

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Located in Central Java, Semarang City is home to a rich blend of cultural and traditional acculturation, particularly in Pekojan Village. This village holds significant historical, cultural, and religious value, as it played an important role in the spread of Islam in the Semarang area. Surrounded by various ethnic groups such as Arabs, Koja (Indian Muslims), Chinese, and Javanese Pekojan Village stands out with its unique character and is often referred to as a multiethnic community.

Pekojan Village carries deep historical significance that shapes the cultural identity of its residents. According to Sonora.id (2022), the name "Pekojan" derives from the word Koja, referring to a settlement inhabited by Indian and Pakistani ethnic groups who migrated and began spreading Islam in the region around the 18th century. Their arrival sparked a process of cultural acculturation in Pekojan Village, influencing not only the religious development, especially the spread of Islam but also traditions and daily cultural practices (Wahjoerini, 2019). The majority of the community in Pekojan is multiethnic, with approximately 80% being of Koja descent and local residents, 50% of whom identify as Koja and another 20% as Chinese or Chinese-Indonesian (Wahjoerini & Handayani, 2020, as cited in Anityas & Ikaputra, 2021). Economically, the village thrives through trade, which is evident in the many shop houses along its streets, including those selling sewing machines, fabrics, and other goods.

The arrival of these ethnic groups greatly influenced the cultural and religious landscape of Pekojan Village. One of the most significant historical landmarks is the Jami' Pekojan Mosque. According to Kurniawati (2024), this mosque is one of the oldest in Semarang and has deep historical roots. It is

believed to have been established during the era of Ki Ageng Pandan Arang I, who used it as a center for teaching Islam in the region. Initially, the mosque began as a small prayer room (mushola) and was later expanded after a Koja merchant donated land in 1887 CE. The mosque is located in what was once a predominantly Muslim neighborhood.

Over time, the Pekojan area became even more diverse with the arrival of other ethnic groups, including the Chinese. The Jami' Pekojan Mosque was later renovated to accommodate more worshippers and strengthen its structure. Beyond being a religious site, the mosque serves as a community hub where people from various ethnic backgrounds come together to interact, deliberate, and discuss issues concerning the Pekojan community (Kurniawati, 2024).

Several distinctive traditions are still observed at the Jami' Pekojan Mosque, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. These include the serving of Indian porridge, communal worship during the Night of I'tikaf (Lailatul Qadar), and graveside pilgrimages. One of the most notable traditions is the preparation of Indian porridge (Bubur India) for iftar, shared among the multiethnic community. This dish, which originates from the Gujarati culture, has long been a favorite for breaking the fast (Farasonalia, 2021). According to Maziyah, Alamsyah, and Widodo (2021), this tradition dates back more than a century, beginning with the Indian traders who had settled in the village.

The unique traditions of Jami' Pekojan Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan, such as the serving of Indian porridge that has been passed down for more than a century, the routine I'tikaf worship on the night of Lailatul Qadar, as well as the grave pilgrimage to one of the important figures and others that have become typical customs, are an integral part of the cultural heritage in Semarang City. However, the lack of documentation on the origins, development and historical significance of these traditions raises concerns about the loss of this valuable information. Cultural heritage documentation plays an important role in saving knowledge and traditions that are vulnerable to being lost over time.

According to Kusnandar, K., Samson, C. M. S., and Rukmana, E. N. (2022), through this process, factual and procedural informants about a cultural work can be recorded and compiled into a useful guide for future generations. In addition, documentation helps raise public awareness of the importance of cultural values to be preserved. The rapid pace of modernization is shaping many changes that make a significant difference to traditional cultural values and practices. The unique traditions of Jami' Pekojan Mosque form an identity that needs to be maintained and preserved for generations to come. The steps that can be integrated through technology can reach the local community as well as a wider outside community so that through the documentary film it becomes one of the preservation efforts in documenting the cultural heritage and traditions that exist in the Pekojan Village area of Semarang city, especially in the cultural values and traditions of the Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang.

Film documentaries can be an effective medium in recording unique traditions in the holy month of Ramadan at the Jami' Pekojan Mosque. Through direct interviews asked by authors to the caretaker of Jami' Pekojan Mosque, the availability of archives in the form of images is not much. This allows changes to the loss of traces of tradition, culture and history that are unique to the Jami' Pekojan Mosque due to the times that affect all conditions ranging from generation and environment. According to Eisenstadt (2021), in the context of preserving traditions and culture, documentary film acts as a window that can provide an overview of society at a certain time, although it is often influenced by the interests of the film maker. Suparman, Madeamin, and Beta (2018) also mentioned that documentary films are one of the steps to preserve local culture and traditions. The making of a documentary film for the traditions of the holy month of Ramadan at the Jami' Pekojan Mosque is expected to be a means of recording information on developing traditions in order to become a preservation effort for future generations. Rachmat and Abdurahman (2019) stated that documentary films are also an effective educational tool for communities and

people who are the younger generation so that they can learn about history, culture, and traditions through a movie and create a sense of love in it. Through good documentation with documentary films, the community and future generations can learn and easily access cultural heritage and traditions, especially during the holy month of Ramadan at the Jami' Pekojan Mosque. This documentary film of the traditions of the holy month of Ramadan is expected to be an archival media for the future. The film is carefully produced to present every important moment, from traditional rituals and worship to social interactions in an interesting and informative way. The documentary film not only showcase the traditions, but also bring to life the atmosphere and meaning behind each practice. The final documentary film is expected to serve as a reference in the future, making it possible for communities and generations to understand and appreciate the cultural heritage and traditions built during the holy month of Ramadan, while encouraging the value of preservation in a broader context.

## **1.2 Problem Formulations**

Based on the background of this research, the problem formulation is as follows:

1. How is the post-production stage in making a documentary film about tradition and culture at Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang?
2. How is the audience's perception of the documentary film about tradition and culture at Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research include:

1. Understanding the post-production process of making a documentary film about tradition and culture at Jami' Pekojan Mosque in Semarang through an explanation of each stage. This research is expected to provide insight into post-production techniques and procedures.

2. Identifying audience responses through a documentary film on traditions and culture at the Jami' Pekojan Mosque in Semarang. The identification is made with the hope of gaining an understanding of the audience's perception of information, appreciation and input that can be used in improving the quality of documentary films in the future.

#### **1.4 Significant of the Research**

The benefits of this project are as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefits
  - a. To provide deeper insight into the culture and traditions of local communities.
  - b. To enrich literature related to religious studies and historical values.
  - c. To serve as a reference and academic source for future research related to cultural preservation through documentary media, especially in the post-production stage.
2. Practical Benefits
  - a. To document in detail unique traditions carried out during the month of Ramadan at Masjid Jami' Pekojan through a systematic post-production
  - b. To function as an educational medium for introducing and instilling awareness among younger generations in the Pekojan community about the importance of preserving Ramadan traditions.
  - c. To serve as medium for promoting and preserving the Ramadan traditions and culture developed at Masjid Jami' Pekojan, Semarang
  - d. To introduce the richness of cultural values contained within to a wider audience through engaging audiovisual media.

## 1.5 Output

The output of this research preparation is a documentary film with the title *The Hidden Soul of Pekojan* is a documentary with a duration of 16 minutes and 46 seconds. The making of this documentary film aims to briefly review the history of the traditions and culture developed in one of the historic buildings in the Pekojan Village area, namely the Jami' Pekojan Mosque in Semarang. In addition, another goal of making this documentary film is expected to be one of the sources of knowledge for the next generation of the management of the Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang and the general public to continue to maintain existing traditions and culture and continue to be developed so as not to be eroded by the times due to the lack of existing documentation from previous years. The documentary film of *The Hidden Soul of Pekojan*, gives a glimpse of Pekojan Village, telling one of the buildings in the form of the Jami' Pekojan Mosque of Semarang as evidence of the history of the entry of Islamic civilization in the city of Semarang as well as the traditions and culture that have developed to this day.