has great potential as social and spiritual capital to strengthen family and community harmony. Research on *Markobar* also contributes to the development of science, particularly in interdisciplinary studies between religion, culture, and social ecology, as well as enriching the literature on the role of local wisdom in building a tolerant and prosperous society (Zulkarnain et al., 2021),(S. M. Harahap & Hamka, 2023),(Pajarianto et al., 2022).

The main principle in the *Markobar* tradition is an understanding of the Mandailing kinship system known as the concept of *dalian natolu*. *Dalian natolu* is depicted as an equilateral triangle, which suggests three basic supports (*dalian*): *mora*, *kahanggi*, and *anakboru*. *Mora*, *kahanggi*, and *anakboru* are a reciprocal unity in the traditional *Pajongjong* ceremony (Bakhsan, 2024). *Markobar* etymologically comes from the word *obar* (news) + the prefix *mar* = to give news, meaning to give news, or to make a traditional speech (Bakhsan, 2024). Religious expression in *Markobar* not only strengthens cultural identity but also serves as a means of internalizing the values of moderation, tolerance, and social harmony (Zulkarnain et al., 2021),(S. M. Harahap & Hamka, 2023),(Pajarianto et al., 2022). Therefore, efforts to preserve education that integrates local wisdom values can help preserve culture and traditional values (Selasih & Sudarsana, 2018),(Nggaruaka et al., 2022). Support behavior that respects the environment and is in line with the SDGs (Sandoval-Rivera, 2020). Support the preservation of cultural heritage and its relevance (Arjaya et al., 2024). Cultural preservation can increase sustainable tourism, which in turn supports the local economy (Ginting et al., 2024), and the need for preservation strategies to be carried out through community participation (Yang et al., 2021) technological and innovation approaches (Mendoza et al., 2023).

Cultural ecology can be understood as (1) a condition of world reality that emphasizes the complex interactions between culture and the environment (2) an analytical framework for understanding the relationships between cultural actors and ecosystems

(3) an organizational policy and practice approach that emphasizes the interdependence between cultural, economic, and environmental sectors (De Bernard et al., 2022),(Wormley et al., 2022),(Dovey et al., 2016). Cultural ecology combines ecological variables (such as population density, resource availability, and disease threats) with cultural variables (values, norms, personality, and social institutions) to understand differences and similarities between human groups. This approach emphasizes that social behavior and institutions are not only influenced by culture, but also by physical and social environmental conditions (Wormley et al., 2022),(Krassen Covan & Fugate-Whitlock, 2019),(Kitayama & Salvador, 2024),(Currie et al., 2021). Cultural ecology is used to support community-based conservation policies, ecosystem restoration that takes into account local cultural practices, and the development of a sustainable creative economy (De Bernard et al., 2022),(Dovey et al., 2016),(Wehi & Lord, 2017).

A prosperous family is a family that is able to meet the basic needs of its members sustainably, both from economic, social, and emotional aspects, so that welfare and a good quality of life are achieved. According to research, financial adequacy, economic resilience, inheritance of assets (Pfeffer & Killewald, 2018),(Fagereng et al., 2018),(Friedline et al., 2021). Harmonious



relationships, support, family commitment (Razzak & Jassem, 2019),(Razzak et al., 2019),(Thomas et al., 2017). Virtuous values, non-economic goals, social reputation I (Parada et al., 2019).(Razzak & Jassem, 2019),(Razzak et al., 2019). According to Islam, a prosperous family is one that is harmonious (Budiman, 2021) supports each other, upholds religious values (Karam, 2021), and is able to meet the physical and spiritual needs of its members (Setyawati et al., 2024), this welfare is holistic, encompassing spiritual, moral, social, and economic aspects, with the goal of achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter (Setyawati et al., 2024).

Seeing the currents of globalization and social change, religious expression in the *Markobar* tradition in Mandailing Natal is a real manifestation of the integration of religious values with local wisdom. However, modernization encourages a shift in values from traditional to modern values (Yeganeh, 2024),(Korotayev et al., 2020), and globalization makes many families begin to abandon traditional practices that used to be a guide to life, such as customs, arts, and local languages, because they are influenced by modern lifestyles and exposure to foreign cultures (Duc, 2024). Thus, globalization and shifting cultural values threaten the existence of this local wisdom. Globalization and modernization have changed the behavior and values of society, eroding local values, especially in the context of family and community (Aswani et al., 2018),(Susanto et al., 2019),(McKenzie, 2019). Consequently, the impact on local wisdom is the erosion of local knowledge (Aswani et al., 2018) the decline of cultural values (Susanto et al., 2019). and the loss of identity and social cohesiveness within local communities (Fiorentino & Vandini, 2024).

This research is a continuation of previous research conducted by researchers and teams in Medan City, Mandailing Natal and North Sumatra (Hawa et al., 2023),(Mailin Mailin et al., 2023),(Hasrat Efendi Samosir et al., 2023). The main objective of this research is to analyze the values of advice, social, spiritual, and communication ethics and their relationship to religious values and family resilience, as well as to formulate a strategy for preserving the *Markobar* tradition so that it remains relevant in forming prosperous families for the young generation of Mandailing Natal. This research is an effort to form prosperous families for the young generation in Mandailing Natal, because increasing modernization and cultural globalization have caused a weakening in the application of the values of advice, social, spiritual, and communication ethics in the *Markobar* oral tradition. To ensure that religious values remain alive in local culture, strengthen family resilience, and maintain the sustainability of the *Markobar* tradition as an important part of Mandailing Natal identity, it is necessary to research in depth.

METHODOLOGY:

The method used in this study is qualitative with an ethnographic approach, namely, by analyzing and interpreting elements of a cultural group such as behavioral patterns, beliefs, and languages that develop in an area (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Ethnographic design, namely involving participant observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis, and detailed recording of social interactions in natural contexts. Researchers seek to understand people's perspectives in building rich narratives about the daily lives of participants (Rishbeth et al., 2018),(Cappellaro, 2017),(Morse, 2016). The research was conducted in Mandailing Natal, specifically in villages that still actively practice the *Markobar* tradition. Researchers seek to understand the practices, symbols, and meanings contained in religious expressions in the *Markobar* tradition. The object of research is the Mandailing Natal community, especially families and traditional and religious leaders who are active in the *Markobar* tradition. The sample was purposively selected, comprising village officials, traditional leaders, and families of *Markobar* practitioners, community members active in traditional activities, and informants deemed knowledgeable about *Markobar* practices.



The research procedure began with the initial research conducted in 2023. This year, data collection will be conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Then, FGDs will be conducted involving cultural leaders and academics as a final cross-check of the research data. The collected data will be analyzed using cultural ecology (Sutton & Anderson, 2020),(Gandy, 2022) as an effort to build prosperous families in Mandailing Natal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Religious Expression in *Markobar* Local Wisdom

The main basis of *Markobar* is *Dalihan Na Tolu* which is the kinship system and the main social philosophy of the Batak people, especially Mandailing and Angkola, which forms the foundation of behavior, norms, and social harmony. *Bontuk ni masyarakat pas doi songon Balik Kuhu, marlandaskon diginjang tolu batu mardalihan, ima nadidongkon "Dalihan Na Tolu"*. Dalihan Na Tolu on consists of, *kahanggi, anak boru* and *mora* (Alam et al., 1977). This is also explained by Mr. Sopian Suri as the king in the village of Panyabungan Julu *mardalian na tolu pula kahanggi, namaranak boru, namora tu namora*.

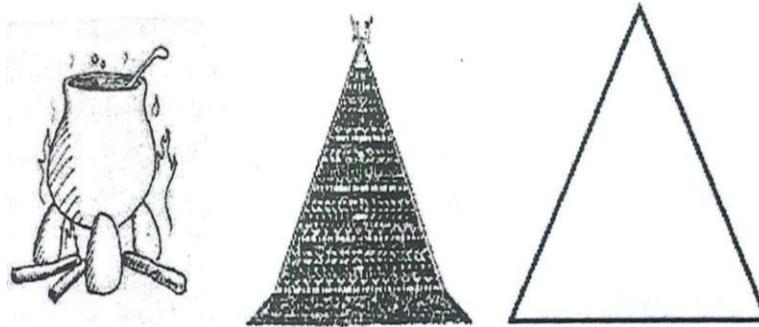


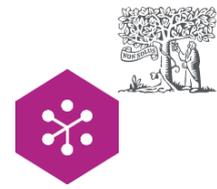
Figure 1. Symbol of Dalian Natolu Mandailing (Bakhsan, 2024).

Dalihan Dalihan natolu is a system of values and kinship structures that serve as the foundation for building social harmony, resolving conflicts, and maintaining harmony between religious communities and groups within society. *Dalihan natolu* consists of three main elements: *mora, kahanggi, and anak boru*. These three elements form a three-legged foundation that emphasizes balance, justice, and mutual respect in social relationships. This system also instills the values of responsibility, brotherhood, and justice in everyday life.

Ekspresi Religious expression in the local wisdom of *Markobar* in the Mandailing community is very closely related to *burangir na hombang*.



Figure 2. Burangir Na Hombang



Burangir Na Hombang is a sign of the start of *markobar* in the preparation and implementation of the wedding. *Baen adong dison burangir na di pataya-taya ni anak boru nami, namarsapa mada amion tu mora nami sanga worthy padema ami surdu burangir nami anso adong doma dalam nami mandokon hata.* The contents of *Burangir Na Hombang* are *gambier, burangir, soda, pining dohot timbako*. Each element has a deep symbolic meaning and is a means of communicating the noble values of the Mandailing people.

According to the module compiled by Falid Dalimunthe, namely about the training of *markobar-kobar* customs, it is stated that *mangalab boru tolu mocom langkana, in manangkasi hata ni daganak must begin with marsapa burangir, manyisik sere (batang boban) must begin with marsapa burangir, in patibal sere sahatan must begin with marsapa burangir.*

Burangir na hombang is not only a ceremonial item, but a means of instilling noble values such as unity, honesty, and respect in Mandailing customs. Each element has symbolic meaning that strengthens social and cultural harmony in the Mandailing community.

Cultural Ecology Analysis in Religious Expressions in *Markobar* Local Wisdom

Markobar emphasizes the *dalihan na tolu* system. Its practice begins with the *burangir na hombang* offering. Religious expressions within *Markobar's* local wisdom, through a cultural ecology approach, have been shown to strengthen tolerance, harmony, and social integration. Local values and the role of traditional and religious leaders are key to building a moderate and peaceful society.

Table 1. Cultural ecology analysis in religious expressions in *markobar* local wisdom

Aspect	<i>Dalihan na tolu</i>	<i>Burangir Na Hombang</i>
Structure	<i>Mora, Kahanggi, Anak Boru</i>	Gambir, burangir, soda, pining, dan timbako.
Value	Respect, togetherness, responsibility. The core message and ethics of speaking	Generosity, forgiveness, helpfulness, and kindness. Sincerity and honesty in relationships. Purity of intention and honesty, the glue of family ties. Strength, courage, and determination, hope for continuity and good offspring. Familiarity, warmth, and openness in communication.
Practice	Greetings, sitting position, turn to speak	Served in every traditional ceremony
Role in <i>Markobar</i>	Determine the order and content of speech, regulate the <i>Markobar</i>	Conditions for starting <i>Markobar</i>

2. *Markobar*: An Effective Strategy for Building Prosperous Families in Mandailing Natal

2.1 Village Apparatus Strategy

Researchers in Panyabungan Julu Village found that the village head and the corrections officer were appointed as traditional figures representing village officials at traditional events such as the *Markobar* (traditional ceremony). The corrections officer is responsible for overseeing customary events within the community, including weddings, funerals, and other traditional occasions.



(a) (b)
Figure 3 (a) The Head of Panyabungan Julu Village as the Village Official and *Markobar* Traditional Figure who is always invited to traditional events in Mandailing Natal. Figure 3 (b). Interview with Mr. Parlagutan as the head of Panyabungan Julu Village.

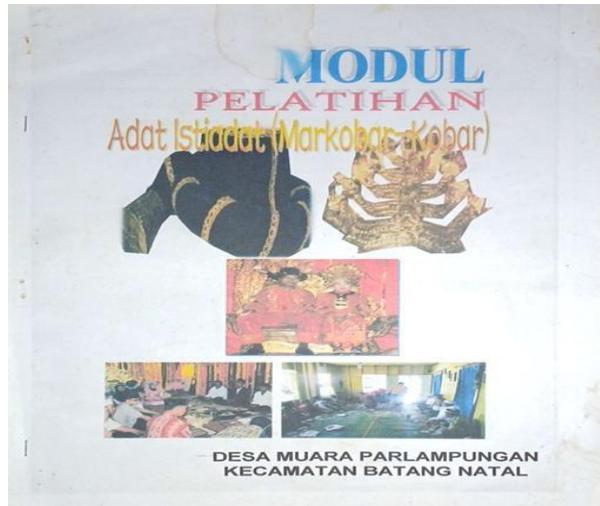
The purpose of compiling the Mandailing *hata-hata paradatan* is " the book of *Hata-Hata Paradatan on i buat so dipelajari dohot iajarkon tu generasinta ima daganak dohot paompunta so ulang mago adat dohot budayanta ima dimandailing on.*"



(a) (b)
Figure 4 (a). Muhammad Partaonan, residing in Panyabungan Julu Village as Head of Community Service.
Figure 4 (b). Book *Hata Hata Paradatan Mandailing* compiled by Muhammad Partaonan.

2.2 Traditional Leader Strategy

Palid Dalimunthe, a traditional elder of Mandailing Natal, explained that apart from teaching *markobar* to his students who come from other villages in Mandailing Natal, he is also often invited to traditional events such as in Panyabungan, Medan, Palembang and Jakarta.



(a) **Figure 5 (a).** Palid Dalimunthe, live is Aek Nangali as traditional leader *Markobar* which always invited for traditional ceremony in Mandailing Natal. **Figure 5 (b).** Modul of traditional ceremony *Markobar-Kobar* that compiled by Palid Dalimunthe.

2.3 Religious Leaders Strategy

Religious leaders use various methods, such as role modeling, habituation, supervision, advice, and punishment, to instill religious values in families. This strategy aims to ensure children have good behavior, a high level of religious awareness, and avoid negative environmental influences. The main supporting factors are family harmony, a healthy social environment, and a good living environment. Effective interpersonal communication, grounded in religious values, is key to building family resilience. *Dalihan na tolu* values, such as compassion (*holong*) and togetherness (*domu*), are internalized through the example of parents and the community. This strengthens religious character and social solidarity within the family.

Markobar Analysis as an Effective Strategy in Forming Prosperous Families in Mandailing Natal

Markobar is effective as a strategy for forming prosperous families in Mandailing Natal because it integrates cultural, religious, and communication values that strengthen the mentality, ethics, and solidarity of families.

Table 2. *Markobar* Analysis as an Effective Strategy in Forming a Prosperous Family

Village Government	Traditional Leader	Religion Leader
<i>Markobar</i> training for young families	Socialization of the values of <i>dalihan na tolu</i> and local customs	Strengthening religious values and Islamic communication
Appointment of Head of Community Affairs	Mediation and resolution of family conflicts	Spiritual guidance and family Counseling
Religion-based family resilience program	Preservation of <i>Markobar</i> Traditions in traditional ceremonies	Counseling on the role of religion in the family



3. The relationship between communication, advice, social and spiritual values, and religious values in forming prosperous families for the young generation of Mandailing Natal.

The *Markobar* tradition emphasizes effective interpersonal communication and is rich in advice, especially that based on religious values. Good communication within the family, supported by parental advice, is the main foundation for building family resilience and shaping the character of a religious and responsible young generation. 16 Routine advice, such as through *Poda Na Lima*, instills the values of discipline, responsibility, and cleanliness that align with Islamic teachings. Social values such as compassion (*holong*), togetherness (*domu*), and mutual respect taught in Mandailing culture strengthen relationships between family members and the community. These values shape the religious character of the younger generation and strengthen the foundation of a prosperous family. The *Markobar* tradition also contains spiritual messages, such as prayer, gratitude, and hope for salvation in this world and the afterlife.

Instilling religious values in the family is achieved through role models, habituation, supervision, advice, and sanctions. A harmonious family environment and healthy social environment strongly supports the success of instilling these values, ensuring adolescents have a strong religious awareness and avoid negative influences.



Figure. 6 *Markobar* at Parlampungan village for preparing for wedding party

The researcher's findings are the *Markobar* event in Parlampungan Village, where *Markobar* is carried out in planning and preparing for the *Horja* event. *Hata-hata Markobar* in Mandailing tradition is a means of traditional communication rich in meaning, instilling moral values, strengthening mental health, and maintaining family and community harmony. The values of communication, advice, social, spiritual, and religious values contained in the *Markobar* tradition are mutually integrated and play an important role in forming prosperous families and the character of the young generation of Mandailing Natal. The synergy of these values strengthens family resilience, builds religious character, and prevents negative behavior in adolescents. This tradition also instills the values of mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, and builds the character of the younger generation. *Markobar* contains spiritual and religious messages that are in line with Islamic teachings, such as *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (encouraging goodness and preventing evil), as well as the values of Islamic faith and guidance. This tradition serves as a medium for preaching and strengthening religious values in Mandailing society.

Table 3. Analysis of Communication, Advice, Social, Spiritual, and Religious Values in *Markobar*

Value Communication	Value Advice	Social Values	Spiritual Values	Religious Values
Subtle rhetoric, word choice, deductive communication, qaulan sadida, qaulan baligha, qaulan ma'rufa, qaulan karima, qaulan layyinan, qaulan maysura.	Advice, guidance, motivation, mental strengthening, life lessons, encouragement to do good.	Mutual cooperation, togetherness, acceptance of new members, family solidarity.	Prayer, hope, gratitude, spiritual strengthening, moral messages.	Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, faith, moral messages, Islamic teachings, remembering Allah.

4. Forum Group Diskusi (FGD)

The focus group discussion (FGD) was attended by researchers, speakers, village officials, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community leaders. The speakers at the FGD were Drs. Askolani Nasution and Rahmi Wahyuni, M. Sos. Several important points were conveyed, namely that the *Markobar* culture in Madina remains a cultural tradition to this day. And its implementation is carried out in accordance with the guidance of traditional leaders who still maintain the *Makobar* tradition. This tradition continues to be carried out from generation to generation within the family. Askolani explained that *Markobar* is currently not just a traditional ritual procession but in the language of higher education is part of oral literature. This means that the beauty of the language in *Markobar*, although there are rules such as the seating arrangement of *Kahanggi*, *Anak Boru*, and *Mora*, there are chants of language that contain beautiful literary values.



(a)



(b)

Figure 7. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) (a) Presentation of material by speakers; (b) Group photo with researchers, resource persons, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants.

Regarding the meaning of *Markobar* in the lives of the Mandailing Natal community, Sopian Suri explained that *Markobar* is a means of bringing together hearts, minds, and feelings within families and communities. It is not just a conversation, but a vehicle for instilling moral, customary, and religious messages to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood. Boja Hasibuan then explained that

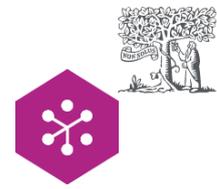


the meaning of *Markobar* lies in togetherness, where people learn to speak politely, respect their conversation partners, and listen sincerely. From there, an attitude of mutual understanding grows that strengthens brotherhood. Riswandi explained that the *Markobar* tradition is a communication culture inherited from ancestors. Through these gatherings, the values of civility and politeness are maintained. Young people learn the ethics of speaking and listening. M. Husin Lubis explained that *Markobar* serves as a space for deliberation, sharing experiences, and providing mutual support. It keeps the community connected to tradition and religion.

Regarding the meaning of *Markobar* in the lives of the Mandailing Natal community, Ali Sadikin explained that *Markobar* is a forum for togetherness to strengthen kinship ties. It is a tradition that teaches the importance of listening to each other, sharing thoughts, and strengthening ties between families. Hasanuddin explained that the meaning of *Markobar* lies in the values of communication and courtesy. Through this tradition, people learn to speak in an orderly manner and respect each other. Mulia Pulungan explained that *Markobar* is a symbol of unity. Through this meeting, parents and the younger generation share experiences so that customs and culture are not lost. Helmi Nasution explained that this tradition teaches the meaning of deliberation. *Markobar* makes everyone feel valued because their voices are heard. Muhammad Saymsir explained that *Markobar* is meaningful as a space to preserve ancestral heritage full of wisdom, while connecting it with religious teachings so that customs remain relevant.

Table 4. Analisis Focus Group Discussion (FGD) RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN THE LOCAL WISDOM OF MARKOBAR: A Study of Cultural Ecology as an Effort to Create Prosperous Families in Mandailing Natal

Aspect Analysis	Finding from traditional leader	Finding from religion leader	Academic perspective	conclusion / Implication
Meaning of Markobar	A means of uniting hearts and minds	Ties of kinship and friendship	<i>Markobar</i> is not just a ritual, but part of oral literature	<i>Markobar</i> is a communication tradition with a double meaning: a social glue, a religious strengthener, and an aesthetic oral literary heritage.
Family education values	Togetherness and mutual respect	Polite and orderly communication	<i>Markobar</i> language has aesthetic value and customary rules (placement of Kahanggi, Anak)	<i>Markobar</i> is a family education based on customs and religion that strengthens the character, morals and responsibility of the younger generation.
Social function	Cultural heritage of communication and etiquette	Symbol of unity and ancestral heritage	This tradition functions as a transfer of values between generations.	Social glue that strengthens family and clan networks.
Spiritual function	Space for deliberation and strengthening	A forum for deliberation and voice appreciation	<i>Markobar's</i> social function demonstrates cultural ecology,	The spiritual function of <i>Markobar</i> is a reminder of faith, prayer, gratitude, and Islamic morals.



	of customs and religion		namely cultural adaptation to maintain social harmony.	
Religious expression	Advice on household, family honor and responsibility	Connecting customs with Islamic teachings	Demonstrates the integration of customs and religion in oral communication practices.	<i>Markobar</i> affirms Islamic values through traditional media.
Relevance for Young Generation and Prosperous Families	Life guidelines from parents' experiences	Moral advice and harmony	<i>Markobar</i> as a religious oral tradition that strengthens brotherhood and faith.	Great relevance, building prosperous families based on faith, communication, and social solidarity.
Academic perspective (Cultural Ecology dan Oral Literature)	A true story full of meaning	Moral guidelines and respect for parents	<i>Markobar</i> becomes cultural capital for building harmonious families.	<i>Markobar</i> is understood as an expression of culture, religion and oral literature, which maintains the continuity of local identity.

Discussion

1. Religious Expression in Markobar Local Wisdom

Markobar, as an oral tradition that has become part of the culture in Mandailing Natal. Therefore, in theory, religious expression can be manifested in the form of art, language, and objects used in religious practices (Godlove, 2018), (Whitehead, 2020), (Bosman, 2020), (Dahl, 2019). It functions as a rhetorical model based on local wisdom that emphasizes the value systems of *dalihan na tolu* and *burangir na hombang*. In *Markobar* theory, it requires mastery of *dalihan na tolu* (three pillars of kinship, (*mora, kahanggi, anak boru*) (Zulkarnain et al., 2021),(Nasution et al., 2021). *Dalihan na tolu* not only regulates social structures, but also strengthens norms of togetherness, justice, and social responsibility. This system has proven effective in building harmony between religious communities, preventing conflict, and facilitating problem resolution through customary deliberations involving customary and religious leaders (S. M. Harahap & Hamka, 2023). *Markobar* and *Dalihan na Tolu* practices encourage moderate, tolerant, and inclusive attitudes, both in daily life (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2024),(A. S. Harahap et al., 2023). The values of *Burangir Na Hombang* are not just ceremonial equipment, but rather a strong symbol of instilling the values of openness, honesty, unity, and respect that strengthen social and cultural harmony in Mandailingi in line with the messages Mandailing customs emphasize the importance of mutual respect, maintaining harmony, and building trust in society (Nasution et al., 2021).

Religious expression in the local wisdom of *Markobar*, through a cultural ecology approach, has been shown to strengthen tolerance, harmony, and social integration. Local values and the role of traditional and religious leaders are key to building a moderate and peaceful society. These values include honesty, mutual cooperation, empathy, tolerance, and responsibility, which are the foundation for the formation of individual and community character(Sakti et al., 2024),(Uge



et al., 2019),(Miranti et al., 2018),(Hidayati et al., 2020),(Suwito Eko et al., 2020),(Setiawan et al., 2017).

2. Markobar: An Effective Strategy for Building Prosperous Families in Mandailing Natal

Markobar is effective as a strategy for building prosperous families in Mandailing Natal because it integrates cultural, religious, and communication values that strengthen the mentality, ethics, and solidarity of families. The strategies implemented by village officials, traditional leaders, and religious leaders each have their own strategies. Village officials act as customary guardians and appoint correctional officers as part of the preservation of the *markobar* culture. Traditional leaders conduct training and write *markobar* modules and books. Religious leaders strategically incorporate Islamic religious values into *markobar* activities. The Strategic Role of Village Officials, Traditional Leaders, and Religious Leaders: Village officials act as customary guardians and appoint correctional officers to preserve the *markobar* culture, ensuring local values remain alive in the community. Traditional Leaders: Conduct training, develop modules, and write books on *markobar*, so that knowledge and practices can be systematically passed down. Religious leaders integrate Islamic values into *markobar* activities, strengthening moderation and family harmony through an inclusive religious approach. (Zulkarnain et al., 2021),(Pajarianto et al., 2022).

3. The relationship between communication, advice, social and spiritual values, and religious values in forming prosperous families for the young generation of Mandailing Natal.

Markobar in Mandailing Natal is not only a traditional tradition passed down from generation to generation, but also holds high cultural, social, and academic value. This tradition is maintained and carried out according to the guidance of traditional leaders, so that it remains sustainable in family and community life. *Markobar* can be seen as part of oral literature, because the beauty of the language used not only conveys a moral message, but also contains aesthetic value in the arrangement of words and the procedure of the procession, such as the placement of *Kahanggi, Anak Boru, and Mora*. This shows that *Markobar* is a tradition rich in meaning, serving to maintain cultural identity while enriching the treasury of Mandailing Natal oral literature. *Markobar* also serves as a medium for deductive communication full of caution, fostering mutual respect, honesty, and solidarity among community members. These values strengthen the mentality, ethics, and character of the younger generation, and build a solid foundation of social solidarity.(Zulkarnain et al., 2021),(Nasution et al., 2021).

Markobar serves as a social glue that strengthens relationships and solidarity, as well as a spiritual medium that reminds us of the values of faith, gratitude, and prayer. Its relevance in the lives of the younger generation is very clear, because this tradition can act as a bulwark against the negative influences of modernization by instilling healthy communication, noble morals, solidarity, and strong faith, thus forming a prosperous, harmonious family that is blessed by God. *Markobar* shapes the character, ethics, and noble morals of the younger generation, thus serving as a guideline in building a harmonious and prosperous household. Religious values are also integrated into *Markobar* practices, strengthening faith, gratitude, and prayer in family life (Zulkarnain et al., 2021),(Jamil et al., 2023). A prosperous family according to Islam is a harmonious family (Budiman, 2021) supports each other, upholds religious values (Karam, 2021),(Setyawati et al., 2024) and is able to meet the physical and spiritual needs of its members. This welfare is holistic, encompassing spiritual, moral, social, and economic aspects, with the aim of achieving happiness in this world and the hereafter (Setyawati et al., 2024).

Markobar is one of the noble traditions of Mandailing Natal, aligned with Islamic teachings, embodying the values of friendship, deliberation, and good advice. Its relevance for the younger generation is significant, as *Markobar* can act as a bulwark against modern cultural trends



that often deviate from religious values, while simultaneously instilling noble morals, polite communication, and a sense of faith and piety. This tradition serves as a forum for parents and community leaders to impart advice and guide the younger generation toward a harmonious, responsible, and sharia-compliant household. Values such as noble morals, polite communication, and a sense of faith and piety are also instilled through the *Markobar* process. (Zulkarnain et al., 2021), (Nasution et al., 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

Markobar, as a Mandailing oral tradition, serves as a model of local wisdom-based rhetoric that emphasizes the *dalihan na tolu* system. Its practice begins with the *burangir na hombang* offering. *Markobar* demands careful word choice, gentle intonation, and deductive narrative to build sympathy and achieve social goals. The effectiveness of the *markobar* strategy in forming prosperous families lies in the synergy of cultural, religious, and communication values, as well as the active role of village officials, traditional leaders, and religious figures in preserving and developing this tradition. Religious expressions in the local wisdom of *Markobar*, through a cultural ecology approach, have been shown to strengthen tolerance, harmony, and social integration. Future research is aimed at religious expressions in the *Burangir Na Hombang* culture in forming prosperous families in Mandailing Natal.

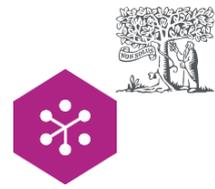
Declarations

Author contribution statement

Team leader he is a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Medan Area University, was responsible for the overall planning of the research, coordination between members, formulation of the methodology, data validation, and writing the final report and scientific publication. He also led the analysis using a cultural ecology approach to ensure consistent integration of theory and field data. Team member 1, he also a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, focused on field data collection, interviews with traditional and religious leaders, and documentation of the *markobar* tradition. He played a key role in compiling a book on value mapping and developing a model for prosperous families based on local wisdom. Team member 2, he was responsible for analyzing research findings, particularly in mapping educational and religious values, and formulating policy recommendations for cultural preservation. He was also actively involved in compiling scientific articles for national journals and Scopus. Furthermore, team member 3, she is, with her expertise in IT, helped formulate the research direction by incorporating AI elements. Her expertise was instrumental in preparing for further research on *Markobar* culture. Team member 4, he is based in Malaysia, is a teaching AI practitioner who is needed to implement the ideas developed in the research. He is responsible for processing all research data to achieve optimal results according to plan.

Funding statement

This research is fully funded by the Ministry of Education and Technology Grant Fund (DPPM) for the 2025 fiscal year, Fundamental Research – Regular scheme. The mandatory output is the Journal of Islamic Religious Education (Q2) with an output deadline of July 12, 2026, while the implementation deadline is December 6, 2025. Main contract number: 122 / C3 / DT.05.00 / PL / 2025 dated May 28, 2025, derivative contract number 7 / SPK / LL1 / AL04.03 / PL / 2025 dated June 11, 2025. Meanwhile, for the Researcher Contract Number; 106 / P3MPI / 3.9.1 / VI / 2025, No. BAP 95 / BPJIID / 3.9.3.2 / VI / 2025.



Declaration of interest's statement

The authors declare that they have no known conflicting financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. Alternatively, the authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships, which could be considered conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to extend their sincere gratitude to all the people and organizations who helped them finish this study, "Religious Expression About Markobar Local Wisdom." We would like to express our profound gratitude to the respondents, cultural practitioners, and leaders of the local community in North Sumatra who so kindly gave of their time, cultural insights, and experiences throughout the data gathering process. Our gratitude also extends to the reviewers and academic colleagues whose insightful criticism significantly improved the research's depth and clarity. Lastly, we thank our home universities for their cooperation in providing the resources and academic setting needed to carry out this study. The writers alone are accountable for any lingering mistakes.

Ethical considerations

According to accepted ethical research guidelines in the social sciences, this study was carried out. Prior to their participation, all participants received information regarding the goals, methods, and extent of the study. To ensure that participation was completely voluntary, informed consent was obtained either orally or in writing. The freedom to leave the study at any moment without facing any repercussions was granted to participants.

All sensitive cultural information, places, and personal names were anonymised and provided in aggregate form to ensure anonymity. The publishing does not reveal any identifiable information. In order to maintain respect for local customs, community norms, and sacred values linked with Markobar local wisdom, the researchers exercised extra caution while handling religious and cultural data.

No coercion, exploitation, or behaviors that would have harmed the participants' psychological, social, or cultural well-being were used in this study. Every piece of information was used only for academic research. An internal review of the study process was conducted to ensure that it adhered to the ethical values of beneficence, justice, and respect.

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