

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The advancement of digital technology has encouraged the emergence of various innovations in tourism promotion, especially through short films, which are considered effective because they are able to convey information while creating emotional engagement with audiences. Bakti and Marpaung (2024) explain that the use of short films as a marketing strategy can increase public interest and broaden the dissemination of destination-related information through digital platforms. Similarly, Effendy (1986) argues that film, as an audiovisual medium, has an important function in promotional activities because of its ability to deliver messages through attractive visual storytelling. In addition, Wardana, Satria, and Yasa (2025) state that cinematic promotional videos can shape positive audience perceptions through visual quality, composition, and narrative elements, allowing viewers to experience destinations virtually. Therefore, short films have become one of the promising approaches for tourism promotion in the digital era.

This strategy is particularly suitable for areas with strong tourism resources, such as Semarang Regency, which offers diverse tourism attractions including natural destinations, tourism villages, and historical and cultural sites. According to official data published by Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Semarang (2025), the number of domestic tourist visits between January and December 2025 exceeded 6.3 million visits (Tourism Development of Semarang Regency, December 2025), reflecting continuous tourism growth and its contribution to regional economic development. Nevertheless, the growth in tourist arrivals has not been accompanied by equally effective digital promotion across all tourism destinations. Several previous studies indicate that tourism promotion in Semarang Regency continues to face several limitations. Gulo and Pranoto (2025) found that digital promotional activities in the Bukit Cinta Rawa Pening area have not been implemented optimally due to limitations in human resources, restricted budgets, and underutilization of digital platforms to reach broader audiences. Likewise, Widadijo

and Therry (2024) argue that historical tourism promotion in the Semarang area still depends heavily on conventional promotional methods, indicating the necessity for more innovative visual promotional media that align with contemporary audience media consumption patterns. This situation reflects a gap between the existing tourism potential and the effectiveness of current promotional approaches, particularly in maximizing communicative and engaging audiovisual media.

Considering these conditions, there is a need to develop promotional media that not only introduces tourism destinations but also creates emotional connections with audiences through compelling storytelling. According to Budiarto (2011), tourism promotion refers to marketing activities aimed at informing, influencing, persuading audiences, and expanding market reach to increase visitor interest. Therefore, the short film “Leave” was developed as a digital promotional medium featuring two tourism destinations in Semarang Regency, namely Fort Willem I Ambarawa and Rawa Pening. The film adopts a narrative-based storytelling approach by portraying the journey of an individual searching for new experiences as an escape from urban life pressures and eventually discovering meaningful experiences through tourism activities.

In determining the tourism destinations featured in the production of the short film “*Leave*”, Fort Willem I Ambarawa and Rawa Pening were intentionally selected because they represent two distinct tourism categories found in Semarang Regency, namely historical tourism and natural tourism, both of which offer strong visual appeal for audiovisual promotion. Fort Willem I Ambarawa was chosen for its historical value as a Dutch colonial heritage site in Central Java and its distinctive architectural characteristics, which provide educational significance while creating a visually compelling environment suitable for cinematic storytelling (Nurmala & Arafat, 2024). In contrast, Rawa Pening was selected because it is recognized as one of the prominent natural attractions in Semarang Regency, known for its scenic lake landscape surrounded by mountainous views as well as its ecological and economic contributions to local communities. Prawesti, Paramita, Wardana, and Sarja (2022) state that Rawa Pening has considerable potential for further

development as a nature-based tourism destination due to its landscape attractiveness and tourism appeal. The integration of these two destinations enables *Leave* to showcase a broader representation of tourism diversity in Semarang Regency while enhancing the film's visual narrative through the combination of historical and natural tourism elements within a single promotional medium.

In developing promotional strategies, identifying the target audience becomes an essential factor to ensure effective message delivery. Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2017) explain that audience segmentation is a key component of marketing communication because it enables promotional messages to be adjusted according to the characteristics and preferences of the intended audience. The short film "Leave" is intended for a broad audience, especially young adults and working individuals who have interests in travel experiences and destination exploration. The storyline, which depicts an individual experiencing fatigue caused by a stressful work environment, is expected to establish emotional connection and relatability among viewers with similar experiences. Through this approach, the promotion of Fort Willem I Ambarawa and Rawa Pening is expected to become more effective in attracting tourist interest.

To further strengthen promotional message delivery, the short film "Leave" is equipped with English subtitles to extend audience accessibility, particularly for international viewers. The inclusion of subtitles enables information regarding tourism destinations in Semarang Regency to reach wider audiences without language limitations, thereby increasing the effectiveness of international promotion. Moreover, for local viewers, subtitles also support better understanding of dialogues, improve message clarity, and enhance the overall viewing experience. Consequently, subtitles function not only as translation tools but also as supporting elements that reinforce audiovisual communication and expand the impact of tourism promotion.

1.2 Statements of Problem

The following research problems are formulated to ensure that the implementation of this study is conducted with a clear direction and a well-defined focus:

1. How is the pre-production stage carried out in developing the short film “Leave” as a promotional medium for tourist destinations in Semarang?
2. What are the stakeholders’ responses and feedback regarding the short film “Leave” as a promotional medium for tourist destinations in Semarang?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are formulated to provide systematic guidance throughout the research process based on the established research problems. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To explain the pre-production process involved in developing the short film “Leave” as a promotional medium for tourist destinations in Semarang.
2. To examine stakeholder feedback regarding the short film “Leave” as a promotional medium for tourist destinations in Semarang.

1.4 Significances of the Study

To establish clear objectives, this study is expected to provide meaningful contributions in both theoretical and practical aspects. The benefits of this research are as follows:

Theoretically, this study contributes to explaining the pre-production process involved in creating a short film as a tourism promotional medium through the application of the Research and Development (R&D) method. Furthermore, this study is expected to enrich academic discussions regarding the use of audiovisual media and storytelling approaches in tourism promotion, particularly in the development of promotional content through a systematic production process.

Practically, this study provides an innovative approach to promoting tourism destinations by utilizing short films as an audiovisual marketing medium. It also demonstrates the potential effectiveness of short films in attracting audience interest

and incorporates stakeholder feedback as an evaluation component to improve the quality and implementation of audiovisual-based tourism promotion.

1.5 Output

The result of this research is a 17-minute short film entitled “Leave,” which highlights tourist destinations in Semarang Regency, namely Fort Willem I Ambarawa and Rawa Pening Lake. These attractions are presented through a blend of narrative storytelling and visual depiction. The film is uploaded on YouTube as a promotional medium aimed at increasing public awareness and encouraging more tourists to visit these destinations.