

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Pekojan Village is one of the oldest residential districts in the city of Semarang, Central Java, with considerable historical and cultural value. Over time, the district has played an important role in shaping the cultural identity of Semarang, specifically in the context of the spread of Islam. Since the 18th century, Pekojan Semarang has been an integral part of a cosmopolitan network of port cities on the north coast of Java, which flourished as a center of international trade. As Java's main port, Semarang attracted traders from many countries, including Arabia, Gujarat, China and Europe, who later settled in Pekojan. The existence of Pekojan Village as an area inhabited by Muslim communities, specifically traders from Gujarat, India, further strengthens its role in the Islamization process and economic development of the region. As part of the port city, Pekojan also played an important role in the trade of spices and other commodities, contributing to Semarang's economic growth and enriching the cultural diversity and social life of communities along Java's north coast (Wahjoerini & Setioko, 2022).

The etymology of the word "Pekojan" is based on the term "Koja" or "Khoja", a term for Muslims from Gujarat, India, who came to the archipelago as traders and propagators of Islam. They then settled and integrated with the local communities in the coastal area. Over time, the area has been inhabited by other Muslim communities, such as Arabs and non-Koja Indians (Wahjoerini & Nurini, 2011). This diversity strengthens Pekojan's identity as an Islamic residential area. In addition to being a place to live, Pekojan has become an important centre for da'wah and religious activities in Semarang. This role makes Pekojan an integral part of the history of Islamisation in Central Java (Kurniawati, 2024). Most of Pekojan's residents work as traders, craftsmen and in the religious sector, making the area a centre of encounter between local and Middle Eastern cultures. The community is also active in various social and cultural activities, such as Hari Raya

celebrations, recitations and religious traditions, which strengthen relations between people from different backgrounds (Budiarto, 2022).

Pekojan Village had a major influence on the process of Islamisation in the Semarang area. Important evidence of this role is the establishment of the Jami' Pekojan Mosque. The mosque was established in 1878 AD (1309 AH) by a Muslim community of Gujarati origin from India, known as Koja. The Jami' Pekojan Mosque serves not only as a place of worship for Muslims, but also as a centre for social activities and religious education for the local Muslim community. Historically, the mosque has been a meeting place for scholars, merchants and the general public to discuss and promote Islamic values. The mosque is also the venue for Islamic holiday celebrations involving different groups, reflecting a strong social cohesion in the midst of diversity.

The Jami' Pekojan Mosque is still actively used and remains the centre of the spiritual life of the surrounding community, as well as a symbol of the continuity of Islamic traditions that have been rooted for centuries. In recognition of its historical and cultural value, the Semarang Municipality designated the Jami' Pekojan Mosque as one of the cultural heritage buildings in Mayor's Decree No. 646/50/1992. This designation confirms the mosque's role as an integral part of the cultural heritage, which must be preserved for future generations.

The traditions and culture of Pekojan Village in Semarang are a case of acculturation between local Javanese culture and elements of Middle Eastern and Indian culture. This acculturation manifests itself in various aspects of community life, from the architectural form of the mosque, which combines traditional Javanese elements with Middle Eastern Islamic styles, to culinary specialities such as Indian Porridge, which is the main dish when breaking the fast-during Ramadan. The tradition of serving Indian porridge involves the active participation of the community in the cooking process and its subsequent distribution to worshipers and local residents. This practice can be understood as a form of communal togetherness and almsgiving. Furthermore, the Qur'anic Tadarus and regular recitation activities that take place during Ramadan are also part of the religious life that strengthens the relationship between residents.

The spirit of mutual cooperation is reflected in various social activities, including community service, the celebration of Islamic holidays, as well as the organisation of mass circumcision and free health services involving all levels of society. The values of tolerance, friendship and social care are upheld in the daily lives of residents, thus making Pekojan not only a residential area, but also a centre of spiritual and cultural life that bonds Islamic identity and diversity in a harmonious community (Wahjoerini & Setioko, 2022).

The selection of a documentary theme focusing on Pekojan Village is intended to underscore the significance of preserving local identity and fostering appreciation for the area's historical heritage. Pekojan is not merely a geographical location, but rather a living space that embodies values of tolerance, diversity, and Islamic heritage, which coexist with local culture (Kurniasari, 2020). It is anticipated that the younger generation will gain a deeper understanding of the historical underpinnings of the multicultural community in Semarang through this documentary. Visual representation has been demonstrated to be an effective tool in raising awareness of historic preservation (Jones, 2019). Pekojan Village has a rich history, including significant contributions to proselytising and trade. This documentary functions as a form of documentation and advocacy for the sustainability of cultural heritage.

The primary audience for this documentary includes younger individuals, such as high school and university students. It aims to raise awareness among them regarding the value of safeguarding and valuing local cultural heritage. Additionally, the documentary targets educational figures teachers, lecturers, cultural scholars, and academic institutions who advocate for the principles of multiculturalism, interfaith tolerance, and heritage-based education. The educational programme has been designed to enhance the students' comprehension of the history and traditions of Pekojan Village, with a particular emphasis on the values of diversity and tolerance that are embodied within these traditions. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the documentary will serve as a catalyst, inspiring the younger generation to engage in the preservation of their culture. Despite its long-standing role as a significant spiritual centre, the Jami' Pekojan

Mosque currently faces limitations in its capacity to accommodate its worshipping community and visitors. The renovations have not fully met modern needs, such as space for social and educational activities, and historical information is lacking. It is anticipated that the dissemination of this documentary will serve to encourage the enhancement of facilities and awareness with a view to the maintenance and care of mosques and historic areas as symbols of cultural preservation and local identity.

The production of the documentary “*The Hidden Soul of Pekojan*” plays a significant role in the preservation of local culture and the documentation of oral and visual history in the Kampung Pekojan area of Semarang. As a region with a rich multicultural background, Pekojan holds various historical, social, and cultural values that have yet to be widely explored by the public or mainstream media.

Amid urban development and changes in spatial function, many cultural elements in Pekojan have begun to deteriorate both physically, such as historic buildings, and non-physically, including local traditions, community language, and social values. The lack of adequate documentation increases the risk of cultural identity loss, particularly in the face of globalization and cultural homogenization.

This documentary serves as a media intervention to capture and reintroduce hidden local narratives and provide a platform for the lived experiences of Pekojan residents that have long been overlooked. Beyond being a creative product, the documentary also functions as an educational tool, a cultural visual archive, and an advocacy medium for the preservation of heritage areas.

Furthermore, the urgency of this documentary lies in the growing need for younger generations to access authentic and contextual information about the cultural heritage around them. Through visual storytelling, the documentary aims to foster collective awareness and strengthen a sense of ownership toward local history as an integral part of Semarang's urban identity.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on the background that has been explained, the problem formulations that arise are:

1. How is the documentary film production process of Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang?
2. What is the response from the audience regarding the documentary film about Jami' Pekojan Mosque?

1.3 Research Objectives

Objective of this research are:

To describe in detail the production process of a documentary film about Jami' Pekojan Mosque in Semarang, starting from the planning stage, shooting, sound recording, to the post production stage. To increase public understanding and awareness of the uniqueness and historical value of Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang.

To identify and analyze audience responses to the Jami' Pekojan Mosque documentary film, including the level of understanding, acceptance, and impact on cultural preservation awareness.

1.4 Significant of The Research

Theoretical Benefits:

Provide insight into the culture and traditions of the local community and enrich the literature related to religion and historical values.

Become a source of reference and information for future research.

Practical Benefits:

To document in detail the unique traditions that take place during the month of Ramadan at Jami' Pekojan Mosque.

As a media to educate and introduce the younger generation in Jami' Pekojan Mosque about Ramadan traditions that need to be maintained and preserved.

As a media to promote and maintain Ramadan traditions and culture in Jami' Pekojan Mosque, Semarang.

To introduce the richness of culture and the values contained therein to the wider community.

1.5 Output

The result of this research preparation is a documentary film entitled *The Hidden Soul of Pekojan* with a duration of 16 minutes and 46 seconds. This

documentary aims to briefly describe the history, traditions and culture that grew up in one of the historical sites in Pekojan Village, the Jami' Pekojan Mosque in Semarang. In addition to serving as a means of information, this video is also expected to be a reference of knowledge for the next generation, especially for the administrators of the Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang and the general public, in order to preserve the existing cultural heritage so that it does not get lost over time due to lack of documentation. Through *The Hidden Soul of Pekojan*, a glimpse of the Pekojan Village is shown, with the Jami' Mosque as a representation of the presence of Islamic civilization in Semarang and the preservation of culture and traditions that are still alive today.