

# **A** N ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY IN INDONESIA'S BATAK TOBA ORAL FOLKLORE

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## **1. Introduction**

Maintaining cultural expressions to protect them from damage or extinction is crucial so that the communities who own them can continue to use and transmit them. This process is known as conservation. According to O'Grady, William [1], Setiartin, et al [2], Olko, et al. [3] and Harimansyah [4], the conservation and revitalization of regional languages and literature can be effectively achieved through systematic documentation. Within the context of Batak Toba oral folklore, conservation is not merely the act of recording traditions but also ensuring their accessibility through digital media utilization (DM), thereby enhancing intergenerational community awareness (CA) and fostering community participation (CP) in cultural practices. Furthermore, sustainable conservation requires institutional support, as government regulations (GR) and educational integration (EI) provide formal mechanisms to embed folklore into learning environments and community life. The Batak Toba are one of the major ethnic groups inhabiting North Sumatra, Indonesia, predominantly located around Lake Toba. They possess a rich cultural heritage characterized by distinct language, customs, and oral traditions that play a central role in maintaining social cohesion and transmitting ancestral values. Before determining whether oral literature requires conservation or revitalization, a linguistic vitality study is necessary to map the urgency of preservation efforts. The classification of oral literature into categories such as critical, endangered, declining, vulnerable, and safe, as stated in the Technical Instructions for Implementation: Language and Literature Conservation, provide a priority framework for determining the urgency of conservation efforts, allowing policymakers and cultural practitioners to assess the level of cultural sustainability and to design appropriate revitalization strategies according to the degree of endangerment faced by each form of oral tradition.

Indonesia, as an archipelagic nation, possesses an extraordinary diversity of languages and literature that reflect its rich linguistic and cultural heritage. However, rapid technological advancement and shifting societal perspectives have significantly transformed the diversity of regional languages and oral traditions. These transformations threaten the vitality of traditional folklore, including the oral traditions of the Batak Toba whose communities are primarily located around Lake Toba. The Batak

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Toba possess a rich heritage of oral traditions such as legends, ritual chants, and storytelling performances that convey moral teaching, ancestral wisdom, and social values. However, these traditions are now facing declining intergenerational transmission and diminishing community awareness. To prevent further cultural erosion, comprehensive conservation and revitalization strategies are essential.

These strategies must involve not only strengthening government regulation support (GR) but also integrating folklore into formal education (EI), fostering active community participation (CP), and utilizing digital media (DM) for sustainable cultural preservation. The urgency of these efforts is recognized in national policy, particularly Law Number 24 of 2014 concerning the National Flag, Language, and Emblem, as well as Government Regulation Number 57 of 2014 on the Development, Fostering, and Protection of Language and Literature, and the Enhancement of the Function of the Indonesian Language (Technical Implementation Guidelines: Language and Literature Conservation, 2019). Through these instruments, the government seeks to ensure cultural sustainability (CS) by safeguarding oral traditions as a crucial component of Indonesia's intangible heritage.

The revitalization of oral literature is defined as a strategic effort to increase the vitality of regional traditions (Ministry of Education and Culture); this aligns with the opinions of Nasution, Jamaluddin [5] and Sartini [6]. The revitalization of oral folklore seeks to preserve and develop cultural knowledge by transmitting it to younger generations and embedding it within the wider community's daily practices. This process highlights the need to cultivate community awareness (CA) and strengthen educational integration (EI) so that folklore is not only remembered but actively practiced. Reinforcing this view, Nugroho, Bayu Aji [7] and Rahima A. [8], argue that conservation and revitalization must be institutionalized as part of formal programs driven by both government and private initiatives. Such programs require the support of government regulation (GR), the mobilization of community participation (CP), and the strategic use of digital media (DM) to ensure accessibility and dissemination. In the context of North Sumatra, these efforts are crucial for safeguarding the oral folklore of its eight ethnic groups, particularly the Batak Toba, where intergenerational decline threatens linguistic vitality. By embedding folklore in daily life and enabling active participation of young practitioners, conservation strategies can contribute to the cultural sustainability (CS) of these traditions, preventing them from extinction.

The objectives of conserving and revitalizing regional literature and oral folklore, as outlined by Ruslan, et al. [9], Amri, et al. [10], Astri, et al. [11], and Seha, et al. [12], and further reinforced in the revitalization pocket book published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, encompass several dimensions outlined as follows:

- (a) fostering active speakers who engage with regional languages and oral traditions with enthusiasm,
- (b) ensuring the joyful survival of regional languages and literature,
- (c) creating creative spaces for independence and innovation in sustaining oral traditions,
- (d) and discovering new functions and domains for language and literature in contemporary life.

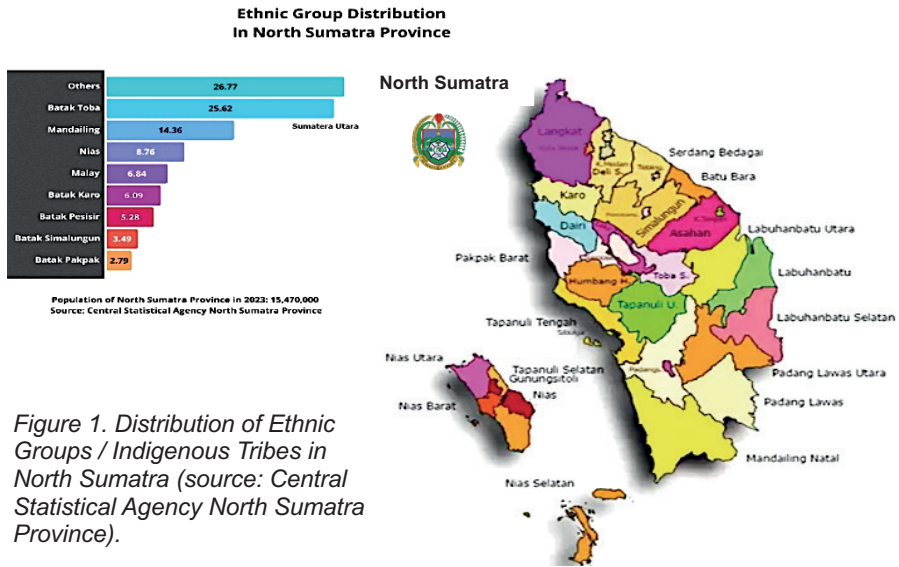
In the case of Batak Toba folklore, these objectives highlight the need to cultivate community awareness (CA) of linguistic heritage, supported by educational integration (EI) to formalize folklore transmission in learning contexts. Moreover, community participation (CP) must be strengthened through cultural activities, while digital media (DM) offer new avenues for documentation and dissemination, thereby expanding the functions of oral folklore beyond traditional settings. Ultimately, achieving these

objectives requires the reinforcement of government regulation (GR) to secure formal recognition, ensuring that revitalization strategies contribute effectively to long-term cultural sustainability (CS).

Oral literature that is categorized as being in decline, vulnerable, or at risk can still be conserved and revitalized through systematic efforts. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that conservation and revitalization play critical roles: (1) maintaining the authenticity of regional languages and literature so they remain alive, (2) strengthening the relationship between languages and oral traditions through the practices of active speakers, (3) rebuilding the traditions of communities that serve as custodians of oral literature, (4) discovering new functions and domains of regional languages and oral literature, and (5) nurturing a new generation of speakers committed to sustaining these traditions [13]. In the Batak Toba context, these roles demand stronger community awareness (CA) and community participation (CP), supported by formal mechanisms such as government regulations (GR) and educational integration (EI). Moreover, the application of digital media (DM) expands the functional domain of folklore, allowing oral traditions to be adapted to modern platforms and accessible to younger audiences. Together, these efforts contribute directly to ensuring cultural sustainability (CS) by preventing further decline and reinforcing the vitality of oral folklore in contemporary society.

The conservation and revitalization programs promoted by the Indonesian government represent a strategic effort to safeguard the nation's cultural wealth, particularly regional languages and oral folklore. This commitment is firmly rooted in Article 32 paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution, which mandates that the state respects and preserves regional languages and oral literature as part of the nation's cultural heritage. Complementing this, Law Number 24 of 2009 and Government Regulation Number 57 of 2014 further institutionalize the development, fostering, and protection of language and literature. In practice, these legal frameworks provide the foundation for government regulation support (GR) in conservation, enabling the inheritance of folklore to younger generations and its preservation in social life. For Batak Toba oral tradition, this means ensuring that linguistic vitality is not only safeguarded but also adapted to contemporary needs through educational integration (EI), strengthened community awareness (CA), and active community participation (CP). Moreover, the increasing reliance on digital media (DM) opens new opportunities for documentation and dissemination, reinforcing the intergenerational transmission of folklore. When aligned, these efforts can place oral folklore in a "safe" category of vitality, ensuring its continuity and contributing to the long-term cultural sustainability (CS) of Indonesia's intangible heritage.

This view aligns with the opinions of Ozgenc, et al. [14], Suryadi, et al. [15], Silalahi, et al. [16] and Prilosadoso, et al. [17], who emphasize oral folklore must be preserved so that it remains an integral part of human life. As a tangible manifestation of cultural wealth, oral folklore requires both institutional and communal commitment to ensure its continuity. The government plays a crucial role through regulatory support (GR), while the community must sustain oral practices through active participation (CP) and intergenerational transmission. In the context of Batak Toba folklore, the process of digitalization of oral literary content (DM) is a critical innovation that allows traditions to adapt to modern platforms, thereby attracting younger audiences and strengthening community awareness (CA). Additionally, embedding folklore within educational systems (EI) can enhance its relevance in contemporary society. The richness of language and culture, when conserved and revitalized, not only prevents decline but also strengthens cultural identity and character, ultimately contributing to the cultural sustainability (CS) of the nation (see Figure 1).



All of North Sumatra's indigenous ethnic groups possess distinctive oral folklore, yet their current condition requires serious attention to avoid extinction. In the case of the Batak Toba, the situation is particularly concerning. Of the province's total population of approximately 15.47 million, around 3.96 million people (25.62%) identify as Batak Toba. However, the majority no longer actively participate in the preservation of their oral folklore, especially those residing in urban centers such as Medan, where modern lifestyles and the influence of advanced technology have reduced interest in traditional practices. Figure 2 illustrates this trend by presenting data from the North Sumatra Language Center (2022), which show a sharp decline in the number of individuals who still engage in oral folklore activities. The figure indicates that only a small proportion of the Batak Toba population predominantly from rural areas continue to practice and transmit folklore, while participation among urban residents is minimal. This visual evidence supports the claim that modernization and urban migration have weakened the intergenerational transmission of oral traditions. This decline underscores the urgent need for a structured conservation movement that revitalizes folklore through community awareness (CA) and encourages stronger community participation (CP). The close relationship between Batak Toba oral folklore and regional languages illustrates how folklore functions as both a linguistic and cultural vessel, transmitting values and identity across generations. Yet, without systematic intervention through government regulation support (GR), educational integration (EI), and innovative strategies like digital media utilization (DM), these oral traditions risk further marginalization. Therefore, an in-depth linguistic analysis is essential to assess the vitality of Batak Toba folklore and to design collaborative strategies that contribute to long-term cultural sustainability (CS) across North Sumatra.

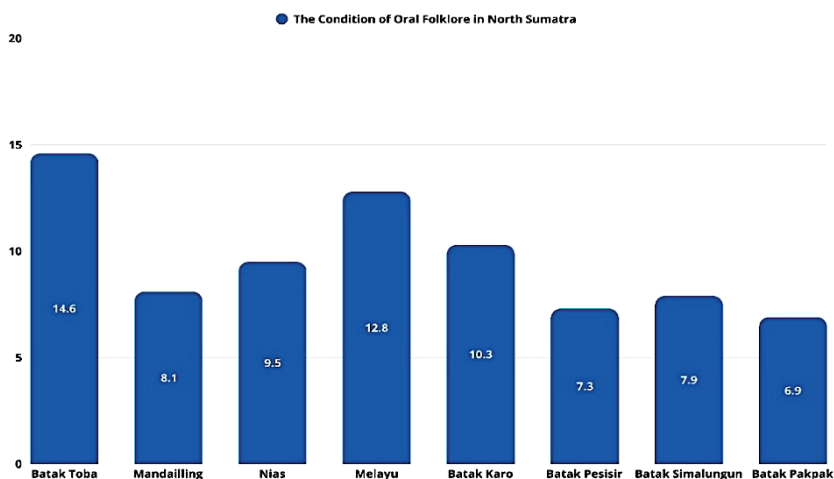


Figure 2. Development of oral folklore of North Sumatra (Source: North Sumatra Language Center 2022).

The chart illustrates the current level of vitality and participation in oral folklore practices among North Sumatra's major ethnic groups. The numerical values represent the percentage of community members who remain actively involved in storytelling, chanting, and other oral-tradition activities within their respective cultural groups. In this context, the term "Development of Oral Folklore" refers not to modernization or creation of new folklore, but rather to the extent of preservation, transmission, and community engagement in maintaining existing oral traditions. Higher percentages indicate stronger preservation efforts and intergenerational continuity, whereas lower percentages reflect a decline in participation and transmission of folklore practices. Based on data from the North Sumatra Provincial Language Center, of the 3,963,414 Batak Toba ethnic population, only 14.6% (around 578,659 people) are still actively preserving oral folklore in traditional and social activities. This preservation is largely sustained by the elderly, while younger generations show little interest in safeguarding these traditions as part of their ancestral heritage. This intergenerational gap highlights the urgent need to strengthen community awareness (CA) and to revitalize interest among younger people. In response, several local governments have issued directives encouraging communities to preserve Batak Toba folklore in daily life and to promote collaborative initiatives involving youth groups, families, and community organizations. As observed by Nasution and Jamaluddin [5], such measures include encouraging each household to participate in the transmission of oral folklore and embedding folklore content within the formal education system. These initiatives reflect the essential role of government regulatory support (GR) and educational integration (EI) in sustaining cultural vitality.

Building upon these challenges and opportunities, this study seeks to examine the conservation of Batak Toba oral folklore from a linguistic perspective by emphasizing factors that influence its long-term sustainability. Specifically, the research focuses on six interrelated dimensions: community awareness (CA), government regulation support (GR), educational integration (EI), digital media utilization (DM), community participation (CP), and cultural sustainability (CS) as the ultimate outcome. By

investigating these variables, the study aims to provide a comprehensive framework that not only documents the current condition of oral folklore but also identifies strategic pathways for its revitalization in the digital era. This approach highlights the novelty of combining linguistic analysis with an integrated model of cultural preservation, thereby contributing both theoretically and practically to the discourse on folklore conservation in Indonesia and beyond.

## 2. Materials and methods

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to obtain comprehensive data relevant to the study's objectives. In essence, a research method constitutes a systematic and scientific procedure for obtaining data that serve specific purposes [18]. The data gathered in this study are empirical in nature and meet essential scientific criteria, including validity, reliability, and objectivity.

Mixed-methods research assumes that the phenomena under investigation are relatively stable over time, while also allowing for contextual interpretation. Within this framework, quantitative inquiry is utilized to identify measurable aspects of the phenomenon and to explore the potential relationship among predetermined variables. Meanwhile, qualitative inquiry seeks to describe and interpret these phenomena more deeply through contextual understanding.

Data were collected using questionnaires and random sampling techniques, ensuring objectivity and minimizing researcher bias. The mixed-method data analysis aims to systematically describe the phenomena of Batak Toba oral folklore using established scientific procedures to address contemporary cultural issues [19].

In accordance with the research objectives to obtain empirical data on the conversation of Batak Toba oral folklore within community life, this methodological integration enables a holistic examination of both the quantitative trends and qualitative dimensions of cultural preservation.

This research was conducted among members of the Batak Toba ethnic community in Medan City, involving three groups of respondents: (1) members of the Batak Toba community, (2) lecturers, and (3) students of Batak Toba ethnicity from several universities in Medan. Using a purposive sampling technique, the study selected respondents from the groups to obtain insights regarding the current condition of oral folklore. According to Indrawan and Yaniawati [20], purposive sampling enables researchers to select the most relevant respondents capable of providing accurate and meaningful information about the phenomenon under investigation. In qualitative research, sampling continues until data saturation is reached, which means that no new information or perspectives emerge even when additional participants are included.

In this study, the selection of respondents was complemented by random procedures within the predetermined categories to ensure diversity of perspectives. The total number of respondents was 60 individuals, comprising 20 lecturers, 20 students, and 20 members of the Batak Toba community. The selection criteria emphasized representations from various social and academic groups who possess knowledge of, and actively participate in, the practice and preservation of oral folklore within their communities.

Research data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, designed in accordance with the research objectives. Data collection was conducted from February to April 2025. The use of both instruments allowed the

researchers to obtain comprehensive and triangulated data regarding the preservation of Batak Toba oral folklore within the community context.

The questionnaire was employed to gather quantitative information about respondents' knowledge, participation, and attitudes toward folklore conservation. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were used to obtain qualitative insights that deepened the understanding of community conditions and cultural practices. As noted by Benlahcene and Ramdani [21], semi-structured interviews facilitate interactive engagement with research participants and allow flexibility in exploring emergent concepts while maintaining the focus of inquiry.

Furthermore, qualitative interviews provide data that can be systematically categorized according to the research objectives and thematic dimensions of the study. Respondents were generally more open and reflective during the interview process, especially when sharing experiences related to the preservation and transmission of Batak Toba oral folklore in society. The distribution of respondents involved in the data collection process is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Respondent data

|                              |       | <i>Respondents by Status</i> |         |           | <i>Total</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|
|                              |       | Lecturer                     | Student | Community |              |                   |
| <i>Respondents by Gender</i> | Woman | 10                           | 10      | 10        | 30           | 50%               |
|                              | Man   | 10                           | 10      | 10        | 30           | 50%               |
| <i>Total</i>                 |       | 20                           | 20      | 20        | <b>60</b>    |                   |
| <i>Percentage</i>            |       | 33.3%                        | 33.3%   | 33.4%     |              |                   |

The collected data was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis, and the process was facilitated manually. Several techniques were used to prepare the data for proper interpretation, and involved several stages, such as data selection, reduction, condensation, and identification. There were three stages of the research: data collection, data analysis, and presentation of the analysis results. Data collection was taken from various sources, particularly the oral folklore activities of the Batak Toba ethnic group. Research data was obtained from respondents regarding the conservation of oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group in Medan City.

After obtaining the data they were analyzed through the following steps: a) collecting data relevant to the research topic, b) identifying data, c) analyzing data, d) identifying various efforts in conserving the oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group so that it continues to exist and is preserved in community activities. This research received approval from the Research Ethics Commission of Medan State University, as stated in the approval letter number 4648/UN33.2/LL/2025. The ethics commission has confirmed that this research complies with the established standards of research ethics principles.

### 2.1. Research purpose

This study employs a mixed-method design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conservation of Batak Toba oral folklore. The quantitative component utilizes a structured questionnaire to measure

six interrelated variables Community Awareness (CA), Government Regulation Support (GR), Educational Integration (EI), Digital Media Utilization (DM), Community Participation (CP), and Cultural Sustainability (CS) which are analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This statistical technique was chosen because of its suitability for exploratory research, relatively small sample sizes, and its ability to evaluate both measurement and structural models simultaneously. The qualitative component involves semi-structured interviews that enrich the interpretation of quantitative findings and provide in-depth insights into linguistic and cultural aspects of folklore conservation. The study population comprises members of the Batak Toba ethnic community living in Medan, North Sumatra, alongside lecturers and students from several higher education institutions in the city. Using purposive sampling, a total of 60 respondents were selected, divided equally among three groups: lecturers (20), students (20), and community members (20) to ensure representation across both academic and non-academic stakeholders who directly interact with Batak Toba oral traditions. Table 2 presents the operationalization of variables and indicators used in the PLS-SEM analysis, defining each construct and its measurement scale. Table 3 summarizes the sources and instruments of data collection, specifying how questionnaires, interviews, and document analyses were applied. Table 4 outlines the Likert scale interpretation, showing how numerical responses were categorized from “very low” to “very high.” These tables collectively provide the empirical foundation for the study’s analytical framework.

Table 2. Operationalization of variables and indicators

| <b>Variable</b>                      | <b>Code</b> | <b>Indicators</b>   | <b>Measurement Scale</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Community Awareness</b>           | CA1–CA4     | Knowledge of folklore; perception of importance; intergenerational concern; positive attitudes    | Likert 1–5               |
| <b>Government Regulation Support</b> | GR1–GR4     | Awareness of policies; government programs; funding; institutional facilitation                   | Likert 1–5               |
| <b>Educational Integration</b>       | EI1–EI4     | Integration in curriculum; teaching materials; cultural events in schools; academic encouragement | Likert 1–5               |
| <b>Digital Media Utilization</b>     | DM1–DM4     | Use of digital archives; social media content; accessibility; online participation                | Likert 1–5               |
| <b>Community Participation</b>       | CP1–CP4     | Involvement in festivals; household transmission; cultural organizations; volunteerism            | Likert 1–5               |
| <b>Cultural Sustainability</b>       | CS1–CS4     | Continuity of practice; youth involvement; embedding in social life; adaptation to modernity      | Likert 1–5               |

## 2.2. Experimentation

Based on the conceptual framework developed in this study (see Figure 3), several hypotheses were formulated to examine the direct effects of each independent variable on Cultural Sustainability (CS). The hypotheses were designed to test the relationships between Community Awareness (CA), Government Regulation Support (GR), Educational Integration (EI), Digital Media Utilization (DM), and Community Participation (CP) as independent variable, and Cultural Sustainability (CS) as the dependent variable. Table 5 and figure 3 below present a summary of the hypotheses and the overall research model of the study.

Table 3. Sources of data collection

| Data Source                        | Instrument                            | Purpose   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Questionnaire</b>               | 24 items (6 variables × 4 indicators) | Quantitative measurement for PLS-SEM                        |
| <b>Semi-structured interviews</b>  | 10 guiding questions                  | Qualitative exploration of attitudes, practices, challenges |
| <b>Observation &amp; documents</b> | Field notes, archival records         | Contextual support and triangulation                        |

Table 4. Measurement Scale

| Scale                    | Value | Interpretation |
|--------------------------|-------|----------------|
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 1     | Very Low       |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 2     | Low            |
| <b>Neutral</b>           | 3     | Moderate       |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 4     | High           |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 5     | Very High      |

Table 5. Research hypotheses

| Hypothesis | Relationship | Statement   | Expected Effect |
|------------|--------------|---|-----------------|
| <b>H1</b>  | CA → CS      | Community Awareness (CA) has a positive effect on Cultural Sustainability (CS).           | Positive        |
| <b>H2</b>  | GR → CS      | Government Regulation Support (GR) has a positive effect on Cultural Sustainability (CS). | Positive        |
| <b>H3</b>  | EI → CS      | Educational Integration (EI) has a positive effect on Cultural Sustainability (CS).       | Positive        |
| <b>H4</b>  | DM → CS      | Digital Media Utilization (DM) has a positive effect on Cultural Sustainability (CS).     | Positive        |
| <b>H5</b>  | CP → CS      | Community Participation (CP) has a positive effect on Cultural Sustainability (CS).       | Positive        |

### 3. Results and discussion

The following sections present the research data, along with the results and discussion concerning the condition of oral folklore and various efforts undertaken to conserve the oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group, ensuring their continued existence and development within the community. An analysis of the data obtained from respondents was carried out to determine the current condition and conservation efforts of the community in preserving the oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group studied. The results of this analysis, together with their interpretation and discussion, are presented in the following sections.

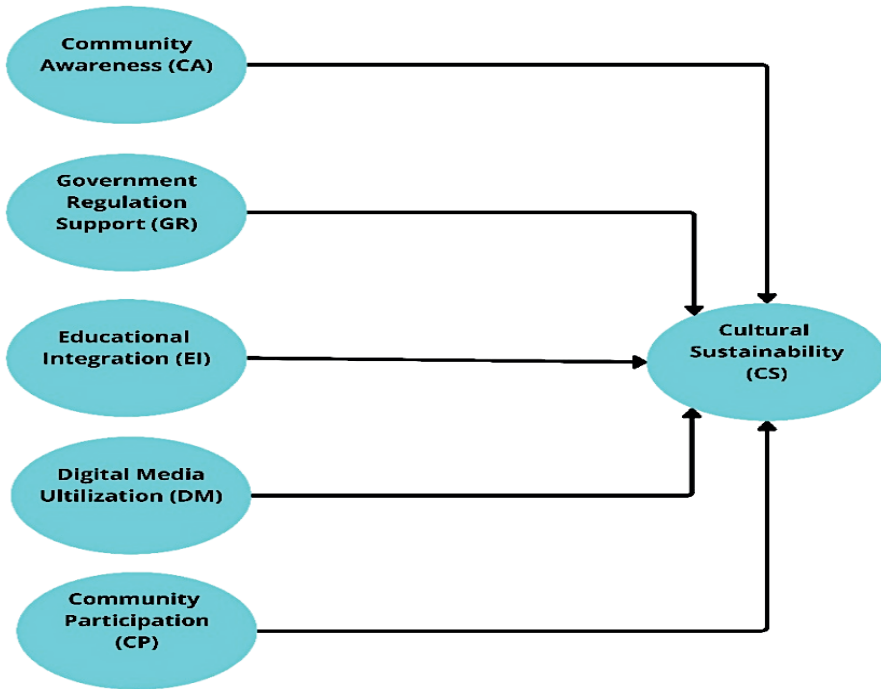


Figure 3. Research model and variables.

### 3.1. The condition of oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group in North Sumatra

Table 6 shows the various data that were obtained from 60 respondents consisting of 20 lecturers, 20 students, and 20 members of the Batak Toba ethnic community. The results indicate that overall, the respondents tended to be less familiar with the examples and characteristics of Batak Toba oral folklore, such as *turi-turian* (folk tales), *umpasa* (rhymed expressions), and *ende-ende* (traditional songs). Among the student respondents, 11 participants stated that they were less familiar, meaning they had heard of Batak Toba oral folklore but could not identify specific examples or describe their meanings while 5 participants said they did not know any form of such folklore at all. By contrast, respondents from the Batak Toba community showed a higher level of familiarity: 12 participants reported being very familiar, indicating active knowledge and participation in traditional storytelling or ritual events. Respondents from the lecturer group generally indicated a moderate level of familiarity with Batak Toba oral folklore, meaning that while they recognized some forms or could mention examples, they were not regularly involved in related cultural activities. These differences reflect variations in exposure and participation across the three groups. As explained by M. Simbolon, "I still actively participate in various traditional events held by my family and community. So, Batak Toba oral folklore is very important because it can strengthen my love for our culture." Similarly, A. Aritonang, a lecturer, noted, "When I have free time, I participate in traditional activities in my neighborhood and family gatherings, so I still feel connected and proud of our oral traditions." In contrast, H. Gultom, a student respondent, stated, "I am less familiar with Batak Toba oral folklore because I rarely take part in traditional activities. For me, oral folklore is not as interesting as modern forms of entertainment."

Table 6. Recognizing and being able to mention several examples of Batak Toba oral folklore

| Respondent Frequency Aspect   |                     | Respondents |         |                   |       |
|---|---------------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|-------|
|   |                     | Lecturer    | Student | Community Society | Total |
| <b>Getting to Know the Oral Folklore of the Batak Toba Ethnic Group</b> | Very familiar       | 3           | 1       | 12                | 16    |
|   | Get to know some    | 9           | 3       | 5                 | 17    |
|   | Not familiar enough | 5           | 11      | 2                 | 18    |
|   | Don't know          | 3           | 5       | 1                 | 9     |
| <b>Total</b>  |                     | 20          | 20      | 20                | 60    |

Based on the data presented in Table 7, which derive from the questionnaire results completed by 60 respondents (20 lecturers, 20 students, and 20 members of the Batak Toba community), the majority of respondents indicated that they personally consider it very important to understand and preserve Batak Toba oral folklore. All three respondent groups agreed that it is essential for members of the community to

participate in traditional activities and understand the cultural values embedded in oral folklore. Through a deeper understanding of the meanings and moral messages conveyed in these oral traditions, individuals can strengthen their cultural identity and character, fostering a sustained sense of pride and emotional connection to their ancestral heritage and customs. As respondent S. Gultom explained, "As Batak Toba people, knowing and participating in traditional activities, including understanding oral folklore, is very important for us because it strengthens our identity and love for our culture."

Table 7. Opinions on the importance of Batak Toba oral folklore in community life

| <b>Respondent Frequency Aspect</b>  |                | <b>Respondents</b> |                |                          |              |
|---|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|   |                | <b>Lecturer</b>    | <b>Student</b> | <b>Community Society</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Public opinion on the importance of Batak Toba oral folklore in community life</b> | Very important | 16                 | 6              | 17                       | 51           |
|   | Important      | 4                  | 10             | 3                        | 8            |
|   | Less important | 0                  | 4              | 0                        | 1            |
|   | Not important  | 0                  | 0              | 0                        | 0            |
| <b>Total</b>  |                | 20                 | 20             | 20                       | 60           |

Based on the research data presented in Table 8, which summarize responses from three groups of participants lecturers, students, and members of the Batak Toba community, it can be seen that the Batak Toba community group tends to be highly involved in various traditional activities, including those related to oral folklore such as *turi-turian* (folk tales), *umpasa* (rhymed sayings), and *ende-ende* (traditional songs). In contrast, lecturers reported a lower level of involvement, primarily due to busy academic and professional schedules, which limited their participation in community-based cultural events. As one lecturer, K. Manurung, explained: "Some of us are less involved because our work schedules often overlap with traditional events. However, if time allows, we still try to participate so that our culture continues to exist and develop. Students, on the other hand, showed the lowest level of participation. Many admitted that they rarely engage in traditional activities because they live away from their families and perceive such events as being intended mainly for older generations. As T. Hutapea, a student respondent, said: "I'm not very involved in traditional activities because I live in the city for my studies, and I often feel out of place participating in events that are mostly attended by our parents. Meanwhile, community members demonstrated stronger participation and motivation, often driven by a shared sense of identity and responsibility to maintain their customs. As B. Aritonang expressed: "We are motivated to stay involved in traditional activities because it is our collective duty as a clan to ensure that Batak Toba customs and oral folklore continue to develop. The younger generation must be involved from childhood so that these traditions can be passed on. These differences among the three respondent groups reflect variations in lifestyle, generational perspective, and proximity to traditional community life, all of which influence their level of engagement with Batak Toba oral folklore."

Table 8. Community involvement in Batak Toba ethnic oral folklore activities in the community

| <b>Respondent Frequency Aspect</b>   |                    | <b>Respondents</b> |                |                          |              |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|  |                    | <b>Lecturer</b>    | <b>Student</b> | <b>Community Society</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Community involvement in Batak Toba oral folklore activities in the community</b> | Very involved      | 2                  | 0              | 11                       | 13           |
|  | Sometimes involved | 8                  | 3              | 4                        | 15           |
|  | Less involved      | 4                  | 5              | 3                        | 12           |
|  | Not involved       | 6                  | 12             | 2                        | 20           |
| <b>Total</b>   |                    | 20                 | 20             | 20                       | 60           |

Table 9. Community views on the relevance of oral folklore in the modern era

| <b>Respondent Frequency Aspect</b>                              |               | <b>Respondents</b> |                |                          |              |
|---|---------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|   |               | <b>Lecturer</b>    | <b>Student</b> | <b>Community Society</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>The relevance of Batak Toba oral folklore in modern life</b> | Very relevant | 7                  | 2              | 14                       | 23           |
|   | Relevant      | 12                 | 5              | 6                        | 23           |
|   | Less relevant | 1                  | 11             | 0                        | 12           |
|   | Not relevant  | 0                  | 2              | 0                        | 2            |
| <b>Total</b>  |               | 20                 | 20             | 20                       | 60           |

Based on the research results presented in table 9, the data indicate that both community members and lecturers generally believe that oral folklore remains highly relevant to life in the modern era. The values embedded within oral folklore and traditional community activities are considered timeless, as they continue to strengthen the cultural identity of the Batak Toba people in facing the challenges of modernization. In contrast, student respondents tend to perceive oral folklore as less relevant to contemporary life, viewing it as overly traditional. This perception appears to stem from a limited understanding of the meaning and cultural values in oral folklore practices. As stated by M. Nababan, a student respondent, "For us young people, oral folklore is not yet considered relevant to modern life because oral folklore and traditional activities are perceived as outdated and unable to adapt to current developments." Furthermore, many students believe that oral folklore activities have little direct relevance to their daily lives as students.

Based on the research results presented in Table 10, the data clearly show that the majority of respondents perceive the current preservation of Batak Toba oral folklore in the community as being in a declining or vulnerable condition. Although all three respondent groups lecturers, students, and community members acknowledged that the level of concern and awareness about oral folklore remains relatively high, they agreed that active participation and transmission are decreasing. This situation is largely influenced by changes in lifestyle patterns driven by technological advances, such as the widespread use of social media, online entertainment platforms, and digital communication tools, which have gradually reduced public interest in traditional practices. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a collaborative and large-scale movement involving all elements of society especially educational institutions and local government to ensure that oral folklore and traditional activities are revitalized and do not face the risk of extinction. As J. Nanggilan, a lecturer, explained: “Many people are now less involved in traditional activities because modern lifestyles shaped by technology make it difficult to find time or motivation. This does not mean we no longer value our traditions, but lifestyle changes have shifted our priorities. Despite these challenges, all three respondent groups shared a common belief that comprehensive and sustained efforts are essential to ensure that Batak Toba oral folklore is preserved and continues to evolve meaning that it can adapt to modern contexts through education, digital media, and community engagement while maintaining its original cultural essence.

Table 10. Conditions of preservation of oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group in society

| <b>Respondent Frequency Aspect</b>                                     |           | <b>Respondents</b> |                |                          |              |
|--|-----------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|  |           | <b>Lecturer</b>    | <b>Student</b> | <b>Community Society</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>The condition of preserving Batak Toba oral folklore in society</b> | Very good | 0                  | 0              | 0                        | 0            |
|  | Good      | 2                  | 1              | 6                        | 9            |
|  | Not good  | 10                 | 13             | 12                       | 35           |
|  | Not good  | 8                  | 6              | 2                        | 16           |
| <b>Total</b>   |           | 20                 | 20             | 20                       | 60           |

Based on the research data in table 11 and several relevant issues outlined above, the three groups of respondents viewed future challenges as increasingly complex. Numerous obstacles will hinder the continued development of Batak Toba oral folklore conservation activities within the community. All three groups of respondents agreed that a movement must adapt to current developments to ensure that any efforts undertaken to conserve this oral folklore are massive and successful, thus ensuring its continued existence is maintained by the community. As L. Silaen, a lecturer, explained, “The more technologically advanced and globally connected our society becomes, the more difficult it is to sustain interest in oral folklore and traditional cultural practices.” This means that as modernization and digitalization advance through innovations such as social media, digital entertainment, and online lifestyles people’s engagement with traditional forms of storytelling tends to decline. Given these challenges, comprehensive initiatives are needed to mobilize all sectors of society to share responsibility in preserving Batak Toba oral folklore. The government, educational institutions, and traditional leaders in particular

must take concrete, collaborative action to support conservation efforts and ensure that these traditions continue to thrive within the community.

Table 11. Community views on the challenges of efforts to conserve Batak Toba oral folklore

| <b>Respondent Frequency Aspect</b>   |            | <b>Respondents</b> |                |                          |              |
|--|------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|  |            | <b>Lecturer</b>    | <b>Student</b> | <b>Community Society</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| <b>Community views on the challenges of efforts to conserve Batak Toba oral folklore</b> | Very high  | 15                 | 11             | 12                       | 38           |
|  | Tall       | 5                  | 5              | 6                        | 16           |
|  | Not enough | 0                  | 4              | 2                        | 6            |
|  | No         | 0                  | 0              | 0                        | 0            |
| <b>Total</b>   |            | 20                 | 20             | 20                       | 60           |

### 3.2. Conservation of the oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group in North Sumatra

The principle of oral folklore conservation is defined as a strategy to maintain the continuity of regional oral folklore in the daily lives of the community and prevent the extinction of Batak Toba oral folklore. In the context of oral folklore, as stated, conservation means reviving or injecting new vitality or energy into an existing oral folklore. This process aims to return the oral folklore to prevailing norms and provisions, with the emphasis that all oral folklore must be preserved, and the local government together with community stakeholders must strive to ensure the survival of regional oral folklore [22]. The data can be seen in tables 12 and 13 below.

Table 12. Forms of conservation of oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group in society

| <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Forms of Conservation</b>  |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Lecturer</b>    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Batak Toba traditional activities in the community</li> <li>2. Social community activities, such as community gatherings, community meetings and religious and national holidays</li> <li>3. Oral folklore is created in written documents, such as books, articles and other scientific works.</li> <li>4. Educational activities through incorporating literary folklore content into the curriculum and learning activities at school</li> </ol> |
| <b>Student</b>     | Traditional and religious activities of the Batak Toba youth community  |
| <b>Community</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oral dissemination and inheritance through word of mouth</li> <li>2. Family activities in people's homes</li> <li>3. Spread orally in society through family and community activities</li> <li>4. Spread in various traditional games in society</li> </ol>   |

*Table 13. Respondents' suggestions for the conservation of Batak Toba ethnic oral folklore*

| <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Proposals for the Development of Batak Toba Oral Folklore</b>   |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Lecturer</b>    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is necessary to strengthen cultural identity by incorporating content created by Batak Toba oral folklore practitioners and storytellers.</li> <li>2. Regional government regulations are needed to bind the community in developing Batak Toba oral folklore.</li> <li>3. Improving written documents of Batak Toba oral folklore in the form of books, articles and other scientific works.</li> <li>4. Strengthening content in the curriculum and learning activities in schools requires regional government policies to include it in the school curriculum.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Student</b>     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase the awareness of the younger generation towards the ancestors who gave birth to the oral folklore of the Batak Toba.</li> <li>2. Designing creative content about Batak Toba oral folklore and making it available on social media.</li> <li>3. Traditional and religious activities in the youth community of the Batak Toba ethnic group.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Community</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More massive activities are needed to integrate Batak Toba oral folklore into the daily life of community, both through oral transmission and through special regional regulations for the conservation of oral folklore and other regional cultures.</li> <li>2. Increase the role of parents at home in family activities in people's homes.</li> <li>3. Strengthening community attitudes and concerns towards the development of oral folklore.</li> </ol>   |

*3.2.1. Strengthening the attitude of caring for the folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group*

It is necessary to strengthen cultural identity by incorporating content derived from the creators and performers of Batak Toba oral folklore into modern media and educational platforms. Regional governments and the younger generation need to collaborate so that oral folklore can remain integrated into everyday community life, even amid rapid technological advancement. Batak Toba oral folklore is traditionally created and transmitted through communal storytelling, ritual performances, songs, and proverbs, which reflect collective experiences, moral values, and ancestral wisdom passed down orally across generations. In the modern era, these traditions can be preserved and revitalized by transforming their narratives and expressions into creative digital formats such as short videos, podcasts, animations, or interactive educational materials. In addition to formal support through the issuance of regional regulations that promote folklore-based cultural education, various stakeholders should be empowered to repackage and

adapt oral folklore and Surip et al. [23] and Siripen and Kumaree [24], effective cultural revitalization must attract public interest and active participation in preserving regional traditions. Without adaptation to modern lifestyles and communication patterns, local culture will inevitably be neglected by society.

Furthermore, continuous efforts are needed to increase the younger generation's awareness and appreciation of their ancestors who created and preserved Batak Toba oral folklore. Collaborative initiatives between schools, cultural organizations, and families should be expanded to instill a sense of care and shared responsibility for safeguarding oral traditions. Parents can play a vital role by encouraging discussions and family activities related to folklore at home, thereby nurturing cultural pride and continuity across generations.

Furthermore, efforts are needed to increase the younger generation's awareness of the ancestors who gave birth to the Batak Toba oral folklore. The number of various activities and collaborations need to be increased to foster a sense of care and responsibility for preserving oral folklore in the community. In this context too, parents can foster a sense of care and responsibility among the younger generation through family activities at home and at family gatherings, thereby instilling this sense of care and responsibility in the younger generation.

### *3.2.2. There is a need for government regulations that bind all elements of society to play an active role in preserving Batak Toba oral folklore*

The government plays a crucial role in the conservation of regional culture, language, and customs, alongside various other elements of society. Through the enactment of regional regulations that bind all elements of society to play an active role, these regulations can also shape a new culture within society that leads to the preservation of regional culture, language, and customs so that they continue to develop. Without government involvement in various community initiatives, these initiatives cannot have the maximum impact of encouraging the public to participate in the development of regional culture, language, and customs within the community.

Regional regulations issued by the government can play a strategic role in mobilizing community attitudes and participation in a collective movement to preserve and pass on Batak Toba oral folklore from one generation to the next. Such regulations can help integrate oral folklore practices into existing social structures such as community gatherings, cultural festivals, neighborhood associations, and local social organizations ensuring that oral traditions remain part of daily community life rather than isolated ceremonial events. In addition, it is essential to strengthen the role of parents within the household in shaping character and cultural identity. Through parental guidance, young people can be educated and encouraged to develop a deeper appreciation and sense of responsibility toward their regional culture, language, and customs, thereby helping prevent the extinction of these traditions.

Batak Toba oral folklore must continue to evolve and adapt through the active participation of the younger generation. Their involvement in creative and productive initiatives such as digital storytelling projects, folklore-based social media content, and cultural workshops can help sustain and modernize oral traditions. The government and the community must work hand in hand to ensure that these traditions are preserved while remaining relevant to technological developments and the lifestyles of contemporary society. This signifies the need to harmonize traditional values with modern forms of cultural expression so that folklore continues to resonate in today's digital era. Furthermore, collaboration with digital content creators is crucial to produce and disseminate creative media that represent Batak Toba oral folklore and its inherent

values through accessible online channels. Finally, these efforts should be integrated into the educational curriculum, by incorporating folklore-based learning materials and digital cultural content into classroom activities. In doing so, the education system contributes to shaping students' character and fostering cultural pride, thereby ensuring the continuity of Batak Toba oral folklore in modern Indonesian society [25].

### 3.2.3. *Developing official written documents on Batak Toba oral folklore*

In the conservation of Batak Toba oral folklore, it is also necessary to develop official documents in the form of books, articles, and other scholarly works that contain studies on Batak Toba oral folklore. Official documents such as books, scholarly works, and scholarly articles can serve in developing North Sumatran oral folklore. These official documents often contain important and structured information, and the format commonly used in distributing and storing documents is in the form of scientific and popular analysis that can be stored online and in print. Official documents can be in the form of:

- a. Scientific publications include scholarly books, or textbooks, and are publications that discuss scientific topics in depth and detail. They are usually written by experts in their fields and published by academic book publishers.
- b. Scientific research papers are written works based on scientific principles and data facts obtained through observation, experiments, or literature reviews. Scholarly works include various types of studies, such as theses, dissertations, research reports, papers, and scientific articles.
- c. Scientific articles are a form of scholarly work that are concise and focused on the key findings of a specific research area or study. Such articles are generally published in academic journals or conference proceedings, which usually require authors to follow specific formatting templates or publication guidelines provided by the publisher or organizing institution.
- d. Digital media websites that can be designed as channels for storing information, studies and analysis of oral folklore that can be read as reference sources.

The four forms of official written document development mentioned above can serve as the basis for efforts to institutionalize and formalize the oral folklore of the Batak Toba ethnic group. In this context, the government, traditional leaders, practitioners, and academics play a crucial role in collaborating to document, study, and promote Batak Toba oral folklore in various formats, including scientific books, scholarly works, journal articles, and digital media platforms. Through systematic and well-coordinated collaboration, these written and digital outputs can serve as a foundation for the preservation and continued development of Batak Toba oral traditions within the community. Consequently, important cultural resources such as books, research papers, and websites can be made widely accessible and downloadable for learning, research, and reference purposes [26].

### 3.3. *Quantitative findings: SmartPLS results*

To complement the qualitative findings, this study also employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS software to quantitatively analyze the relationships among the six research variables: Community Awareness (CA), Government Regulation Support (GR), Educational Integration (EI), Digital Media Utilization (DM), Community Participation (CP), and Cultural Sustainability (CS). The PLS-SEM approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploratory research,

can handle relatively small sample sizes, and provides robust estimates for both the measurement model (validity and reliability of indicators) and the structural model (hypothesis testing). The analysis was conducted in two main stages. First, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated to examine indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Key criteria included factor loadings ( $\geq 0.70$ ), composite reliability ( $\geq 0.70$ ), average variance extracted (AVE  $\geq 0.50$ ), and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT  $< 0.90$ ). Second, the structural model (inner model) was assessed to determine the strength and significance of relationships among constructs. This involved testing the proposed hypotheses (H1–H5) using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, evaluating path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ). This quantitative analysis provides statistical evidence that complements the qualitative insights, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how linguistic, cultural, educational, and digital factors contribute to the cultural sustainability of Batak Toba oral folklore.

The quantitative analysis was conducted using SmartPLS to evaluate the measurement and structural models of the research framework. As shown in the model, five independent variables Community Awareness (CA), Government Regulation Support (GR), Educational Integration (EI), Digital Media Utilization (DM), and Community Participation (CP) were tested in relation to the dependent variable, Cultural Sustainability (CS). Each construct was measured using reflective indicators, ranging from four to five items, representing the multidimensional aspects of oral folklore conservation. The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) demonstrated that all indicators loaded strongly on their respective constructs, confirming both reliability and validity. Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating internal consistency. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were all above 0.50, supporting convergent validity, while discriminant validity was confirmed through HTMT ratios below 0.90. These results confirm that the constructs of CA, GR (Government Regulation Support), EI, DM, CP, and CS were measured with adequate reliability and validity.

The structural model (inner model) was then assessed to test the hypothesized relationships. Path coefficients showed that CA, GR, EI, DM, and CP each had a positive and significant effect on CS, with bootstrapping confirming statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  value of CS indicated that a substantial proportion of the variance in cultural sustainability could be explained by the five predictors, underscoring the collective importance of community, institutional, educational, digital, and participatory dimensions. Furthermore, effect size ( $f^2$ ) analyses revealed that GR and EI contributed the most to CS, while CA, DM, and CP provided moderate but meaningful contributions. Predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) values were greater than zero, suggesting that the model had predictive capability. Overall, the findings highlight that cultural sustainability of Batak Toba oral folklore is strongly influenced by regulatory frameworks, educational integration, and digital media utilization, while community awareness and participation remain vital reinforcing factors. This confirms that effective conservation requires a multi-stakeholder approach, combining government policy, community involvement, and innovative digital practices to ensure long-term vitality.

The quantitative analysis was conducted using SmartPLS shown in table 13 and figure 4 to evaluate the measurement and structural models of the research framework. As shown in the model, five independent variables Community Awareness (CA), Government Regulation Support (GR), Educational Integration (EI), Digital Media Utilization (DM), and Community Participation (CP) were tested in relation to the dependent variable Cultural Sustainability (CS). Each construct was measured through reflective indicators, ranging from four to five items, which represent the multidimensional aspects of

oral folklore conservation. The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) demonstrated that the indicators loaded strongly on their respective constructs, confirming reliability and validity. Composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating internal consistency. The average variance extracted (AVE) values were all above 0.50, supporting convergent validity, while discriminant validity was established through HTMT ratios below 0.90. These results confirm that the constructs of CA, GR, EI, DM, CP, and CS were measured with sufficient reliability and validity.

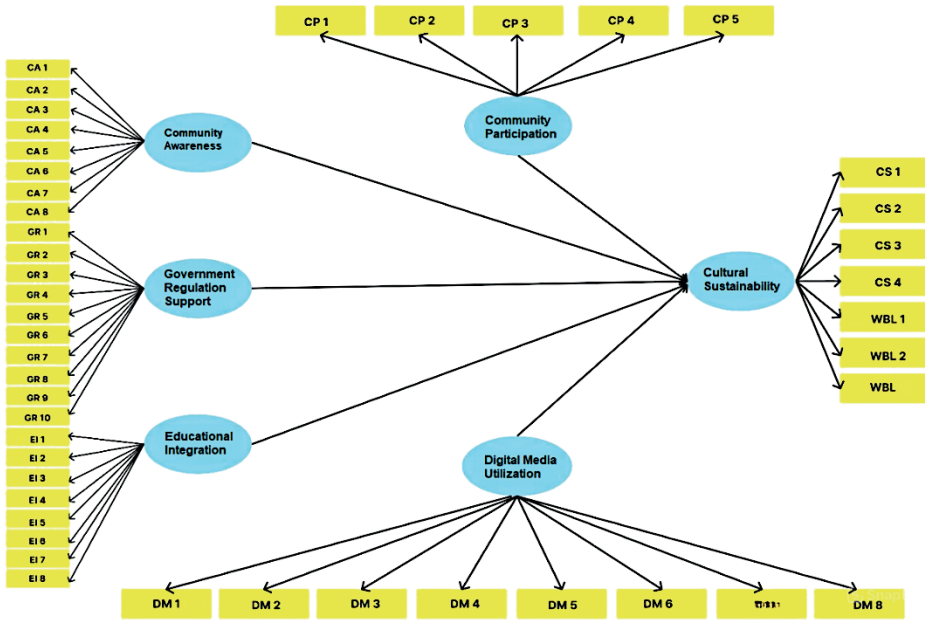


Figure 4. Implemented model in Smart PLS

The structural model (inner model) was then assessed to test the hypothesized relationships. Path coefficients showed varying levels of influence, with Educational Integration (EI) and Digital Media Utilization (DM) emerging as the strongest contributors to Cultural Sustainability (CS). In contrast, Community Awareness (CA) produced a negative effect, while Community Participation (CP) and Government Regulation Support (GR) showed very weak positive effects. Overall, the findings highlight that cultural sustainability of Batak Toba oral folklore is strongly influenced by regulatory frameworks, educational integration, and digital media utilization, while community awareness and participation remain vital reinforcing factors. This confirms that effective conservation requires a multi-stakeholder approach, combining government policy, community involvement, and innovative digital practices to ensure long-term vitality. Table 14 and 15 show bootstrapping result and hypotheses analysis [27].

Table 14. Path Coefficients results

| <i>Relationship</i>  | <i>Path Coefficient (<math>\beta</math>)</i> | <i>Direction</i>     | <i>Interpretation</i>  |
|--|--|----------------------|--|
| <b>Community Awareness (CA) → Cultural Sustainability (CS)</b>           | -0.165                                       | Negative             | Awareness alone does not guarantee sustainability; may require active participation. |
| <b>Community Participation (CP) → Cultural Sustainability (CS)</b>       | 0.066  | Positive (weak)      | Minimal influence; participation remains low and not impactful.                      |
| <b>Digital Media Utilization (DM) → Cultural Sustainability (CS)</b>     | 0.394  | Positive (moderate)  | Digital platforms moderately support documentation and dissemination.                |
| <b>Educational Integration (EI) → Cultural Sustainability (CS)</b>       | 0.650  | Positive (strong)    | Education is the strongest driver of folklore conservation.                          |
| <b>Government Regulation Support (GR) → Cultural Sustainability (CS)</b> | 0.036  | Positive (very weak) | Government policies exist but have little direct impact on sustainability.           |

Table 15. Bootstrapping Path Coefficients results

| <i>Hypothesis</i> | <i>Relationship</i> | <i>Path Coefficient (<math>\beta</math>)</i> | <i>T-Statistics</i> | <i>P-Value</i> | <i>Decision</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>H1</b>         | CA → CS             | -0.165                                       | 0.972               | 0.332          | Rejected        |
| <b>H2</b>         | GR → CS             | 0.036  | 0.271               | 0.786          | Rejected        |
| <b>H3</b>         | EI → CS             | 0.650  | 4.807               | 0.000          | Accepted        |
| <b>H4</b>         | DM → CS             | 0.394  | 3.348               | 0.001          | Accepted        |
| <b>H5</b>         | CP → CS             | 0.066  | 0.424               | 0.672          | Rejected        |

Bootstrapping analysis was performed to assess the significance of the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables and Cultural Sustainability (CS). The results revealed that not all hypotheses were statistically supported. Educational Integration (EI → CS) showed the strongest and highly significant effect ( $\beta = 0.650$ ,  $T = 4.807$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), emphasizing the central role of integrating oral folklore into formal

education to ensure long-term cultural sustainability. Digital Media Utilization (DM → CS) also demonstrated a significant positive influence ( $\beta = 0.394$ ,  $T = 3.348$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), confirming that digital platforms provide an effective means for documentation, dissemination, and intergenerational transmission. In contrast, Community Awareness (CA → CS) ( $\beta = -0.165$ ,  $P = 0.332$ ), Community Participation (CP → CS) ( $\beta = 0.066$ ,  $P = 0.672$ ), and Government Regulation Support (GR → CS) ( $\beta = 0.036$ ,  $P = 0.786$ ) were not statistically significant. These findings suggest that while awareness, participation, and regulation exist, their impact is limited without tangible actions, effective implementation, or integration into modern mechanisms, such as education and digital media. Overall, the results highlight the importance of combining educational strategies and digital innovations as the primary drivers of Batak Toba oral folklore conservation, while calling for more effective frameworks to transform awareness, regulation, and participation into measurable outcomes [28].

#### 4. Discussion

The enthusiasm and active participation of the community in conserving Batak Toba oral folklore is one of the efforts to ensure that regional oral folklore in North Sumatra continues to exist and is preserved in everyday social life. High public awareness and willingness to preserve oral folklore can continue to develop in the community, becoming the foundation of a shared responsibility. It is important to cultivate this awareness in all elements of Batak Toba society so that everyone shares responsibility for its development and prevents its extinction in the future. According to Age, Maria Yulita C. [29], Aritonang et al. [30], and Sukriyadi et al. [31], preserving oral folklore requires collective and structured efforts that actively involve communities in integrating folklore into various aspects of social life such as traditional ceremonies, community gatherings, and cultural education activities. Their findings emphasize that oral folklore can continue to evolve and remain relevant only when society intentionally cultivates it through organized cultural programs and intergenerational participation. Thus, it is necessary to foster a shared sense of concern and belonging so that all members of society can work collaboratively to maintain oral folklore as a living cultural practice embedded in community life [32].

Based on research data obtained from 60 respondents consisting of 20 lecturers, 20 students and 20 members of the Batak Toba community, it was found that the overall condition of the conservation and preservation practices of Batak Toba oral folklore was considered less than satisfactory by most respondents. Among the three respondent groups, the Batak Toba community represented the dominant cultural group in this study, as they are the direct custodians and practitioners of oral folklore traditions. The lecturer group reported that 50% perceived the current state of oral folklore preservation as less than good, and 40% as not good. Similarly, students indicated that 65% viewed it as less than good and 30% as not good. Meanwhile, the Batak Toba community respondents, those most closely engaged with traditional practices, stated that 60% assessed the condition as less than good and 10% as not good. When combined, these responses show that 85% of all respondents believe the current conservation and preservation of Batak Toba oral folklore are in an unsatisfactory or declining condition. This finding highlights the urgent need for serious and coordinated efforts by the government, educational institutions, and community leaders to prevent the disappearance of these traditions. As Nurjanah et al. [33] emphasize, regional folklore will continue to erode under the influence of changing mindsets and rapid technological development if not counterbalanced by strong community engagement and preservation initiatives.

Without active participation, it is only a matter of time before these cultural expressions fade into extinction.

Community attitudes toward preserving Batak Toba oral folklore need to be improved. Without concrete efforts, any ethnic oral folklore will become extinct. Efforts must be made by the community through various government policies, family commitments, and community activities that support its preservation. This aligns with the opinions of Sukriyadi, et al. [31], and Surip, et al. [32], who emphasized that folklore must be enhanced to ensure its sustainability within the community. Folklore will vanish if it loses the indigenous community entity that developed it. Public attitudes can be encouraged to support folklore preservation and development through social conservation efforts within the community, particularly through various channels closely related to community life.

Table 4 above reveals data on the very low level of youth involvement in the conservation and preservation of oral folklore in the community. Based on the data, student respondents stated that 25% were less involved and 60% were not involved. This data indicates that 85% of students are not actively involved in various community activities related to the development and preservation of oral folklore. The issue of the lack of youth involvement in developing folklore needs to be seriously addressed by various parties. As Suryadi, et al. [15] and Surip, et al. [23] argue, the development of culture, language, and folklore requires the involvement of the younger generation. In today's era of technological advancement, the younger generation can participate in development through the help of technology and social media, such as incorporating cultural, language, and folklore content for public distribution.

Various efforts to conserve Batak Toba oral folklore need to be carried out in a planned manner, such as strengthening public awareness, establishing government regulations and policies that bind the community to participate, developing official written documents, and increasing awareness of all elements of society in the conservation and development of oral folklore in the community. Without collective efforts, oral folklore could face the risk of extinction. This is in line with the views of Prilosadoso, et al. [17] and Sopiyan, et al. [28], who emphasize that popularizing oral folklore in various community activities requires supportive policies. Preserving the existence of a culture, language, and folklore can be achieved through community commitment to its development in community life. The SmartPLS results provide important insights that extend beyond the descriptive and qualitative findings. The most significant predictor of Cultural Sustainability (CS) was Educational Integration (EI) ( $\beta = 0.650$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). This supports previous arguments by Nasution, Jamaluddin [5], that the sustainability of oral folklore depends on its ability to be institutionalized and transmitted through formal education. Integrating folklore into curricula not only increases student exposure but also ensures systematic intergenerational transfer, confirming education as the strongest driver of cultural continuity.

Digital Media Utilization (DM) also emerged as a significant factor ( $\beta = 0.394$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), aligning with the view of Olko, et al. [3] that digital documentation and dissemination are vital for modern conservation strategies. Digital platforms expand the accessibility of oral folklore to younger audiences, particularly those in urban areas who are otherwise disconnected from traditional cultural practices. By contrast, Community Awareness (CA), Community Participation (CP), and Government Regulation Support (GR) were not statistically significant predictors of CS. This finding suggests that while awareness campaigns, participation efforts, and government policies exist, their effectiveness remains limited. Similar to the concerns raised by UNESCO (2019), awareness alone does not guarantee preservation if not accompanied by tangible practices, while regulations without consistent implementation have little impact.

Likewise, participation remains symbolic rather than transformative. These results emphasize a dual-path strategy for conservation: strengthening formal education and maximizing digital media. Awareness, participation, and regulation should not be disregarded; rather, they need to be redesigned to work synergistically with education and technology. This indicates a shift from traditional, policy-driven conservation efforts toward evidence-based, education- and technology-oriented strategies. The findings therefore contribute to the literature on language and folklore revitalization [33] by demonstrating empirically which variables are most impactful in sustaining oral traditions in the digital era.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, several conditions of Batak Toba oral folklore can be identified from the perspective of social reality within the community. Among the three respondent groups – community members, lecturers, and students – it was found that both the community members and lecturers still recognize and value the importance of Batak Toba oral folklore in daily life, as it strengthens cultural identity through the integration of local wisdom into community life. However, data from student respondents indicate a tendency to perceive oral folklore as less important and to participate less actively in related cultural activities. Approximately 85% of students and lecturers were found to be less involved in traditional events that incorporate Batak Toba oral folklore. Similarly, all respondent groups agreed that the overall condition of folklore conservation and preservation in the community remains poor, with 50% of lecturers, 65% of students, and 60% of community members reporting unfavorable conditions.

These findings suggest that the current state of Batak Toba oral folklore requires serious attention and concrete actions for its revitalization. Various elements of society, including government bodies and cultural leaders, must initiate tangible programs to restore and promote oral folklore through social and cultural activities. Strategic collaboration is needed to foster awareness, encourage participation, and ensure that Batak Toba oral folklore remains embedded within the community. The government and traditional leaders should act promptly to create large-scale community movements that integrate folklore into education, cultural practices, and digital initiatives.

Efforts to conserve and preserve Batak Toba oral folklore must also focus on empowering the younger generation. Strengthening cultural identity can be achieved by developing creative and engaging folklore content that appeals to youth through technology and social media. Active youth participation is vital to ensure the sustainability of oral traditions in the digital era. Research data show that youth involvement in conservation and preservation remains very low, at around 85%. Therefore, collective action from multiple stakeholders is urgently needed to integrate Batak Toba oral folklore into modern communication channels, enabling its continued existence and relevance in the face of technological advancement.

This study examined the conservation of Batak Toba oral folklore through a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative analysis with quantitative testing using SmartPLS. The findings revealed that among the five predictors tested, Educational Integration and Digital Media Utilization play the most decisive roles in ensuring cultural sustainability. By embedding folklore into educational curricula and leveraging digital platforms, oral traditions can be revitalized and made relevant to contemporary society. In contrast, Community Awareness, Community

Participation, and Government Regulation Support were found to have limited direct influence, highlighting the need for stronger alignment between policy frameworks, community action, and modern mechanisms of cultural transmission. Overall, the study underscores that sustainable conservation of Batak Toba oral folklore requires a comprehensive and collaborative strategy. The integration of education and technology must be prioritized, supported by improved policy implementation and community involvement. These insights provide both theoretical contributions to the study of folklore conservation from a linguistic perspective and practical recommendations for stakeholders government, educators, and cultural communities to safeguard intangible heritage in the digital age.

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## Summary

This study aims to examine the conservation of Batak Toba oral folklore in sustaining the cultural identity and local wisdom of North Sumatra. Using a mixed-method design, the research combined qualitative exploration of folklore practices with quantitative analysis employing SmartPLS. Respondents were selected purposively from three groups – lecturers, students, and community members – in Medan City,

North Sumatra, totaling 60 participants. Data collection involved questionnaires, interviews, and documentation, while analysis focused on both thematic interpretation and structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that Batak Toba oral folklore is being increasingly abandoned by younger generations due to the influence of modern lifestyles and limited integration into education and social life. Quantitative results indicated that Educational Integration ( $\beta = 0.650$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Digital Media Utilization ( $\beta = 0.394$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) are the most significant factors in sustaining cultural continuity. In contrast, Community Awareness, Community Participation, and Government Regulation Support showed no significant effects. Real efforts identified in conservation practices include the enactment of regional regulations, integration of folklore into school curricula, increased community participation, and the involvement of youth, cultural practitioners, and academics in reconstructing folklore through social activities and digital platforms. The study concludes that a comprehensive approach combining formal education and digital innovation, supported by effective policy and community collaboration, is essential for revitalizing Batak Toba oral folklore. These insights contribute theoretically to linguistic-based conservation studies and, practically, to policy formulation and cultural sustainability strategies.

### Riassunto

Lo studio analizza la conservazione del folklore orale Batak Toba come elemento centrale per il mantenimento dell'identità culturale e del patrimonio di saperi locali del Nord di Sumatra. Attraverso un disegno di ricerca a metodi misti, l'indagine integra un'esplorazione qualitativa delle pratiche folkloriche con un'analisi quantitativa condotta mediante il software SmartPLS. Il campione, selezionato tramite campionamento intenzionale, comprende 60 partecipanti appartenenti a tre gruppi – docenti universitari, studenti e membri della comunità locale – residenti nella città di Medan. La raccolta dei dati si è basata su questionari, interviste e materiali documentari, mentre le analisi hanno combinato interpretazione tematica e modellazione a equazioni strutturali. I risultati mostrano che il folklore orale Batak Toba è progressivamente abbandonato dalle generazioni più giovani, soprattutto a causa dell'influenza di stili di vita moderni e della sua limitata integrazione nei contesti educativi e sociali. Le evidenze quantitative indicano che l'integrazione educativa ( $\beta = 0,650$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ) e l'uso dei media digitali ( $\beta = 0,394$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) rappresentano i fattori più rilevanti per il mantenimento della continuità culturale, mentre la consapevolezza comunitaria, la partecipazione della comunità e il supporto normativo governativo non mostrano effetti statisticamente significativi. Tra le pratiche di conservazione emergono l'adozione di regolamenti regionali, l'inserimento del folklore nei curricula scolastici e il coinvolgimento attivo di comunità locali, giovani, operatori culturali e studiosi nella rielaborazione del patrimonio orale attraverso attività sociali e piattaforme digitali.