

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The tourism sector in Japan remains a key industry for the government, as evidenced by the increasing number of foreign tourists each year. Japan's appeal as a technologically advanced country, combined with its well-preserved traditional culture and pop culture phenomena such as anime and manga, has attracted millions of tourists to the country. According to data released by the Japan National Tourism Organization (2024), saw a record high of 36.8 million international tourists, an increase of 47.1% compared to 2023 (Ekowati, et al., 2019).

Japan is one of the favorite overseas tourist destinations for Indonesian travelers. In early 2017, two cities in Japan, Tokyo and Osaka, were included in the list of the 10 most searched tourist destinations on the travel search site Skyscanner Indonesia. In addition, based on data on overseas credit card usage, Japan is one of the most visited countries by Indonesians, alongside Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and South Korea.

As one of the most developed countries in Asia, and even in the world, Japan offers a blend of technological advancement and unique traditional culture. Tourists can purchase sophisticated electronic products such as cameras and computers at relatively low prices. The advanced transportation system that covers the entire country also makes it easy for tourists to travel from one city to another. Unfortunately, most tourists still tend to stay within the three major cities, commonly referred to as the “golden triangle”: Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka. This has led to overtourism, resulting in overcrowding and traffic congestion at popular destinations such as Tokyo Disneyland, Arashiyama Bamboo Forest, Dotonbori in Osaka, and various other locations. Therefore, the Japanese government, through the Japan Tourism Agency (2023), is making efforts to address

overtourism by introducing alternative cities or tourist destinations that are not yet widely known to tourists, with a focus on sustainable tourism development (Ekowati et al., 2019)

Among the many cities and tourist destinations to visit in Japan, Aizuwakamatsu City is a strong contender with its potential to attract tourists seeking an authentic experience of Japanese history and culture, as well as its unspoiled natural beauty. Located in Fukushima Prefecture, the Aizuwakamatsu region offers an unforgettable blend of history, nature, and culture. Once a stronghold of samurai tradition, Aizuwakamatsu preserves its rich history while embracing modern travelers. Whether visitors are drawn to towering castles, Edo-period villages, or breathtaking natural landscapes, this area is a must-visit destination in Japan. Just five hours from Tokyo by train, Aizuwakamatsu is the perfect vacation spot for those seeking an authentic Japanese experience without the crowds.

Overall, Aizuwakamatsu is a city that successfully harmonizes its rich history with the dynamics of modern life, attracting both domestic and international tourists. The city not only offers stunning natural landscapes and the enduring charm of traditional culture but also provides the experience of tracing the strong samurai heritage that still resonates today. In addition to main attractions like Tsuruga Castle and samurai sites, Aizuwakamatsu also offers various other tourist spots, ranging from historical sites, ancient temples, annual cultural festivals, to a variety of local cuisines that are sure to tantalize your taste buds. With its strong samurai history and culture, as well as its tourism potential that continues to be developed through various sustainable tourism programs, Aizuwakamatsu has great appeal as an alternative destination that offers authentic and educational experiences. This potential will be further optimized if supported by innovative, creative, and educational promotional efforts to reach more tourists, especially young people and international tourists seeking new experiences. The potential in creating pop-up books, which have various benefits, is that they can interactively attract readers

from the destinations that the author shares through pop-up book promotional media.

Therefore, the use of pop-up interactive books as an advertising method to promote the beauty of Aizuwakamatsu City is the primary focus of this study. This study was conducted to develop an attractive and interactive tourism information medium. One of the innovations introduced is the creation of an interactive pop-up book as a visual and promotional medium for Aizuwakamatsu City tourism. This pop-up book is designed by combining the history, culture, and natural beauty of Aizuwakamatsu in an attractive and easy-to-understand format. The main objective of this research is to provide tourism information about Aizuwakamatsu in the form of an interactive pop-up book that not only serves as a promotional medium but also provides a new and enjoyable experience for readers and potential tourists who want to learn more about the cultural and natural wealth of this city.

## **1.2. Statements of the Problem**

The following discussion statement of problems is necessary so that the implementation of this research has a clear direction and structured focus:

1. What is the process of creating interactive pop-up books about Aizuwakamatsu in general and destination historical tourism in Aizuwakamatsu City?
2. How can the visuals in interactive pop-up books about Aizuwakamatsu in general through historical tourist destination attract Indonesian and foreign tourists to Aizuwakamatsu City?

## **1.3. Aim of the Study**

The purpose of this research is intended to guide the research process methodically with reference to the problem formulation. The following are the objectives of this research:

1. To elaborate on the explanation and stages in the process of creating and developing an interactive pop-up book to produce an effective medium for introducing tourist destinations in Aizuwakamatsu City.
2. To explore and identify the visual and design elements of an interactive pop-up book as an effort to introduce tourist destinations in Aizuwakamatsu City.

#### **1.4. Advantages of the Study**

In order to have specific objectives, this research is expected to make a significant contribution both theoretically and practically. The following are some of the benefits of this research:

##### **1.4.1. Theoretical Advantages**

1. To expand knowledge and put into practice the theories acquired during college studies.
2. To enhance skill in tourism promotion that have been previously utilized.

##### **1.4.2. Practical Advantages**

1. To develop knowledge related to tourism and apply it through this research.
2. To improve skills in designing and creating promotional media in the form of interactive pop-up books.
3. To introduce and promote tourism in the city of Aizuwakamatsu.

#### **1.5. Output of the Study**

Creating an interactive pop-up book is a multifaceted artistic and engineering endeavor that transforms flat pages into dynamic, three-dimensional scenes, inviting readers into a truly immersive narrative experience. The process, while intricate, is deeply rewarding, culminating in a tactile and visual masterpiece.

For the final assignments, the outcome of this project is an interactive pop-up book that presents interesting visualizations of tourist destinations in Aizuwakamatsu City. This book contains information about tourist attractions, with several historic buildings featured on the cover of our book, cultural festival activities from various seasons, accompanied by photos and brief descriptions of each tourist attraction, as well as recommendations for restaurants serving Aizuwakamatsu's local cuisine. It also includes QR codes to facilitate navigation to the tourist destinations. Ultimately, crafting an interactive pop-up book is a testament to creativity, precision, and patience. The end result is not just a book, but an experience – a tangible piece of art that delights and fascinates readers of all ages, inviting them to physically engage with the story in a way that traditional books cannot.