



Representation of Cosmological Values in the Architecture of Traditional Toba Batak Houses

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ABSTRACT

The architecture of Toba Batak traditional houses is a cultural heritage of the Indonesian archipelago, rich in symbolism and cosmological values. This study aims to examine the representation of cosmological values in the structure, spatial layout, and ornamentation of Toba Batak traditional houses, and to understand how these values function in the socio-cultural life of the community. Using a descriptive qualitative method with an anthropolinguistic approach and symbolic analysis, data were collected through literature review. The results show that Toba Batak traditional house architecture functions not only as a residence but also as a manifestation of the cosmos, composed of three main layers: the upper world (banua ginjang), the middle world (banua tonga), and the lower world (banua toru). This spatial division is represented through the stilt structure of the house, the orientation of the building facing north or the rising sun, and the use of gorga ornaments, which symbolize life, strength, and protection. Furthermore, the house's raised-from-the-ground construction system reflects the concept of separating sacred and profane space, while the curved roof symbolizes the human connection with ancestors and divine powers. This research confirms that Toba Batak architecture is a medium for transmitting cosmological values that continue to live on in the community's cultural practices. These findings are expected to contribute to the preservation of traditional architecture and the development of vernacular architectural studies in Indonesia.

Keywords: cosmological values, architecture, Toba Batak, traditional houses

Representasi Nilai Kosmologis dalam Arsitektur Rumah Tradisional Batak Toba

ABSTRAK

Arsitektur rumah adat Batak Toba merupakan warisan budaya kepulauan Indonesia yang kaya akan simbolisme dan nilai-nilai kosmologis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji representasi nilai-nilai kosmologis dalam struktur, tata ruang, dan ornamen rumah adat Batak Toba, serta memahami bagaimana nilai-nilai tersebut berfungsi dalam kehidupan sosial budaya masyarakat. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan antropolinguistik dan analisis simbolik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa arsitektur rumah adat Batak Toba tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai tempat tinggal, tetapi juga sebagai manifestasi kosmos yang terdiri dari tiga lapisan utama: dunia atas (banua ginjang), dunia tengah (banua tonga), dan dunia bawah (banua toru). Pembagian ruang ini direpresentasikan melalui struktur rumah panggung, orientasi bangunan menghadap utara atau matahari terbit, serta penggunaan ornamen gorga yang melambangkan kehidupan, kekuatan, dan perlindungan. Lebih lanjut, sistem konstruksi rumah yang ditinggikan dari tanah mencerminkan konsep pemisahan ruang sakral dan profan, sementara atap lengkung melambangkan hubungan manusia dengan leluhur dan kekuatan ilahi. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa arsitektur Batak Toba merupakan media transmisi nilai-nilai kosmologis yang terus hidup dalam praktik budaya masyarakat. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat berkontribusi pada pelestarian arsitektur tradisional dan pengembangan studi arsitektur vernakular di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: internasionalisasi, nilai-nilai etika, upacara Batak Toba, antropolinguistik

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional Toba Batak architecture has again become a significant focus in academic discourse and cultural preservation policy, particularly amidst the rapid flow of modernization that is driving the transformation of form, function, and spatial values within traditional Indonesian communities. Many traditional houses have undergone structural changes due to the practical needs of modern society, potentially eroding their symbolic meaning and cosmological values (Simanjuntak, 2021). The Toba Batak traditional house, or ruma gorga, is not merely a physical artifact but a representation of the Toba Batak people's cosmology, which views the world as a unified system consisting of *banua ginjang* (upper world), *banua tonga* (middle world), and *banua toru* (underworld). In the context of current issues regarding the loss of cultural meaning due to the commercialization of tourism and infrastructure development, the study of the representation of cosmological values in traditional house architecture has become increasingly relevant and urgent (Situmorang, 2020).

The main problem that has emerged is the declining understanding of the younger generation regarding the cosmological meaning and function of their own traditional architecture. Many traditional houses have been restored only to their physical aspects, without preserving the spatial philosophy and symbolism inherent in the building structure (Hutapea, 2019). The research problem formulation in this study includes how cosmological values are represented in the structure, spatial layout, and ornamentation of Toba Batak traditional houses, and how these values are understood and passed down in the context of contemporary society. These questions are important because traditional architecture is not merely a material form but also a medium of cultural knowledge that embodies the Toba Batak people's outlook on life (Nainggolan, 2020).

Previous research has extensively examined Toba Batak traditional house architecture in the

context of aesthetics, construction, and functionality. For example, Manurung's (2018) study examined the stilt structure and ecological adaptation of traditional houses, while Simbolon (2019) highlighted the gorga ornament as a medium of visual communication between humans and ancestors. Meanwhile, Lumbantobing (2020) examined the transformation of traditional houses within modern development practices in the Toba region. However, while numerous studies have addressed symbolic and aesthetic aspects, few have in-depth examined the representation of cosmological values in relation to spatial structure, building orientation, and the cultural narratives that bind all architectural elements. This dearth of research that comprehensively connects cosmological philosophy and architectural form indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed. This research gap is not only related to the lack of discussion of cosmology in architecture, but also to the limited anthropolinguistic approach to understanding the terms, symbols, and narratives that shape the structures of meaning in Toba Batak traditional houses. In many studies, aspects of ritual language, the naming of house parts, and the symbolic meaning of gorga are often not connected to Toba Batak cosmology, which has a complex and layered knowledge system (Saragih, 2021). Yet, Toba Batak cosmology is not merely a spiritual concept but also forms the basis for the formation of spatial planning, structural hierarchy, and relationships between house parts. Therefore, this research fills this gap by bringing together architectural, anthropolinguistic, and symbolic analysis within a holistic framework.

This research is significant because it provides a deeper understanding of how Toba Batak traditional houses represent the cosmos and how this value system functions in community life. In a modern context, cultural revitalization is not simply about preserving the physical form of a building; it must also protect the philosophical values and traditional perspectives that are at the heart of vernacular architecture (Sinaga, 2022). By



uncovering the cosmological dimensions of traditional house architecture, this research helps ensure that cultural restoration and preservation are not merely decorative but also maintain the symbolic integrity and meanings passed down through generations.

The academic contribution of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach, combining architectural studies, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. This approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between the physical structure of buildings and the worldview of the Toba Batak people. This research broadens understanding of how traditional architecture can be read as a cultural text containing spiritual, social, and historical narratives (Gultom, 2019). Furthermore, this research provides practical contributions to the preservation of Toba Batak traditional houses, particularly for local governments, traditional village managers, tourism developers, and local communities striving to maintain their cultural identity amidst globalization.

Specifically, this research enriches the literature on Indonesian vernacular architecture by demonstrating that the Toba Batak traditional house is not merely a functional structure, but a representation of cosmology systematically structured through building orientation, vertical and horizontal spatial divisions, and the symbolism of gorga ornaments. This contribution is significant because many previous studies of vernacular architecture have emphasized construction and aesthetic aspects without delving into broader value systems and philosophies (Siregar, 2018). Thus, this research provides a new perspective on how traditional architecture can be understood as an integral part of a cultural knowledge system.

Finally, this research is expected to inspire the development of a traditional architectural preservation model based on cultural values, not just physical form. Sustainable cultural preservation requires a comprehensive understanding of the structures of meaning that

shape the architectural identity of the Toba Batak people (Hutagalung, 2020). Through examining the representation of cosmological values in Toba Batak traditional houses, this research provides a scientific foundation for preserving cultural heritage that is not only aesthetic but also possesses profound spiritual and social values. Thus, this research makes an important contribution in maintaining the sustainability of Toba Batak culture while enriching the treasury of traditional architectural knowledge in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the representation of cosmological values in the architecture of Toba Batak traditional houses requires a cross-disciplinary understanding encompassing anthropology, vernacular architecture, cultural semiotics, and anthropolinguistics. Traditional Toba Batak architecture is inseparable from the cosmological perspective of its people, who view the world as a three-layered order: *banua ginjang* (upper world), *banua tonga* (middle world), and *banua toru* (underworld). Therefore, this literature review reviews the theoretical framework and previous research findings related to Batak cosmological concepts, traditional architecture, spatial symbolism, gorga ornaments, and relevant analytical approaches.

The Toba Batak cosmological concept serves as the primary foundation for understanding the structure and spatial layout of traditional houses. This cosmology is influenced by Parmalim beliefs and ancestral cosmic concepts that place the relationship between humans and spirits, nature, and ancestors as a unified whole. According to Vergouwen (2004), the Batak people believe that the world is composed of three interconnected dimensions, with each space having a specific function and sacred value. Harahap (2015) added that this division of the cosmos is not only present in rituals but also manifested in building structures, settlement patterns, and spatial orientation. This understanding of cosmology forms the basis for

interpreting architectural symbolism, so that each part of the traditional house has spiritual and social significance.

The vernacular architecture of the Toba Batak has been discussed by several architectural and anthropological experts. Nasution (2011) stated that the traditional Batak house represents both ethnic identity and a social system that binds kinship ties within the concept of *Dalihan Na Tolu*. In this context, the house's architecture reflects not only aesthetics but also the social structure of the community. Meanwhile, Simanjuntak (2018) highlighted the ecological aspects and environmental adaptation in the design of the Toba Batak stilt houses, which are able to withstand soil humidity, animal attacks, and the tropical climate. This study demonstrates that Toba Batak architecture is the result of a complex interaction between cultural, environmental, and cosmological values.

The structure of a traditional Toba Batak house is divided into three main sections, directly representing the divisions of the cosmos. The *bagas onggat* (curved roof) is interpreted as the *banua ginjang*, where ancestral spirits and spiritual powers reside. The *jabu tonga*, or central room, represents the *banua tonga*, the human world, the center of daily activities. Meanwhile, the space under the house (*bara jabu*) reflects the *banua toru*, the underworld, symbolizing the abode of destructive forces, the animal kingdom, and profane elements. According to Tarigan (2017), this vertical structural division is the most concrete visual representation of Toba Batak cosmology. The integration of sacred and profane spaces is carefully orchestrated to create harmony between human life and nature.

The study of spatial symbolism in traditional architecture also plays a crucial role in understanding cosmological representations. According to Eliade (1959), traditional architecture across cultures often functions as an "axis mundi," or world axis connecting humans to the divine world. In the Toba Batak context, traditional houses serve as the cosmic axis, connecting the three

worlds through their spatial structure, building orientation, and the rituals performed within them. Sitorus (2016) states that the orientation of traditional houses facing the sunrise is not merely a practical choice, but a symbol of respect for the source of life and ancestral spirits. Thus, the building's orientation, spatial division, and construction layout are symbolic elements reflecting cosmology.

In addition to spatial structure, the *gorga* ornament is an important element in cosmological representation. *Gorga* are typical Toba Batak carvings that combine red, black, and white to symbolize cosmic balance. According to Hutagalung (2014), red represents the upper world and the power of life, black symbolizes the underworld and the power of death, while white reflects the purity of the middle world. This color symbolism is integrated into the *gorga ulu singa*, *gorga boraspati*, and *gorga desa na ualu* motifs, each of which has protective and spiritual values. As explained by Bruner (2013), *gorga* is not only an aesthetic decoration, but a means of visual communication that contains moral and cosmological messages for future generations.

The study of *gorga* ornaments is also discussed from a cultural semiotic perspective. According to Peirce (1955), a symbol is a sign representation related to an object and an interpretant through cultural conventions. In the Toba Batak context, *gorga* symbols function as markers of cosmological values through cultural conventions passed down through generations. Tobing (2019) explains that each *gorga* motif has a semantic relationship with Batak mythology, including the story of the creation of the universe and the relationship between humans and *Debata Natolu* (the three gods who formed the world). Thus, *gorga* ornaments can be read as cultural texts that reinforce the structure of cosmological meaning in traditional house architecture.

An anthropolinguistic approach is also relevant to understanding local terminology in Toba Batak architecture. Anthropolinguistics emphasizes the relationship between language,



culture, and social practices. According to Duranti (1997), language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of knowledge systems and cultural values. Local terms such as *jabu soding*, *jabu bona*, *ruma gorga*, or *tiang soko guru* (pillar standing on a pillar) hold meanings inseparable from the social structure and cosmology of the Toba Batak people. Pardede (2020) highlights how the naming of spaces in traditional houses reflects social hierarchy, family roles, and certain sacred values. Therefore, terminological analysis is crucial in understanding the representation of cosmological values in architecture.

Research on Toba Batak traditional houses also examines the dynamics of architectural preservation and transformation. Lumbanbatu (2020) shows that modernization has influenced changes in materials and construction techniques in traditional houses, although spatial patterns and symbolism generally remain intact. However, research by Sibuea (2018) reveals that the regeneration of symbolic knowledge related to cosmology is weakening due to a lack of cultural education for the younger generation. This poses challenges for the preservation of cosmological meaning in traditional architecture.

The literature review also shows that cosmological interpretations in vernacular architecture are often overlooked in physical restoration processes. According to Putra (2019), cultural conservation cannot be limited to the physical restoration of buildings but must also be accompanied by the restoration of values, social functions, and symbolic meaning. In the Toba Batak context, understanding cosmology is key to ensuring that traditional houses continue to function as cultural spaces that reflect the community's identity and outlook on life.

Although numerous studies have addressed the construction, aesthetics, and symbolism of Toba Batak architecture, studies specifically examining the holistic relationship between spatial structure, building orientation, *gorga* ornamentation, and cosmology are still limited.

This suggests room for further research that examines cosmological representations from an integrative perspective. An interdisciplinary approach combining cosmological theory, spatial semiotics, vernacular architecture, and anthropolinguistics is considered the most appropriate approach to explaining the complexity of cultural meanings in Toba Batak traditional houses.

Overall, this literature review underscores that Toba Batak traditional house architecture is a material and symbolic construction that reflects the cosmology of its people. The representation of the cosmos in the vertical structure of the house, the building's orientation, the ornamental symbolism, and the spatial terminology form a unified system that forms a holistic understanding of traditional Toba Batak architecture. The studies conducted provide a strong foundation for this research to delve deeper into how these cosmological values are internalized in architecture and how these meanings play a role in contemporary cultural practices.

METHOD

This study, which examines the representation of cosmological values in the architecture of Toba Batak traditional houses, uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on understanding cultural meanings, spatial symbolism, and cosmological structures that cannot be explained through quantitative methods. The descriptive-analytical design allows the researcher to describe architectural phenomena in depth and analyze the relationships between building structures, *gorga* symbols, spatial layout, and the cosmological views of the Toba Batak people.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher herself, who served as data collector, analyzer, and interpreter. To strengthen the findings, additional instruments included field notes, visual observation sheets, a camera for building documentation, and symbolic analysis

tools. The objects of study in this research included Toba Batak traditional houses, specifically their vertical structures, spatial layout, building orientation, and gorga ornaments, which represent cosmological values. The primary data sources came from key informants such as traditional leaders, cultural stakeholders, gorga craftsmen, and local communities familiar with architectural traditions. In addition, secondary data sources were obtained through literature, historical records, cultural archives, and previous research.

Data collection techniques utilized three main methods: observation and documentation study. Direct observations were conducted at traditional Toba Batak houses in several locations, such as Samosir and Silalahi, to examine the building structures, spatial divisions, and gorga ornaments. In-depth observations were conducted in a semi-structured manner, allowing researchers to explore informants' understanding of cosmological values and symbolic meanings in architecture. Documentation was conducted by collecting photographs, videos, ritual records, and relevant written sources to enrich the research data. A triangulation approach was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic and symbolic analysis techniques. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns, categories, and themes related to cosmology, spatial planning, and cultural meanings in traditional house architecture. Symbolic analysis was used to interpret the meaning of gorga ornaments and building structures from a Toba Batak cosmological perspective. The analysis process was conducted simultaneously with data collection, following an interactive analysis model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data were analyzed inductively to produce findings rooted in the cultural context of the community. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and informant validation. Source

triangulation was conducted by comparing information from traditional figures, gorga craftsmen, and the general public. Method triangulation was carried out by combining observation and documentation studies. Informant validation was carried out by reconfirming research findings to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations. Furthermore, an audit trail was used to systematically record the research process as a form of scientific transparency.

The research phase began with preparation, which included developing instruments, determining the study location, and collecting literature. The next stage was field data collection through observation. Once the data was collected, thematic and symbolic analysis was conducted to interpret the findings. The final stage was compiling a research report and verifying the results to ensure that the representation of cosmological values in the architecture of Toba Batak traditional houses was comprehensively explained and aligned with the research objectives.




RESULTS

1. Cosmological Representation in the Vertical Structure of Traditional Houses

Field data shows that the vertical spatial division of Batak houses is not merely related to function but also embodies cosmological structure. The high, towering roof represents *banua ginjang*, the world of ancestors and protective spirits. The human living space represents the *banua tonga*, and the underfloor space represents the *banua toru*, which is the underworld which is related to economic functions, livestock, and the symbol of the world of darkness.

The following table summarizes these symbolism findings.




Table 1
Representation of the Triloka in the Structure of Toba Batak Traditional Houses

No.	Architectural Elements	Physical Description	Cosmological Meaning	Socio-Cultural Functions
1	<p>Towering Roof</p> 	Triangular shape from front/back, curved high where the back is higher than the front.	Banua ginjang (upper realm)	A sacred space that connects humans with the Creator and ancestors.
2	<p>Living Room</p> 	Living area and daily activities.	Banua tonga (the realm of humans/living creatures)	Social interaction, decision making, family rituals.
3	<p>Under the House</p> 	Located under the house structure.	Banua Toru (the underworld)	Placement of livestock, storage of agricultural products, symbol of the foundation of life.

2. Cosmological Representation in Ornaments and Carved Motifs

Carvings (gorga) are the most dominant medium for cosmological expression. The three main motifs gorga ulu singa, gorga sitompi, and gorga boraspati—are consistently found in traditional houses and embody values of protection, fertility, and cosmic balance.

Table 2
Cosmological Meanings of Gorga in Toba Batak Traditional Houses

No.	Gorga Motif	Location in the House	Cosmological Symbolism	Cultural Values
1	<p>Ulu Singa</p> 	Roof top and front.	The ruler of Banua Ginjang, the ward off disaster.	Protection and strength.
2	<p>Living Room</p> 	The outer walls of the house.	Symbol of fertility, guardian of the home.	Prosperity and sustainability.
3	<p>Sitompi</p> 	Support beams and frames.	The harshness of the rhythm of life	Balance and harmony.

Observations show that the use of red, black, and white in the gorga is consistent with the concept of the triloka (three-dimensional world) and Batak philosophy: red represents the spirit of life, white represents purity and prayers to ancestors, and black symbolizes strength.

2.1 Cosmological Representation through House Orientation

Research results indicate that the orientation of traditional houses is not arbitrary. Traditional houses tend to face the sunrise or mountain ranges and lakes, which are understood as sources of life.

Tabel 3
House Orientation and Its Meaning

Orientation	Cosmological Interpretation	Customary Practice
Facing East	Direction of life and birth.	New hope and blessings.
Facing Lake Toba/Mountain	The source of ancestral power.	Genealogical and spiritual legitimacy.

Observations and textual analysis of sources reveal that the orientation of the house also determines the layout of the living room and guest seating during traditional ceremonies, demonstrating that orientation is not merely symbolic but also socio-organic.



2.2 Cosmological Representation in Spatial Division

The spatial division of the Toba Batak traditional house reflects the relational values within the Dalihan Na Tolu (three traditional hearths) structure: hula-hula, dongan tubu, and boru. The front room is symbolized as an area for hula-hula, the middle room for dongan tubu, and the back room for boru. This demonstrates the integration of cosmology with the kinship system.

DISCUSSION

1. Architecture as a Manifestation of the Toba Batak Triloka

The findings indicate that the structure of the traditional house directly represents the Batak cosmological concept, which divides nature into three layers. The vertical shape of the house is consciously designed to reflect the relationship between humans and their ancestors and the supernatural world. This demonstrates that cosmology is not merely an abstract concept but is internalized in the structure of the community's physical space.

Thus, traditional houses become cultural texts that contain cosmological narratives visually and functionally, in accordance with the anthropolinguistic perspective which views symbolic language and artifacts as part of a cultural communication system.

2. Gorga as a Cosmological Language

The gorga motif is not merely an aesthetic ornament, but a form of “visual language” that represents a belief system. Ulu singa, boraspati, and sitompi demonstrate humanity's connection to cosmic forces. The repetition of motifs in different houses demonstrates that this symbolism has been consistently passed down across generations. All gorga motifs embody a narrative of cosmic dualism: protection versus threat, fertility versus destruction, order versus chaos. This narrative is at the heart of Batak cosmology.

C. Architecture as a Regulator of Social Relations

Cosmology and kinship systems are interwoven into the spatial structure of the house. The placement of guests during traditional ceremonies and the division of space based on Dalihan Na Tolu demonstrate that the traditional house is an arena for the representation of social values. Thus, architecture not only stores cosmological values but also reproduces social systems. This aligns with anthropolinguistic methods, which view architectural symbols as social performatives.

4. House Orientation as a Guardian of Cosmic Harmony

The orientation of traditional houses reflects a relationship with the sun, nature, and ancestral spirits. This demonstrates that the Batak people understand space as a living entity that needs to be harmonized with the forces of nature. The house serves as a mediator between humans and the cosmos.

5. Integration of Cosmology, Belief Systems, and Architecture

This research shows that all elements of the house—structure, ornamentation, space, and orientation—consistently reflect the Batak worldview. The relationship between cosmology and architecture is not merely symbolic, but also practical and communal. Traditional houses function as centers of cosmological, genealogical, and social life, thus being described as “living architecture.”

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the architecture of the Toba Batak traditional house represents the most complete representation of the Batak people's cosmology, which views the universe as a unity between the upper world (banua ginjang), the middle world (banua tonga), and the underworld (banua toru). This cosmological representation is not only present visually in the form of building structures and carved ornaments, but also lives on

in cultural practices, kinship systems, and social spatial arrangements that continue to be maintained to this day. The Toba Batak traditional house is not merely a physical structure, but a cultural text containing spiritual narratives, genealogical symbols, and values of cosmic balance that have been passed down through generations.

From a structural perspective, the study found that each part of the house was designed with a clear cosmological philosophy. The soaring roof symbolizes the connection between humans and their ancestors and the sacred world; the central space reflects the reality of human life and social interaction; while the space under the roof depicts the underworld, which serves as a place for economic activity and the foundation of life. This structure not only demonstrates mastery of traditional architecture, but also shows how the Batak people interpret space as an integral part of their belief system.

In terms of ornamentation, *gorga*, as a traditional carving, has been shown to play a crucial role in communicating cosmological values. Motifs such as *ulu singa*, *boraspati*, and *sitompi* serve not only aesthetic purposes but also convey messages of protection, fertility, and balance in life. The distinctive Batak colors—red, black, and white—reinforce these messages as symbols of life energy, ancestral power, and purity. Thus, *gorga* can be understood as a visual linguistic medium that records and disseminates cultural values.

Furthermore, the orientation of traditional houses, which generally face east or toward mountains and lakes, demonstrates the community's awareness of maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature. The orientation of the house is not simply a technical decision, but a form of respect for the source of life and the spiritual forces believed to protect the family. Research also finds that Batak cosmology is strongly integrated with the kinship system through the application of *Dalihan Na Tolu* in spatial division. The placement of guests, ritual activities, and the distribution of spatial functions

demonstrate how social values are internalized in architecture.

Overall, this research confirms that the architecture of Toba Batak traditional houses is a complete manifestation of Batak cosmology in the form of space, symbols, and social practices. The relationship between architecture and cosmology is not merely symbolic, but performative: traditional houses act as intermediaries that maintain the balance between humans, ancestors, and nature. Thus, traditional houses are not only a material heritage, but also an immaterial heritage that preserves the knowledge, identity, and local wisdom of the Toba Batak people.

Research on the representation of cosmological values in the architecture of Toba Batak traditional houses has several important theoretical, practical, and policy implications. Theoretically, this research enriches anthropolinguistic studies by demonstrating that architecture can function as a symbolic medium representing a community's worldview. Findings regarding the integration of building structure, *gorga* motifs, house orientation, and spatial divisions demonstrate that cultural language is present not only in verbal form but also in visual and spatial artifacts. This opens up opportunities for developing anthropolinguistic theory toward the study of visual and cultural spaces.

Practically, this research provides architects, building designers, and cultural activists with a deeper understanding of how traditional cosmological principles can inform the design of buildings rooted in local wisdom. In the context of cultural tourism, these findings can serve as a reference in developing tourist destinations based on authentic, traditional architecture rather than merely decorative elements. This is crucial given the increasing number of Toba Batak traditional houses being reconstructed without considering their cosmological significance.

The policy implications are also significant. The government can use the results of this study to develop guidelines for the preservation of traditional houses, encompassing both physical and



non-physical aspects, including orientation, the meaning of the gorga (traditional house), the sustainability of the spatial system, and socio-cultural functions. Preservation policies that focus solely on building form without understanding cosmological values have the potential to result in traditional houses losing their identity.

This research also has educational implications. Material on Toba Batak cosmology and traditional architecture can be integrated into the local cultural education curriculum, so that the younger generation will not only recognize traditional houses as tourist attractions but also understand their significance as ancestral knowledge.

Finally, this research fosters collective awareness that preserving traditional houses involves more than just preserving the buildings, but also preserving the Toba Batak people's way of life. Traditional houses are symbols of cultural continuity that are crucial to community identity, so the results of this study can form the basis for more holistic and sustainable cultural preservation efforts.

This research presents a comprehensive overview of the representation of cosmological values in the architecture of Toba Batak traditional houses, but there is still room for further research and development. First, local governments and traditional institutions are advised to strengthen traditional house preservation programs by providing technical and financial support to traditional house owners, given that many traditional houses are beginning to experience significant damage. Preservation should not only focus on the physical form of the building, but also on preserving its symbolic meaning and cosmological values.

Second, future researchers are advised to conduct a more in-depth study of the variations in gorga motifs across Toba Batak regions, as there may be differences in cosmological interpretations between regions. An interdisciplinary approach—combining architecture, anthropology, linguistics,

and history—can yield a more comprehensive understanding of the symbolic value of traditional houses.

Third, the results of this research can be used as teaching materials in local cultural education in schools and universities. Strengthening education based on local wisdom is crucial to ensure that the younger generation understands the meaning of cosmology and their cultural identity. Finally, research is needed that examines how the cosmological values of traditional houses can be adapted in modern architecture, so that cultural heritage remains relevant and alive amidst the development of the times.

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