CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Central Java is a province in Indonesia renowned for its attractive tourist destinations. Located in the center of Java Island, the province boasts a variety of attractions, including a rich culture, rich history, captivating natural beauty, and significant places of worship. Historical tourism, in particular, is a major draw for both domestic and international tourists (Maria et al., 2024), making Central Java a significant destination for heritage enthusiasts.

Seeing this potential, Semarang City stands out as a region in Central Java with great potential as a historical and cultural tourism destination. With an area of 373.70 km2 and a diverse population of various ethnicities, including Javanese, Chinese, and Arab, Semarang offers a unique cultural richness (Marcella, 2012). This uniqueness and diversity inherently make Semarang a strategic location for tourism development.

Although Semarang is often labeled a transit city, recent data shows that its tourism potential is far greater and has proven significant. According to official statistics, Semarang ranks first as the destination with the highest number of visitors to tourist attractions and events in Central Java. With a total of 7,345,373 tourists (Central Java Province Statistics Agency, 2024), this figure far exceeds other major competitors. Specifically, Semarang attracted 24,296 international tourists and 7,321,077 domestic tourists. This high number of foreign tourist visits underscores the urgency of providing comprehensive information in foreign languages.

Therefore, developing an interactive English-language guidebook is crucial. Informative and interactive guidebooks have proven effective as tourism promotion media (Wulansari, 2023). By designing persuasive and interactive media, this guidebook is believed to be able to present Semarang as a destination in an engaging manner and have a significant influence on tourists' travel decisions.

Tourism is a leading sector in Indonesia. According to Yoeti (in Safira et al., 2023), it is defined as temporary travel for recreation or personal satisfaction, not business. In today's digital age, accurate and relevant information is crucial in travel planning. Modern travelers rely heavily on online reviews on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Google Reviews. This suggests that the validity of information, amenities, and positive experiences shared online by users are strong determinants in destination selection decisions.

The need for comprehensive information is crucial for tourists. Studies have shown that route details, trip duration, amenities, ease of access, and positive online reviews significantly influence travel decisions and planning, making locations with comprehensive information and positive feedback much more attractive to visitors.

Recognizing the importance of easy access and relevant information, the Semarang City Government strives to support tourism through the implementation of the Trans Semarang bus system. It operates to alleviate congestion in Semarang and accommodate commuters heading to the city center and tourist destinations. What distinguishes Trans Semarang from other city buses is its scheduled departures, designated boarding and alighting stops, and fixed fares (Nursalim & Sancono, 2023).

To facilitate tourist access to various destinations, the Simpang Lima Bus Stop was chosen as the starting point for the route. This bus stop was chosen because of its strategic location in the center of Semarang City, surrounded by various main facilities, and offering very easy access. Simpang Lima Semarang is located in the center of Semarang City and is surrounded by various facilities such as hotels, shopping centers, and entertainment venues, making it a popular destination (Tampubolon et al., 2024). Several Trans Semarang corridors operate at the Simpang Lima Bus Stop: Corridors I, III, IV, V, and VIII.

According to Santoso et al. (2019), although there are 14 frequently visited tourist attractions in Semarang, this study identified four prime locations rich in historical and cultural value. These four focus destinations are Sam Poo Kong Temple, Lawang Sewu, Mandala Bhakti Museum, and Ranggawarsita Museum. These four represent cultural acculturation, traces of Dutch railway history, Indonesian military struggles, and the largest cultural, historical, archaeological, and geological collections in Central Java.

To attract visitors to Semarang's historic destinations, information must be presented in an engaging and accessible manner. These interactive travel guidebooks not only provide basic location data, history, and facilities, but also integrate rich visuals, maps, and potential technological features, making them a relevant solution. One effective form is the pop-up book. According to Fazira & Qohar (2021) Pop-ups contain pieces of paper that appear, move, or rotate when opened and become fully visible when the guidebook is closed, as well as two or three dimensional objects. Pop-ups are inherently three-dimensional and physically interactive, encouraging users to interact with the guidebook in various ways.

In the context of this research, the process of writing, designing, and developing visual content plays a crucial role in the creation of an interactive travel guidebook. Visual design serves not only as an aesthetic aspect, but also as a primary means of effectively

communicating messages, with attention to readability, narrative continuity, and harmony between text and images. Meanwhile, the preparation and writing of the narrative play a central role in maintaining the consistency and quality of information, ensuring the text is easy to understand, informative, and engaging, as well as aligned with the cultural context presented.

Overall, this research focuses on creating an interactive travel guidebook from scratch, which is expected to be an effective information and promotional medium for the city of Semarang. With Semarang as the main setting and Trans Semarang as the connecting element between locations, this guidebook aims to introduce local tourism potential to national and international tourists through an innovative and engaging approach. Therefore, developing this interactive travel guidebook from scratch is a strategic step that integrates tourism information and creativity into a promotional medium that is applicable and has the potential to have a broad impact.

1.2   Statements of the Problem

Based on the background above, the problem formulation in this research and the preparation of this final assignment is as follows:

1.   How is the process of Designing an interactive travel guidebook to Semarang's historical sites via Trans Semarang corridor v access?

2.   How is the feedback on the Interactive travel guidebook to Semarang's historical sites via Trans Semarang corridor v access?

1.3   Research Objectives

The objectives of this research and final assignment are as follows:

1.   To describe the design process of the Interactive travel guidebook to Semarang's historical sites via Trans Semarang corridor v access.

2.   To analyze and evaluate the feedback received on the interactive travel guidebook to Semarang's historical sites via Trans Semarang corridor v access.

1.4   Research Benefits

The advantages of the study are as follows:

1.4.1 Theoretically

This research contributes to developments in the fields of interactive media development, visual communication design, and tourism promotion. Specifically, it deepens understanding of how systematic content design and writing can produce

accurate and cohesive interactive media for destination promotion purposes. The study also presents a model for implementing creative media effectively in conveying information about local wisdom and history.

1.4.2 Practically

This research is expected to provide practical benefits for various parties. For tourists, this guidebook can serve as an informative and engaging guide to discovering the city's leading tourist attractions. For the Semarang City Government, this guidebook can serve as an alternative medium for tourism promotion, thus supporting efforts to develop the regional tourism sector. For students, this work can serve as a reference in developing creative promotional media and understanding the process of systematic content creation and development. Meanwhile, for universities or study programs, this guidebook is a tangible contribution from students in developing products that support cultural promotion, while strengthening the profile of graduates who are adaptive to community needs.

1.5 Output

This final project has produced an interactive travel guidebook titled "Exploring Semarang by Trans Semarang Corridor V" for four tourist destinations: Sam Poo Kong Temple, Lawang Sewu, Mandala Bhakti Museum, and Ranggawarsita Museum. As a tourism promotional product, this book is expected to increase tourist interest, especially those who want to explore the city independently.

The guidebook consists of approximately 60 attractively designed pages. We have included interactive elements such as pop-ups that display additional information and visual surprises to provide a more dynamic reading experience. To reach a wider audience, the book is written in English. However, we also provide access to the Indonesian language version via a barcode located at the end of the page, making it easier for readers who do not understand English.