



Axiology of Basic Education in the Land of Batak: Tension Between Traditional Values of Hamoraon, Hagabeon, Hasangapon And Modernization

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ABSTRACT

Basic education in Batak Land has long been driven by three cultural values: Hamoraon (prosperity), Hagabeon (descendants), and Hasangapon (honor). Modernization now challenges this value system through individual aspirations, a digital economy, language shift, and weakening communal social control. This study aims to describe how the three values operate as an axiological system in basic education, to identify the tensions that modernization produces, and to formulate a model of axiological reconciliation. A qualitative library research design was used. The corpus consisted of 33 documents published between 2018 and 2026, screened against explicit criteria and analyzed through content analysis with thematic coding. The results show four strands of literature: meaning and practice of Batak values (8 documents), axiological framing (6), integration of local wisdom into curriculum (11), and modernization pressures (8). One document reports that only 30% of Batak Toba adolescents aged 15 to 18 in a Medan district maintain the language, and another reports 17 million Indonesians identifying as content creators. None of the six axiological documents was situated in a Batak community. The study concludes that the tension is a problem of interpretation and transmission rather than a clash of rival value systems. A reconciliation model combining reinterpretation of the values, curricular embedding, and community partnership is proposed, with mother-tongue value vocabulary as an enabling condition. Implications are discussed for curriculum design, teacher education, and regional education policy.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most visible expressions of Batak identity. The population census profile of ethnic groups compiled by Statistics Indonesia treats educational attainment and regional language use as core indicators of each group's social profile (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). Studies from South

Tapanuli and from Batak church communities describe parents who work tirelessly, and are willing to sacrifice much, so that their children can study as far as possible (Dalimunthe & Lubis, 2019; Raulina et al., 2026). The saying *anakkon hi do hamoraon di ahu*, meaning that children are the parents' treasure, captures this orientation (Raulina et al., 2026).

At the same time, several trends put pressure on this orientation. Studies of Toba Batak youth report advanced language shift. In one district of Medan, only 30% of Batak Toba adolescents aged 15 to 18 were classified as maintaining the language (Nainggolan & Girsang, 2019), and in Rantau Selatan the language was classified as critically endangered among children (Vinawari et al., 2019). Research on Indonesian students in collectivist settings shows that parental expectations shape children's self-efficacy and career exploration (Jasmon et al., 2020), while content creation has become a favored occupation that offers young Indonesians income without depending on formal credentials (Jati, 2025). Research on *Dalihan na Tolu* warns of degrading communal values among adolescents (Priyono & Siregar, 2021) and asks whether local wisdom can act as social control in the use of technology (Lubis et al., 2019).

Indonesian basic education currently offers space for local values. Studies of *Kurikulum Merdeka* describe how teachers can design learning around local conditions such as village culture (Damayanti et al., 2025), and how local wisdom-based education can support the Pancasila Student Profile in elementary schools (Ginanjar et al., 2026). Yet the direction that such designs take depends on which values are chosen and how they are read, and that question is axiological before it is pedagogical.

Axiology is the branch of philosophy that studies value, conventionally divided into ethics, which concerns the good, and aesthetics, which concerns the beautiful. In education, axiology asks which values justify the aims, content, and methods of schooling (Rahmadani et al., 2021; Vakhovskyi, 2025). Recent work describes the axiological dimension of the philosophy of education as a reflection on the ethical and moral norms that underlie every educational and formative process (Rodrigues, 2025), and argues that, when the value picture of the world changes rapidly, students should take part in reassessing and constructing values instead of only receiving them (Vakhovskyi, 2025). Axiological approaches have been applied to teacher preparation (Bicheva & Filatova, 2018), to Islamic education (Jasnain et al., 2022), and to local culture-based character education in primary school (Rosita & Hanum, 2024).

In the Batak worldview, three values are repeatedly linked to schooling. *Hamoraon* refers to wealth, *Hagabeon* to successful descendants, and *Hasangapon* to being influential and respected (Dalimunthe & Lubis, 2019),

with honor in one account obtained through education and experience (Simamora et al., 2022). Together with Dalihan na Tolu, a kinship structure of three elements (hula-hula, dongan tubu, and boru), these values are recognized as resources for character building (Sibarani et al., 2018; Sitanggang et al., 2020; Sitorus et al., 2024). Local wisdom itself has been categorized into life philosophy, oral traditions, traditional values, social systems, and environmental ethics (Sitorus et al., 2024). In this scheme, Hamoraon, Hagabeon, and Hasangapon can be read as a life philosophy expressed through traditional values, and Dalihan na Tolu as a social system. Their manifestations are varied: parental sacrifice and aspiration (Dalimunthe & Lubis, 2019), achievement motivation grounded in Hagabeon (Hasugian, 2023), ritual practice aimed at lineage and blessing (Saragi et al., 2024), a role in primary school character education (Siahaan & Sagala, 2025), and the construction of the three values as a cultural reality within an urban Batak church congregation (Pangaribuan, 2018).

Three limitations stand out in the literature reviewed here. First, studies of Batak values tend to examine one value, one site, or one instrument, and studies with an explicit axiological frame have rarely been situated in Batak communities. Second, research on local wisdom in elementary schools concentrates on how values can be integrated into the curriculum, especially under Kurikulum Merdeka (Damayanti et al., 2025; Ginanjar et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2026), and gives less attention to why the values themselves are contested. Third, language shift, parental expectation, and the digital economy are usually treated in separate research strands. We therefore argue that the tension between traditional and modern values in Batak basic education is not a clash between two incompatible axiologies. It is a tension in how one value system is interpreted and transmitted, and it can be reconciled when interpretation, curriculum, and community roles are redesigned together.

The purpose of this article is threefold: to describe how Hamoraon, Hagabeon, and Hasangapon function as an axiological system in basic education; to identify the main axiological tensions produced by modernization; and to formulate a model of axiological reconciliation for basic education in Batak Land.

RESEARCH METHOD

The object of the study is the axiology of basic education in Batak Land, North Sumatra, understood as the value system that gives direction and justification to elementary schooling. The case is the interaction between the traditional values Hamoraon, Hagabeon, and Hasangapon and the pressures of

modernization. No institution or event was observed directly. The study examines how this case is represented in scholarly and official documents.

This is a qualitative library research with a conceptual and philosophical orientation. It relies entirely on secondary data, namely published texts, and no primary data were collected. The design fits a research question that concerns the normative and philosophical dimensions of educational value rather than empirical measurement. It is therefore not intended to estimate how common any tension is in a population.

Because the study has no human respondents, the sources of information are documents. The corpus contains 33 documents: 27 journal or bulletin articles, four conference papers, one statistical report, and one magazine essay. Documents were included if they (a) were published between 2016 and 2026; (b) addressed Batak values, axiology or philosophy of education, local wisdom in primary and general education, or modernization pressures on Indonesian youth; and (c) could be traced through a DOI, an institutional repository, or an official publisher page. Documents were excluded if their bibliographic data could not be verified or if they addressed vocational or technical training unrelated to values.

The procedure had four stages. First, keywords in English and Indonesian, including axiology of education, Hamoraon Hagabeon Hasangapon, Dalihan na Tolu, Batak Toba local wisdom, language shift, local wisdom in elementary school, Kurikulum Merdeka, and youth digital economy, were used to search Google Scholar, national journal portals, publisher websites, and the website of Statistics Indonesia. Second, titles and abstracts were screened against the inclusion criteria. Third, the bibliographic data of each selected document were verified on the publisher page or DOI record and managed in Mendeley using the APA 7th edition style. Fourth, each document was read, and relevant passages, figures, and arguments were extracted into a coding sheet. The data collection technique was documentation.

Data were processed in three steps. In data reduction, extracted passages were coded inductively. In categorization, codes were grouped into themes, and each document was assigned one primary theme. In data display, frequencies and reported figures were arranged in tables. The analysis used content analysis and interpretation through an axiological lens, that is, by asking which values are affirmed, contested, or transmitted in each document. Themes were then synthesized into propositions about tension and reconciliation. To support trustworthiness, bibliographic data were checked against original sources, and every claim in the Discussion was traced to at least one document in the corpus.

RESULTS

Profile of the Corpus

The corpus consists of 33 documents (Table 1). Publication years range from 2018 to 2026, and 15 documents (45%) were published in 2024 or later. By type, the corpus contains 27 articles, four conference papers, one statistical report, and one magazine essay. By setting, 15 documents (45%) concerned Batak communities or Batak values, 15 concerned Indonesia in general or other regions, and three concerned contexts outside Indonesia.

Table 1.
Distribution of Documents by Publication Year (n = 33)

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Documents	3	4	3	3	4	1	6	6	3

Thematic Distribution

Coding assigned each document one primary theme (Table 2). Integration of local wisdom into curriculum, learning, and character education was the largest theme.

Table 2.
Primary Themes in the Corpus (n = 33)

Primary theme	Documents	%
Meaning and practice of Batak values (Hamoraon, Hagabeon, Hasangapon, Dalihan na Tolu)	8	24.2
Axiological or philosophy-of-education framing	6	18.2
Integration of local wisdom into curriculum, learning, and character education	11	33.3
Modernization pressures (language, technology, expectations, digital economy, demography)	8	24.2

Note. Percentages are rounded and sum to 99.9.

Six documents took axiology or philosophy of education as their primary frame. None of the six was situated in a Batak community. Their settings were general Indonesian character education, Islamic education, a primary school in Banten, and three contexts outside Indonesia. Among the 11 documents on integration, four referred explicitly to Kurikulum Merdeka or the Pancasila Student Profile, three were literature reviews covering 20 to 40 sources each, and two addressed Batak values directly. No document in the corpus examined teacher authority or the teacher-student relationship in relation to Batak values.

Data on Modernization Pressures

Table 3 arranges the figures and findings reported in the corpus for four pressures on the traditional value system.

Table 3.
Data Reported for Four Modernization Pressures

Pressure	Data reported in the corpus
Language shift	Batak Toba maintenance of 30% among adolescents aged 15 to 18 in one Medan district. In Rantau Selatan (28 participants), the second generation was classified severely endangered and the third generation critically endangered; education and workplace were the dominant shift domains. In Deli Serdang, young speakers gave prestige or pride (100%), identity (90%), and the wish to keep the language (90%) as reasons for maintenance; neighborhood domain (100%), regular visits to the homeland (80%), and traditional ceremonies (50%) were maintenance factors.
Parental expectation	In a survey of 1,017 medical students in four Indonesian faculties, parental expectations influenced self-efficacy, which formed part of the routes toward career exploration. Documents on the three values describe parents as tireless and willing to sacrifice everything for their children.
Digital economy	Youth unemployment of 17.3% in 2025; 17 million self-identified content creators in 2024, of whom 8 million treated content creation as their main occupation, earning the equivalent of 63% of the national minimum wage. Some young creators continued after graduating and others discontinued formal education.
Communal social control	A case study of two schools in North Sumatra found basic differences in student attitudes toward technology between the school that integrated Dalihan na Tolu and the school that did not. A study of adolescents in Padangsidimpuan reported degradation of Dalihan na Tolu values. A study in Salaon Toba Village reported that Dalihan na Tolu remains in daily use and teaches respect, courtesy, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and care.

Data on Integration Practices

Documents on integration report forms of local wisdom that can enter learning: life philosophy, oral traditions, traditional values, social systems, and environmental ethics. One case study reports that the flexibility of Kurikulum Merdeka allows teachers to design learning around local conditions such as village culture. One study of an axiological approach in a primary school reports that group work and thematic activities helped students internalize values such as mutual cooperation, respect for elders, and care for the environment, and understand their practical benefits.

In summary, the corpus shows four patterns. First, the documents on Batak values are numerous but are not framed axiologically, whereas the axiological documents are not situated in Batak communities. Second, the documents on integration are the largest group, and only two of them address Batak values. Third, the quantitative data on modernization pressure come mainly from language studies, one survey of students, and one report on the digital economy. Fourth, no document examines the teacher-student relationship in relation to Batak values.

DISCUSSION

Batak Values as an Integrated Axiological System

The corpus supports reading Hamoraon, Hagabeon, and Hasangapon as one system in which education is the shared route. Wealth, continuity of descendants, and honor are each reached through schooling, and honor is described as obtained through education and experience (Simamora et al., 2022). Earlier studies often isolate a single value, such as Hagabeon as a source of achievement motivation (Hasugian, 2023). Treating the three together clarifies their division of labor: Hamoraon supplies security, Hagabeon supplies generational continuity, and Hasangapon supplies recognition. In the vocabulary of constructive axiology, where value can function both as an ideal and as a norm of behavior (Vakhovskyi, 2025), the three values are ideals for the child and norms for the parent, which explains why parental sacrifice appears so consistently (Dalimunthe & Lubis, 2019; Raulina et al., 2026).

The system also interacts with religion. In South Tapanuli, the cultural view of the three values was reported as the most dominant encouragement to send children to school, with religious teaching only a supporting factor (Dalimunthe & Lubis, 2019). In a Batak church setting, by contrast, care for children was framed as a spiritual calling that goes beyond cultural obligation (Raulina et al., 2026). Axiology in Batak basic education is therefore layered, and a reconciliation model cannot treat it as purely cultural.

Tension in Educational Goals and Parental Expectation

The data on parental expectation show an enabling side. Expectations shaped self-efficacy among Indonesian students in a collectivist culture (Jasmon et al., 2020), and the 3H literature presents parental aspiration as a motivational resource (Hasugian, 2023). The tension therefore does not lie in expectation itself. It lies in what expectation is directed at. When Hasangapon is read as visible status, children are steered toward credentials that display family honor. When it is read as recognition earned through education and experience (Simamora et al., 2022), the same value can accommodate a wider range of

paths. Whether expectations become a burden for young Batak children is not tested in the corpus, and this study does not claim it. The absence of such evidence is itself a gap that limits confident claims about children's well-being.

An alternative reading deserves mention. It holds that the three values are inseparable from status and material success, and therefore conflict with child-centered and pluralist education. The corpus cannot settle this, because most documents describe the values approvingly, in the language of character education, and few examine their costs. Our proposition that reinterpretation can preserve the core of the values rests on an account of honor as earned through education and experience (Simamora et al., 2022), and it needs empirical testing before it is treated as established.

Tension in the Meaning of Hamoraon

Digital media now offers routes to income that bypass long formal schooling, and a considerable share of young people treat content creation as a main occupation (Jati, 2025). For a value system in which education is the straight road to prosperity, this raises an axiological question about whether schooling is valued for credentials or for the capacities it builds. Local wisdom studies in elementary schools mostly address integration (Damayanti et al., 2025; Ginanjar et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2026) and do not answer this question. Constructive axiology offers a direction: in rapidly changing value pictures, students should participate in reassessing values (Vakhovskiy, 2025). Applied here, Hamoraon can be reinterpreted as intellectual and creative wealth and the capacity to contribute, and children can be invited to discuss what Hamoraon means in a digital economy instead of receiving a fixed definition. This reinterpretation keeps the value's core, which is prosperity gained by dignified means, while widening the routes.

Tension in Language as a Vehicle of Values

The language data are the starkest in the corpus (Nainggolan & Girsang, 2019; Vinawari et al., 2019). Two features deserve attention. First, education and the workplace were the dominant domains of shift in Rantau Selatan (Vinawari et al., 2019), so the school is a site where the language recedes. Second, young speakers in Deli Serdang who maintained the language named pride and identity as reasons, and neighborhood, homeland visits, and ceremonies as supporting factors (Sitanggang et al., 2021). Maintenance thus rests largely on domains outside the school. We infer, as a proposition and not as a finding, that if value concepts such as Hamoraon, Hagabeon, and Hasangapon are carried by their own vocabulary, language shift narrows children's access to their meanings. Schools can respond by making the three values and their vocabulary an explicit object of study, in the mother tongue where possible, and

by connecting classroom language with the family and community domains that already sustain it.

Tension in Communal Social Control

Dalihan na Tolu has been described as a balancing structure of Toba Batak social relations, and a case study reported different student attitudes toward technology depending on whether local wisdom was integrated (Lubis et al., 2019). Adolescents in an urban setting were reported to show degradation of the same values (Priyono & Siregar, 2021), while a village study found the values still in daily use (Sitanggang et al., 2020). Read together, these findings suggest that the values weaken where the kinship audience that once enforced them is absent, as in online spaces and urban settings. This is a different tension from those above, because it concerns the institutions that transmit values and not the values themselves. It calls for a response that rebuilds the transmitting relationships, which is why community partnership appears as a separate pathway below.

Toward a Model of Axiological Reconciliation

The four tensions point to a model with three pathways and one enabling condition (Table 4). The pathways are ordered: reinterpretation comes first because it decides what content curricular embedding should carry, and community partnership sustains both. This ordering differs from much of the integration literature, which begins from curriculum and asks how values can be inserted (Ginanjar et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2026; Sitorus et al., 2024).

Table 4.

Model of axiological reconciliation for basic education in Batak Land

Pathway	Response to tension	Practical form
1. Reinterpretation of the values	Goals and expectation; meaning of Hamoraon	Class discussion and projects in which pupils explain what prosperity, descendants, and honor mean today; Hamoraon as intellectual and creative wealth; Hasangapon as recognition earned through education, experience, and character
2. Curricular embedding	Meaning of Hamoraon; language	Values treated as a thread across subjects and thematic projects, using the flexibility of Kurikulum Merdeka, rather than as a separate ornament

Pathway	Response to tension	Practical form
3. Community partnership	Communal social control	Parents, church leaders, and customary leaders as partners in school programs; Dalihan na Tolu relationships used as an ethic of respect and responsibility, including in digital conduct
Enabling condition: mother-tongue value vocabulary	Language shift	Explicit teaching of the vocabulary of the three values, linked with family and neighborhood language domains

The curricular pathway builds on evidence that local wisdom can support character formation in primary schools, including Batak 3H values (Siahaan & Sagala, 2025), Batak local wisdom in the curriculum (Sitorus et al., 2024), Sasak local wisdom (Tohri et al., 2022), and axiological approaches that help pupils see the practical benefit of values (Rosita & Hanum, 2024). Related advocacy links local wisdom to character education in the era of globalization (Wulandari et al., 2024; Zulkarnaen, 2022), to traditions as a source of character education (Ardianti et al., 2025), and to higher education (Hidayati et al., 2020). Much of this literature, however, relies on literature reviews and single-site case studies (Ardi et al., 2024; Damayanti et al., 2025; Ginanjar et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2026), so the claims of effectiveness should be treated as promising and not as established.

For future testing, each element of the model implies observable indicators: pupils' ability to articulate more than one meaning of each value (reinterpretation); the presence of the values as a thread in teaching modules across several subjects (embedding); documented roles for parents and community leaders in school programs (partnership); and pupils' use of value vocabulary in the mother tongue (enabling condition). These indicators are proposals for testing and not results of this study.

How This Study Differs from Earlier Research

Three differences can be stated. First, the unit of analysis is a system of three values rather than one value, one ritual, or one instrument. Second, the frame is explicitly axiological and situated in Batak basic education, whereas the axiological documents in the corpus were located elsewhere and the Batak documents were mostly descriptive. Third, language shift, parental expectation, the digital economy, and weakening social control are analyzed within one argument and matched to distinct pathways. Studies such as Sitorus et al.

(2024) and Siahaan and Sagala (2025) establish the potential of Batak values for character education. The present study asks which of those values are contested and why, and it places integration after reinterpretation.

Implications for Policy and Practice

For curriculum developers, the model suggests choosing local content by first deciding, with teachers and community members, which reinterpreted meanings of the three values the school wishes to transmit. For teacher education, an axiological approach to preparation, already proposed for vocational teachers (Bicheva & Filatova, 2018), can be adapted so that teachers can lead value discussions instead of only delivering local content. For regional governments, local content provisions could be extended from language instruction to structured value integration and to formal roles for parents, churches, and customary leaders in school programs.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding is that the tension between traditional Batak values and modernization in basic education is better understood as a problem of interpretation and transmission than as a clash of value systems. Across the corpus, education is the shared route to Hamoraon, Hagabeon, and Hasangapon, while four pressures act on how the values are read and passed on: expectations tied to visible status, a digital economy that widens routes to prosperity, language shift, and weakening communal social control. Among the 33 documents, none combined an explicit axiological frame with a Batak basic education setting.

Returning to the research question, the traditional axiological framework of Batak society can be reconciled with the demands of modernity when the three values are reinterpreted together with pupils, embedded across the curriculum in the light of that reinterpretation, and sustained through partnerships with families, churches, and customary institutions. Reconciliation of this kind neither abandons the values nor freezes them. It keeps their core, which is dignified prosperity, continuity between generations, and honor earned through education, while allowing the routes toward them to change.

The contribution is both conceptual and methodological. Conceptually, the study offers an ordered model of axiological reconciliation with three pathways, namely reinterpretation, curricular embedding, and community partnership, and one enabling condition, namely mother-tongue value vocabulary. Methodologically, it demonstrates how an axiological lens can be used to organize a heterogeneous corpus of documents on values, language, and youth into one analysis.

The study has limitations. It relies on secondary data and a purposive corpus of 33 documents, so it cannot estimate how widespread each tension is, and its thematic coding reflects the authors' judgment. The corpus contained no evidence on children's well-being under high expectations, and none on teacher authority in relation to Batak values. Further research should therefore test the model in schools through action research or design-based research, measure children's experience of parental expectation, examine the teacher-student relationship, and compare Batak communities in rural and urban settings and in the diaspora.

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