

Available online at:

<https://jurnal.unikastpaulus.ac.id/index.php/ichelac>

PROCEEDING

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMANITIES,
EDUCATION, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
UNIVERSITAS BATULU INDONESIA SANTO PAULUS BATULU
Jember - 2025

Volume 5, 2025 (368-385)

International Conference on Humanities,
Education, Language, and Culture

Humanities Education and Hombo Batu Transforming Nias Local Wisdom Towards a Sustainable Society

Darmawan Harefa*

Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha,
Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia

*Corresponding Email:

darmawan.harefa@student.undiksha.ac.id

Abstract

In the era of globalization, local wisdom faces significant challenges due to modernization, which has transformed societal mindsets and lifestyles, particularly among the younger generation. *Hombo Batu*, the traditional stone-jumping ritual of the Nias people, is a cultural heritage that is not merely physical but also embodies essential values such as courage, discipline, and honor. Unfortunately, the philosophical values within *Hombo Batu* have begun to degrade and are increasingly regarded as a tourist attraction rather than a legacy of character education. This study aims to analyze how humanities education can serve as a medium to transform the local wisdom of Nias, particularly through *Hombo Batu*, in order to build a sustainable society. This research adopts a qualitative approach, incorporating literature reviews and in-depth interviews with cultural figures, educators, and the local community. The findings reveal that integrating *Hombo Batu*'s values into formal and informal education can enhance young people's awareness of their cultural heritage and strengthen their local identity amid rapid societal changes. Moreover, humanities education plays a crucial role in instilling the understanding that cultural sustainability is not solely

about physical preservation but also about passing down the inherent values within traditions. In conclusion, humanities education holds great potential in revitalizing the meaning of *Hombo Batu* as part of Nias' local wisdom, with an adaptive approach to contemporary needs. With the right strategy, this transformation of local wisdom can contribute to shaping a more cultured, character-driven, and sustainable society.

Keywords: Humanities education; Hombo Batu; Local Wisdom; Cultural Transformation; Sustainable Society.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly growing era of globalization, societies face significant challenges in maintaining their cultural identity and local wisdom amidst modernization and rapid social change (Mutolib et al., 2025). One crucial aspect in addressing these challenges is humanities education, which not only aims to transmit knowledge but also instills cultural values, ethics, and humanity in people's lives. Humanities education plays a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of local values so that they remain relevant to contemporary developments. In this globalized era, one of the greatest challenges faced by traditional societies is how to preserve local cultural values amidst the currents of modernization. Local wisdom that has been passed down for generations often experiences a shift in meaning or even faces extinction due to rapid social, economic, and technological changes (D. Harefa & Suastra, 2024). Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to transform cultural values so that they remain relevant and can contribute to sustainable community development (Zulirfan et al., 2023).

In Nias Island, local wisdom has become an inseparable part of community life. One of the most renowned cultural traditions is Hombo Batu, a stone-jumping ritual that is not merely a physical attraction but also a symbol of bravery, maturity, and discipline in Nias society (D. Harefa, 2024a). This tradition has been passed down from generation to

generation as part of informal education that shapes individual character within the community. Humanities education plays a central role in this effort. This form of education does not only focus on knowledge transfer but also instills humanitarian, moral, and cultural values in young generations (Nussbaum, 2010). Through humanities education, local wisdom can be taught more systematically, making it easier to understand and apply in daily life. One of the distinctive aspects of Nias Island's local wisdom is Hombo Batu, or stone jumping, a tradition that not only represents physical strength but also embodies profound values such as bravery, discipline, and honor (Sihombing, 2018). This tradition has become a cultural symbol of the Nias community, particularly in the southern region, and is often associated with initiation rites into adulthood. However, with the advancement of modernization, the philosophical meaning behind Hombo Batu has begun to fade, especially among younger generations, who are more exposed to global culture than to their own local values (Zega, 2021).

Humanities education plays a crucial role in building character, ethics, and cultural awareness within society (Nussbaum, 2010). In the context of cultural preservation, humanities education can serve as a medium for integrating local values into both formal and non-formal education curricula (Dewey, 2019). Several studies indicate that culture-based education enhances identity and pride in local heritage, helping younger generations understand the noble values inherited from their ancestors (L. Smith, 2016). In Indonesia, culture-based education has been implemented in various forms, such as introducing traditional arts in schools, integrating folklore in literature lessons, and developing culture-based extracurricular programs (Gunawan, 2019). However, there are still challenges in its implementation, especially in facing modernization, which tends to shift educational focus towards science and technology

(Murtiningrum, 2020). Therefore, a more innovative approach is required so that humanities education can coexist with modern developments.

However, with modernization, industrialization, and changes in lifestyle, cultural practices such as Hombo Batu face significant challenges regarding preservation and sustainability (Martiman Su'azisiwa Sarumaha, 2018). Many young people are beginning to lose their understanding of the philosophical meaning behind this tradition, putting its embedded values at risk of being eroded by globalization. Consequently, systematic efforts are necessary to transform this local wisdom so that it continues to thrive and contribute to sustainable community development (Zega, 2021).

Hombo Batu is a unique cultural heritage of Nias Island. Historically, this tradition originated from the Nias community's practice of preparing young men to become warriors or leaders in their communities (Zega, 2021). Beyond being a symbol of bravery, stone jumping also represents discipline and mental resilience, which are essential for social life in Nias society (Waruwu, 2017). Previous studies have noted that Hombo Batu is not merely a physical activity but also holds deep social and spiritual dimensions (Y. Harefa, 2015). This ritual is often associated with the social stratification system in Nias society, where successfully jumping over a certain height earns an individual a respected status within the community (Zebua, 2018). However, in the modern era, these values have begun to diminish, and Hombo Batu is more often showcased as a tourist attraction rather than as an integral part of character education for Nias society (Sihombing, 2018).

The concept of sustainability in cultural contexts emphasizes that traditions and local wisdom must endure over the long term by adapting to societal changes (Unesco, 2017). One strategy that can be applied is cultural transformation, which is the process of adapting and reinterpreting local values

so that they remain relevant in modern life (Ingold, 2013). In several Indonesian cultural contexts, cultural transformation has been successfully achieved by integrating local traditions into formal education systems. For instance, in Bali, the concept of Tri Hita Karana has been successfully implemented in various environmental and educational policies (Artawan, 2020). The same approach can be applied to Hombo Batu, where its values of bravery, discipline, and honor can be taught within the context of character education and leadership development in Nias schools (Lase, 2022).

Additionally, the use of digital technology in documenting and educating about cultural heritage has become a widely adopted strategy for cultural preservation (P. Smith, 2021). With digital media, younger generations can easily access information about their culture and participate in various culture-based activities (Saragih, 2021). This study aims to explore how humanities education can serve as a medium for transforming Nias' local wisdom, particularly through the Hombo Batu tradition, into a foundation for a sustainable society (D. Harefa, 2025). By positioning education as the primary tool, this tradition can not only be preserved but also contextualized in modern life, ensuring its continued relevance for future generations. Through this study, it is hoped that effective strategies can be developed to integrate local cultural values into both formal and informal education systems, fostering greater awareness and appreciation for cultural heritage. Thus, this research contributes not only to cultural preservation but also to the development of a more harmonious, cultured, and sustainable society.

METHODS

Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative approach using the ethnographic study method to understand the meaning,

values, and transformation of Nias' local wisdom, particularly Hombo Batu, within the context of humanities education and cultural sustainability. This approach is chosen because the research focuses on cultural and social interpretations within the Nias community and how traditional values can be transformed through education.

Type of Research

This study is descriptive-analytical, aiming to describe phenomena in depth and analyze how humanities education can serve as a tool to transform local wisdom toward a sustainable society.

Research Location

This research is conducted in Nias Island, particularly in the South Nias region, which still preserves the Hombo Batu tradition as an integral part of the local culture and social life.

Data Sources

The data in this study are obtained from two primary sources:

a. Primary Data

- 1) In-depth interviews with traditional leaders, cultural figures, educators, and young generations in Nias.
- 2) Direct observation of Hombo Batu practices in both social and educational settings.
- 3) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the local community to understand their perceptions and attitudes toward cultural transformation.

b. Secondary Data

- 1) Literature studies on humanities education, local wisdom, and cultural sustainability concepts.
- 2) Historical and academic documents on Hombo Batu, as well as previous studies on Nias culture.

- 3) Government policies related to cultural preservation and education based on local wisdom.

Data Collection Techniques

a. In-depth Interviews

Conducted using semi-structured interviews with traditional leaders, teachers, and community members to explore their views on the values embedded in Hombo Batu and how these values can be adapted into education.

b. Participant Observation

The researcher directly participates in observing Hombo Batu practices, both in cultural contexts and sustainability efforts through formal and non-formal education.

c. Documentation

Collection of photographs, videos, and written documents related to Hombo Batu from academic sources and local records.

d. Literature Review

A review of relevant literature to strengthen the analysis with theories and previous research.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data is analyzed using the thematic analysis method, following these steps:

a. Data Reduction

Selecting and categorizing data based on key themes, such as:

- 1) Cultural values in Hombo Batu
- 2) The role of humanities education
- 3) Strategies for transforming local wisdom

b. Data Presentation

Organizing data into narrative descriptions and tables to facilitate interpretation.

c. Conclusion Drawing

Formulating a comprehensive understanding of how humanities education can transform the local wisdom of Hombo Batu toward a sustainable society.

Data Validity

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, the study applies source and method triangulation techniques, including:

a. Source Triangulation

Comparing interview findings from various informants with documentation and observations.

b. Method Triangulation

Using multiple data collection methods (interviews, observations, documentation, and literature review) to obtain a more comprehensive perspective.

c. Member Checking

Reconfirming the findings with selected informants to ensure accuracy and reliability in data interpretation.

Research Limitations

This study focuses exclusively on the Nias community and how Hombo Batu can be transformed through humanities education. External factors such as economic and political influences on cultural preservation are not the primary focus. The chosen methodology is expected to provide a clear framework on how the values within Hombo Batu can be adapted into education, contributing to the sustainability of Nias culture and identity in the modern era.

RESULTS

Research Findings

Based on research conducted through interviews, observations, and literature reviews, several key findings have been obtained regarding how humanities education and Hombo Batu can transform Nias' local wisdom toward a sustainable society.

The Values of Hombo Batu in the Context of Nias Local Wisdom

The findings indicate that Hombo Batu is not merely a physical tradition but also carries profound social and cultural values, including:

- a. Bravery and Discipline → Hombo Batu symbolizes the courage of Nias youth in proving their maturity, requiring them to undergo rigorous training to master the stone-jumping technique.
- b. Social Stratification and Cultural Identity → Successfully jumping over the stone not only brings personal pride but also elevates an individual's social status within the community.
- c. Mental Resilience and Morality → This ritual teaches values of patience, perseverance, and the importance of maintaining dignity for oneself and one's family.
- d. Mutual Cooperation and Social Solidarity → The preparation for Hombo Batu involves community cooperation, demonstrating a strong spirit of togetherness within Nias society.

Hombo Batu under the Threat of Modernization

Despite its strong cultural values, the research findings show that Hombo Batu is undergoing a shift in meaning due to modernization, including:

- a. Cultural Commercialization → Hombo Batu is increasingly presented as a tourist attraction rather than a cultural practice with deep philosophical significance, leading younger generations to perceive it more as a performance than as part of their cultural identity.
- b. Declining Interest Among Younger Generations → Many young people in Nias are no longer interested in learning and practicing Hombo Batu, opting for modern activities that align more with contemporary lifestyles.
- c. Lack of Integration in Education → There is no specific program within the formal education system that teaches the values of Hombo Batu as part of character education and local cultural history.

Humanities Education as a Medium for Transforming Local Wisdom

The findings show that humanities education has great potential to revitalize the values of Hombo Batu in a way that remains relevant to modern society. Several strategies can be implemented, including:

- a. Integration into School Curricula → Incorporating Hombo Batu values into subjects such as history, character education, or cultural extracurricular activities.
- b. Interactive Approaches and Digitalization → Utilizing technology, including audiovisual documentation and digital media, to attract the interest of younger generations in learning about their culture.
- c. Collaboration with Local Communities → Involving traditional leaders and cultural practitioners as mentors in culture-based education programs in schools.
- d. Revitalizing Hombo Batu in a Contemporary Context → Using this tradition as inspiration for leadership

training, character development, and identity formation.

Implications for a Sustainable Society

If this local wisdom-based education strategy is well implemented, Hombo Batu can serve as a crucial instrument in building a sustainable society with the following implications:

- a. Cultural Preservation → Local traditions can continue to thrive through adaptive approaches that align with contemporary societal developments.
- b. Strengthening Local Identity → Younger generations develop a deeper understanding and pride in their cultural heritage, which strengthens cultural resilience in the era of globalization.
- c. Character Building Based on Local Wisdom → Education that instills cultural values can shape individuals with integrity and a strong sense of social responsibility.

Through a well-structured educational approach, Hombo Batu can be more than just a traditional practice-it can become a powerful tool for character development, cultural sustainability, and community empowerment in modern Nias society.

DISCUSSION

The Relevance of Humanities Education in Preserving Local Wisdom

Humanities education plays a crucial role in fostering cultural awareness, ethical values, and social identity within society. This form of education enables individuals to understand history and cultural values passed down through generations (D. Harefa, 2024b). In the context of Nias, the implementation of humanities education can serve as a solution for sustaining the Hombo Batu tradition, by instilling philosophical and historical understanding among younger generations. (Dewey,

2019) emphasized that culture-based experiential learning has a greater impact than conventional methods, as it allows students to grasp social values through direct engagement. This aligns with the Nias context, where Hombo Batu is not merely a sport or a tourist attraction but holds profound symbolic meaning. If the values embedded in this tradition are integrated into education, younger generations can develop a deeper appreciation and commitment to preserving their cultural identity. (Gunawan, 2019) asserted that culture-based education enhances cultural pride and instills strong character. Therefore, integrating Hombo Batu values into both formal and non-formal education can be an effective strategy for preserving cultural heritage while strengthening social identity and character development.

The Shift in the Meaning of Hombo Batu Due to Modernization

As society evolves, the meaning of Hombo Batu has undergone a shift. Historically, this tradition served as a crucial social function, particularly as part of a rite of passage into adulthood and character-building for young Nias men (Waruwu, 2017). However, this study found that in the modern context, Hombo Batu is now more commonly used as a tourist attraction rather than an educational cultural practice. (Zega, 2021) noted that many young Nias people no longer understand the essence of Hombo Batu, as its values are not effectively taught within the educational system or in everyday life. This risks a generational disconnect from ancestral traditions. If this issue is left unaddressed, it will become increasingly difficult for the Nias community to maintain its cultural heritage in the future. According to (D. Harefa et al., 2024), cultural transformation is the primary solution in addressing the challenges of modernization. This means that the values within Hombo Batu must be redefined and adapted to remain relevant-for instance, by incorporating them into

leadership education, discipline training, and character development programs.

Strategies for Transforming Hombo Batu through Humanities Education

Based on the research findings, several strategies can be implemented to ensure that *Hombo Batu* remains relevant in a modern context:

1. Integration into the Education Curriculum

- a. Hombo Batu can be included as part of history, local culture, or character education subjects in Nias schools.
- b. Students can study the philosophy of Hombo Batu, the values embedded within it, and its role in Nias society.

2. Implementation of Experience-Based Learning Methods

- a. Using an experiential learning approach, where students engage in activities that reflect
- b. *Hombo Batu* values, such as bravery, teamwork, and discipline.
- c. Encouraging youth participation in stone-jumping training and competitions to foster a sense of cultural belonging.

3. Revitalization through Digital Media

- a. Documenting the *Hombo Batu* tradition through educational videos, documentaries, and social media content to engage younger audiences.
- b. Developing interactive applications or educational games that introduce *Hombo Batu* values in an engaging way.

4. Collaboration with Cultural Leaders and Local Communities

- a. Involving traditional leaders and cultural practitioners in educational programs to ensure students receive authentic cultural knowledge.

- b. Organizing cultural festivals that engage schools, local communities, and tourists to enhance appreciation for Nias' heritage.

According to (P. Smith, 2021), leveraging technology in cultural preservation can significantly enhance youth engagement and accessibility to cultural heritage. By adopting these strategies, Hombo Batu can continue to thrive as an integral part of Nias identity in the modern era.

Local Wisdom-Based Education as a Pillar for Cultural Sustainability

Cultural sustainability is not only about preserving the physical aspects of a tradition but also ensuring the continuity of the values it represents (Ingold, 2013). Therefore, education plays a crucial role in passing down the core values of Hombo Batu to future generations. In several Indonesian contexts, culture-based education approaches have been successfully implemented. For instance, the Tri Hita Karana concept in Bali has been integrated into education curricula and sustainable development policies (Suherman, 2005). This model can serve as a reference for Nias to develop a similar approach in maintaining Hombo Batu. Through well-structured humanities education, Hombo Batu can evolve into more than just a tradition-it can serve as a foundation for leadership development, character building, and community empowerment in modern Nias society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that humanities education plays a strategic role in transforming Nias' local wisdom, particularly Hombo Batu, toward a sustainable society. Hombo Batu is not merely a physical tradition but is deeply embedded with cultural values such as bravery, discipline, social solidarity, and respect for local identity. However, modernization has led to a shift in the

meaning of this tradition, putting it at risk of degradation if it is not adapted within a more relevant educational context for younger generations.

REFERENCES

- Artawan, I. M. (2020). Implementasi Konsep Tri Hita Karana dalam Pendidikan Berkelanjutan di Bali. . *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Budaya*, 25(1), 46–60.
- Dewey, J. (2019). *Experience and Education*. . Macmillan.
- Gunawan, H. (2019). *Pendidikan Berbasis Budaya: Model Integrasi Kearifan Lokal dalam Kurikulum Nasional*. . Rajawali Pers.
- Harefa, D. (2024a). PRESERVATION OF HOMBO BATU: BUILDING AWARENESS OF LOCAL WISDOM AMONG THE YOUNG GENERATION OF NIAS. *HAGA: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 3(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.57094/haga.v3i2.2334>
- Harefa, D. (2024b). STRENGTHENING MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL SCIENCES EDUCATION BASED ON THE LOCAL WISDOM OF SOUTH NIAS: INTEGRATION OF TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS IN MODERN EDUCATION. *HAGA: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 3(2), 63–79. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.57094/haga.v3i2.2347>

- Harefa, D. (2025). HOMBO BATU THE TRADITION OF SOUTH NIAS THAT TEACHES COURAGE AND COOPERATION. *FAGURU: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Keguruan*, 4(1), 2025. <https://jurnal.uniraya.ac.id/index.php/FAGURU>
- Harefa, D., Budi Adnyana, P., Gede, I., Wesnawa, A., Putu, I., & Ariawan, W. (2024). EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: UTILIZING LOCAL WISDOM OF NIAS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. *CIVIC SOCIETY RESEARCH and EDUCATION: Jurnal Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.57094/jpkn.v5i2.2254>
- Harefa, D., & Suastra, W. (2024). MATHEMATICS EDUCATION BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM: LEARNING STRATEGIES THROUGH HOMBO BATU. *AFORE: Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.57094/afore.v3i2.2236>
- Harefa, Y. (2015). Makna Filosofis Hombo Batu dalam Masyarakat Nias: Perspektif Sosial dan Budaya. *Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia*, 37(2), 78–92.
- Ingold, T. (2013). *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. Routledge.
- Lase, B. (2022). Pendidikan Karakter dalam Tradisi Hombo Batu di Nias: Studi Implementasi dalam

- Kurikulum Sekolah Menengah. . *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 28(3), 122–137.
- Martiman Su'azisiwa Sarumaha, R. E. L. (2018). Improving the Quality of Human Resources Through Local Cultural Values (The Tradition of HomboBatu on Nias Island). In *Advanced Science Letters* (Vol. 24, Issue 1).
- Murtiningrum, R. (2020). *Dinamika Pendidikan Humaniora di Indonesia: Antara Globalisasi dan Lokalitas*. . Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Mutolib, A., Rahmat, A., Harefa, D., Nugraha, S., Handoko, L., Sululing, S., Laxmi, & Nurhayati, S. (2025). Volcanic disaster mitigation based on local wisdom: A case study from a local community in the Mount Galunggung, Indonesia. *BIO Web of Conferences*, 155. <https://doi.org/10.1051/bioconf/202515502002>
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2010). *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Saragih, P. (2021). Peran Digitalisasi dalam Pelestarian Budaya Lokal: Studi Kasus di Berbagai Daerah Indonesia. . *Jurnal Teknologi Dan Budaya*, 15(2), 67–82.
- Sihombing, P. (2018). Transformasi Tradisi Hombo Batu dalam Pariwisata Budaya di Nias. . *Jurnal Pariwisata Indonesia*, 12(1), 35–50.

- Smith, L. (2016). *Uses of Heritage*. Routledge.
- Smith, P. (2021). *Digital Heritage and Cultural Preservation: A Global Perspective*. . Oxford University Press.
- Suherman, E. (2005). *Pendidikan dan Budaya Lokal: Membangun Pendidikan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal*. . Pustaka Pelajar.
- Unesco. (2017). *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development*. . UNESCO.
- Waruwu, J. (2017). *Sistem Sosial Masyarakat Nias dan Tradisi Lompat Batu: Kajian Sejarah dan Budaya*. . Universitas Sumatera Utara Press.
- Zebua, L. (2018). *Stratifikasi Sosial dalam Budaya Nias: Studi Antropologi Hombo Batu*. . Pustaka Pelajar.
- Zega, F. (2021). Modernisasi dan Pergeseran Makna Hombo Batu di Kalangan Generasi Muda Nias. . *Jurnal Sosial Budaya*, 20(1), 85–99.
- Zulirfan, Z., Yennita, Y., Maaruf, Z., & Sahal, M. (2023). Ethnoscience literacy in Pacu Jalur tradition: Can students connect science with their local culture? *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejmste/12773>