



The *Poda Na Lima* philosophy: A contextual leadership framework for elementary schools

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Abstract. This study reconstructs the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy into a contextual school leadership framework to bridge the gap between formal administrative demands and local cultural values. The objective is to analyze how these indigenous values are interpreted and implemented by school principals in North Tapanuli. Using a qualitative exploratory design, the study employed purposive sampling to select 15 participants (3 principals, 9 senior teachers, and 3 community leaders) from the elementary school population. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Results indicate that *Poda Na Lima* encompasses five dimensions: leadership accountability, teacher professionalism, infrastructure management, environmental development, and social ethics. These values are operationalized through transparency, role modeling, and ethical communication within the school community. In conclusion, integrating indigenous wisdom fosters

a contextual leadership model that strengthens school governance and social harmony. It is recommended that local education authorities integrate this framework into leadership training programs to enhance culturally-responsive school management.

Introduction

School principal leadership is a pivotal factor in school effectiveness and educational quality. Modern discourse has shifted the principal's role from a mere bureaucratic administrator to a strategic leader responsible for shaping organizational culture and social climate (Nebieridze, 2024; Pont, 2020; Said et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of school leadership practices in diverse geographical contexts depends not only on formal managerial competence but also on the ability to integrate local social and cultural values into school management (Chaaban et al., 2025; Lumbanbatu, 2025). This contextual sensitivity is vital in non-urban areas such as North Tapanuli, where community dynamics deeply influence the implementation of education (Sumintono et al., 2019; Swart et al., 2022).

Despite its importance, educational leadership in Indonesia is still largely dominated by universal, urban-centric models. Consequently, research explicitly linking school governance with local wisdom remains limited (Lwi, 2019; Sugiarti et al., 2024), leaving potential cultural inspirations underutilized (Arjaya et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2024). In the Batak Toba community, the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima*—comprising *paias robamu* (purity of heart), *paias pabeanmu* (personal cleanliness), *paias bagasmu* (home cleanliness), *paias pekaranganmu* (environmental cleanliness), and *paias parangemu*

(social ethics)—offers a robust ethical framework that resonates with the community's pursuit of hamajuon or dignified progress (Hawa et al., 2023; Pasaribu et al., 2025).

The novelty of this research lies in its reconstructive approach to indigenous philosophy, moving beyond descriptive cultural studies. Previous research has extensively explored *Poda Na Lima* values primarily as moral guidelines, social-ethical systems, or cultural artifacts (Siregar, 2023; Salamuddin, 2023; Siregar & Demidyuk, 2024). However, those studies remain largely confined to perspectives on personal or social conduct. This study departs from existing literature by explicitly transforming these ethical values into an operational framework for leadership practices. Unlike prior work, this research identifies how these values serve as functional pillars of school governance, specifically by enhancing accountability, professionalism, and infrastructure management.

This study aims to analyze how the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy is reconstructed and implemented within the leadership practices of elementary school principals in North Tapanuli Regency. By examining how principals interpret and operationalize these *Poda Na Lima* values, this research seeks to bridge the gap between indigenous wisdom and formal educational management, thereby creating a more responsive leadership model. Accordingly, the central research question guiding this inquiry is: How is the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima* reconstructed and operationalized in the leadership practices of elementary school principals in North Tapanuli?

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design. An exploratory design was chosen specifically to uncover and reconstruct the nuanced ways in which *Poda Na Lima* values are integrated into school leadership, a phenomenon that has not been extensively theorized in previous literature. While an explanatory design focuses on cause-and-effect relationships, this exploratory approach prioritizes the "how" and "why" of cultural value reconstruction within real-life school management contexts.

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted in North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra. Three public elementary schools were selected purposively: SD Negeri 173100 Tarutung, SD Negeri 173146 Sipoholon, and SD Negeri 173270 Siborongborong. The selection of these three schools was based on their geographic representation of three major sub-districts in North Tapanuli, providing a range of school environments (urban vs. semi-rural) while maintaining cultural homogeneity. Furthermore, these schools were identified by local education authorities as institutions that consistently prioritize local wisdom in their daily activities.

The participants (N=15) were selected through purposive sampling, comprising 3 school principals (with >5 years of tenure), 9 senior teachers, and 3 school committee representatives. The number of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, where information obtained from different stakeholders showed repetitive patterns and no new thematic categories emerged.

Data Collection Techniques

The researcher served as the primary instrument (a human instrument). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. To ensure the quality of the data collection process, an interview guide was developed based on the dimensions of *Poda Na Lima*. The instrument's validity was established through expert judgment (face validity) by two

experts in educational management and Batak culture, ensuring that the questions accurately captured the philosophy's reconstruction.

Table 1. Research Instrument Blueprint

Dimension of <i>Poda Na Lima</i>	Leadership Indicators	Interview Focus Points
<i>Paias Rohamu</i> (Purity of Heart)	Accountability & Integrity	Transparency in school budgeting, sincerity in serving students, and ethical leadership.
<i>Paias Pabeammu</i> (Personal Cleanliness)	Professionalism & Role Modeling	Teacher and principal discipline, professional appearance, and adherence to codes of conduct.
<i>Paias Bagasmu</i> (Home Cleanliness)	Internal School Environment	Management of classrooms, teachers' rooms, and internal school facilities.
<i>Paias Pekaranganmu</i> (Environment)	Infrastructure & External Space	Maintenance of school grounds, eco-friendly policies, and school aesthetics.
<i>Paias Parangemu</i> (Social Ethics)	Social Capital & Interaction	Communication with stakeholders, social harmony, and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model by Miles & Huberman (2007), involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The two-cycle coding process identified initial concepts, which were then grouped into broader themes representing the leadership framework. Reliability in this qualitative context was maintained through detailed field notes and cross-checking transcriptions with participants' recordings.

Trustworthiness of the Data

To ensure the credibility of the research findings, several strategies were employed to verify the data's trustworthiness. Data validity was maintained through source and technique triangulation, as well as through a member-checking process in which the interpretation of the findings was discussed again with the participants. In addition, the researcher engaged in prolonged fieldwork to establish rapport with participants, thereby enabling the collection of more authentic data.

All participants provided voluntary consent before the interviews were conducted, and their identities were kept confidential throughout the research process. This study has limitations related to its specific geographical and cultural scope within the Batak Toba community. Therefore, the findings emphasize depth of understanding and transferability to similar contexts rather than broad statistical generalization (Gunn, 2021).

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima* in North Tapanuli Regency is not merely understood as a traditional moral teaching. In the context of school leadership practices, these cultural values are reconstructed by school principals into an operational leadership framework for managing elementary schools.

Data obtained from in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis reveal that local cultural values function not only as symbols of cultural identity but also as a normative foundation for decision-making and daily leadership practices. The reconstruction of these values yielded five

dimensions of school governance, inspired by the philosophical elements of *Poda Na Lima*. The operational framework derived from the research findings is presented in Table 1.

Table 2. Operational Framework of School Leadership Based on the *Poda Na Lima* Philosophy

No	Philosophical Element	Dimension of School Governance	Operational Indicators and Practical Implementation
1.	<i>Paias Robamu</i> (Purity of Intent/Soul)	<i>Accountability & Authentic Leadership</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transparency in reporting the use of School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds. 2. Allocation of teachers' responsibilities based on competence and experience. 3. Consistency between the principal's policies and their implementation in practice.
2.	<i>Paias Paheanmu</i> (Personal Integrity and Self-Presentation)	<i>Professionalism & Personal Branding</i>	Demonstrating discipline, maintaining professional appearance, and ensuring orderly administrative practices.
3.	<i>Paias Bagasmu</i> (Cleanliness of Facilities)	<i>Internal Infrastructure Management</i>	Maintaining clean classrooms, well-managed sanitation facilities, and comfortable working spaces for teachers and staff.
4.	<i>Paias Pekaranganmu</i> (Environmental Orderliness)	<i>Eco-Institutional & Social Capital</i>	Development of educational gardens, proper drainage systems, and active community participation in maintaining the school environment.
5.	<i>Paias Parangemu</i> (Behavioral Integrity)	Karakter & Etika Sosial	Promoting respectful communication, implementing anti-bullying practices, and fostering academic integrity.

The table above illustrates that each element of the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy has direct implications for school leadership practices. Cultural values that were previously understood primarily as ethical guidelines for everyday life are translated into concrete managerial indicators within educational governance. Based on this framework of indicators, the following discussion explains how each element of the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy is reconstructed and manifested in the leadership practices of school principals in the research sites.



Image 1. FGD with the principal and teachers at SD Negeri 173146 Sipoholon

***Paias Rohamu* as the Foundation of Leadership Accountability**

The findings of this study indicate that the value of *paias rohamu*, which in the Batak Toba tradition refers to maintaining purity of heart and sincerity of intention, serves as a principle that significantly influences how school principals exercise their leadership functions. In school management practices, this value is primarily reflected in how leaders build accountability into decision-making processes and manage educational resources. In other words, *Paias Roham* is not merely understood as a personal moral teaching but is also translated into an ethical guideline within the leadership practices of educational organizations.

In the schools examined in this study, principals seek to translate the value of *paias rohamu* into leadership practices that emphasize openness and honesty in school administration. One of the most visible manifestations of this value is the practice of transparency in the management of School Operational Assistance funds. Reports on the use of these funds are regularly displayed on school information boards for access by teachers, staff members, and the surrounding community. This transparency is intended not only to fulfill government-imposed administrative requirements but also to reflect a moral responsibility toward the school community. Such practices demonstrate that accountability in school leadership is driven not only by bureaucratic obligations but also by ethical commitments rooted in local cultural values.

Beyond financial transparency, the value of *Paias Rohamu* is also reflected in the decision-making processes for distributing teachers' duties and responsibilities. Principals attempt to allocate workloads based on teachers' competencies, experience, and the school's needs, thereby fostering a sense of fairness among educators. Teachers interviewed in this study reported that decisions regarding task allocation are usually communicated openly during school meetings and accompanied by explanations of the considerations the principal used. This approach helps reduce potential conflicts while strengthening mutual trust between school leaders and teachers.

These findings indicate that the moral value embedded in *Paias Roham* is not merely symbolic but serves as an ethical foundation for everyday leadership practices. In this context, principals not only perform administrative roles as school managers but also act as figures who safeguard the integrity of educational organizations. This illustrates that school leadership rooted in cultural values possesses a strong moral dimension in fostering organizational trust.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of [Permata & Mustoffa \(2023\)](#), who emphasize that effective management of educational funds is strongly influenced by the consistent implementation of transparency and accountability principles. When information about the use of school resources is communicated openly, trust among school members in leadership tends to increase. Transparency in resource management thus functions not only as a mechanism for administrative oversight but also as a means of strengthening leadership legitimacy within the school community.

From a leadership theory perspective, these practices are closely related to the concept of authentic leadership. This theory emphasizes that a leader's legitimacy is determined not only by formal organizational authority but also by the moral integrity demonstrated in daily actions ([Aziz et al., 2025](#); [Nababan & Sari, 2022](#); [Simatupang & Tampake, 2024](#)). Leaders who maintain consistency between the values they uphold and the behaviors they display are more likely to earn the trust of organizational members. Personal integrity, honesty, and sincerity are therefore essential elements in building a leader's credibility within the framework of authentic leadership.

However, the findings of this study reveal an additional dimension that enriches the understanding of authentic leadership. Within Batak Toba society, leadership legitimacy arises not only from

universal moral commitments but is also reinforced by the alignment between leaders' behavior and the cultural values embedded in the community. When school principals exercise leadership based on the principle of *Paias Robamu*, their actions are perceived by members of the school community as reflections of shared cultural values. This perception strengthens the social and emotional relationship between leaders and the school community.

Leadership literature also suggests that integrating local cultural values into leadership practices can enhance leaders' legitimacy within organizations. Cultural values embedded in communities serve as normative frameworks that guide leaders' behavior and reinforce the organization's collective identity (Rizaq, 2021; Lynch et al., 2022). When cultural values such as *Paias Robamu* are internalized in school leadership practices, organizational trust is built not merely on compliance with formal regulations but also on the belief that leaders act ethically and responsibly in accordance with shared values.

Within the framework of authentic leadership, integrating *Paias Robamu* into leadership practices can strengthen leadership legitimacy through two primary pathways. First, the value enhances school members' trust through the consistency between cultural values and the principal's leadership behaviors. Second, it enriches the school's cultural identity as part of an organizational culture that extends beyond mere administrative compliance (Khan & Jamil, 2023; Simatupang & Tampake, 2024).

These findings carry important theoretical implications for studies on educational leadership. Authentic leadership has often been conceptualized as a universal leadership model centered on the leader's personal moral integrity. However, the results of this study suggest that local cultural dimensions can also serve as additional sources of leadership legitimacy. Cultural values such as *paias rohamu* provide an ethical foundation that strengthens leadership accountability and fosters trust within the school community (Hidayat & Patras, 2021; Lynch et al., 2022).

Overall, the findings of this study affirm that the moral value of *Paias Robamum* functions not merely as a cultural symbol but also as an ethical foundation that strengthens leadership accountability in schools. The integration of this value with the principles of authentic leadership demonstrates that leadership legitimacy is built not only on leaders' personal integrity but also on the alignment between leaders' actions and the cultural values embedded in the school community.

***Paias Paheanmu* and the Formation of Teacher Professionalism**

The element of *paias paheanmu*, which literally refers to maintaining personal cleanliness, is reconstructed in this study as a symbol of professionalism in school leadership practices. In the Batak Toba culture, the concept of personal cleanliness extends beyond physical hygiene to encompass broader moral meanings, such as discipline, responsibility, and respect for oneself and others. Therefore, the value of *paias paheanmu* in this study is interpreted as a principle that can serve as the foundation for developing professional behavior within the school environment.

The reconstruction of this value indicates that local wisdom can serve as the basis for a school's work culture when these cultural values are embodied in everyday leadership practices. Several studies on school leadership emphasize that professional culture in educational institutions is shaped not only by formal regulations but also by leaders' role modeling and consistency between their actions and values (Junaidin et al., 2022; Sukur et al., 2023). Leaders who maintain alignment between what they say and what they do are more likely to influence organizational members' behavior, as such behavior becomes a normative reference for members when performing their work (Warni et al., 2022). This pattern is highly relevant to Batak Toba culture,

which places strong emphasis on exemplary behavior as a key mechanism in the formation of social norms.



Image 2. In-depth discussion session with teachers and school leaders

Observations conducted in the schools involved in this study show that the value of *paias paheanmu* is reflected through various forms of role modeling demonstrated by school principals. One of the most prominent practices is time discipline. Principals consistently arrive at school earlier than most teachers. This early presence is not merely an administrative routine but also serves as a symbolic message that discipline is an integral part of a teacher's professional responsibility. This phenomenon aligns with findings from previous studies emphasizing that leaders' discipline can act as a normative signal for school staff to uphold professional standards in their work (Abdurrahman & Muhammad, 2023; Warni et al., 2022).

In addition to time discipline, role modeling is also evident in the way principals maintain professional appearance and ensure orderly administrative management. Principals routinely review the completeness of teaching documents, including lesson plans, teaching journals, and school activity reports. On several occasions, principals also provide guidance to teachers on the importance of maintaining orderly administrative records as part of their professional responsibilities. These findings are consistent with studies on school quality culture, which highlight the important role of school leadership in establishing work standards through consistent supervision, evaluation, and professional guidance (Azzahro' & Rossidy, 2024; Junaidin et al., 2022; Sukur et al., 2023).

Such role modeling has a tangible impact on the school's work culture. Teachers interviewed in this study reported that the principals' disciplined attitude encouraged them to adjust their own work behavior. Some teachers even expressed that they felt uncomfortable arriving late when the principal had already arrived earlier. Over time, this situation gradually shapes a set of behavioral standards that are collectively accepted within the school environment, even though they are not formally written. In other words, professional culture is not established solely through rigid rules but develops through a continuous process of exemplary leadership.

This phenomenon indicates that school principals' leadership plays a crucial role in shaping work norms within the school environment. The exemplary conduct of leaders becomes a central mechanism in the formation of a sustainable organizational culture. In the Batak Toba culture, the values of personal cleanliness and dignity embedded in *paias paheanmu* are also closely related to work ethic and respect for others. Therefore, leadership practices that demonstrate discipline,

integrity, and responsibility can strengthen the organizational identity of schools that emphasize professionalism.

These findings are consistent with the perspective of [Leithwood et al. \(2020\)](#), who describe school principals as normative actors within educational organizations. School leaders do not merely carry out administrative functions but also shape organizational culture through the values and behaviors they demonstrate. When principals consistently exhibit integrity, discipline, and professionalism, these behaviors often serve as reference points for teachers and school staff in performing their duties. Numerous studies on school leadership also indicate that improvements in teacher professionalism and instructional quality are strongly influenced by principals who can build a strong work culture through exemplary leadership and continuous supervision ([Gunawan, 2021](#); [Junaidin et al., 2022](#)).

Thus, the reconstruction of the value of *paias paheanmu* in this study demonstrates that local wisdom can function as a foundation for fostering professionalism within schools. This value can be manifested through leadership practices that emphasize discipline, responsibility in task management, and mutual respect among members of the school community. The integration of local cultural values into educational leadership practices not only strengthens schools' organizational identity but also fosters a more disciplined, orderly, and responsible professional culture among educators. Studies on school culture and quality culture further affirm that integrating local cultural values into school leadership can reinforce the formation of work norms that support the improvement of teacher professionalism ([Gunawan, 2021](#); [Junaidin et al., 2022](#); [Sukur et al., 2023](#)).

***Paias Bagasmu* and *Paias Pekaranganmu* in School Environmental Management**

The dimensions of *paias bagasmu* and *paias pekaranganmu* within the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima* relate to efforts to maintain cleanliness and order in living spaces, both within the home and in the surrounding environment. In the context of school leadership, these values are reconceptualized as principles that guide the management of the physical school environment in a more organized, cleaner, and healthier manner. School principals do not merely view environmental cleanliness as a technical obligation but rather as an integral part of school culture that must be collectively maintained by all members of the school community. Consequently, the values of *paias bagasmu* and *paias pekaranganmu* can be understood as foundational principles for leadership practices that emphasize creating a healthy learning environment that more comprehensively supports the educational process.

Observations conducted in the schools involved in this study show that the value of *paias bagasmu* is reflected in the relatively well-organized management of learning spaces. Classrooms are kept clean through student duty schedules and routine teacher supervision. Desks and chairs are arranged neatly to facilitate students' participation in learning activities. Classroom ventilation is also maintained to ensure proper air circulation. The classroom walls are equipped with various learning media, including educational posters, students' work, and learning information that supports classroom instruction. In addition, sanitation facilities, such as toilets and handwashing stations, are regularly maintained to ensure students can use them comfortably. These conditions indicate that classroom management not only emphasizes cleanliness but also considers the comfort and suitability of the learning environment.

Meanwhile, the value of *paias pekaranganmu* is evident in school principals' efforts to manage the external school environment, keeping it clean and well-organized. The schoolyard is used not only for ceremonial or sports activities but also as an open learning space. In several schools, the school yard has even been developed into an educational garden planted with various ornamental and

productive plants. Teachers often use this area as a learning medium, particularly for environmental education activities. The use of outdoor spaces as part of the learning process indicates that the school environment is not merely a physical facility but also a learning resource that supports students' learning.

Efforts to maintain the cleanliness of the school environment also involve active participation from members of the school community. Students are involved through regular communal activities or cleaning duty schedules. Teachers and school staff also play a role in supervising the condition of the school environment to ensure it remains clean and comfortable. On several occasions, members of the surrounding community participate in collective activities to clean the school area. Such participation demonstrates that environmental management within schools is not solely an internal responsibility but also involves support from the surrounding community. Research on school leadership shows that the involvement of multiple stakeholders, both within and outside the school, is a key factor in creating a positive school climate that supports learning processes (Firmina et al., 2025; Hartini et al., 2025).

These findings suggest that cultural values related to environmental cleanliness can be effectively integrated into school management practices. A clean and well-organized learning environment contributes positively to students' comfort during learning activities. When learning spaces are tidy and healthy, students tend to concentrate more easily during classroom activities. Furthermore, a well-maintained environment fosters a sense of belonging toward the school among both students and teachers. Studies on school environments also indicate that the quality of a school's physical environment is closely associated with students' comfort and engagement in learning (Damri et al., 2025; Rofiah et al., 2024).

The results of this study are consistent with previous research emphasizing that school leaders play a significant role in shaping a conducive learning climate through effective environmental management. In educational leadership literature, such practices are often associated with instructional and transformational leadership, both of which highlight leaders' roles in building a school culture that supports learning (Nelitawati & Ginanjar, 2023; Susanti et al., 2025; Widawati et al., 2024). School leaders are therefore responsible not only for administrative functions but also for creating learning environments that enable teachers and students to engage in educational activities effectively.

From a broader perspective, these practices can also be interpreted as a form of ecological leadership. The concept of ecological leadership emphasizes the importance of balancing physical, psychosocial, and organizational cultural environments within educational systems. Educational leaders are viewed as agents of change who not only manage school organizations but also foster collective awareness regarding environmental sustainability as an integral component of the educational process (Hartini et al., 2025; Rifai et al., 2025; Widawati et al., 2024).

By internalizing the values of *paias bagasmu* and *paias pekaranganmu*, school principals help build awareness of the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness and sustainability. These cultural values serve as the foundation for developing behaviors among school members that demonstrate greater concern for the surrounding environment. Consequently, environmental management within schools should not be viewed merely as a technical aspect of school management but also as part of character education that instills ecological responsibility among students and the wider school community. Ultimately, integrating local cultural values into school leadership practices not only strengthens schools' identity as learning communities but also creates educational environments that are healthier, more participatory, and more sustainable.

***Paias Parangemu* and the Formation of Social Ethics in Schools**

The final element of the *Podu Na Lima* philosophy is *paias parangemu*, which relates to behavioral integrity and social ethics in everyday life. In the Batak Toba tradition, this concept does not merely refer to an individual's ability to regulate personal behavior but also reflects a moral responsibility to maintain harmonious social relationships with others. Therefore, in the context of school leadership, the value of *paias parangemu* can be reconstructed as a principle that promotes the development of sound social ethics through respectful interactions among principals, teachers, students, and school staff.

In the schools involved in this study, this value is reflected in daily communication practices that emphasize politeness and respect for others. School principals consistently remind members of the school community of the importance of using respectful language in all forms of communication, both in classroom learning activities and in everyday interactions within the school environment. Teachers are also encouraged to treat students with respect, for example, by listening openly to students' opinions, providing guidance using non-demeaning language, and maintaining a constructive dialogue in the classroom. These practices demonstrate that school leadership not only manages educational activities administratively but also plays an important role in shaping the school community's character and communication ethics.

The value of *paias parangemu* is also reflected in the way schools cultivate harmonious social relationships among members. Teachers are expected to serve as role models by demonstrating respectful behavior in their interactions with students and colleagues. In practice, teachers strive to remain patient when facing differing opinions in the classroom and avoid using harsh or demeaning language. Gradually, these habits contribute to the development of a more courteous communication culture within the school. Students are also encouraged to show respect toward their peers and maintain politeness when interacting with teachers and school staff.

Within the Batak Toba culture, these respectful communication practices are closely tied to the philosophy of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, a value system that governs social relationships within the community. This principle emphasizes balanced interpersonal relationships through mutual respect and recognition of each individual's role within the social structure. When such values are internalized within school life, relationships among teachers, students, and staff become more harmonious because individuals strive to maintain ethical behavior in their interactions. The integration of these cultural values illustrates how local wisdom can function as a normative framework that strengthens leadership practices in building a healthy organizational culture within schools.

Beyond daily communication, the value of *paias parangemu* is also evident in how schools address conflicts that arise within the school environment. In several cases of student disputes, schools tend to employ dialogical approaches rather than punitive or repressive measures. Teachers or principals typically facilitate meetings between the parties involved in the conflict to discuss the issue openly. Through such dialogue, students are encouraged to understand others' perspectives and recognize the consequences of their actions. This approach not only aims to resolve conflicts peacefully but also fosters social awareness and moral responsibility among students (Purnadewi & Widana, 2023).

This dialogical approach indicates that conflict resolution in schools is not solely focused on imposing sanctions but also on cultivating empathy and social awareness. Through deliberation and dialogue, students learn to understand how their behavior affects others and develop

constructive problem-solving skills. In this context, the school functions as a social space that not only imparts academic knowledge but also shapes students' capacity to build healthy social relationships.

The findings of this study indicate that local cultural values can function as effective social instruments for fostering a harmonious school climate. The integration of the value of *paias parangemu* into school leadership practices contributes to the development of more stable and respectful relationships among members of the school community. Such conditions provide an essential foundation for creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for students.

These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the importance of integrating ethical and cultural values into school leadership practices. Research suggests that leadership emphasizing respectful communication, respect for individual dignity, and dialogical conflict resolution can strengthen social cohesion and improve the quality of relationships among members of the school community (Alamin et al., 2024; Hasbi, 2022; Simanjorang et al., 2020). Cultural values internalized within school life serve as behavioral guidelines that help maintain balanced social relationships among members of the school community.

The integration of local culture in leadership practices also demonstrates that school principals do not merely act as administrators but also function as moral leaders who shape patterns of interaction within the school environment (Widana et al., 2023). When values such as *paias parangemu* are used as guiding principles in leadership practices, principals help build a culture of respectful communication and responsiveness to the social needs of school members. This strengthens the view that school culture can serve as an important instrument for creating a social climate conducive to learning.

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that the concept of *paias parangemu* originates in Batak Toba culture, and its application in other schools may require adaptation to different sociocultural contexts. Several studies indicate that the relationship among school leadership, organizational culture, and work ethic may vary across local contexts and the quality of their implementation in everyday practice (Badaruddin, 2022; Megayanti & Asri, 2023). Therefore, further research is needed to empirically examine how local cultural values such as *paias parangemu* influence social cohesion, school climate, and the quality of learning across different educational contexts.

In summary, *paias parangemu* can be understood as an important foundation of social ethics in building harmonious relationships within schools. The integration of this local cultural value helps foster a culture of respectful communication, strengthen social cohesion among members of the school community, and create a more peaceful, inclusive educational environment that supports students' social development.

Model of School Leadership Based on the *Poda Na Lima* Philosophy

Based on the overall findings of this study, the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima* can be reconstructed as a contextual framework for school leadership. In practice, school principals do not merely interpret these values as cultural ethical teachings but translate them into concrete leadership actions in school management. This process of translating cultural values into organizational practice forms an integrated leadership pattern that combines local wisdom with the principles of modern educational management.

Analysis of the research data indicates that each element within the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy contributes to different dimensions of school governance. These values do not function independently but complement one another in forming a holistic leadership system. In other words,

a cultural philosophy that originally functioned as a moral guideline within society undergoes a reconstruction of meaning when applied in the context of educational leadership.

The first element, *Paias Robamu*, serves as the foundation of leadership accountability. This value emphasizes the sincerity of intention and moral integrity in carrying out leadership responsibilities. In school practice, this principle is reflected in the principal's efforts to establish transparency in managing educational resources, such as openly reporting the use of school funds and making decisions that consider fairness for all members of the school community. These practices indicate that a leader's moral integrity is not merely a personal virtue but also serves as a basis for building organizational trust.

The second element, *Paias Pabeanmu*, relates to the development of teacher professionalism. In the context of school leadership, this value is reflected through the principal's role modeling of professional behavior, including punctuality, responsibility in carrying out tasks, and orderly management of educational administration. When principals consistently demonstrate such professional conduct, teachers tend to adjust their own work behavior, leading to the emergence of collectively shared professional standards within the school (Anto et al., 2024).

The third and fourth elements, *Paias Bagasmu* and *Paias Pekaranganmu*, are related to the management of the school's physical environment. These values emphasize the importance of maintaining cleanliness, orderliness, and the suitability of living spaces (Hasibuan et al., 2024; Uswatun et al., 2026). In leadership practice, these principles are translated into efforts to create a healthy and conducive learning environment. School principals encourage well-organized classrooms, the maintenance of sanitation facilities, and the use of school surroundings as open learning spaces. Consequently, the school environment is not viewed merely as a physical facility but as part of a broader learning ecosystem that supports the educational process.

The final element, *Paias Parangemu*, plays a role in shaping the school community's social ethics. This value emphasizes the importance of maintaining behavior that reflects respect for others. In school life, this principle is manifested through a culture of polite communication, respectful social relationships, and the resolution of conflicts through dialogical approaches. The application of this value helps create a more harmonious social climate within schools and supports the development of students' character. When these findings are synthesized, it becomes evident that the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima* constitutes a leadership pattern that integrates multiple dimensions of school management, ranging from the moral aspects of leadership and teacher professionalism to environmental management and the development of school culture. Based on this synthesis, the study proposes a school leadership model rooted in Batak Toba local wisdom.



Image 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and validation session with school principals and teachers to finalize the reconstructed leadership model."

The synthesis of the findings demonstrates that each element of the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy contributes to a distinct dimension of school leadership while remaining interconnected in forming a comprehensive leadership system. Based on these conceptual relationships, this study develops a school leadership model grounded in local wisdom, as illustrated in Image 1.

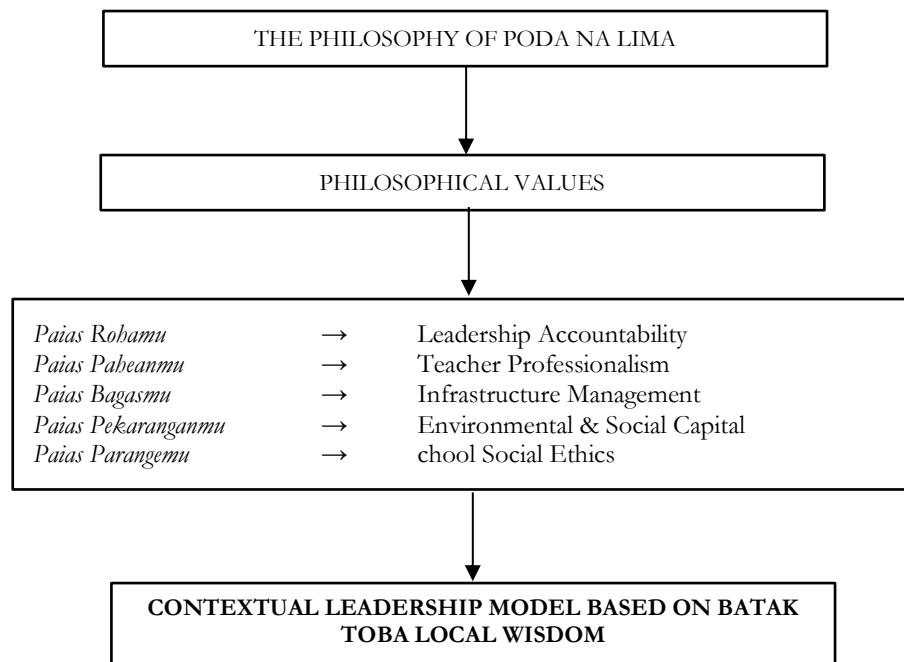


Image 4. School Leadership Model Based on the *Poda Na Lima* Philosophy

This model illustrates that the philosophical values embedded in *Poda Na Lima* serve as normative sources influencing various dimensions of school governance. These values do not operate independently but interact with one another in shaping integrative leadership practices. The value of *Paias Rohamu* emphasizes leadership accountability; *Paias Pabeanmu* promotes teacher professionalism; *Paias Bagasmu* and *Paias Pekaranganmu* relate to the management of the school environment; while *Paias Parangemu* contributes to the development of social ethics among members of the school community. The integration of these five dimensions results in a leadership model that is oriented not only toward managerial effectiveness but also toward strengthening cultural values and social relationships within the school community.

The findings of this study contribute to the field of educational leadership by demonstrating that local cultural values can serve as conceptual foundations for developing school leadership models. The integration of the *Poda Na Lima* philosophy into leadership practices shows that educational leadership is shaped not only by modern management theories but also by the cultural value systems that exist within society. This research contributes to the discourse on indigenous leadership by providing a culturally-responsive model that integrates local wisdom with modern management principles. It challenges urban-centric leadership paradigms by proving that local philosophy can provide a robust foundation for organizational professionalism and transparency. For school principals and education authorities, the *Poda Na Lima* framework serves as a strategic guide for building community trust and social harmony. It provides a foundational resource for developing principal training programs that are contextually relevant to the North Tapanuli region.

Despite its significant contributions to the study of indigenous leadership, this research possesses several limitations that should be acknowledged. The geographical and cultural scope of this study is confined to the Batak Toba community in North Tapanuli, which may limit the generalizability

of the findings to educational settings in other ethnic or regional contexts. Furthermore, because this investigation focused exclusively on elementary schools, the results may not fully capture the leadership dynamics in secondary education, which often involve more intricate administrative and social complexities. Lastly, the data primarily reflect the perspectives of school principals and teachers; thus, students' viewpoints and experiences were not yet fully explored in the reconstruction of this leadership framework.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that local education authorities consider integrating the *Poda Na Lima* framework into professional development and leadership standards for school heads to foster more culturally-responsive school management. For future research, it is suggested that scholars conduct quantitative or mixed-methods studies to empirically measure the long-term impact of this model on student character development and institutional performance. Additionally, comparative studies involving other local wisdoms, such as those from the Karo or Simalungun communities, would be highly valuable in enriching the paradigm of indigenous leadership within the broader Indonesian educational landscape.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the philosophy of *Poda Na Lima* can be reconstructed as a contextual framework for school leadership in managing elementary education in North Tapanuli Regency. These cultural values are not merely understood as traditional moral teachings but are translated by school principals into operational leadership practices, including leadership accountability (*paias rohamu*), teacher professionalism (*paias pabeanmu*), the management of the school environment and infrastructure (*paias bagasmu* and *paias pekaranganmu*), and the development of social ethics among members of the school community (*paias parangemu*). The integration of these values forms a school leadership model grounded in local wisdom that emphasizes not only managerial effectiveness but also the strengthening of cultural values, social relationships, and the school community's character. These findings indicate that local wisdom can function as a normative foundation for developing educational leadership practices that are more contextual and culturally relevant. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine this local wisdom-based leadership model across different cultural contexts to broaden understanding of how cultural values contribute to school leadership practices.

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