

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Traditional food is more than just something that is eaten. It is part of a culture that reflects a community's identity, beliefs, and history. In Indonesia, where people come from many different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds, traditional food acts as a bridge between generations. It helps preserve traditions and showcases wisdom passed down through time. Traditional food not only strengthens cultural identity but also supports tourism. According to Putri et al. (2023), traditional food makes tourist experiences more special because it gives them something meaningful to remember, offering not only taste, but also stories, values, and cultural insight. This is why food tourism has become more popular today, as tourists look for unique and memorable experiences through local cuisine.

One of the best examples of this is the city of Surakarta, also called Solo, located in Central Java. Solo is well known as one of the most culturally rich cities in Indonesia. It has become a favourite place for both local and international tourists who want to explore Javanese culture, including its traditional foods, arts, and customs. Based on the Central Java Tourism Statistics Book (2023), Solo ranked third in the number of tourist visits among cities and districts in the province, with more than four million visitors. This is an impressive result, especially since Solo is smaller in size compared to places like Semarang or Klaten. This shows that Solo has a rich variety of cultural attractions, especially in culinary attraction which makes it an appealing destination for many tourists.

Table 1.1 Central Java Tourism Statistics in 2023

Rank	City	Domestic Tourist	International Tourist	Total
1	Semarang Kota	6,470,037	12,699	6,482,736
2	Klaten	6,293,175	163,882	6,457,057
3	Surakarta	4,019,566	10,120	4,029,686
4	Semarang Kab.	3,531,786	2,344	3,534,130

5	Banyumas	3,526,643	12	3,526,655
6	Magelang Kab.	3,191,668	252,957	3,444,625
7	Demak	2,744,866	174	2,745,040
8	Purbalingga	2,482,974	7	2,482,981
9	Kebumen	2,036,275	0	2,036,275
10	Jejara	1,976,091	15,251	1,991,342

The slogan ‘Solo, The Spirit of Java,’ introduced in 2003, supports the city's identity, highlighting its cultural essence and Javanese heritage. According to Pandansari et al. (2020), the slogan is part of Solo’s efforts to present itself as the center of Javanese culture. It sends a message that Solo is more than just a city, but it is a place where Javanese traditions are still alive, including traditional foods. Through this slogan, Solo invites visitors to experience its cultural life firsthand, making local food an important part of that experience.

Traditional food in Indonesia has been influenced by many other cultures over time, such as Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern, and European. This mix of influences can be clearly seen in Solo’s culinary scene. As Yonatan et al. (2024) states, this cultural exchange has made Indonesian food more diverse while still being connected to local values. However, there are also challenges. Many traditional foods have been changed or adapted to follow modern tastes. As a result, younger generations might not understand the original recipes or cultural meanings behind these dishes. In Solo, more restaurants now offer Western and Asian-style foods, and even traditional dishes are often modified. This causes the original taste and cultural value to slowly fade.

Lenjongan, one of the examples of traditional snack in Solo, has begun to change in recent times due to cultural acculturation within the community. *Lenjongan* is a dish of traditional Javanese snacks made from cassava and other basic ingredients. It includes 13 variants, such as *gendar*, *lindri*, *lopis*, *klepon*, *sawut*, *jongkong*, *gatot*, *getuk*, *tiwul*, *cenil*, *ketan hitam*, *ketan putih*, and *grontol*, but the originality of *lenjongan* itself has become separated and incomplete. In many cases, only eight to ten variants are found in one serving. Furthermore, only

a few of these variants like *klepon* and *getuk* remain widely known among the public, while many others are no longer recognized in terms of their names or appearances. As modern foods become more popular, the traditional ones like *lenjongan* are at risk of being forgotten.

To respond to this concern, this final project produced a short film titled “*Asmaradana Telah Kembali*”, meaning “*Asmaradana Has Returned*.” The name “*Asmaradana*” comes from *macapat*, which is a form of Javanese poetry about love, and *Asmaradana* itself means love. The use of the word *Asmaradana* aims to give a strong Javanese impression and to convey a deeper meaning. Its connection to the story lies in the core message of the short film, which is that love which once existed will always return and never truly disappear. That love may be passed on through someone else, just like in the ending of this short film, where love from family is shown to be the greatest kind of love and the one that will always return. The short film is not only about food, but it also tells a story of family, tradition, and emotion. The use of short film as the media was chosen because visual storytelling is a powerful and accessible way to promote cultural values. As explained by Khairani and Trilestari (2019), short films are effective because they combine images, sounds, and narratives in a way that can leave a strong emotional impression on viewers. They can be watched repeatedly, allowing the message to stay in people’s minds and reach wider audiences.

This short film was developed using the Research and Development (R&D) method with an approach from Borg and Gall (1983) to ensure it is accurate and rooted in local culture. The R&D method was chosen because it provides a structured and thoughtful process that fits well with films that explore cultural heritage, such as “*Asmaradana Telah Kembali*”. This method allows the film to grow through a careful journey of research, planning, development, validation, and refinement. Each step supports the creation of a story that not only engages emotionally but also reflects the cultural values being represented.

The film will show everyday life in Surakarta, with scenes of family activities, traditional markets, all centered around *lenjongan*. Close-up shots will be used to capture the actors' expressions, helping the audience connect with the emotions of

the story. There will also be clear introductions to each part of *lenjongan*, explaining their names and shapes. These visual elements aim to help viewers appreciate *lenjongan* not just as traditional snacks, but as meaningful parts of cultural identity.

The short film is also meant to be part of a larger effort to promote traditional food, working together with the Surakarta Tourism and Cultural Office (Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Kota Surakarta). It will be shared as part of the city's tourism program to reach a broad audience. The film will be distributed through various digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, with the support of the Surakarta Tourism and Cultural Office to help promote it more widely. According to Mayasari and Pasaribu (2021), promoting local food can support tourism growth while also protecting cultural identity. The goal of this short film is to help people remember and appreciate traditional food, both in their taste and cultural meaning. It aims to encourage pride, interest, and a sense of belonging among both older and younger audiences.

In conclusion, "*Asmaradana Telah Kembali*" is created to bring attention back to *lenjongan* and to inspire a deeper appreciation for traditional food. Through a touching story and visual experience, this short film will make it easier for people to connect with cultural heritage. Traditional food should not only be preserved through recipes but also shared through meaningful stories, emotions, and experiences that can be understood by everyone.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

In conducting this project, it is essential to identify the core issues that the study seeks to address. These problems are formulated in the form of guiding questions that help direct the focus of the project. By clarifying these problems, the project becomes more structured and its outcomes more relevant. The questions below serve as the foundation for exploring both the creative process and the social impact of the short film "*Asmaradana Telah Kembali*":

1. How is the short film "*Asmaradana Telah Kembali*" produced?

2. What is the public response from the people of Surakarta, people from other cities, and the Surakarta Tourism and Cultural Office regarding this short film?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

After defining the problems, the next step is to outline the goals of the project. These objectives provide a clear direction and purpose, ensuring that every step taken during the process aligns with the intended outcomes. The following points summarize the main aims of this project:

1. To understand and analyze the process of producing a culturally themed short film.
2. To preserve *lenjongan* as one of Surakarta's cultural culinary heritages by introducing it through a short film that is engaging for younger audiences and tourists, supported by the Surakarta Tourism and Cultural Office.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Every creative project holds value not only for the creator but also for its broader contribution to society. This project carries significance in both educational and promotional contexts. It aims to support cultural preservation through modern media while also providing tangible benefits for tourism promotion. The significance of this project can be seen in the following aspects:

1. As an educational medium, this short film is intended to raise public awareness about the cultural and historical significance of *lenjongan* and Surakarta's broader culinary heritage in general.
2. As a promotional platform, the short film will help introduce traditional foods, especially *lenjongan*, to a wider audience. It will serve as a tool to attract both local and international tourists, supported and promoted by the Surakarta Tourism and Cultural Office as part of the city's cultural and culinary tourism campaign.

1.5 Output of the Project

The main output of this project is a short film titled “*Asmaradana Telah Kembali*”, which presents an emotional and culturally rich story centered on *lenjongan*. The film will be crafted in a creative and engaging way to leave a strong impression on viewers. It aims to touch the hearts of audiences and evoke a sense of nostalgia, especially among older generations. The film will include scenes that show a return to the past when *lenjongan* was still widely known and appreciated.

In addition to being a story of memory and culture, the film will also serve as an educational tool that introduces *lenjongan* and each of its components in detail, showing how this traditional food should be recognized and preserved. The duration of the film is twelve minutes and thirty three seconds. This length is considered ideal because it is not too short to feel rushed and not too long to make the audience lose interest. It allows the message to be delivered clearly and emotionally.