



Analysis of the Potential of Mossak Batak as a Tourist Attraction in Toba Regency

Ryos Gardio¹, Bambang TJ Hutagalung², Mery Silalahi³, Ade Putera Arif Panjaitan⁴,
and Rusmauli Simbolon⁵

¹⁻⁵ IAKN Tarutung, Indonesia

Email: ryosgardio33@gmail.com¹, bambangtjh@gmail.com², mersil1510@gmail.com³,
panjaitan.ade@iakntarutung.ac.id⁴, symbolonrusmauli@gmail.com⁵

Abstract: Mossak Batak Toba is a traditional martial art originating from the Batak Toba tribe in North Sumatra and passed down from generation to generation. Characterized by agile, nimble, and powerful movements, Mossak is not only a physical discipline but also contains spiritual values such as courage, discipline, and loyalty. This study aims to identify and analyze the potential of Mossak Batak as a tourist attraction in Toba Regency from a cultural, economic, and social perspective, and to formulate strategies to optimize its potential amidst various existing challenges. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, using observation, interviews, and documentation data collection techniques, with descriptive analysis and SWOT analysis as analytical tools. The results of the study indicate that Mossak Batak has significant cultural value as an intangible heritage, economic potential through cultural tourism performances and training, and a social role in strengthening local identity and pride. However, challenges such as limited digital promotion, lack of educational materials, weak stakeholder coordination, and low community participation still exist. The study concluded that with the right strategies—such as cross-sector collaboration, effective digital promotion, and the development of local cultural festivals—Mossak Batak can be promoted as a leading tourist attraction in Toba Regency. This will not only contribute to cultural preservation but also support local economic growth and strengthen global recognition of Batak cultural identity.

Keywords: Mossak Batak, Cultural Tourism, Toba Regency, Martial Arts, Local Potential.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a phenomenon that involves travel and visits by individuals or groups to various places for recreational, cultural, historical or business purposes (Tigginehe, AM, 2019). Every tourist destination in an area certainly has various potentials that can be used as a lure for visitors. Some of them are natural and human resources, cultural festivals to recreation. Tourist attractions are certainly more attractive with their uniqueness and make them different from others. This condition will certainly affect local economic growth.

The Toba Regency area is one of the tourist destinations in Indonesia that has a variety of tourism potential to be explored and enjoyed by people both domestically and abroad (Hutagalung and Sihombing, 2021). The area is surrounded by mountains and the presence of

Lake Toba is a kind of magnet that can attract tourists to come and visit. The strong traditions of customs, religious and historical values, and culinary delights also make the Toba Regency area even more interesting to explore. The potential of this area will certainly be very beneficial for the regional economy, especially the community if it is managed and developed properly.

As a newly established Regency in 2020, Toba Regency has an area of 2,021.80 km². Toba Regency has 16 sub-districts with a total population of 212,133 people (Toba Central Statistics Agency 2015). This area is also very strategic because it is directly adjacent to several regencies on the edge of Lake Toba, including Asahan Regency, North Tapanuli Regency, Simalungun Regency and Samosir Regency. The population in Toba Regency is diverse due to the presence of various residents from different backgrounds. The residents who live in this area include the Toba Batak Tribe, Karo Tribe, Mandailing Tribe, Simalungun ethnic group and other immigrant tribes such as Javanese, Malay and Padang. The Toba Batak Tribe is the largest tribe inhabiting the Toba Regency area.

The Toba Batak tribe as the majority tribe inhabiting the Toba Regency area still holds fast to the values of customs, morals, and rituals of their ancestors. The Toba Batak culture is a rich and enchanting heritage, encompassing various aspects of daily life reflected in traditional customs, art, architecture, and culinary specialties. The Toba Batak tribe also continues to maintain and preserve its traditions and culture amidst increasingly modern developments. These various cultures include architecture and carvings on Jabu Bolon, Tortor dance and traditional cuisine such as arsik and saksang. However, among these cultures, there is one art that is rare or almost unknown to the public, namely *the Mossak* or *Monsak* Batak martial art. Similar to other tribes in Indonesia, of course the Mossak martial art of the Toba Batak people has similarities with other martial arts in Indonesia. This condition is influenced by the background of the origin of the ancestors of the Indonesian people who came from the Malay group. However, the geographical conditions and customs of each tribe in Indonesia make the traditions very diverse. This makes each martial art in

Indonesia have different names, but many of them have the same meaning, including Mossak Batak.

Mossak Batak Toba is a traditional martial art inherited from the Batak Toba ethnic group in North Sumatra (Pakpahan and Sinulingga, 2023). Its movements are agile, fast, and full of power, passed down from generation to generation and are an important part of Batak Toba culture. Mossak is used to protect oneself and maintain the security of one's hometown. Mossak techniques include kicks, punches, locks, and throws. This martial art emphasizes physical, mental, and spiritual strength. Its philosophy teaches about courage, discipline, and loyalty.

In Mossak Batak philosophy, courage is seen as a highly valued trait. Mossak Batak teaches that courage is not only about physical fearlessness, but also about moral and spiritual courage to face life's challenges and difficulties. This concept is the importance of facing obstacles with a high head and a strong heart, even in difficult or risky situations. After that, discipline becomes one of the key aspects in Mossak Batak philosophy. Mossak Batak emphasizes the importance of having self-control, adherence to values and norms accepted in society, and a commitment to carrying out tasks earnestly and consistently. Discipline in Mossak Batak covers various aspects of life, from hard work to maintaining a balance between individual needs and community interests. Furthermore, loyalty is a highly respected value in Batak culture. Mossak Batak teaches that loyalty is a strong commitment to people who are important in our lives, such as family, friends, and community. This involves deep emotional and moral encounters, as well as consistency in supporting and maintaining these relationships in difficult situations or facing temptations. Mossak Batak is not just a martial art, but an art that contains high cultural values. This martial art reflects the courage, toughness, and never-give-up spirit of the Toba Batak tribe. Mossak is also a symbol of the unity of the Toba Batak people.

The Toba Batak people are a society that has a very strong habit of respecting nature and their ancestors with the belief that their ancestors have an important role in preserving and protecting them (Simanjuntak, MA 2020) . Therefore, respecting ancestors is a way to

obtain blessings and protection from them, as well as to maintain a harmonious relationship between the living and deceased generations. This respect is carried out in various ways, such as giving offerings, traditional ceremonies, and through the traditions of each community. If you pay attention, there are many customs of the Indonesian people that highly respect the universe and its creator, and these customs are the basis for every activity of the Toba Batak people including the Mossak Batak martial art. This is what makes it unique and makes it different from other martial arts in Indonesia.

If we examine the fighting procedures more deeply, Mossak Batak Toba is no less unique than other martial arts. First, in the fighting stage, Mossak Batak has a unique spiritual approach and strong belief in the power of nature. Before fighting, Mossak Batak practitioners will perform rituals and spells to gain protection and strength from the supernatural. This is an integral part of mental and spiritual preparation before engaging in a fight. Second, in fighting techniques, Mossak Batak relies on dynamic and fast movements, and uses great physical strength. Techniques such as kicks, punches, and catches are used with full power and speed. In addition, twisting movements are also characteristic of Mossak Batak, by adjusting to the flow of energy and the opponent's movements. Not only that, in Mossak Batak there are also elements of dance or rhythmic movements that are included in martial arts training. The players involve rhythmic body movements, steps that are done in sync, or movements that follow the rhythm of traditional music that accompanies Mossak training. The addition of dance elements or rhythmic movements can provide a more beautiful and interesting nuance in Mossak training. In addition, it strengthens the social bonds between participants, because they practice together, following the same rhythm and movements, creating a unifying experience. This is not only a physical exercise, but also an expression of culture and identity of the Batak tribe.

On the other hand, with all its uniqueness and distinctiveness, the Mossak Batak Toba martial art still seems less popular, especially for young people who currently prefer martial arts from abroad. In fact, many schools in Toba Regency choose karate and wushu as their extracurricular activities. Concerns about the extinction of Mossak Batak are growing among

the Batak people, because the values and traditions contained in it face threats from modernization and rapid changes in the times. If this condition is allowed to continue, the symmetry of Mossak Batak martial arts will disappear. Meanwhile, the party that should be actively involved in preserving regional arts is the younger generation, as explained by Sihombing (2020) that the very diverse cultural wealth must be preserved for the sustainability of the culture for future generations (Sihombing, 2020).

When compared to other tourist attractions in Indonesia, it can be seen that the Mossak Batak martial art is very far behind, even almost unknown to the Indonesian people. Unlike the silat martial art which has reached the international arena and even become a branch of competition in the Sea Games and Asian Games, the Mossak martial art must certainly get great attention and support from the government. This is of course to maintain the existence of Mossak Batak so that it remains sustainable, and if possible also get the same treatment as the silat martial art. Therefore, of course, efforts are expected from every party from the government to the smallest community in maintaining, preserving and supporting the Mossak Batak martial arts.

In the context of tourism potential, there are several gaps that need to be analyzed in depth. First, the lack of documentation and publications that promote Mossak Batak as a major tourist attraction results in a lack of information that can be accessed by domestic and foreign tourists. Second, the infrastructure and supporting facilities for Mossak Batak performances are still inadequate, making it difficult to preserve and promote this culture. Third, there is a lack of synergy between local governments, cultural communities, and tourism industry players in promoting Mossak Batak as a tourism icon for Toba Regency. The potentials that will be identified in the analysis include the intrinsic appeal of Batak Mossak itself, such as the beauty of the dance, the uniqueness of traditional musical instruments, and the folklore that is the theme of the performance. In addition, external potentials such as tourist interest in local culture and the possibility of developing tour packages that integrate Mossak Batak performances will also be analyzed. This study will

also explore effective and sustainable promotion models to introduce Mossak Batak to a wider tourism market.

In some cases, Mossak Batak performances have managed to attract tourists, although on a limited scale. This shows that there is significant interest from tourists in this performing art. In the case study, a Mossak Batak performance held during the Lake Toba Festival and Aquabike World Championship managed to attract hundreds of tourists, both local and solo. This proves that with the right promotional strategy, Mossak Batak has great potential to become a strong tourist attraction. This is what then prompted the researcher to choose a research topic on Mossak Batak with the title " Analysis of Mossak Batak Potential as a Tourist Attraction in Toba Regency".

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The word “ analysis” comes from the Ancient Greek word “ analisis ”, which literally means “ to release”. The word “ analisis ” consists of two parts, namely “ ana ” which means “ back” and “ luein ” which means “ to release”. Therefore, analysis can be interpreted as an effort to observe in detail an object or phenomenon by breaking it down into the components that form it or reassembling the components for further research. Analysis can be explained as the process of breaking down a subject into different parts and examining each part and a summary of each other to gain an accurate and complete understanding of the whole. Darminto, et al (2011).

Sugiyono (2015) defines analysis as a systematic step to collect and measure data from various sources such as interviews, field notes, and documents. This process involves organizing data into categories, dividing into relevant units, synthesizing, forming patterns, selecting significant key concepts, and drawing conclusions so that they can be easily understood by researchers and others.

According to Komaruddin (2001), analysis is a thinking process to dissect a whole into smaller parts so that it can identify the signs of each part, unite each other, and the role of

each in creating an integrated whole. Meanwhile, according to Azwar (2019), analysis is an effort to break down or analyze a unit into its smallest parts.

Based on the ideas that have been presented, it can be concluded that analysis is a thinking process that aims to solve or break down a problem from its unity into its smallest parts.

In general, potential has a meaning that refers to the possibility or ability that has the capacity but has not been fully realized to develop or actualize. According to Munir, M (2020) tourism potential is something that is fully owned by the region which can then be developed into an interesting tourist attraction and has an attraction so that tourists want to visit. Oktaviani, R. (2021) also supports this opinion and adds that the attraction itself can be in the form of natural, cultural or man-made tourism.

Furthermore, Harimurti, A. (2023) argues that an area that can be developed into a tourist attraction, in addition to having its own appeal for tourists to visit, is also expected to provide economic benefits to the local community. Wulandari, D (2021) also argues that every tourist attraction must continue to pay attention to local cultural values and traditions.

The research "Potential Analysis of Mossak Batak as a Tourist Attraction in Toba Regency" is a research that will explore the potential of one of the local martial arts, namely Mossak Batak, to be used as an example of an attraction for the community in Toba Regency. The author focuses on the aspects that influence and also the process of the importance of Mossak Batak as a tourist attraction so that it can be redeveloped later and remain sustainable so that it can have a positive impact on the local community in Toba Regency.

3. METHOD

The research "Analysis of Mossak Batak Potential as a Tourist Attraction in Toba Regency" uses a qualitative descriptive research type. Qualitative descriptive aims to find a theory. This research method directly involves researchers in the field and acts as observers, then categorizes actors, observes phenomena directly, pours directly into observation notes without manipulating variables and emphasizing natural observations.

In qualitative descriptive methods, researchers will analyze data that has been collected in various forms, including words, images, but not with numbers. Merriam (2009) explains that qualitative research is suitable for research that wants to understand a meaning and also the experience of the research subject, then the results of the research will be presented in the form of a rich and in-depth description.

This research is expected to provide a clear and in-depth picture of the potential of Mossak Batak as a tourist attraction in Toba Regency. So that the results of this study are useful for the government, stakeholders and local communities in developing Mossak Batak as a potential tourist attraction.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mossak Batak is a martial art originating from the Batak people, especially around the Toba Regency area in North Sumatra. The name " Mossak" itself is often associated with the term in the Batak language which means strength or endurance. As a martial art, Mossak Batak functions more than just physical training, but also involves the moral, spiritual, and cultural aspects of the Batak people.

King Sisingamangaraja XII first popularized or created Mossak Batak and then taught it to his troops to fight against Dutch colonialism in Tanah Batak. He was very skilled in Mossak martial arts. His skills in this field of fighting reportedly made him difficult to overcome in conflict. When King Sisingamangaraja died, the Mossak troops he had disbanded and spread to the areas in Tanah Batak and then developed Mossak Batak with the characteristics of each region.

This is reinforced by the statement made by the informant in the following interview:

"Initially, it was King Sisingamangaraja (Results of an interview with Mr. Penataran Naibaho, Mossak Teacher/Mediator, 2024)

Then Mossak Batak emerged as a method of self-protection. Batak people in ancient times were often involved in conflicts or wars between tribes, either to defend their territory or to defend the honor of the tribe. Therefore, Mossak Batak was born as a way to prepare

oneself to face these physical threats. This art teaches fighting techniques that involve agility, strength, and endurance, all of which are very necessary in battle.

Mossak Batak is not only seen as a security tool, but also as a symbol of courage and self-honor. In Batak society, maintaining honor is a very important value. Therefore, this martial art is also part of traditional ceremonies, where young men are tested to show their courage and skills in defending themselves.

Over time, Mossak Batak has experienced various forms of development that adapt to the social and cultural changes of the Batak people. In its early days, Mossak Batak training was carried out in a more informal context and was more related to daily physical training. However, over time, this martial art began to interact with traditional ceremonies and rituals, where martial arts techniques are often practiced at events such as weddings, traditional parties, and funeral ceremonies.

During the colonial period and after, the Mossak Batak began to be marginalized due to the influence of outside cultures and changing times. For example, during the Dutch colonial period, many local traditions were ignored or banned, including traditional martial arts practices such as Mossak Batak. Even so, some more isolated Batak communities still maintain and instill Mossak Batak in their daily lives.

Entering the modern era, although the influence of foreign culture is increasingly dominant, there are efforts from several communities to preserve Mossak Batak. In Toba Regency, for example, a number of community groups and cultural organizations are trying to revive this tradition through various training and performances. Mossak Batak is starting to be promoted again as part of the rich Batak cultural identity and as one of the cultural tourism attractions in Toba Regency.

Nowadays, Mossak Batak is not only seen as a martial art, but also as a means to introduce Batak culture to the outside world. Various cultural events, festivals, and trainings involving Mossak Batak are held to attract tourists who want to learn more about Batak traditions.

Mossak Batak plays an important role in the formation of character and social life of the Batak people. In the Batak community, this martial art is not just a physical skill, but also part of character education. Every movement in Mossak Batak teaches values such as discipline, respect for opponents, courage, and the importance of maintaining honor.

For the Batak people, especially those living in rural areas and around Lake Toba, Mossak Batak also has a deep spiritual meaning. As part of the tradition, Batak Mossak is often practiced in order to honor ancestors, as well as to provide protection and blessings in life. In addition, many traditional events involve Mossak Batak performances to strengthen relationships between communities and show the diversity of Batak culture.

Mossak Batak also plays a role in strengthening the identity of Batak culture amidst the flow of modernization. The younger generation of Batak who now live in big cities often feel disconnected from their cultural roots, but by studying and preserving Batak Mossak, they can reconnect with their ancestral traditions. The practice of Mossak Batak, both as a martial art and as a cultural symbol, plays an important role in maintaining Batak cultural heritage.

5. Conclusion

Based on research on the potential of Mossak Batak as a tourist attraction in Toba Regency, a number of important findings were obtained that answered the formulation of this research problem. First, the potential of Mossak Batak as a tourist attraction lies in the cultural, economic and social aspects. Culturally, Mossak Batak has high historical and philosophical value as a traditional martial art that has been passed down from generation to generation by the Batak people. This art represents local identity and unique cultural wealth. In economic terms, Mossak Batak has the potential to create new opportunities through art performances, martial arts training, and the development of cultural tourism packages. Socially, Mossak Batak is able to strengthen the sense of togetherness of the local community while introducing tourists to traditional Batak values.

Second, to optimize the potential of Mossak Batak as a tourist attraction, a comprehensive and integrated strategy is needed. The strategy includes strengthening

promotion and *branding* , improving supporting infrastructure, and synergy between the government, artists, and the private sector. Promotion efforts can be carried out through digital platforms, cultural events, and cooperation with travel agents. Infrastructure such as art stages, cultural information centers, and accessibility of performance locations need to be improved to attract more tourists. Meanwhile, ensuring synergy between stakeholders is needed for sustainable management, both in the field of art preservation and local economic development.

However, this study also identified a number of obstacles that need to be overcome, such as lack of information and promotion of Mossak Batak, limited infrastructure, and low involvement of local communities. With the right approach, these obstacles can be overcome, so that Mossak Batak can be optimized to become one of the leading tourist attractions of Toba Regency.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of integrating local traditions such as Mossak Batak into the tourism sector. In addition to preserving cultural heritage, this development also has great potential to improve the regional economy, enrich the tourism identity of Toba Regency, and expand appreciation of local arts and culture at the national and international levels.

REFERENCE

- Arifianto, DR, & Yulianto, E. (2019). The Potential of Pencak Silat as a Cultural Tourism Attraction in West Java. *Scientific Journal of Tourism* , 6(2), 153-162.
- Arista, NWO, Sutarya, IG & Widana, IKA (2017). Management of Mepantigan Art as a Tourist Attraction in Batubulan Village, Gianyar Regency, *Journal of Hindu Religious Research*, 1(1), 117-122.
- Azwar, 2019. Analysis of Service Quality of Integrated Responsive Apartment Management System Using Servqual Method. Muhammadiyah University of Riau.
- Central Bureau of Statistics of Toba Regency. (2015, March 31). Geographical Location of Toba Samosir Regency. <https://tobakab.bps.go.id/statictable/2015/03/31/24/letak-geografis-kabupaten-toba-samosir.html>

- Darminto, Dwi Prastowo and Julianty, Rifka. 2011. *Financial Report Analysis*. YKPN, Yogyakarta.
- Harimurti, A. (2023). Ecotourism potential in Banyuwangi Regency. *Scientific Journal of Geography* , 13(1), 1-10.
- Kartika Sari, R. (2023). The influence of mystical beliefs on people's consumption behavior in the digital era. *Scientific Journal of Economics and Business "Bisma"* , 15(1).
- Komaruddin, 2001. Encyclopedia of Management, 5th Edition, Jakarta, Bumi Aksara. (53)
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2012). Marketing management (14th ed.). Pearson.
- Lubis, Z. (2019). Study of Batak cultural values in the martial art of Mossak pencak silat: (study at the Toba Holbung Silat Studio, Medan). *Journal of Socio-Humanities* , 21(1), 1-14.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* . Jossey-Bass.
- Munir, M. (2020). Natural tourism potential in Kuningan Regency. *Journal of Scientific Dynamics* , 20(1), 57-68.
- Nugroho, SS (2021, August). MAKING MADIUN THE CITY OF WARRIORS: Initiating a Policy for Developing Cultural Tourism Based on Pencak Silat. *In Proceedings of the Law and Social Studies Conference*.
- Oktaviani, R. (2021). Religious tourism potential in Gresik Regency. *Scientific Journal of Management and Business* , 7(1), 1-12.
- Pakpahan, A., & Sinulingga, J. (2023). SEMIOTICS OF THE STAGES OF TOBA BATAK MOSSAK. *Competence*, 16(1), 30-44.
- Pramana Widagda, S., Prasetyanto, H., Suharto, T., & Yuwono, Suselo H. (2022). Merpati Putih Pencak silat Attraction as a Tourist Attraction in an Effort to Preserve Indonesia's Cultural Heritage. *Tourism Media*, 20(1), 136–147.
- Sihombing, MM (2020). Kinship System of the Toba Batak Tribe. *ISTP Journal of Science and Technology* , 13 (1), 103-106.
- Simanjuntak, MA (2020). “Martutu Aek”, Batak Cultural Ritual Instilling the Value of Love for the Country . *Innovative Journal* , 5(3), 235-248.
- Simanjuntak, TB (2020). Development of the Mossak Toba pencak silat learning model to improve the character of students at SMA Negeri 1 Balige. *Scientific Journal of Sports Education*, 14(2), 145-152.

- Sugiyono, P (2015). *Combination research methods (mixed methods)* . Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Suparto, S. (2023). Javanese Society and Mystical Beliefs: A sociological study. *Scientific Journal of Sociology " Community"* , 10(2).
- Tingginehe, AM, Waani, JO, & Wuisang, CE (2019). GREEN TOURISM PLANNING IN ROON DISTRICT. *Journal of Urban and Regional Planning*, 6 (2) 511-520.
- Hutagalung, I, Juliana and Sihombing, Natalia (2021). STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING THE TOURISM SECTOR IN TOBA REGENCY IN AN EFFORT TO INCREASE REGIONAL ORIGINAL INCOME. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 1 (2) 150-172.