

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Film is an audiovisual medium that combines moving images, sound, composition, lighting, and editing to communicate stories, emotions, and meaning to audiences (Brown, 2021). Film also functions as a communication medium capable of conveying information, experiences, and social messages through visual storytelling. With the advancement of digital technology, films can be distributed more widely through various online platforms, making audiovisual content increasingly accessible to audiences.

One form of audiovisual content that continues to grow in the digital era is the short film. Short films are increasingly popular among young audiences, including students, due to their concise storytelling, flexible production process, and easy distribution through digital platforms. Students are also active consumers of digital video content, using audiovisual media not only for entertainment but also as a source of information and learning (Rahman et al., 2022). These characteristics make short films an effective medium for presenting stories closely related to students' everyday experiences (Wawiyah et al., 2023). Since student life is closely connected to various academic and social activities, short films also have the potential to represent the environments and spaces that students frequently use in their daily lives.

Student academic and social activities are no longer limited to formal educational settings. In addition to classrooms and libraries, students frequently utilize urban spaces such as cafés and public areas for studying, group discussions, and social interaction. These practices reflect a shift in how learning and social activities extend beyond formal institutional spaces into everyday urban environments. In this context, urban tourism is understood not merely as activities centered on formal tourist destinations, but as part of everyday urban life where cities function as lived spaces in which daily practices and spatial experiences

intersect (Richards, 2021). According to Koens & Milano (2023), urban tourism, therefore, can be seen as embedded within the urban system, where informal spaces such as cafés, streets, and public areas contribute to shaping the overall experience of the city. As these spaces become increasingly important in students' daily activities, access to information about suitable urban spaces also becomes increasingly necessary.

Based on a preliminary questionnaire distributed to 28 Applied Foreign Language students from the 2023–2025 cohorts, most respondents were only familiar with popular locations frequently featured on social media, while awareness of other potential study spaces in Semarang remained relatively low. The findings also revealed that students primarily rely on social media platforms to obtain information about places for studying, completing assignments, and socializing outside campus. Nevertheless, much of the available content tends to emphasize visual attractiveness rather than presenting the atmosphere, functionality, and lived experience of these spaces.

This condition indicates a gap between students' needs and the type of information commonly available through digital platforms. Therefore, there is a need for a more engaging medium that can represent urban spaces in a meaningful and relatable way. Compared to conventional promotional content, short films can combine visual representation, narrative, and emotional experiences, allowing audiences to gain a deeper understanding of a place and its atmosphere. Through narrative storytelling, locations can be naturally integrated into a story while maintaining audience engagement through characters, conflicts, and emotional development. According Cao et al. (2021) explain that audiovisual storytelling can influence audience engagement and shape perceptions more effectively than informational content alone. Consequently, short films have the potential to help students determine suitable places for studying, discussion, and other activities outside campus while simultaneously introducing urban spaces through relatable experiences.

Based on this issue, this study develops a 40-minute short film entitled “9 Reasons I Didn’t Believe in Us”. The short film combines romance and mystery genres and tells the story of two university students whose relationship develops through a campus project while misunderstandings and anonymous messages create emotional conflict. Throughout the narrative, several urban spaces in Semarang, including cafés, libraries, and public areas, are incorporated as part of the characters’ interactions and experiences. In addition to serving as narrative settings, these locations also function as representations of student social spaces and urban life in Semarang. The completed film is distributed through the YouTube channel “Bahasa Asing Terapan SV Universitas Diponegoro” to increase accessibility and audience reach.

This study employs the Research and Development (R&D) method using the ADDIE model. According to Branch (2009), ADDIE consists of five stages: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, which provide a systematic framework for product development. In this research, the model is used to guide the development process of the short film from initial analysis and story planning to implementation and evaluation. However, the primary focus of this study is the pre-production stage, particularly the development of story concepts, character construction, narrative structure, scriptwriting, and the representation of student social spaces within the film.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the pre-production process in developing the short film “9 Reasons I Didn’t Believe in Us.” According to Alfathoni et al. (2025), pre-production involves activities such as idea development, scriptwriting, story development, visual planning, and production preparation. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to film production studies, particularly in understanding the role of pre-production as a conceptual foundation for creating structured and meaningful audiovisual works. In addition, this research is also expected to serve as a reference for students and aspiring filmmakers in developing short films that are relevant to contemporary student life and urban experiences.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background described above, the research questions in this study are:

1. What is the pre-production process in the story development for the short film “9 Reasons I Didn’t Believe in Us”?
2. How was feedback from target users utilized to evaluate the production of the short film “9 Reasons I Didn’t Believe in Us”?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the pre-production process in the creation of the short film “9 Reasons I Didn’t Believe in Us.”
2. To evaluate feedback from the target audience regarding the creation of the short film “9 Reasons I Didn’t Believe in Us,” as input used to refine the final short film.

1.4 Significance of Study

This study makes an academic contribution by highlighting the importance of pre-production in short film development through the application of the ADDIE model within a Research and Development (R&D) framework. The findings indicate that activities such as audience analysis, story development, script writing, storyboard preparation, character creation, and production planning play a crucial role in supporting a more structured filmmaking process. Practically, this study can serve as a reference for students and aspiring filmmakers in understanding the importance of thorough preparation before production. Furthermore, the development of the short film "9 Reasons I Didn't Believe in Us" demonstrates how short films can be used not only as an audiovisual storytelling medium but also as a medium to present students' experiences and introduce public spaces in Semarang through visual storytelling.

1.5 Research Output

The output of this study is a 40-minute short film entitled “9 Reasons I Didn’t Believe in Us”, which combines romance and mystery genres to tell the story of Alsa and Arka, two university students whose relationship develops through a campus project but is disrupted by misunderstandings caused by anonymous messages. The film explores themes of trust, communication, perception, and personal growth, while incorporating student-oriented public spaces in Semarang such as cafés, libraries, and other social spaces as part of its narrative setting. The film aims to present a realistic representation of student life while also introducing alternative spaces that support academic and social activities. The completed film was published on the YouTube channel “Bahasa Asing Terapan SV Universitas Diponegoro”, making it accessible to a wider audience as both an audiovisual work and a medium for promoting student-related public spaces in Semarang.