



THE EXISTENCE OF *DALIHAN NA TOLU* AS LOCAL WISDOM AND ITS RELEVANCE TO COMMUNITY SOCIAL DYNAMICS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

A Local cultural wisdom, which includes various varieties in Indonesia, has its uniqueness which is still maintained today, even though the digital era has become a local community. The rapid development in all aspects of life, from analogue to digital, has made some Batak tribes maintain their local cultural customs, namely Dalihan Na Tolu. Maintaining the existence of Dalihan Na Tolu among local and overseas communities is not easy because to preserve cultural customs, the values of local wisdom experience degradation. The purpose of this study was to determine the activities of Dalihan Na Tolu as a way of life or a philosophy of life for the Batak people because Dalihan Na Tolu is a guideline that has never been abandoned by the Batak people, both locally and overseas. This type of research is library research with qualitative data collection. This research method uses sociology with the subject Dalihan Na Tolu and analysis of social network mapping. To strengthen this method, the researcher uses Clifford Geertz's thought to understand symbols, meanings and identities in Dalihan Na Tolu through a text. This study's findings are that Dalihan Na Tolu's local wisdom has three elements, namely Mora, Kahanggi and Boru. These three elements have interrelated relationships and can facilitate normal societal and cultural activities. Batak people, both local and overseas, can adapt to the situation and developments in this modern era. Thus, the philosophy of Dalihan Na Tolu will never change or disappear, even though times and places are always dynamic.

Keywords: *Dalihan Na Tolu, a Local Culture Wisdom, Social, Cultural Customs*

Abstrak

Kearifan lokal budaya yang beraneka ragam di Indonesia memiliki keunikan tersendiri yang masih dipertahankan sampai hari ini, walaupun era digital telah menyelimuti masyarakat lokal. Pesatnya perkembangan dalam segala aspek kehidupan dari analog hingga menjadi digital membuat sebagian suku Batak tetap mempertahankan adat budaya lokalnya yaitu *Dalihan Na Tolu*. Mempertahankan eksistensi *Dalihan Na Tolu* pada masyarakat lokal maupun perantauan tidaklah mudah, karena untuk menjaga kelestarian adat budaya mengalami degradasi nilai-nilai kearifan lokalnya. Tujuan penelitian ini mengetahui aktivitas *Dalihan Na Tolu* sebagai pedoman hidup atau falsafah hidup suku Batak, karena *Dalihan Na Tolu* merupakan pedoman yang tidak pernah ditinggalkan sampai kapanpun oleh masyarakat Batak baik di lokal maupun diperantauan. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian perpustakaan (*library research*) dengan jenis pengumpulan data kualitatif. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan sosiologi dengan subjek *Dalihan Na Tolu* serta analisis pemetaan jaringan sosial. Untuk memperkuat metode tersebut peneliti menggunakan pemikiran Clifford Geertz untuk dapat memahami simbol, makna maupun identitas pada *Dalihan Na Tolu* melalui sebuah teks. Hasil temuan penelitian ini adalah kearifan lokal *Dalihan Na Tolu* memiliki tiga unsur yaitu *Mora*, *Kahanggi* dan *Boru*. Ketiga unsur tersebut memiliki hubungan yang saling berkaitan serta dapat memudahkan dalam aktivitas adat budaya pada masyarakat. Masyarakat suku Batak baik lokal maupun perantauan, mereka dapat menyesuaikan diri dengan situasi dan perkembangan pada era modern ini. Dengan demikian, *falsafah Dalihan Na Tolu* tidak akan pernah berubah maupun hilang meskipun zaman dan tempat selalu dinamis.

Kata kunci: Dalihan Na Tolu, Kearifan Lokal, Sosial, Adat Budaya

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a diversity of cultures and beliefs that surround the community. Culture and society are a pattern that cannot be separated from one another because if there is a society, it will always be followed by culture. Of course, culture will not exist without society. (Soerjono Soekanto, 2005, p. 147) Reporting to the official website of the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in the SP2010 data code, there are 1331 ethnic categories in Indonesia. The number of 1331 categories is also the code for the name of the tribe, another name for a tribe, the name of a sub-tribe, and even the name of a sub-tribe. (Fahri Zulfikar, 2021) Meanwhile, ethnicity is a social unit that can be distinguished from other social units based on awareness of the identity of cultural differences, especially language. The various ethnic groups certainly have differences, ranging from religion, belief, and language to customs. (R. Van Dijk, 1979, pp. 6-8)

The phenomenon of social behavior in this

society is never free from influences or actions based on culture and customs. Based on BPS data, there are Batak tribes that apply the *Dalihan Na Tolu* custom in North Sumatra. The Batak are a group of tribes that inhabit most of North Sumatra, while the categories as Batak are the Angkola, Karo, Mandailing, Pakpak/Dairi, Simalungun, and Toba regions. (Uli Kozok, 2009, pp. 5-8)

Along with the times and advances in various fields ranging from science to modern technology, cultural traditions have begun to shift. They must be separate from today's modern technological developments. It can also be seen in the *Dalihan Na Tolu* culture, which comes from the Batak people. The existence of the *Dalihan Na Tolu* order needs to be preserved and cultivated because it contains elements of their life philosophy. Consequences and inability to make *Dalihan Na Tolu* culture insignificant or of no benefit to learning. It can be seen that some Batak people do not care about the philosophy of *Dalihan Na Tolu*. (Meilina, 2022)

Culture can shape human identity, which is also related to people's lives. If the identity is

lost, there is inevitably a lost identity. That is, the existence of culture is lost, so humans become alien to themselves. (Butarbutar et al., 2020, pp. 21–28) *Dalihan Na Tolu* is a system for regulating relationships between individuals, a fundamental concept of Batak culture. (Basyral Hamidi Harahap & Hotman M. Siahaan, 1987, p. 30)

In addition, the ancestors of the Batak tribe have made *Dalihan Na Tolu* an essential reference in the social order. It has been proven by the values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in the life of the Batak people so far, they have been implemented. It can be seen from the events held by the Batak tribe, such as marriages, deaths, etc. (Bungaran Antonius Simanjuntak, 2009, p. 123)

According to Jurgen Habermas, efforts to communicate between humans in a society do not occur freely but are rational. According to Habermas, the rational nature is that the action is an instructive action aiming to achieve mutual understanding through awareness. (Jurgen Harbemas, 1984, p. 11) Thus *Dalihan Na Tolu* is needed to give society a reference in life and have human values.

This research focuses on the interaction of adat and its relevance to the community in the surrounding life and the Batak tribe as the object of this research. As is known from the perspective of custom, their lives are governed by the *Dalihan Na Tolu* kinship system, namely the linkage of three (*tolu*) kinship elements; *kah-anggi*, *anak boru*, and *mora*. As a kinship system, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is used as a guide for communicating, acting, and solving social problems.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses library research, while the method used is literature study. In addition, the approach in this study uses qualitative research with the type of research in the field of sociology with research subjects including *Dalihan Na Tolu* and its relevance to people's lives. Data on the phenomenon of the *Dalihan Na Tolu* indigenous people in the Batak tribe were analyzed using social network mapping analysis. (B. Rudito & Famiola M., 2013, p. 141)

Social network analysis makes an alternative view that explains *Dalihan Na Tolu* relation-

ships able to position within the philosophical framework of the three pillars of sustainable development in the Batak tribe. Analysis of social network mapping also looks at the extent to which the structure and composition of relationships influence norms. This model is expected to help determine the proper steps to revitalize the local wisdom of *Dalihan Na Tolu* among the Batak people. (B. Rudito & Famiola M., 2013, p. 155)

This research also uses Clifford Geertz's thoughts to explore *Dalihan Na Tolu* by reading the Batak people through a text. It can be understood by a network of signs, symbols, routines, and habits that require hermeneutics. (Muhammad Nurul Huda, 2005, pp. 211–216) Geertz added that culture is a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form through communication, preservation and development of knowledge about attitudes towards life. (Clifford Geertz, 1973, p. 193)

The data collection method used is from primary and secondary sources, in this case, related to the *Dalihan Na Tolu* custom and its relevance to the community. (Mathew Miles, 2014, p. 124) Due to using qualitative research, the data will be presented in the form of a description and focus. (Jonaedi Efendi & Johnny Ibrahim, 2018, p. 23) This descriptive presentation will be used optimally using qualitative data from a literature study.

The data analysis used in this study is a qualitative descriptive analysis. With a systematic procedural, they are namely clarifying observational data material, classify data, process data based on the interrelationships between components and symptom units in the context of the focus of problems of social interaction of the Batak people in the *Dalihan Na Tolu* culture, and describe as a whole systematically the phenomena that There is.

RESEARCH RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The Existence and Cultural Customs of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in Society

When talking about Batak cultural customs, it will focus on one of the people from the North Sumatra region. The Batak tribe has several ethnic groups: the Karo Batak, Simalungun

Batak, Pak-Pak Batak, Toba Batak, and Angkola Mandailing Batak. (Aris Ananta, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, M Sairi Hasbullah, Nur Budi Handayani, 2015, p. 149)

The identity of the Batak tribe was prevalent in 1926; it was called Jong Batak, which consisted of Mandailing, Toba, Karo, Simalungun, Angkola and Pakpak youths. (Hans Van Miert, 2003, p. 475) The formation of the Batak community is an arrangement of various clans, partly due to the migration of families from other areas in Sumatra and even outside the island of Sumatra. (Akhsan Na'im & Hendry Syaputra, 2011, pp. 23–36)

The belief of the Batak tribe before embracing Islam and Christianity is called the belief system towards *Mula Jadi Nabolon*, who has power over the sky, and his power is manifested in the *Natolu Debata*. (Marbun & Hutapea, 1987, p. 39) In addition, the Batak tribe also has the concept of soul and spirit, which is divided into three concepts, namely; *Tondi*¹, *Sahala*², and *Begu*³. (Koentjaraningrat, 2004, p. 114)

Dalihan Na Tolu is a part of the cultural customs of the Batak tribe, which means a three-legged stove. (Sitanggang, 2010, p. 25) According to Benny, there are two ways of looking at scientific facts: facts and semiotics. In social and cultural science, facts are not everything because, behind facts, there is something else. Meanwhile, in social and cultural science, the semiotics behind the fact is something else, namely meaning. So, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is a socio-cultural science that deals with signs which have a significant meaning for humans. (Benny H. Hoed, 2014, p. 5)

The Clifford Geertz paradigm views cultural customs as a text that needs to be read to discover behaviour in society. (Clifford Geertz, 1973, p. 114) *Dalihan Na Tolu* is a symbol for the Batak people, which has the meaning behind the system. The essence of *Dalihan Na Tolu* is the embodiment of the *Mula Jadi Nabolon Debata* (Anicetus B. Sinaga, 2004, p. 52) who has three servants? It means that *Dalihan Na Tolu* is

1 Tondi is a person's soul or spirit, which is a force; therefore, Tondi gives life to humans.

2 Sahala is the soul or spirit of a person's power.

3 Begu is the tondi of people who have died, whose behaviour is the same as that of humans, only appearing at night.

an open system and makes these cultural customs a support and guarantor for a harmonious life for the entire Batak cultural order. (Bungaran Antonius Simanjuntak, 2009, p. 358)

Therefore, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is a symbol that has its meaning and contains mystical-religious elements. The number in the *Na Tolu* sentence contains elements of an odd number which symbolizes life and is always associated with transcendent and mystical matters and is considered a sacred number. (Basyral Hamidi Harahap & Hotman M. Siahaan, 1987, p. 37) As it is known that *Dalihan* comes from the word *dalik*, which means *dais* (to touch). *Na Tolu* is three pillars of the furnace touching each other. In the Toba Batak Culture Dictionary, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is the basis of social life for all Batak people, consisting of three inseparable elements. (Marbun & Hutapea, 1987, p. 37)

In addition, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is analogous to three interrelated elements, namely *Dongan sabutuha/Kahanggi* (family friends), *Hula-hula/mora* (wife's family), and *Boru* (son-in-law's family). (T.M. Sihombing, 1986, p. 13) The system of these three elements is essential in bonding the unity of the Batak community; this kinship system is interrelated between the three elements. This reciprocal system is realized due to the linkages between the family and other individuals and groups. (Bambang Suwondo, 1982, p. 29) Thus, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is part of the product of a kinship system that regulates relations between people in society.

Dalihan Na Tolu is also a mediator in solving problems of domestic violence, and this cultural custom can solve problems between two troubled parties. They still adhere to culture (*adat*) in solving problems and are resolved using Batak customary law. (Lumbanbatu, 2019, pp. 1–13) In the Mandailing Natal community, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is used to maintain the harmonization of a multicultural society so that people can live in peace and harmony. (Undang Sakti Rangkuti, 2021, pp. 14–15)

The core values of Batak culture seven values reflect ethnic or national identity. The seven elements of value are; kinship, religion, *hagabeon* (longevity), *hamoraan* (honour), *uhum* and *ugari* (customary law and culture), *pengayoman* (protection), and *marsisarian* (mutual under-

standing).(J.C. Vergouwen, 2004, pp. 164–167)

Many Batak people have moved from their hometowns in North Sumatra and its surroundings to various overseas places, local and national, in Indonesia. The Batak people are known for their determination to preserve and maintain the cultural values of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, even though they are far from their hometowns. It is in line with Andi Limbong⁴, who said that the advantages of the Batak people will still maintain their culture.

The existence and cultural customs of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in the modern era are still consistent with their customs. Even though the Batak people have spread to various areas outside North Sumatra, they still adhere to the *Dalihan Na Tolu* culture. Thus the author will discuss more deeply related to the philosophy of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in the following discussion.

Reflection of the Meaning of the *Dalihan Na Tolu* Philosophy that Underlies Community Life

Philosophy is also the expression of deep thoughts used as a way of life.(Kemdikbud, 2016) According to Grayling, philosophy is a scientific discipline that strives for general truths and principles through observing and solving basic and general problems regarding existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language. (A.C. Grayling, 1999, p. 54) In this sense, philosophy is closely related to politics, education, religion, natural sciences and mathematics. For example, the work of Isaac Newton uses the term 'natural philosophy' because it includes disciplines associated with science, such as medicine, astronomy, physics, and natural sciences.(David C. Lindberg, 2007, p. 123)

Harun Nasution uses the term philosophy in an attempt by humans to understand radically, integrally and systematically about God, the universe and humans so that they can produce knowledge about what nature is as far as human reason can reach and what the human attitude towards this knowledge is.(Zaenal Abidin, 2011, pp. 148–149)

According to T.M. Sihombing, "*tungku nan*

tiga" expresses a statement about the unity of family relations within the Batak tribe.(Riris Nainggolan & Syamsul Bahri, 2019, pp. 1–13) The *Dalihan Na Tolu*, an indigenous group community, is part of all Batak tribes; although the terms used are different, the meaning is the same.

Some of the researchers' findings found that the Karo Batak people are called *Rakut Site-lu* or *Sangkep Si Telu*, consisting of *Kalimbubu*, *Mondaya*, and *anak Beru*.(Martin Luther Peranginangin, 2004, p. 24) In the Mandailing community, it is called *Dalihan Na Tolu* which has elements from *Kohanggi*, namely the clan family, *mora*, the wife's family, and *boru*, the family that takes from the wife or son-in-law's family.(Undang Sakti Rangkuti, 2021, pp. 69–71) In contrast, the Simalungun Batak community is called *Tolu Sahundulan*, which consists of *Tondong*, *Mondaya* and *Boru*.(Ariokh Thio Gunadi Putra, Kahfiati Kahdar, 2019, pp. 37–43) It is also in the Batak Toba community called *Dalihan Na Tolu* with the elements of the name, namely *Dongan Sabutuha*, *Hula-Hula* and *Boru*.(Sitanggang, 2010, p. 42) Thus, the term *Dalihan Na Tolu* has the same meaning even though it differs in the Batak ethnic group.

Dalihan Na Tolu is a philosophy based on the social relations of the Batak community, meaning that the main guideline in *Dalihan Na Tolu* is used as self-identity both in status, function and social attitudes in dealing with other community members.(Lumbanbatu, 2019, pp. 1–13) It is in line with the stove analogy, namely that the stove cannot be separated from everyday life, which means that humans need food to live and use the stove (*dalihan*) as a function of cooking and heating the body.(T.M. Sihombing, 1986, pp. 56–58) The definition of a three-stove is three stones used as a pedestal for the pot (*dalihan*) in cooking. The ancestors of the Batak tribe interpreted that the stone stove had one unit in strengthening the pot for cooking or cooking so that nothing in the pot spilled so that it could be cooked perfectly. Thus, the three stones together have their respective positions well.(T.M. Sihombing, 1986, p. 60)

Kahanggi, Mora, and Boru, elements of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, are a kinship system that will determine everything in people's lives. The differ-

⁴ Andi Limbong is a migrant from Batak Toba who is currently migrating to Brebes. (Ramos Hakta Tua Tambunan, 2018, p. 45)

ent designations of Dalihan Na Tolu have a mechanism to resolve all conflicts in community groups through deliberations of daily meetings and closest families. The three elements of Dalihan Na Tolu can also become mediators between two parties who are in a state of conflict. Nevertheless, if this mediation fails, Mora can act as an arbitrator who can resolve conflicts using local customary power and is coercive.(Prayoga & Zuska, 2022, pp. 242–253)

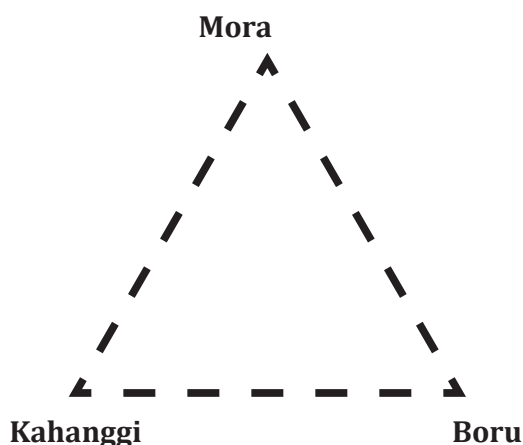


Figure 1: Unity of family relations in the Dalihan Na Tolu custom

Dalihan Na Tolu has the highest level in his group, Mora, then the levels below, *Kahanggi* and *Boru*. These three elements are interrelated and function to maintain good relations between the three and become a unit in family relationships. *Dalihan Na Tolu* is also used as one of the core cultural values of the Batak tribe.(Anwar Saleh Daulay, 2008)

Part of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, namely *Mora*, this element has a higher and more honourable position, so *Kahanggi* and *Boru* must be highly respected. The form of respect is in the form of attitudes, words and deeds. In this case, if there is deliberation and it does not produce an agreement, then a unilateral and forced decision will occur and is difficult to oppose.(Marbun & Hutapea, 1987, p. 61)

The next part is *Kahanggi*,⁵ and This ele-

⁵ Kahanggi is also called Dongan Sabutuha, Dongan Tubu, Dongan Saboltok, and senina. According to the father's line, this group consists of people with the same lineage. In other words, a group is a group that has the same surname or ancestor. (Marbun & Hutapea, 1987, p. 41)

ment signifies togetherness to bear sorrow and suffering, light and heavy to carry.(Abbas Pulungan, 2018, p. 105) In the Batak people, *kahanggi* represents the presence of *Debata Soripada*, symbolized in white and must be kept clean. The white symbol is a symbol of equality and equality in Batak society.(Gultom Rajamarpondang, 1992, p. 57)

Boru or *anak Boru* is a group of recipients of wives; in public relations, *anak Boru* will greatly respect their *Mora*, and vice versa, *Mora* will love their *Boru*.(Azhar Riyadi, 2019, pp. 35–48) If it is analogous to daily activities or events in the Batak tribe, then *Boru* will become *parkobas* or servants. Meanwhile, in disputes, *Boru's* position is as a peacemaker. In this case, *Boru* becomes a place of a solution when there is a dispute in the community.(Richard Sinaga, 2007, p. 15)

In addition, the *Dalihan Na Tolu* indigenous people use and utilize the *Dalihan Na Tolu* philosophy that prevails in society. The philosophy in question is, first, *Somba mar Mora* with the understanding of respect, maintaining honour, courtesy, and support. Second, *Elek mar Anak Boru* with understanding, takes heart, seduces, keeps her from being offended, and loves her. Third, *Manat-Manat mar Kahanggi* with the understanding of being careful, not careless, and guarding one's feelings.(Suhaimy Pasaribu, 2020, pp. 57–58)

Talking about the Batak tribe's philosophy of life, namely *Dalihan Na Tolu*, its identity shows a limit of difference from other groups. *Dalihan Na Tolu* is applied within the North Sumatra region. This philosophy is also used outside North Sumatra, especially for those who migrate outside the North Sumatra area. The author has also found some data related to the Migrating Batak tribe in various regions of Java, such as Brebes, Bandung, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Pekalongan etc., so that the identity that the Batak people can still apply the philosophy of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in their new place.

Implementation of Dalihan Na Tolu's Values to the General Public

Socio-cultural values are the part that is considered by society as human beings who have life values. This value is valuable as expect-

ed, beautiful and abstract, with idealism.(Yulianthi, 2015, p. 29) In simple terms, *Dalihan Na Tolu* is part of socio-cultural values that benefit the wider community. It means that in family life, neighbours and the wider community have meaning and benefits for socio-culture. It is what can form a society that has good relations with other human beings without any differences, whether in ethnicity, profession, colour, culture or attitude. The values of *Dalihan Na Tolu* have a useful function in people's daily lives, especially in education, behaviour, religion and regulating the discipline of community activities.(Undang Sakti Rangkuti, 2021, pp. 37-47)

The socio-cultural values in *Dalihan Na Tolu* can be formulated as follows; *first*, the value of speech (*partuturan*) in manners with parents and those around them. In order to maintain the culture of the Batak tribe, this system is used as good communication in inviting the interlocutor to be more intimate so that the value of speech can also act and solve social problems.(Rachel Devita Suharto, Nur Hidayah, 2022, pp. 37-47) *Second*, Humanity and Brotherhood Values in making an event, decision, or deliberation should be informed and known by the rest of the community. That is, they cannot walk alone because in deciding the law on customary issues, ceremonies and *siriaon* in marriage or death, the participation of the community is required so that they can help each other.

Third, the value of *Hamoraon* means honour. The value of honour in the Batak tribe is seen in the material, scientific and spiritual aspects that exist in a person. The Batak people respect people who have high religious knowledge.(Lebba Kadorre Pongsibanne, 2017, p. 98) *Fourth*, *Uhum* and *Ugari* values mean culture. These two values are legal values that uphold justice and respect justice. Betraying the customary agreement, he will also get legal sanctions according to custom.(Lebba Kadorre Pongsibanne, 2017, p. 99)

Fifth, the value of kinship or familiarity is the most important position of the values above. It can be seen in the Batak sub-tribes, such as; the Batak tribe, Mandailing tribe, Angkola tribe, and other tribes. This value manifests in the implementation of *Dalihan Na Tolu* with greetings, blood relations, and marital ties.(Lebba Kadorre

Pongsibanne, 2017, p. 96)

For overseas communities outside the North Sumatra region, Batak cultural customs contain cultural values such as religious or belief values, kinship values, *Hagabeon*, *Hamoraon* and *Uhum* and *Ugari* values, where these values are traditional wisdom and at the same time become capital for human development. It is related to identity and ethnicity as a way of life and a means of interaction that should have functions and benefits in a society that owns culture. Ethnic identity is the internalization of values passed down by the ancestors so that the existence of *Dalihan Na Tolu* is maintained, which later becomes the philosophy and way of life for the Batak people.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research above, it can be described that the local wisdom of the *Dalihan Na Tolu* culture still exists and is still implemented and used by the Batak community, both locally and overseas. It is because the philosophy of life in *Dalihan Na Tolu* does not change anything, even though it is not his hometown. *Dalihan Na Tolu's* philosophy of a cooking stove with three legs is a balanced relationship between kinship and kinship. The values that need to be instilled in *Dalihan Na Tolu* are speech values (*partuturan*), human and brotherly values, *hamoraon* values, *uhum* and *ugari* values, and kinship or familiarity values. Understanding local wisdom and its relevance to social life is crucial to implement in everyday life. It is related to cultivating an attitude of love for the prevailing culture or customs. Therefore it is necessary to educate the people of Indonesia regarding preserving culture as a diverse nation in collaboration with the government.

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