

Representation of Batak Kinship Values in Modern Batak Pop Songs

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Abstract

This study examines the representation of Batak kinship values in modern Batak pop songs as a medium of cultural expression that has developed amidst social change in Batak society. Modern Batak pop songs serve not only as entertainment but also as a means of conveying moral messages, collective identity, and strengthening traditional values passed down through generations. The focus of this research is to examine how Batak kinship values are represented through song lyrics, linguistic symbols, and the social meanings they convey. This study used a qualitative approach with content analysis of several popular modern Batak pop songs. Data were collected through documentary studies in the form of song lyrics and analyzed using cultural representation theory and Batak kinship concepts such as *Dalihan na tolu*, *hasangapon*, *hagabeon*, and *hamoraon*. The results show that modern Batak pop songs often represent kinship values in the form of respect for parents, solidarity between siblings, loyalty within family ties, and an emphasis on the importance of custom in social relations. Furthermore, songs also depict the dynamics of modern life, such as migration, family conflict, and longing for one's hometown, which strengthens emotional bonds of kinship. Thus, modern Batak pop songs play a crucial role in maintaining Batak kinship cultural values despite the context of a society undergoing continuous modernization. This research is expected to contribute to cultural studies, modern oral literature, and the preservation of Batak ethnic identity through popular music.

Keywords: Batak Kinship, Pop Songs, Cultural Representation, *Dalihan na tolu*

Introduction

Popular music is an integral part of modern culture, serving not only as entertainment but also as a medium of social communication that conveys the values, ideology, and identity of specific social groups. In cultural studies, music is understood as a social text that constructs meaning through symbols, language, and the collective experiences of its listeners (Storey, 2018). The phenomenon of popular music in Indonesia has developed with the emergence of various local genres, one of which is modern Batak pop songs, which persist amidst the dominance of mainstream music. The existence of modern Batak pop songs demonstrates that local culture has not been completely eroded by modernization but has instead been able to adapt to new forms without losing its identity (Heryanto, 2015).

In the context of Batak society, the kinship system is a crucial element that forms the basis of social relations and the structure of cultural life. Batak society is known for its strong social system, encompassing the concepts of *marga* (clan name), *Dalihan na tolu*, and the relationships between *hula-hula*, *dongan tubu*, and *boru*, which govern the ethics

and order of social life (Vergouwen, 2004). The Batak kinship system is not only a form of biological relationship, but also a social relationship that determines an individual's responsibility, honor, and position within the traditional community (Sibarani, 2012). Therefore, Batak kinship values often emerge in various cultural expressions, including oral literature, traditional rituals, and modern music that thrives in the public sphere.

Modern Batak pop music is an important medium for conveying cultural messages because it operates in a broad mass communication space. Regional pop music can be understood as a form of representation of ethnic identity that has undergone a process of modernization, yet still carries elements of tradition inherent in its lyrics and themes (Weintraub, 2010). Modern Batak pop song lyrics often address themes of parenthood, hometown, migration, longing for family, and the moral responsibility of children to their parents. These themes demonstrate that kinship values not only persist but also form the core of the emotional narrative that shapes the appeal of these songs to the Batak people and a wider audience (Hutajulu, 2019).

The representation of cultural values in songs can be understood through the concept of representation as a process of producing meaning through language and symbols. Representation is not simply a reflection of reality, but rather an active process that shapes society's understanding of a particular value or identity (Hall, 1997). In this regard, the lyrics of modern Batak pop songs serve as texts that represent the Batak kinship system, both in the form of respect for elders and the strengthening of clan-based social solidarity. Songs, as cultural texts, also have the ability to shape collective perceptions of what is considered ideal and meaningful in social life (Barker, 2012).

In semiotic studies, song texts are understood as a series of signs with both denotative and connotative meanings. Meaning arises not only from words but also from the social context, ideology, and cultural structures that shape them (Barthes, 1977). Modern Batak pop songs can be read as cultural signs containing kinship symbols such as addresses to *inang* (parent), *amang* (parent), *tulang* (bone), *namboru* (mother), and other traditional terms with strong emotional and symbolic value. These symbols serve as markers of Batak identity and affirm social relations passed down through generations (Siahaan, 2018).

However, the development of modern Batak pop songs also demonstrates a transformation in the way traditional values are conveyed. Musical modernization has introduced electronic instruments, contemporary pop styles, and more commercialized music industry production. These changes can foster negotiations between traditional values and modern market tastes, so that the kinship values portrayed in songs are not always purely traditional but have been adapted to suit the needs of the times (Heryanto, 2015). From a popular culture perspective, this process demonstrates that tradition is not static but is continually reconstructed through new media interacting with modernity (Storey, 2018).

Several previous studies have examined Batak music, particularly those addressing aspects of identity, ethnomusicology, and cultural change within Batak society. Weintraub (2010) emphasized that regional music in Indonesia has undergone a process of commodification, yet still serves as a marker of local identity. Sibarani (2012) explains that Batak cultural values can be traced through various forms of oral traditions and traditional symbols that exist within the community. Furthermore, Hutajulu (2019) points out that Batak songs often serve as a medium for emotional expression for migrants, emphasizing their spiritual connection to their families and hometowns. However, studies specifically analyzing the representation of Batak kinship values in modern Batak pop songs through a social semiotic approach are still relatively limited.

The research gap in this study lies in the lack of research linking modern Batak pop song lyrics to the Batak kinship system in a more structured way within the framework of cultural representation and social semiotics. Most previous research has focused on musicality, the historical development of Batak music, or general identity studies, without examining how kinship values are represented through linguistic signs in song lyrics (Weintraub, 2010). However, analyzing the representation of kinship values is crucial because popular music plays a significant role in shaping the younger generation's understanding of cultural values passed down through generations (Barker, 2012).

Based on this gap, this study offers the novelty of focusing on the representation of Batak kinship values in modern Batak pop songs, using a social semiotic approach and cultural representation theory. This approach allows researchers to view song lyrics as a social practice that not only conveys moral messages but also constructs kinship identities in contemporary Batak society (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, social semiotics views meaning as not standing alone, but rather as always influenced by social context, power relations, and the purpose of communication within society (Halliday, 2014).

The research questions are: (1) How are Batak kinship values represented in the lyrics of modern Batak pop songs? And (2) What symbols are used to emphasize these kinship values in the lyrics? This research question is important because the representation of kinship values in songs is not always conveyed explicitly, but often appears in the form of symbols, metaphors, and emotional narratives that require in-depth reading (Barthes, 1977).

The purpose of this research is to describe the representation of Batak kinship values in modern Batak pop songs and to identify the cultural symbols used in the lyrics as a means of strengthening Batak identity. This research also aims to explain how kinship values are reproduced through popular music, thus maintaining their relevance to modern Batak society. From a cultural perspective, this aim is in line with the view that cultural texts always function as spaces for the production of identity and social meaning (Hall, 1997).

The benefits of this research are divided into theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the study of local popular culture and expand the application of representation theory and social semiotics in the study of regional music. This study can also contribute to the development of research on Batak culture, extending beyond ritual customs to modern expressions such as popular music (Storey, 2018). Practically, this research can serve as a reference for the Batak people, especially the younger generation, to re-understand the kinship values inherited from their culture. Furthermore, this research can help regional music industry players maintain cultural values in their work as a form of preserving local identity (Heryanto, 2015).

The primary theoretical basis used in this research is Stuart Hall's theory of cultural representation. Hall (1997) explains that representation is the process of producing meaning through language, signs, and symbols that shape people's perspectives on social reality. In the context of modern Batak pop songs, lyrics serve as a form of language that represents social values such as respect for elders, family solidarity, and moral obligations to the clan. In addition, Halliday's social semiotic theory is used to interpret song lyrics as social practices that reflect the social relations and cultural context of the community in which they are used. Halliday (2014) states that language not only conveys information but also constructs certain social relationships and ideologies within society.

In addition to the theories of representation and social semiotics, this study also utilizes the concept of the Batak kinship system, which emphasizes the importance of *Dalihan na tolu* as the basis of social relations. Vergouwen (2004) explains that *Dalihan*

na tolu is the primary social structure of Batak society, governing relations between groups of women givers, women recipients, and relatives of the same clan. This system emphasizes that kinship in Batak society is not simply blood relations, but rather a social system that demands ethics, respect, and collective responsibility. This concept is relevant to understanding how modern Batak pop songs represent social relations through customary terms and moral messages contained in the lyrics (Sibarani, 2012).

Therefore, this study begins with the understanding that modern Batak pop songs are cultural texts that represent Batak kinship values through symbols, narratives, and moral messages. Songs are not only entertainment products but also media that maintain and reconstruct Batak identity amidst modern social change. Analysis of the representation of kinship values in modern Batak pop songs is important to see how traditions remain alive in new forms and how Batak culture is negotiated through contemporary popular media (Barker, 2012).

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing primarily on analyzing the meaning and representation of cultural values in modern Batak pop song lyrics. This qualitative approach was chosen because the study does not aim to statistically measure phenomena, but rather to understand and interpret the socio-cultural meanings contained in song lyrics as a form of cultural representation. Qualitative research allows researchers to understand texts as social phenomena rich in meaning and related to the cultural context of the communities they use (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, descriptive research is used to describe in detail the forms of Batak kinship values that emerge in modern Batak pop song lyrics without manipulating variables (Sugiyono, 2022).

This research is text-based research, positioning song lyrics as the primary data. Songs are understood as products of popular culture that are not neutral, but rather contain ideological and symbolic values, as well as constructions of specific ethnic identities. Therefore, this study also utilizes a social semiotic approach as an analytical framework to understand the relationship between language, signs, and the socio-cultural context that shape meaning in song lyrics. Social semiotics emphasizes that language is a social practice that functions to convey ideology and identity within society (Halliday, 2014). In this context, modern Batak pop song lyrics are treated as texts that represent the Batak kinship system through symbols, traditional terms, and narratives of social relations.

This research is a descriptive qualitative study with a document analysis design. Document analysis was used because the research data consisted of song lyrics, which are readily available in written and digital documentation. Document analysis is a relevant research technique for studying cultural texts because it allows researchers to interpret the messages, values, and representations hidden within the documents (Bowen, 2009). In popular culture research, documents such as song lyrics are seen as primary sources for exploring the construction of identities and social values reproduced through media (Barker, 2012).

Furthermore, this research design also utilizes cultural representation analysis, as the primary focus of the study is to examine how Batak kinship values are constructed through linguistic symbols and song narratives. Representation is understood as the process of producing meaning through language that shapes people's perspectives on a particular cultural reality (Hall, 1997). Therefore, this study seeks to identify elements of Batak kinship representation that appear in song lyrics, both explicitly and implicitly.

The data in this study are divided into primary and secondary data. The primary data consist of lyrics from modern Batak pop songs that address themes of kinship, family, parent-child relationships, and social relations within the *Dalihan na tolu* system. Song lyrics were chosen as the primary data because they are the most explicit verbal medium for conveying cultural messages, particularly through word choice, metaphors, and traditional terms that represent Batak identity. Secondary data consist of journal articles, books, and scholarly literature relevant to the study of popular culture, social semiotics, and the Batak kinship system. The use of secondary sources is necessary to strengthen the analysis and build a scientific interpretative framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The subjects of this study were not human beings, but rather cultural texts in the form of modern Batak pop song lyrics. Therefore, the research sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used because researchers selected data based on specific criteria according to the research needs. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research because it focuses on data depth, not population size (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

The song selection criteria for this study were: (1) the song falls into the modern Batak pop category and is widely circulated through digital media; (2) the lyrics use Toba Batak or a mix of Batak and Indonesian; (3) the dominant theme concerns family, parents, homesickness, clans, or the values of *Dalihan na tolu*; and (4) the song was produced or popular during the modern timeframe, namely around 2015–2024. This timeframe was determined to ensure that the data truly reflects the development of contemporary modern Batak pop. In qualitative research, limiting the time span is important to maintain the social and cultural relevance of the data analyzed (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The sample size for this study was set at 10–15 songs that met these criteria. This number is considered adequate for descriptive qualitative research because it allows for in-depth analysis of patterns of representation of kinship values without compromising the research focus. Qualitative research does not require large amounts of data, but rather emphasizes sufficient information (data saturation) to identify thematic patterns (Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020).

The primary instrument in qualitative research is the researcher themselves (human instrument). The researcher acts as data collector, analyst, and interpreter of meaning based on the theoretical framework used. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument because analysis relies heavily on the ability to interpret textual data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Additionally, a supporting instrument in the form of a text analysis sheet (coding sheet) was used to classify the data based on Batak kinship value categories. The analysis sheet includes columns for song identity, lyric excerpts, kinship value categories (e.g., respect for parents, sibling solidarity, clan relations, *Dalihan na tolu* relations), and interpretation of meaning based on social semiotics. The use of coding sheets aims to maintain consistency in analysis and facilitate the categorization of findings (Saldaña, 2021).

Data collection was conducted through documentation. Documentation was conducted by collecting lyrics of modern Batak pop songs from official sources such as digital music channels, lyric websites, and streaming platforms that provide song lyrics. The data was then recorded and classified according to the research theme. Documentation techniques are considered appropriate in textual research because they allow researchers to systematically obtain data without direct interaction with participants (Bowen, 2009).

The data collection stages included: (1) identifying relevant modern Batak pop songs, (2) downloading or recording song lyrics, (3) verifying the lyrics' conformity to the official versions of the songs, (4) selecting data based on purposive sampling criteria, and (5) grouping lyrics according to Batak kinship value categories. This process was repeated to ensure the data used was truly valid and aligned with the research focus.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). In the data reduction stage, the researchers selected sections of the lyrics relevant to Batak kinship values. In the data presentation stage, the selected lyric excerpts were arranged in an analysis table to facilitate pattern identification. Next, in the conclusion stage, the researchers interpreted the symbolic and ideological meanings in the lyrics based on cultural representation theory and social semiotics.

The analysis was conducted by combining Stuart Hall's representation theory and Halliday's social semiotics. Representation theory is used to examine how kinship meanings are produced through language in lyrics, while social semiotics is used to understand how song texts function as social practices that shape the collective identity and values of the Batak people (Hall, 1997; Halliday, 2014). Using this approach, the analysis focuses on linguistic cues such as the use of customary terms (*amang*, *inang*, *tulang*, *namboru*, *hula-hula*), metaphors of migration, and emotional expressions that emphasize solidarity and moral obligations within Batak families.

To ensure data validity, this study employed theoretical triangulation techniques and diligent observation of the texts. Theoretical triangulation was conducted by comparing interpretations of the lyrics using several theoretical concepts, namely cultural representation, social semiotics, and the concept of the Batak kinship system. Theoretical triangulation is crucial in qualitative research to ensure that the analysis is not merely subjective but has a strong scientific foundation (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, diligent observation was carried out by repeatedly reading and interpreting the lyrics to achieve consistency of meaning. This process also included double-checking coding categories to avoid interpretation bias. With this method, this research is expected to be able to produce a systematic description and interpretation of how Batak kinship values are represented in modern Batak pop songs as a form of contemporary popular cultural expression.

Results

The results of this study were obtained through an analysis of 12 modern Batak pop songs selected using purposive sampling based on the dominant themes of kinship, family, and Batak social relations in the lyrics. The analysis was conducted using a social semiotics and cultural representation approach, thus presenting the results in the form of categories of Batak kinship values that appear in the song lyrics. The meaning of kinship values is interpreted through linguistic symbols, traditional terms, and emotional narratives that form the social messages in the song lyrics (Hall, 1997).

In general, it was found that modern Batak pop songs represent Batak kinship values through five main categories: (1) respect for parents, (2) longing for family and hometown among migrants, (3) solidarity and support between siblings, (4) symbolic *Dalihan na tolu* relations, and (5) internalization of traditional moral values in modern life. The language in the song lyrics shows that the Batak kinship system is not only maintained as a tradition, but is also reproduced in the form of a modern narrative that is emotional and easily accepted by the younger generation (Halliday, 2014).

1. Respect for Parents as a Representation of Core Kinship Values

The most dominant category appearing in modern Batak pop song lyrics is the value of respect for parents, especially mothers (*inang*) and fathers (*amang*). This value is expressed through expressions of affection, acknowledgment of parental sacrifice, and apologies from children who are unable to repay their families. This demonstrates that the parent-child relationship remains central to the Batak kinship system in popular cultural representations.

Several lyrics use linguistic symbols such as "*mauliate inang*," "*dang tarbalos holongmu*," and "*tangiang ni amang inang*," which signify the position of parents as primary, respected figures. These symbols reinforce the fact that modern Batak pop songs construct kinship meanings through emotional symbols, not simply biological relationships. Within the concept of representation, these meanings are formed because language functions as a tool for producing cultural values in society (Hall, 1997).

The respect for parents in the songs is also conveyed through narrative structures that position children as those with moral responsibility. This narrative reflects the Batak cultural value that a child's success is the family's success, and that parental prayers have social and spiritual power. This aligns with the understanding that the Batak kinship system emphasizes children's loyalty to their families as a collective moral obligation (Sibarani, 2012).

2. Longing for Migrants as a Symbol of Family and Clan Bonds

The second dominant category is the theme of longing for family, hometown, and clan identity. Modern Batak pop songs often depict individuals living far from Batak land and experiencing loneliness, yet maintaining emotional ties with their families. This theme demonstrates that kinship in Batak culture is not limited by geographical space, but rather lives on through memory and emotional bonds.

Lyrics containing words such as "*tarholong ho inang*," "*huta*," "*pangidoan ni roha*," and "*mulak tu bona pasogit*" serve as powerful symbols in constructing representations of family ties. In social semiotics, these symbols are not merely words but also carry a social function that builds collective identity as Batak people (Halliday, 2014).

The theme of longing for migrants also often depicts the inner conflict between economic needs and family responsibilities. Songs depict migration as a means of making parents happy, but at the same time, it can lead to feelings of guilt due to being away from them. This narrative pattern emphasizes that Batak kinship values are still considered more important than individual interests. In the context of popular culture, this narrative demonstrates that songs serve as a space for negotiation between modernity (social mobility) and tradition (family ties) (Storey, 2018).

3. Sibling Solidarity and Dongan tubu as Social Identity

Research results show that sibling solidarity, or the relationship between *dongan tubu* (siblings of the same clan), is also an important value represented in modern Batak pop songs. This solidarity is displayed through symbols of togetherness, emotional support, and the affirmation that blood and clan ties cannot be severed.

Several songs convey the message that siblings must support each other, especially in difficult situations. Linguistic symbols such as "*pardomuan*," "*marsiadapari*," "*sahat ma hita*," and "*mardongan tubu*" demonstrate that kinship in Batak society is built on the principle of collectivity. This aligns with the view that Batak society has a strong social system through clan identity as the primary bond of the community (Vergouwen, 2004).

The analysis reveals that sibling solidarity is also interpreted as social protection. The lyrics not only refer to siblings as emotional connections but also as a place to return to when individuals experience failure in life. Thus, modern Batak pop songs create the representation that family and clan are a "social home" that always provides a safe haven. In the concept of cultural representation, this forms the understanding that Batak identity cannot be separated from kinship structures (Hall, 1997).

4. Symbolic Representation of *Dalihan na tolu*

Research results show that the values of *Dalihan na tolu* are not always explicitly expressed, but are often present in the form of symbols and traditional terms that represent Batak social relations. *Dalihan na tolu*, as a Batak social structure, consists of the *hula-hula*, *dongan tubu*, and *boru* relationships, which serve as guidelines for social ethics (Vergouwen, 2004).

In song lyrics, the terms "*hula-hula*," "*tulang*," "*namboru*," and "*boru*" are used as symbols of respect and social standing. For example, the use of "*tulang*" not only denotes an uncle but also an important figure in traditional relations. This confirms that modern Batak pop songs maintain the traditional kinship system, even though conveyed in modern music.

Representations of *Dalihan na tolu* also appear in narratives about marriage, family blessings, and the obligation to uphold the good name of the clan. These songs illustrate that marriage is not merely a personal matter, but a customary affair involving kinship structures. This pattern aligns with the view that the *Dalihan na tolu* system functions to regulate social relations while maintaining the stability of the Batak community (Sibarani, 2012).

5. Internalization of Customary Moral Values in Modern Life

The final category is customary moral values, represented through messages of life, sacrifice, loyalty, and the necessity of maintaining family dignity. Modern Batak pop songs often include messages urging the younger generation to remember customs, respect their elders, and maintain Batak identity.

Some lyrics contain narratives that convey advice, such as "*unang lupa adat*," "*jaga goar ni marga*," and "*ingot dohot roham*." This advice demonstrates that songs function as a medium for informal cultural education. This aligns with the understanding that popular culture is not merely entertainment but also a means of transmitting social values and norms (Barker, 2012).

Table 1. Kinship Value Categories in Modern Batak Pop Songs

NO	Kinship Value Category	Lyric Indicator	Form of Representation
1.	Respect for parents	<i>inang, amang, tangiang, mauiliate</i>	affection, filial responsibility
2.	Longing for migrants	<i>Huta, bona pasogit, mulak</i>	Family ties across space
3.	Solidarity of siblings/ <i>marga</i>	<i>dongan tubu, marsiadapari</i>	togetherness, social protection
4.	<i>Dalihan na tolu</i>	<i>tulang, namboru, hula-hula</i>	symbolic customary relationship structures
5.	Customary moral values	don't forget customs, maintain the clan	moral messages, Batak identity

The table 1 shows that Batak kinship values in modern Batak pop songs are not only depicted as nuclear family relationships but also encompass broader customary relationships. Thus, the research confirms that modern Batak pop songs are a medium of cultural representation that reproduces traditional values in a modern form.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that modern Batak pop songs predominantly represent Batak kinship values through reverence for parents, longing for family among migrants, solidarity among clan members, the *Dalihan na tolu* symbol, and the internalization of traditional moral values. These findings reinforce the view that popular music is not merely entertainment, but rather a cultural text that embodies a social value system and ethnic identity. In popular culture studies, musical texts are understood as social products that reflect the collective experiences of society, including emotional experiences, ideologies, and social relationships considered important (Storey, 2018).

1. Respect for Parents as a Batak Kinship Ideology

The dominant theme of respect for parents in modern Batak pop songs indicates that the Batak kinship structure still places parents at the moral and social center. In Batak society, parents are not merely biological figures, but symbols of family honor and sources of legitimacy for traditional values. This aligns with Sibarani's (2012) study, which states that the core values of Batak culture are reflected in respect for parents and the obligation of children to maintain family dignity. In modern Batak pop songs, this respect is produced through emotional language such as thanks, apologies, and acknowledgment of parental sacrifices.

In representation theory, Hall (1997) asserts that language not only depicts reality but also constructs specific meanings that influence how society understands cultural values. Thus, the use of the terms "*inang*" and "*amang*" is not simply a reference to parents, but rather a way of constructing the Batak identity as a society that honors the family. Songs embodying this theme indirectly shape the ideology that success in life must be rooted in the happiness of parents. This ideology is reinforced by its repetition in numerous songs, thus becoming part of the listener's collective memory.

This finding also aligns with research by Hutajulu (2019), which shows that modern Batak songs often contain moral messages about children's responsibilities towards their parents, especially in the context of migration. The difference between this study and Hutajulu's lies in the analytical focus, which emphasizes symbolic representation in the lyrics, rather than just general themes. Using social semiotics, this study observes that respect for parents in songs is not simply a theme, but a cultural sign that strengthens the Batak social structure.

2. Longing for Migrants as a Collective Memory Practice

The dominant theme of migration in modern Batak pop songs also demonstrates that Batak kinship is inseparable from the experience of social migration. Migration has been a part of Batak social history, and this experience has given rise to strong emotional expressions in music. In popular culture studies, the experience of migration often gives rise to nostalgia as a form of strengthening identity and social ties (Barker, 2012).

In this study, longing for migrants is represented through the symbols "*bona pasogit*" and "*huta*," which are not merely geographical hometowns but also symbols of origin and family ties. From a social semiotic perspective, these symbols have social

meanings shaped by the Batak cultural context, namely that the hometown is the center of family and clan identity (Halliday, 2014). Modern Batak pop songs construct the hometown as an ideal space, a place where parents reside, and a place where individuals return to gain social legitimacy.

This finding is relevant to Weintraub's (2010) research, which states that regional music in Indonesia serves as a medium for maintaining local identity amidst modernization. In the Batak context, local identity is strengthened through narratives of longing that unify the collective experiences of migrants. This research expands on Weintraub's findings by showing that this identity emerges not only in the musical aspect but also primarily in the lyrical structure, which emphasizes the value of kinship as the core of Batak identity.

Furthermore, the theme of migration also highlights the conflict between modernity and tradition. Migrants are depicted as pursuing economic success, yet still carry the moral burden of providing for their families. This conflict demonstrates that modernity does not erase traditional values, but rather creates new negotiations within popular cultural practices. This aligns with Heryanto's (2015) view that modern culture in Indonesia often demonstrates a process of adaptation, rather than a complete elimination of traditional values.

3. Sibling and Clan Solidarity as Social Capital

Research findings on sibling solidarity, or *dongan tubu*, indicate that modern Batak pop songs still maintain the concept of collectivity as a core value. This solidarity is presented not only as an emotional connection but also as social support in facing life's difficulties. In the Batak kinship system, the clan serves as a social identity that creates a network of support and a sense of security. Vergouwen (2004) emphasized that the clan functions as a social structure that binds individuals in an obligation to help each other.

In the lyrics of modern Batak pop songs, this solidarity is represented through words that emphasize togetherness and the steadfastness of brotherhood. This representation reinforces the idea that Batak individuals cannot stand alone but are always embedded within the social network of the extended family. In Hall's (1997) theory of representation, the repetition of these symbols of brotherhood creates a collective meaning, suggesting that Batak identity is a communal one.

Previous research on Batak music has often emphasized the role of songs as entertainment or nostalgia, but little has examined clan solidarity as social capital reproduced through song lyrics. This is where the contribution of this research becomes important because it shows that modern Batak pop songs not only convey emotions, but also reinforce clan-based social structures that are still alive in contemporary society.

4. Dalihan na tolu as an Enduring Cultural Symbol

One important finding in this study is the emergence of *Dalihan na tolu* values in symbolic form. *Dalihan na tolu*, as the primary Batak social system, regulates relationships between kinship groups, particularly *hula-hula*, *dongan tubu*, and *boru*. This system forms the basis of social ethics and honor in Batak society (Vergouwen, 2004).

In modern Batak pop songs, *Dalihan na tolu* is not always explained directly, but appears through terms such as "*tulang*," "*namboru*," and "*hula-hula*." From a social semiotic perspective, these terms function as signs that carry social meanings greater than their literal meaning. The term "*tulang*," for example, refers not only to an uncle but also to a respected figure holding an important traditional position within Batak family relations (Sibarani, 2012).

This finding strengthens the argument that popular culture can be a space for preserving traditional values in new forms. Modern Batak pop songs serve as a medium for preserving the symbols of *Dalihan na tolu*, ensuring that the younger generation remains familiar with traditional terms and relationships. This aligns with Barker's (2012) view that popular culture can be a tool for reproducing social values because it operates through mass consumption and the repetition of symbols.

Compared with previous research that discussed regional music as a cultural identity, this study provides a more specific explanation that the Batak identity represented in modern pop songs is closely linked to the structure of *Dalihan na tolu*. In other words, Batak identity in modern music is not only about the Batak language, but also about the system of social relations reproduced through kinship symbols.

5. Customary Moral Values and Cultural Education through Songs

Research also shows that modern Batak pop songs contain the internalization of customary moral values, such as messages to never forget customs, maintain family dignity, and preserve clan identity. These moral messages demonstrate that songs function as an informal medium for cultural education. In popular culture theory, musical texts often serve as a means of shaping social values because they can reach a wider audience and build collective emotions (Storey, 2018).

The moral messages in songs also demonstrate a collective concern about the loss of cultural identity due to modernization. Modern Batak pop songs can be understood as a form of symbolic resistance to the flow of globalization, which tends to homogenize culture. Heryanto (2015) states that local popular culture often serves as a space for subtle resistance because it preserves traditional symbols in modern forms that are more readily accepted by the community.

In the Batak context, customary moral messages not only emphasize the importance of tradition but also emphasize that customs are a source of identity and honor. These songs foster the understanding that one should not forget one's origins even in the modern world. Thus, modern Batak pop songs function as a tool for maintaining social identity as well as a means of building ethnic pride.

6. Relationship of Findings to Research Gap and Novelty

The findings of this study address the research gap outlined in the introduction, namely the lack of studies specifically analyzing Batak kinship values in modern pop songs using cultural representation and social semiotic approaches. Previous research has primarily examined Batak music from the perspective of genre development or general identity (Weintraub, 2010), while this study demonstrates that kinship values are complexly represented through linguistic symbols, traditional terms, and emotional narratives.

The novelty of this study lies in the categorization of kinship values appearing in modern Batak pop songs, as well as the interpretation that these kinship symbols function as social practices that strengthen contemporary Batak identity. Thus, this study demonstrates that modern Batak pop music has not only undergone musical modernization but also maintains customary value structures through lyrical texts reproduced in popular culture.

This study has limitations in that it only analyzes song lyrics as texts without involving interviews or direct observation of listeners or songwriters. As a result, this study cannot empirically explain how listeners interpret these kinship values in real life. In cultural research, interpretations of textual meaning can vary depending on the

audience's social experiences (Hall, 1997). Furthermore, another limitation lies in the limited sample size, meaning the research results cannot be broadly generalized to all modern Batak pop songs. However, in qualitative research, the primary goal is not statistical generalization, but rather a deeper understanding of the cultural phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Overall, this discussion confirms that modern Batak pop songs represent kinship values that remain strong within Batak culture. Songs serve as a medium for transmitting family values, clan solidarity, and the *Dalihan na tolu* structure in a modern format. This demonstrates that Batak culture has not lost its identity but continues to adapt through popular media. From a popular culture perspective, this phenomenon demonstrates that tradition and modernity are not always in conflict but can complement each other through symbolic negotiation within cultural texts (Storey, 2018).

Conclusion

Based on the objectives and research problem formulation, it can be concluded that modern Batak pop songs strongly represent Batak kinship values through lyrics containing symbols, traditional terms, and emotional narratives related to family. These representations are predominantly expressed in the form of respect for parents (*inang* and *amang*), longing for hometowns (*bona pasogit*) by migrants, solidarity between siblings of the same clan (*dongan tubu*), and affirmation of children's moral obligations to their families. Furthermore, the research findings also address the second research problem formulation, namely that Batak kinship symbols in modern pop songs are present through the use of typical kinship terms such as *tulang*, *namboru*, *hula-hula*, *boru*, and traditional expressions that emphasize the social structure of *Dalihan na tolu* (the traditional of the Tolu people). Thus, modern Batak pop song lyrics function not only as entertainment but also as a medium for representing Batak social identity, reproducing kinship values within the context of contemporary popular culture.

The implications of this research's findings indicate that modern Batak pop music plays a strategic role as a means of preserving cultural values in a society undergoing social change. These findings demonstrate that Batak kinship values have not been completely weakened in the modern era, but have instead been adapted through popular music media that is more easily accessible to the younger generation. Modern Batak pop songs function as a space for transmitting values, particularly in strengthening respect for parents, maintaining extended family solidarity, and maintaining the *Dalihan na tolu* symbol in a simpler yet meaningful form. Academically, this research strengthens the perspectives of cultural representation and social semiotics that language in song lyrics is not simply a series of words, but a social practice that constructs collective meaning and shapes ethnic identity. Practically, the results of this study can also serve as a reference for educators, cultural activists, and regional musicians to utilize songs as a medium for cultural education and strengthening kinship values in modern Batak society.

However, this study has limitations because it only focuses on the analysis of lyric text without involving the response of the audience or songwriter, so the interpretation of meaning still depends on the researcher's reading. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop this study through an audience reception approach to determine how Batak listeners, especially the younger generation, interpret the kinship values conveyed in modern pop songs. Future research can also expand the number of song samples, compare Batak pop songs across decades, or examine the differences in the representation of kinship values between traditional and modern Batak songs. Furthermore, further research can combine lyric analysis with visual analysis of video

clips and musical aspects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how Batak kinship values are represented in the popular music industry. Thus, the study of modern Batak pop songs can further enrich the study of local popular culture and strengthen its contribution to the preservation of Indonesian cultural identity.

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