

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors and plays a significant role in the global economy. According to Sutono and Meitasari (2021), tourism is an activity facilitated by institutions such as the community, entrepreneurs, and the government. The tourism industry not only contributes to economic growth but also creates jobs, increases community income, and promotes cultural exchange and understanding between nations. Indonesia, with its extraordinary natural and cultural wealth, has great potential to become one of the world's leading tourist destinations. Despite this potential, tourism in Semarang City still faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of promotion and innovation in attracting tourists, especially the younger generation. The younger generation tends to be more interested in destinations that offer unique and interactive experiences, and information presented through attractive and easily accessible media.

Semarang City, the capital of Central Java Province, is rich in culture and history. Historic sites such as Lawang Sewu, Tugu Muda Simpang Lima, Klenteng Sam Poo Kong, Blenduk Church, and Marba Building in Kota Lama are silent witnesses to the city's long historical journey. Each place holds stories and cultural values, making them a great potential for educational and cultural tourism (Amrullah & Tohir, 2017). However, despite having many interesting historical sites, public interest, especially among the younger generation, in exploring and understanding local tourism remains relatively low. This phenomenon can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of engaging promotion, conventional methods of teaching history, and changes in entertainment patterns among the younger generation who tend to favor digital technology and social media.

Based on the data from Semarang Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in 2020 and 2021, Semarang City, the capital of Central Java Province, experienced a

significant decrease in tourist visits. In 2020, domestic tourists numbered 3,260,303 but this figure dropped to 2,663,684 in 2021. Similarly, international tourists declined dramatically from 6,628 in 2020 to just 77 in 2021. Despite the wealth of historical and cultural sites such as Lawang Sewu, Kota Lama, and Klenteng Sam Poo Kong, which hold immense educational and cultural tourism potential, the interest in local history, particularly among the younger generation, remains relatively low. The interest of the younger generation in local history remains relatively low. According to a study conducted by Astuti, Idris, and Sholeh (2020) in the *Kalpataru* journal, students at SMA Negeri 15 Palembang showed only a moderate interest in the history and culture of Palembang. The study revealed that the majority of students had an interest level categorized as "fair," with none of them reaching the "good" or "very good" categories. This indicates a lack of engagement among the younger generation in understanding local history and culture, which may be attributed to various factors, such as unengaging history teaching methods and a shift in interests toward digital technology and social media. This decline in tourism interest can be attributed to several factors, including insufficient engaging promotions, conventional history teaching methods, and a shift in entertainment preferences among the younger generation, who are increasingly inclined towards digital technology and social media.

To address these challenges, an innovative and engaging approach is needed so that the local history of Semarang City can be accepted and appreciated by the younger generation. One media that has great potential in conveying information in an educational and entertaining way is comics. Rahmi and Rahmati (2020) define comics as cartoons that depict characters playing out a story and are a form of illustrated news, consisting of various situations and sometimes humorous. Comics have strong visual appeal and can tell stories in an easily understood and engaging manner. Through the combination of images and text, comics can bring history and culture to life in a more interactive and captivating way. Various studies have shown that visualization through comics can enhance readers' memory and understanding, especially among children and teenagers, as cited from the research by Santoso (2024) titled "Perancangan Motion

Comic Sebagai Media Promosi Pariwisata Kota Lama Semarang" and research by Putra and Yasa (2019) titled "Komik sebagai sarana komunikasi promosi dalam media sosial". According to Daryanto (2013), students tend to dislike textbooks, especially those that do not include engaging pictures and illustrations. Empirical evidence shows that students prefer books that are illustrated, colorful, and visualized in realistic or cartoon forms rather than black text that fills most of the pages.

The use of comics as a tourism promotion media can be an effective strategy to attract the interest of the younger generation. According to Ambaryani and Airlanda (2017), comics are a form of visual communication media that has the power to convey information in a popular and easily understood manner. Comics can convey information about tourist spots, history, culture, and local cuisine in an enjoyable way. Additionally, comics can also be used to educate the public about the importance of preserving cultural heritage and the environment. By developing a comic focusing on Semarang City's tourism like Kota Lama Semarang, Lawang Sewu, Tugu Muda, Simpang Lima Semarang, and Sam Poo Kong Temple, it is expected to increase the knowledge and interest of the younger generation in local tourist destinations. This comic would not only serve as a promotional tool but also as an educational media that can foster awareness and appreciation of Semarang City's cultural and historical wealth. Furthermore, increased tourist interest in local destinations is also expected to positively impact the regional economy through increased tourist visits and income from the tourism sector.

Overall, developing comics as a promotional media for Semarang City tourism is an innovative step that can help address challenges in the tourism sector and maximize the region's potential to attract more tourists. Thus, it is hoped that this comic can contribute to advancing Semarang City's tourism and enhancing appreciation for local cultural and historical wealth. Through this approach, it is hoped that the younger generation would not only gain entertainment from the comics but also acquire knowledge about Semarang City's history and culture in an enjoyable way. According to Ntobuo, Arbie & Amali, (2018), comics, as a learning media serve as a tool for

effectively conveying instructional messages and as a visual communication learning media. This comic is designed to be more than just an entertaining read, it is a bridge to connect the younger generation with their cultural and historical heritage. Thus, this comic not only functions as an entertainment media but also as an effective educational tool, encouraging the younger generation to care more about and appreciate the cultural and historical heritage around them. Moreover, with increased appreciation for local history, it is also hoped that there would be an improvement in the preservation and appreciation of historical sites in Semarang City.

Research and Development (R&D) is one of the important approaches in creating and developing innovative new products. One of the models often used in the R&D method is the model developed by Borg and Gall (1983). The Borg and Gall model offers a systematic and structured framework for effective product development, which includes various stages ranging from identifying needs, developing prototypes, field testing, to disseminating the final product.

In this modern era, technological and scientific advancements have driven the need for continuous innovation in various fields, including education, industry, healthcare, and information technology. Improving product and service quality through the R&D approach is crucial to ensuring sustainability and competitiveness in the global market. The Borg and Gall R&D model, with its clear stages, provides a structured guide for developing products that are not only innovative but also effectively meet user needs. Each stage in this method offers opportunities for continuous evaluation and improvement, ultimately producing high-quality products that meet user needs.

Therefore, this study used the Borg and Gall R&D method to develop the comic book with the aim of enhancing the awareness of historical tourism destinations in Semarang City in an engaging manner. This study is expected to make a significant contribution to the promotion of historical tourism in Semarang, particularly among the younger generation who are more interested in visual media such as comics. Through this approach, the comic book is expected to present historical information in

a more engaging and captivating way, thereby increasing public interest and knowledge about Semarang City's historical and cultural wealth. Additionally, this study also aimed to test the effectiveness of comics as a promotional media, with the hope of serving as a model for developing similar products in the future.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

According to the discussion above, the writer writes the following problem formulation:

1. How to create an English comic book as a promotion media for Semarang historical sites using the Research & Development method?
2. What are the stakeholder's feedback about the English book to promote Semarang historical sites?

1.3 Objective of the Research

There are two objectives of the study as follows.

1. To understand how to create an English comic book to introduce Semarang historical sites.
2. To understand the stakeholder's feedback about the English comic book, so the improvement can be made to the work.

1.4 Advantage of the Research

The study is significant to be conducted. It has two contributions, each contribution is explained as follows.

1. To provide an information source for tourists that introduces understanding of historical tourist sites in Semarang City.
2. To develop an alternative promotional media that can offer interesting and in-depth information.

1.5 Output

The output of this research is a comic that combines adventure with historical tourist sites in Semarang City, providing engaging and in-depth information about the local history and culture. This comic would not only serve as a comprehensive information source for tourists to understand and appreciate the historical values of the city but also as an effective promotional media that can increase visits to these historical sites.