

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Semarang, the capital city of Central Java Province has been one of popular city for its tourism, the city has many potential tourist destinations, such as Curug Lawe nature tourism that provides the beauty of the Waterfall, 3D museums Kota Lama that provide image-related works as educational tourism, Lawang Sewu which is a historical building that used to be the office of the Dutch railway company, Tugu Muda which was erected to commemorate the Five Days battle in Semarang (Daniswari, 2022). There are also historical buildings of a religious nature such as the Sam Poo Kong Temple and Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery, which was the first monastery to spread Buddhism in Java.

According to Camilleri (2018), tourism encompasses a variety of types, including cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, historical tourism, and religious tourism, each serving to different motivations and experiences.. Each component has its own goals and benefits in order to achieve a goal to introduce to the outside world about a value that exists in that place. With this variety of tourism, it is hoped that it will provide a variety of choices for tourists as a place to explore various aspects of a country. And the one of popular tourism in Semarang is historical tourism to attract people.

Historical tourism is one aspect of cultural tourism, which is a forum for tourists to get to know the culture of a place or event. The purpose of this historical tourism is to introduce the existence that history is a valuable heritage and an asset of a city to be visited by tourists. In general, historical tourism is related to cemeteries, places of worship, old cities, historical buildings during the

colonial period, and also other buildings (Wardani & Vanel, 2024). One of the historical attractions in Semarang is Watugong Buddhagaya Monastery.

According to Yubi (2014), Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong itself is one of the religious-based historical tourist attractions in the city of Semarang, located in the Banyumanik area with a land area of around 2.25 hectares. The establishment of Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong in Semarang in 1955 is directly and significantly related to the revival of Buddhism in Indonesia. The impetus for its establishment came after the Vesak celebration at Borobudur in 1955, where the wisdom and personality of Bhikkhu Ashin Jinarakhita greatly inspired a prominent Buddhist landlord in Semarang, Goei Thwan Ling a.k.a Sutopo.

But over time, this place is also used as a religious-based historical tourist spot because the building structure of the Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery itself has Chinese and Thai architectures which make this place more interesting to be visited by tourists who want to know the history of the monastery. And until now, there are still many new developments in the Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery to further develop tourism. Due to the lack of marketing through technology, this place is still rarely visited by many people. Therefore, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is very important to promote for the temple.

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an important component of cultural conservation preservation. ICTs are used in the context of cultural conservation and launch the transformation of cultural heritage archives and digitalitation. However, The use of social media and ICT educational applications plays a role in supporting the distribution of cultural knowledge, the use of ICT opens the door for the promotion of cultural assets through the development of cultural databases and through wider online platforms (Krisnanik et al., 2024). Promotional media plays an important role in expanding the reach to audiences, both locally and globally. The promotional video content is disseminated through various digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram. Research by Ratna and Saputri (2023), this indicates that the use of digital media

is an effective strategy to introduce local cultural wealth to a wider community. Culture-based tourism, supported by appropriate digital promotional media, contributes significantly to spreading local values, increasing appreciation of local culture, and has the potential to have a positive economic impact on the surrounding community.

Various information such as activities, photos, videos, and icons of a region can be promoted through social media, tourism websites, and other digital platforms to attract tourists from various regions. Therefore, the development of culture-based tourism is a very potential opportunity, and the use of digital promotional media in this modern era is very important to optimise this potential by increasing the exposure and attractiveness of local cultural tourism destinations in the eyes of the wider public (Sugiyarto et al., 2018).

From several interviews or visits, there are still many people who do not know that Watugong Vihara Semarang is a tourist attraction that can be visited by all groups, some parties say that they only know from Google Maps. However, with limited access to the market for the general public, so that's why this place is rarely visit. According to the visitor data in the last 3 months, it is also still very rare to come for a tour or study visit. In other words, Watugong Monastery must have an initial platform or container to market to the outside world using this interactive web which will later be marketed by the Google Platform by paying for hosting for a year in order to maximise the marketing of this tourist spot.

Limitations in terms of marketing or branding of Watugong Monastery are still very few or minimal, compared to other historical tours such as Sam Poo Kong where the place has been widely exposed to the wider media such as web information, marketing videos via YouTube, and also through Instagram. It is inversely proportional to Watugong Monastery which still lacks marketing due to the inability to use media marketing to expand its reach to a wider audience, especially through the web in the form of complete information with interesting designs in it. To address this issue, the Research and Development (R&D) method

will be employed to design, produce, and evaluate a digital promotional product developed to enhance the visibility of Buddhagaya Watugong Monastery in the digital tourism landscape.

1.2 Statement of Problem

According to the background and description previously provided, the research process can be stated as follows :

1. How is the process of creating a web for marketing media for Watugong Buddhagaya Monastery?
2. How is the feedback from the stakeholder and general public of the interactive website “*www.watugongsemarang.my.id*”?

1.3 Research Objective

The Objectives of this research can be seen as follows :

1. To explain the process related to the creation of an interactive web related to tourism information of Watugong Buddhagaya Monastery.
2. To obtain and analyze the visitors and staff or stakeholders feedback on Vihara Buddhagaya Watugong interactive website.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically, academically, and practically, as follows:

1. Theoretically

This research aims to expand academic discourse in the fields of tourism, information technology, and digital-based media. The creation of this interactive

website can be a reference for further research that focuses on the development of tourism promotion media with digital media.

2. Academically

This research makes a significant contribution to interdisciplinary knowledge by integrating concepts from the fields of tourism studies, digital media production, and communication science. This research can serve as an academic example for students and researchers exploring effective strategies for cultural tourism promotion using interactive websites that are designed to be as engaging as possible.

3. Practically

The interactive website developed in this project serves as an information platform for visiting tourists with the aim of effectively introducing Watugong Monastery. The website uses engaging presentations to raise public awareness, foster appreciation that cultural tourism is important as knowledge, and attract interest in the monastery as a significant tourist destination and build potential.

1.5 Output

The output from this final project is an interactive website called “*www.watugongsemarang.my.id*” with a variety of information and news that includes audiovisuals that make the content can be more enjoyable. By providing complete information, this website help Watugong Monastery can be more recognized by the public.