

# Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude of Magtatandok on the Practice in Animal Bite Management

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*Abstract— This study investigated the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of magtatandok practitioners in Eastern Pangasinan ethnomedicine with an emphasis on their function in traditional animal bite treatment. Despite their ongoing significance in rural healthcare, the topic addressed the scant empirical documentation of indigenous healers' competencies. Recognizing their importance to community-based health systems and cultural preservation requires an understanding of these aspects. Thirteen (13) magtatandok practitioners participated in a descriptive study that used purposive and snowball sampling. Structured surveys were used to collect the data, and weighted means were used for analysis. The findings proved that practitioners had excellent skills (3.49), a very high level of knowledge (3.48), and extremely favorable attitudes (3.49) toward tandok practice. In addition to demonstrating compassion and a strong sense of cultural devotion, they demonstrated confidence in wound assessment, procedural application, and patient care. The study settled on the conclusion that magtatandok practitioners persist as capable indigenous healers whose attitudes, knowledge, and attitude uphold ethnomedical practices and support their ongoing significance in community health care systems, stability, and retirement preparedness.*

*Index Terms- Attitude, Knowledge, Magtatandok, Skills, Traditional Animal Bite Treatment*

## I. INTRODUCTION

A magtatandok is a traditional ethnic healer in Pangasinan who uses tandok, an indigenous ethnomedical procedure that is frequently utilized to treat animal bites. Healing is accomplished through culturally ingrained methods that are thought to extract contaminants from wounds. These practitioners acquire their knowledge and skills through apprenticeship, observation, and prolonged experiential practice rather than formal medical education, making their role deeply embedded in community-based health systems. In far-flung

regions where access to biomedical facilities may be limited, magtatandok practitioners are frequently considered reputable first contact clinicians since they are stewards of indigenous healing knowledge. Despite modernization, their method is still important in today's health-seeking habits because it combines cultural belief systems, experience learning, and community trust.

The study of Adulta and Adillo (2021) on ethnomedicine offers a more comprehensive framework for comprehending these traditional healers' continued existence. The World Health Organization has continuously recognized the value of complementary and traditional medicine, highlighting the widespread use of indigenous healing systems in primary healthcare, especially in low- and middle-income nations where formal health services are difficult to access and afford (World Health Organization, 2025). Global research further shows that traditional healers often serve as the first point of care for injuries, infections, and wound related conditions, including animal bites, due to their accessibility and cultural acceptability. Research from Asian and African communities also shows that high cultural trust, perceived efficacy, and knowledge transmission between generations all contribute to the continued use of traditional healing.

A growing corpus of research in the Philippine context attests to the traditional healing systems' ongoing significance in rural health practices. Indigenous reading and healing-related cultural practices are still prevalent in rural areas (Kabeta, et al., 2015; mapatse, et al., 2022; Tũaño, et al., 2025). This indicates that traditional knowledge continues to have an impact on how communities respond to health issues. Mhz, et al. (2025) emphasizes that culturally grounded knowledge systems, including indigenous health beliefs, remain deeply embedded in

Filipino learning environments and community practices. Furthermore, Mshelbwala, et al. (2025) and Tschopp, et al. (2016) stress that to fulfill community-based needs, especially in underserved regions, localized and culturally sensitive approaches in health and education are crucial. The relevance of indigenous systems in modern practice is further demonstrated by Ferre (2025), which demonstrate that Filipino practitioners continue to actively employ traditional and community-based strategies to address local health and learning challenges. Due to their accessibility, cultural trust, and affordability, magtatandok practitioners are still consulted for animal bite cases in rural barangays, according to a diminutive yet expanding body of research and local reports (Tuaño, et al., 2025; Wassie, et al., 2015; Zu, 2019). However, rather than systematically evaluating practitioners themselves, the majority of the work that is currently accessible concentrates on community perceptions or the widespread use of traditional healing. As a result, there is an obvious research gap in the empirical evaluation of the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes of magtatandok practitioners as key participants in ethnomedical practice.

Bridging this gap is crucial because it helps preserve and document indigenous health systems and gives us an improved comprehension of their function in the provision of local healthcare. As a result, the study provides insightful data regarding how ethnomedical practitioners in Eastern Pangasinan retain traditional healing methods and their applicability in both cultural and health system contexts

## II. METHODOLOGY

With the goal to explore and describe the traditional healing methods of magtatandok (mananandok) in Eastern Pangasinan, this study used a descriptive research strategy. Thirteen (13) traditional healers made up the participants; they were specifically chosen based on their extensive knowledge and active participation in tandok, especially with regard to managing animal bites. In addition, snowball sampling was utilized, where initial participants identified other qualified practitioners through community referrals and local networks, ensuring that all respondents possessed firsthand knowledge

and authentic practice experience. A systematic survey instrument was used to assess the magtatandok practitioners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The weighted mean was used as the main statistical method to analyze the results. Belandres (2018) stated that this kind of approach allows for the systematic quantification of responses and the interpretation of the practitioners' competencies and dispositions within the ethnomedical context, thereby providing a clear and organized description of their traditional healing practices.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Level of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude of Magtatandok Practitioners in Ethno-Medicine

Table I: Weighted Mean on the Level of Knowledge of Magtatandok Practitioners in Ethno-Medicine

Knowledge	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
I have sufficient knowledge about “tandok” as a traditional healing practice.	3.58	Strongly Agree
I understand the process of performing “tandok” for animal bite cases.	3.46	Strongly Agree
I am knowledgeable about the materials used in “tandok”.	3.42	Strongly Agree
I know the proper preparation of the wound before performing “tandok”.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I am familiar with the proper techniques in performing “tandok”.	3.46	Strongly Agree
I understand why “tandok” is still practiced in our community.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I know the appropriate duration of “tandok”	3.46	Strongly Agree

treatment for animal bites.		
I know what should be applied to the wound after "tandok".	3.50	Strongly Agree
I am aware of how many treatment sessions are needed for animal bite cases.	3.42	Strongly Agree
I know the proper advice to give to patients regarding wound care after "tandok".	3.50	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.48	Strongly Agree

The aggregate weighted mean of 3.48, verbally expressed as Strongly Agree, indicates that the magtatandok practitioners showed a high level of understanding on the traditional therapeutic practice of "tandok." This suggests that the respondents have a thorough awareness of the tenets, practices, and cultural underpinnings of tandok, especially when it comes to handling animal bite incidents in their local communities. The highest mean score of 3.58, obtained that the magtatandok practitioners have sufficient knowledge about tandok as a traditional healing practice, by which it suggests that the practitioners are highly confident in their knowledge and capability as traditional healers. Long years of direct participation in traditional healing methods, observation, and experiential learning may have contributed to this confidence.

In ethnomedicine, knowledge is often transmitted orally through apprenticeship and intergenerational learning, allowing traditional healing systems to persist across generations. This result is consistent with the study of Wassie et al. (2015) and Gakuya et al. (2020), which highlights knowledge as the fundamental factor driving competence and performance. In a similar vein, current research on indigenous and traditional healing methods highlights that, as opposed to formal medical education, traditional healers acquire specialized knowledge through extended community immersion and cultural

experience. According to Che et al. (2024), traditional healers frequently have in-depth procedural and contextual knowledge of culturally acceptable therapies as a result of long-term exposure to their communities.

The results also showed high mean scores of 3.50 for factors pertaining to recognizing the cultural significance of tandok, post-treatment care, and wound preparation. This implies that the practitioners have a practical grasp of wound care and patient care in addition to procedural knowledge. Such findings align with the study of Sosa (2016), which explains that health related actions are shaped by prior knowledge, experiences, and perceived effectiveness of practices. Participants clarified that elder Magtatandok's mentoring and observation were the sources of their expertise and that they learned this through observation and study from the traditional healers in the past, emphasizing how crucial cultural transmission is to the preservation of ethnomedical knowledge. This also provides credence to the study of De los Reyes et al. (2026), which holds that individuals pick up skills and behaviors via repeated practice, imitation, and observation.

Participants also showed knowledge of the shortcomings of conventional healing, especially when problems occur. They demonstrate responsible decision-making and community-centered care by acknowledging the necessity of hospital referral in severe circumstances. Despite having slightly lower means of 3.42, the indicators of familiarity with treatment materials and number of sessions are still in the Strongly Agree category, indicating only slight variations influenced by local practices, available resources, and individual experience. The results show that magtatandok practitioners have extensive ethnomedical knowledge, which greatly aids in the maintenance of community-based health practices and traditional healing customs in Eastern Pangasinan.

Table II: Weighted Mean on the Level of Skills of Magtatandok Practitioners in Ethno-Medicine

Skills	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
I am confident in performing “tandok” properly.	3.46	Strongly Agree
I follow a systematic procedure when performing “tandok”.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I properly prepare my tools and materials before performing “tandok”.	3.42	Strongly Agree
I am skilled in handling different types of animal bite cases.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I ensure cleanliness and safety while performing “tandok”.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I know the appropriate duration of each “tandok” session.	3.46	Strongly Agree
I monitor the progress of patients who return for follow-up treatment.	3.42	Strongly Agree
I assess the condition of the wound before performing “tandok”.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I can manage minor complications related to “tandok”.	3.58	Strongly Agree
I provide proper recommendations when complications arise.	3.54	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.49	Strongly Agree

The aggregate weighted mean of 3.49, verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicates that the

magtatandok practitioners showed a high degree of proficiency in carrying out the traditional healing technique of "tandok." This indicates that the respondents possess substantial practical competence and confidence in applying traditional ethnomedical techniques for managing animal bite cases within their communities. The continuously high evaluations imply that the practitioners have honed their therapeutic skills via years of hands-on instruction, repeated practice, and continuous engagement.

Practical skills in ethnomedicine are typically learned by immersion in community healing traditions, where mastery is greatly aided by observation, imitation, and real performance of healing treatments. The respondents are capable of managing minor complications related to tandok, with the highest mean score of 3.58, indicating that practitioners have great procedural competence and practical judgment when addressing minor treatment-related issues. This result shows that their abilities go beyond merely carrying out the process; they also have the capacity to gauge circumstances and, when needed, carry out suitable actions. These results corroborate the study of Serpell (2025), which emphasizes that skills are reinforced by repeated practice, experience learning, and practical application. In the same manner, Sosa (2016) and Zu (2019) reveal that rather than receiving formal clinical training, traditional healers frequently acquire advanced practical skills through extended community-based practice and hands-on experience.

The respondents provide proper recommendations when complications arise, gained the second-highest mean score of 3.54, which further suggests that magtatandok practitioners exhibit accountability and sound judgment when providing patient care. Their capacity to offer direction and suggest suitable courses of action indicates that they understand patient safety and the significance of maintaining community well-being. This result is consistent with Mapatse et al. (2022) which states that interpersonal care, knowledge, and dedication to enhancing health outcomes all have an impact on health-promoting behaviors. The qualitative comments provided considerable support for these conclusions. This further indicates that magtatandok practitioners demonstrate responsibility and good judgment when

delivering patient care. Their ability to provide guidance and recommend appropriate actions shows that they are aware of the importance of preserving community well-being and patient safety. This finding is in line with related studies, which contends that knowledge, commitment to improving health outcomes, and interpersonal care all influence health-promoting behaviors (Adulta and Adillo, 2021; Ferrer, 2025; Gakuya, et al., 2020; Serpell, 2025). These conclusions received strong support from the qualitative remarks.

Furthermore, De los Reyes, et al (2026) holds that abilities are learned via observation, modeling, and contact with seasoned practitioners, is significantly reflected in the development of these practical skills. Hence, the results show that magtatandok practitioners have excellent practical competence, which allows them to maintain traditional treatment methods and carry on with their important role as ethnomedical healers in Eastern Pangasinan.

Table III: Weighted Mean on the Level of Attitude of Magtatandok Practitioners in Ethno-Medicine

Attitude	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
“Tandok” is an important part of our cultural tradition.	3.46	Strongly Agree
I value the traditional knowledge that passed down to me.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I am proud to practice “tandok” in our community.	3.42	Strongly Agree
I intend to preserve and continue the practice of “tandok”.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I observe traditional practices or rituals associated with “tandok”.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I perform “tandok” not only for income but also to help others.	3.46	Strongly Agree
I believe “tandok”	3.42	Strongly

provides valuable service to the community.		Agree
The income I receive from “tandok” is sufficient for my needs.	3.50	Strongly Agree
I am willing to treat patients even if they cannot fully pay.	3.58	Strongly Agree
I encourage patients to return for follow-up if necessary.	3.54	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.49	Strongly Agree

Collectively, weighted mean of 3.49, verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicates that the magtatandok practitioners had very positive sentiments toward the traditional therapeutic method of "tandok." This suggests that, as part of their ethnomedical traditions in Eastern Pangasinan, the respondents continue to have a strong sense of cultural devotion, compassion, and dedication to the preservation and practice of tandok. Tandok is seen as a significant social and cultural obligation that is ingrained in communal life rather than a means of subsistence. They are willing to treat patients even if they cannot fully pay and have the highest mean score of 3.58, which clearly demonstrates the practitioners' altruistic orientation and community-centered beliefs. This result shows that magtatandok practitioners' primary motivations continue to be compassion, service, and concern for the well-being of others. In rural and indigenous societies, where healing methods are strongly linked to social duty, reciprocity, and communal solidarity rather than monetary recompense, traditional healers frequently exhibit such sentiments.

This result is consistent with Tuaño et al. (2025) which highlights how interpersonal commitment, empathy, and the desire to enhance community well-being impact health-promoting behaviors. In this situation, practitioners' determination to keep treating patients despite receiving minimal compensation is indicative of their strong sense of social duty and

dedication to aiding the neediest members of their communities.

These quantitative results were strongly supported by the interview responses. Participants frequently stated that their major reason for practicing tandok is still to assist others. The respondents continue to provide treatment even when compensation is insufficient and monetary gain is not their immediate concern, that they indicate that the practitioners prioritize community welfare and healing outcomes over personal financial benefit. These show how serving others and showing compassion have become essential parts of their identity as traditional healers. Similarly, they encourage patients to return for follow-up, if necessary, reflected as the second-highest mean score of 3.54, which further suggests that magtatandok practitioners have a strong sense of accountability and ongoing patient care.

Conducting follow-up consultations displays a persistent dedication to community health as well as concern for patient recovery. Kabeta et al. (2015), which holds that attitudes and actions are acquired through interaction and observation with recognized role models, can also be used to explain this tendency. By watching more seasoned healers in their communities, younger practitioners in traditional healing systems frequently develop caring and service-oriented attitudes.

Despite having the lowest mean scores (3.42), the indicators pertaining to pride in practicing tandok and conviction in its community significance nevertheless fall into the Strongly Agree category. This implies that practitioners acknowledge the increasing impact of contemporary biomedical treatment while still appreciating tandok. Participants indicated strong cultural commitment and pride in maintaining traditional therapeutic methods, even if they noted that various individuals today choose hospital-based care. Their answers show a well-rounded viewpoint that honors both conventional and cutting-edge medical methods. Despite having the lowest mean scores (3.42), the indicators pertaining to pride in practicing tandok and conviction in its community significance nevertheless fall into the Strongly Agree category. This implies that practitioners acknowledge the increasing impact of contemporary biomedical

treatment while still appreciating tandok. Participants indicated strong cultural commitment and pride in maintaining traditional therapeutic methods, even if they noted that various individuals today choose hospital-based care. Their answers show a well-rounded viewpoint that honors both conventional and cutting-edge medical methods.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The magtatandok practitioners in Buneg, Pozorrubio, Pangasinan consistently exhibit a high degree of expertise, proficiency, and favorable attitudes regarding the use of tandok as an ethnomedical method for managing animal bites. In terms of knowledge, the practitioners have a solid grasp of the concepts, methods, wound assessment procedures, and post-treatment care related to tandok, which reflects the breadth of knowledge gained through extensive experience, observation, and generational transmission of traditional healing practices. Their capacity to evaluate patient problems and identify situations that call for referral to official medical facilities demonstrates a practical understanding of the breadth and constraints of their practice.

At the same time, their balanced recognition of modern medical intervention demonstrates openness to practical health realities while maintaining respect for traditional methods. Taken together, these findings affirm that magtatandok practitioners continue to function as knowledgeable, capable, and community-oriented healers whose ethnomedical practice remains a meaningful component of local healthcare traditions and cultural identity.

At the same time, their fair acknowledgment of contemporary medical intervention shows respect for conventional practices while remaining receptive to real-world health issues. When considered collectively, these results confirm that magtatandok practitioners are skilled, competent, and community-focused healers whose ethnomedical practice is still an important part of regional healthcare customs and cultural identity.

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