CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Traditions and Culture

Tradition refers to activities that are carried out repeatedly within a community, gradually evolving into customs or religious rituals, and passed down from one generation to the next. Muhaimin (2020), citing Funk and Wagnalls, explains that tradition consists of knowledge and practices transmitted through habitual action. In the context of Islam, traditions include repeated behaviors or practices carried out by Muslims in their everyday lives. Barth (as cited in Muhaimin, 2016) argues that a practice can be considered an Islamic tradition if the person performing it believes that their actions reflect an Islamic spirit.

Taylor (as cited in Basrowi, 2005) defines culture as a complex set of knowledge, beliefs, morals, customs, laws, and skills that can be learned by humans as members of a society. Culture serves as a shared system of knowledge that many people accept as a framework for planning, acting, and creating works to fulfill the needs of a civilized society. It encompasses values, norms, beliefs, art, and various other forms of communal expression. Thohir (2013) adds that culture not only reflects local wisdom but also has the power to shape public thinking and everyday life. Tradition and culture are interrelated, each influencing the other, forming unwritten societal norms that are widely accepted as proper and good. Both are products of the communities that uphold them.

2.2 Pekojan Village Semarang

Located in a village within the Purwodinatan Sub-district of Semarang City, this historic area is known as a settlement for Muslim communities of Indian descent. The name "Pekojan" comes from the term "Koja," referring to Muslim traders from Gujarat, India, who began settling on the northern coast of Java in the 18th century. Koja group arrived via maritime trade routes, bringing with them a strong influence on Islamic culture and teachings. They established their community around the Kali Semarang which was an important transportation route

at the time and gradually formed an independent community with a distinct cultural identity. Their activities extended beyond trade to include social and religious practices that laid the foundation for the development of the area. This community made significant contributions not only to the economic growth of the region but also to shaping the Islamic identity of the people of Semarang. Over time, the area became a clear example of the interaction and integration between migrants and local residents.

Besides the ethnic Koja community, the area is also home to Arab, Chinese, and Javanese populations, making it a strong example of cultural diversity within Indonesian urban settings. Rini (2020) highlights that the interactions among these groups have led to a unique form of cultural blending, which can be seen in various elements such as local architecture, cuisine, and everyday habits. The community values harmonious neighbourly relations and cultural tolerance, which play a vital role in their social life. Nevertheless, these social dynamics face challenges, particularly due to modernization and economic pressures in urban environments. A shift from collective values toward individualism is beginning to appear, especially among younger residents. Unfortunately, visual and narrative documentation of these changing dynamics remains limited. In this regard, ethnographic methods using media, like documentary films, offer a promising approach to capturing and conveying the complex socio-cultural realities of the area.

The area holds an important place in the history of Islam in Semarang City. Since the 18th century, the Koja community has established the Jami' Pekojan Mosque, which serves as both a place of worship and a center for Islamic propagation and remains actively used today. According to Fardianto (2020), the mosque functions not only for prayer but also as a hub for educational and social activities that involve diverse community groups. During the month of Ramadan, the mosque regularly hosts events such as communal breaking of the fast, distribution of Indian porridge, and i'tikaf, a spiritual retreat where worshippers stay in the mosque during the last ten nights of Ramadan to engage in worship and reflection, all of which nurture spiritual values and foster social bonds. These

customs are preserved by the Koja community as part of their Islamic cultural heritage passed down through generations. Furthermore, the presence of graves belonging to religious leaders around the mosque makes the area a significant pilgrimage site that reinforces the spiritual identity of the local population. Despite its rich historical and religious significance, Pekojan's contribution to the Islamic heritage of the region has yet to be fully captured and presented through thorough visual documentation.

2.3 Jami' Pekojan Mosque as Cultural Heritage

The Jami' Pekojan Mosque was established in 1878 by Sheikh Latief, a leader of the Koja community from Gujarat, India, as a response to the Dutch East Indies government's policy of racial segregation. Initially, the mosque functioned both as a cemetery and a place of worship for Muslims in Semarang. In 1892, the mosque underwent renovations incorporating Chinese architectural influences, visible in the decorative elements and the pulpit, while key features like the marble flooring, teak pillars, doors, and stained-glass windows remained intact. Today, the mosque is recognized as a protected cultural heritage site, showcasing a strong blend of cultures through its architectural style and the Chinese inscriptions displayed at the entrance. This unique combination offers visitors a rich religious and historical experience infused with Middle Eastern cultural nuances amid the urban environment of Semarang City (Interview with Mr. Lukman Hakim, April 12, 2025).

Beyond its primary function as a place of worship, the Jami' Pekojan Mosque serves as a central hub for social and cultural activities within Semarang's Muslim community. In addition to the five daily prayers, the mosque regularly hosts religious recitations, discussions, and various community events (Damanik, 2025). This active involvement fosters strong social bonds among residents from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Koja, Arab, Chinese, and Javanese. Such harmonious coexistence has led to the emergence of a unique cultural blend visible in everyday life, influencing local architecture, cuisine, and social customs. The mosque stands as a symbol of cross-cultural unity and tolerance, embodying a spirit of neighborliness amid the diverse and pluralistic environment of the city.

During Ramadan, Masjid Jami Pekojan transforms into a vibrant center of religious and social activities. Besides serving as the venue for tarawih prayers, it also hosts iftar gatherings featuring a distinctive dish known as Indian Porridge, a cultural legacy of the Koja community from Gujarat (Maziyah et al., 2017). Traditionally, the porridge is prepared with spices such as cinnamon, ginger, galangal, lemongrass, and vegetables like carrots and celery. It is cooked over a wood fire in a large cauldron for around three hours, using approximately 20 kilograms of rice daily. The porridge is then distributed to hundreds of worshippers, maintaining a long-standing tradition that strengthens solidarity and a strong sense of community among local residents. Through these communal events, values of unity and mutual support continue to be passed down, reinforcing the mosque's role as a vital center of life for the Pekojan Muslim community.

A unique tradition observed during Ramadan at this mosque is the distribution of Indian Porridge at iftar. This dish is a cultural legacy from the Koja community of Gujarat. The porridge is prepared using traditional spices such as cinnamon, ginger, galangal, lemongrass, along with vegetables like carrots and celery. It is cooked over a wood fire in a large cauldron for approximately three hours, utilizing around 20 kilograms of rice daily. The porridge is then shared with hundreds of worshippers, serving as a tradition that reinforces solidarity and a strong sense of community among its members.

Jami' Pekojan Mosque is also a place for i'tikaf, particularly during the final ten nights of Ramadan, as a means to seek the sacred night of Lailatul Qadar. I'tikaf is a recommended sunnah practice intended to bring one closer to Allah. Moreover, the mosque grounds include a tomb complex that acts as a pilgrimage site for the local community. Among the notable graves is that of Syarifah Fatimah bint Husain Alaydrus, believed to be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This tomb serves as a site for prayer and seeking blessings from the surrounding residents (Al-Mahdi, 2020). The presence of this tomb enhances both the spiritual and historical significance of the Jami' Pekojan Mosque. Through i'tikaf and pilgrimage to the tombs, the community is able to deepen their faith and reinforce their spiritual connection with their forebears.

2.4 Documentary Film

Documentary films function as an audio-visual medium designed to present factual information and social realities in an impartial and educational way. Their main objective is to dispel misunderstandings and highlight traditions as valuable cultural assets worthy of preservation. What sets documentaries apart is their use of authentic visual footage, limited narration, and a focus on delivering clear and informative content. They generally follow a coherent storyline that starts with an introduction, develops through a conflict, and ends with a conclusion, enabling them to effectively communicate messages and engage audiences. As such, documentaries play a vital role in safeguarding culture and conveying traditional values (Purwanto, 2021).

In addition to being educational tools that make information more appealing and easier to grasp through visual storytelling, documentary film also acts as cultural archives. They capture and preserve endangered traditions, providing future generations with opportunities to understand their ancestral history and cultural roots. This underscores the critical importance of archival efforts, which involve the collection, storage, and preservation of cultural and historical materials to maintain a community's heritage and ensure the continuity of a nation's legacy (Mutiara, 2020).

By combining sound and imagery, documentary film offers a broader and more immersive form of cultural documentation compared to text or photos alone. Their dynamic presentation and accessibility in today's digital environment attract younger audiences, fostering a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage and motivating ongoing preservation efforts (Mentari & Syaputra, 2024). As digital media that vividly depict real-life scenarios, documentaries are especially effective in recording and communicating enduring cultural values and traditions within society. Through compelling narration and visuals, these videos make cultural messages more understandable and relatable across diverse audiences. In particular, documentary films play an essential role in documenting and educating about the rich historical, architectural, and traditional heritage of Pekojan Village such as the unique practice of serving Indian porridge during Ramadan while also

raising awareness about the need to preserve and transmit Pekojan's local wisdom to future generations.

From these studies, it can be concluded that documentary films are an effective medium in preserving culture and tradition, and can be an interesting educational tool for the public.

2.4.1 The Urgency of Cultural Heritage Documentation

Modernization is a major factor contributing to the decline of local cultures and traditions. Advances in technology and the growing influence of globalization have led people to adopt more modern lifestyles, often at the expense of traditional customs. According to Puspita and Wahyudi (2020), the diminishing interest among younger generations in preserving ancestral traditions has accelerated the disappearance of many cultural practices. The widespread influx of foreign cultural influences further hastens the erosion of local values, gradually pushing indigenous culture out of everyday community life. Consequently, the nation's cultural heritage, which forms a key part of its identity, faces increasing threats, particularly due to insufficient efforts in documentation and preservation. This trend is evident in the low participation of youth in traditional arts and customs, signaling a fragile continuation and regeneration of local cultural heritage (Puspita & Wahyudi, 2020).

Cultural preservation efforts argely depend on documentation, which acts as a means to capture, maintain, and transmit cultural aspects to future generations. Faisal and Rifa'i (2019) emphasize that documentation allows forgotten traditions to be visualized and narrated, ensuring they remain accessible and understandable for those who come after. Without organized recording and preservation, numerous cultural components face the danger of vanishing. Amidst the fast pace of global changes, the role of documentation is becoming more critical and urgent (Faisal & Rifa'i, 2019).

The archiving of culture, both visually and historically, holds a crucial role in sustaining the continuity of traditions amid the pressures of modernization. Through mediums such as video recordings, written texts, and audio documentation, communities are able to revisit and interpret cultural legacies from

the past. According to Sari and Hidayati (2021), cultural archives serve not only as historical records but also as tools to revive traditions that are at risk of fading away. By implementing systematic archiving, various cultural elements can become valuable resources for education, academic research, and international promotion. These archives not only enhance people's awareness of their cultural heritage but also highlight the significance of local culture within the broader context of global civilization. Thus, safeguarding traditions through archiving is a vital means of ensuring cultural continuity and fostering the growth of the nation's cultural identity (Sari & Hidayati, 2021).

2.4.2 Title of Documentary Film

The title *"The Hidden Soul of Pekojan"* was chosen because it best reflects the essence of this research and documentary production, which aims to uncover the hidden layers of Kampung Pekojan in the city of Semarang. As one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, Pekojan holds a rich cultural legacy from Arab, Indian, and Malay communities that once coexisted in the area. Unfortunately, these cultural assets have not been widely recognized by mainstream media or passed down to younger generations.

Amid urban development and shifting social dynamics, many of Pekojan's historical narratives and cultural values are beginning to fade. The phrase *"hidden soul"* is used to represent the depth of traditions, local stories, and communal identities that persist yet often remain unseen. This documentary is intended to serve as a medium to revive public awareness of the importance of preserving local heritage, while also engaging audiences through a visual approach that is emotional, reflective, and inspiring.

2.5 Pre-Production

The first phase in making a documentary film is called pre-production, which serves as a critical foundation for the overall success of the project. During this stage, detailed strategic planning is conducted to ensure that all elements of the production process run effectively and according to plan. Activities in pre-production include defining the main theme, conducting thorough research, choosing sources, drafting the script, and organizing the shooting schedule.

Additionally, technical preparations such as budgeting, selecting filming locations, and assembling the production team are carefully planned. A key part of this phase is carrying out in-depth research, as the documentary's quality relies heavily on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information gathered. Proper planning in pre-production helps facilitate a smoother and more focused production process (Purnama & Kurniawan, 2020).

2.5.1 Conceptualizing a Documentary Film

The first step in creating a documentary film is the conceptualization phase. During this stage, the original idea is shaped into a clear concept that carries a specific message, viewpoint, and goal. While a documentary must accurately reflect reality, it should also be presented in an engaging manner to educate and motivate viewers.

2.5.2 Research

Research plays a vital role in documentary production to guarantee the accuracy of facts and the depth of the information presented. This process includes reviewing existing literature, conducting field observations, and interviewing key sources. The collected data serves as the basis for developing the storyline and crafting the script (Ramadan et al., 2020). Furthermore, this phase involves mapping out locations, identifying the main subject, and gaining insight into the social and cultural context of the topic. Comprehensive research enables producers to create content that is both relevant and authentic while minimizing the risk of misrepresentation.

2.5.3 Planning

Once the research phase is finished, the next stage is planning, which involves creating the treatment, storyboard, production timeline, and budget. According to Reid and Sanders (2021), thorough planning is essential for ensuring a smooth production process and achieving a high-quality final documentary. During this phase, the team arranges the shooting schedule, selects the crew, prepares the required equipment, and secures location permits. Additionally, a preliminary narrative structure is established to guide the production in a more organized and goal-oriented manner.

2.6 Production

Following the planning phase, the production stage centers on the technical execution, which includes capturing images and audio as outlined in the plan. Nugroho (2025) explain that this phase involves operating cameras, audio devices, and other necessary equipment to film scenes based on the script. It is crucial for documentary filming to be truthful and authentically depict reality. Maintaining a positive rapport between the crew and interviewees is vital to obtaining accurate information and deeper insights. Furthermore, factors such as lighting, sound quality, and location choice are carefully managed to create an atmosphere that enhances the film's content.

2.6.1 Type of Shot

The type of shot plays an important role in documentary film production as it influences how the subject or object is displayed to viewers. Astuti, Nugroho, and Lestari (2020) explain that different shot types such as close-up, medium shot, long shot, and extreme close-up serve distinct purposes, including highlighting details, setting the mood, or offering various contextual views. Choosing the right type of shot can enhance the emotional impact and effectiveness of the documentary's message. In addition to the main footage, the use of B-roll is also essential to enrich the visual storytelling. The proper use of B-roll not only makes a video more engaging but also increases the audience's emotional involvement, provided that the additional footage is based on relevant content and appropriate timing (Huber et al., 2019).

2.6.2 Camera Angle

Camera angle describes the placement and orientation of the camera in relation to the subject being filmed. According to Prasetyo (2019), camera angles play a significant role in expressing perspective and visual meaning. Common angles used are eye level, high angle, low angle, and bird's eye view. Selecting an appropriate camera angle can produce dramatic effects and guide the viewer's attention to specific elements within the narrative.

2.6.3 Camera Movement

Camera movement refers to the methods of moving the camera while filming. Camera movement techniques including panning, tilting, tracking, dolly, and zoom are essential in creating dynamic visuals that enhance storytelling in documentaries. These techniques add visual depth and emotional engagement when applied skilfully (Prasetyo et al., 2020).

2.6.4 Lighting

Lighting plays a vital role in video production, with the primary goal of ensuring the visuals are clear and easy for viewers to see. When setting up lighting for a film, several factors must be taken into account, including the direction of the light, camera sensitivity, the subject, available equipment, background, and the use of key light, back light, and fill light (Lestari & Subechi, 2019). In filmmaking, light sources are typically classified into two types: natural light and artificial light.

2.6.5 Audio

Sound or audio is another essential component in films or videos (Pratista, 2017). It helps deliver messages or information more effectively to the audience within each scene. Audio encompasses all sounds, including dialogue, sound effects, and other noises that accompany the visuals. Consequently, the quality of audio management significantly impacts the success of a scene. Additionally, audio plays a key role in stimulating the audience's imagination and setting the mood Manesah, Wibowo and Santoso (2021).

2.7 Post Production

Post production is the last stage in the documentary filmmaking process, where visual and audio elements are edited to create a final product that reflects the initial concept. Muafa and Junaedi (2020) state that this phase includes video editing, incorporating narration, background music, sound effects, and additional visuals such as graphics. The goal is to organize both audio and visuals into a coherent and engaging story. The post production process includes the following steps:

a. Data Transfer; It is moving all recorded video and audio files from the camera or storage devices to a computer or editing system for further work.

b. File Import; It is uploading all video, audio, and additional supporting files into the editing software to prepare for editing.

c. Composing Footage; It is arranging and organizing video clips in a rough sequence that follows the intended story or flow.

d. Audio Editing; It is processing the sound by removing noise, balancing volume levels, and adding background music and sound effects to ensure clear and supportive audio.

e. Editing; It is cutting, arranging, and assembling detailed video clips to create a coherent and well-structured narrative.

f. Subtitling; It is adding translated texts or captions on screen to help viewers understand dialogue or information presented in the video.

g. Color Grading; It is adjusting colors and lighting in the footage to improve aesthetics, maintain consistency, and match the story's mood.

2.8 YouTube

Daraini and Masnawati (2024) describe YouTube as a free digital platform that allows users to upload, view, explore, comment on, and share video content. With its strong monetization appeal, it has become one of the most widely used social media platforms, hosting over 65,000 new video uploads each day (Wibowo, 2024). Beyond entertainment, YouTube acts as a lens into local cultures by featuring traditional practices, cultural celebrations, and daily life, helping audiences develop a richer appreciation for cultural heritage. As an educational medium, YouTube promotes cultural learning by encouraging active viewer participation. Rather than passively consuming content, audiences are invited to engage and construct their own understanding. By providing thought-provoking material that fosters critical thinking, YouTube can effectively support constructivist approaches to learning about local culture (Zain, Tasya, & Indra, 2023).

2.9 Previous Works

In developing and preparing this documentary film, a crucial initial step involves formulating ideas, selecting a theme, and shaping the overall project concept. This process requires the author to engage in creative thinking influenced

by both internal insights and external sources. To support this, the author conducted research by analyzing reference documentary films that align with the project's original vision and pre-production planning. The purpose of this research is to identify essential components necessary for producing a compelling documentary. Three documentary films were chosen as comparative references, selected for their conceptual similarities. These references serve to inform and inspire the narrative structure and cinematographic approach intended for the project. Below are the documentary films referenced by the author:

The first reference is a documentary entitled *"Keraton Yogyakarta, Pancering Kauripan"*, released by the YouTube (Paniradya Kaistimewan, 2023). This film delves into cultural themes and local wisdom, offering a comprehensive look at the importance and function of the Yogyakarta Palace in daily life. It also features prominent cultural figures from the region and aims to foster awareness and encourage the preservation of local heritage. Running for 18 minutes, the documentary was produced by Paniradya Kaistimewan and directed by Thomas Chris.

The documentary *"Kraton Yogyakarta, Pancering Kauripan"* was chosen as a key reference for this project because of its thematic alignment and color grading style, which closely reflect the concept envisioned by the author. In the review process, the author analyzed both the cinematographic elements and the narrator's choice of language. The opening narration from the film will be adapted and customized by the author for use in the production of their own documentary.

Figure 2. 1 Previous Works Pancering Kauripan

The second documentary used as a reference is titled *"Menjelajahi Warisan Islam Di Mostar, Bosnia Herzegovina – Muslim Travelers"*. This film, uploaded

on the YouTube channel MDTV Official (2024), is narrated by Armalina and produced by Muhammad Yasin. With a runtime of 21 minutes and 20 seconds, the documentary follows Armalina's journey as she visits various Islamic heritage sites in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Throughout the film, the narrator provides historical context and describes the current state of each location, while also participating in a local cultural tradition—horseback riding—as part of a deeper cultural engagement.

Figure 2. 2 Previous Works Muslim Travelers

This documentary was chosen by the author as a reference due to its thematic alignment, as both works explore Islamic heritage within a specific setting. The author drew inspiration from various elements, including the camera shot techniques and the film's narrative structure. The documentary makes use of long shots during walking sequences and medium shots when the narrator is providing explanations about specific sites. Moreover, its narrative progression offers useful guidance on how to effectively introduce and build a compelling and cohesive storyline centered around a location.

The third documentary referenced shares a similar style to the second but has a different title. Titled *"Perkembangan Islam di Shymkent, Kazakhstan – Muslim Travelers"*, this video provides information on the origins and development of Islam in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. The historical narrative is presented by Indonesian narrator Nabila Ishma Nurhabibah. With a length of 22 minutes and 18 seconds, the documentary was uploaded in 2024 and produced by Muhammad Yasin.

Figure 2. 3 Previous Works Muslim Travelers

This documentary features activities that closely resemble those planned in the author's own project, such as showcasing a mosque and tasting traditional local cuisine. Through a detailed analysis of the video, the author found it to be a valuable resource for learning how to build a coherent storyline, conduct interviews with participants, and incorporate inspiring quotes into the narration. Additionally, the author observed the effective and suitable cinematographic techniques used in the video, which contributed to a visually engaging and appealing presentation. As a result, similar methods will be applied by the author in developing their documentary project.

Most Islamic heritage documentaries referenced in this study tend to focus primarily on the physical aspects of historical architecture or present formal historical narratives that are informative and chronological in nature. For instance, documentaries like *Kraton Yogyakarta, Pancering Kauripan* (2023) and *The Development of Islam in Shymkent* (2024) emphasize architectural documentation and highlight the roles of key historical figures. Their presentation styles are generally static, with limited exploration of contemporary cultural practices or the daily lives of communities today. In contrast, there has yet to be a documentary that specifically and comprehensively explores the social and cultural life of Kampung Pekojan in Semarang particularly traditions like the distribution of Indian porridge during Ramadan. This observation is based on the author's initial search using

digital platforms such as YouTube and Google, with keywords like "Pekojan Semarang documentary," "Islamic heritage Semarang," and "Indian porridge tradition." The search results reveal a significant lack of narrative and humanistic visual documentation on Pekojan, with almost no full-length, publicly accessible documentary available.

This gap is further supported by findings in Chapter I of this report, which highlight the lack of consistent digital documentation regarding the history and culture of Kampung Pekojan. Without proper documentation, there is a growing risk that the collective memory of values such as cultural identity, tolerance, and diversity will continue to fade. In fact, cultural documentation plays a crucial role as a visual archive for various disciplines, including anthropology, local history, and cultural education. This absence became the primary motivation for creating *The Hidden Soul of Pekojan*, a documentary intended to address this void through a communicative and inclusive visual approach. The film presents a fresh storytelling method by centering the narrative on community life. Rather than simply relaying history in a linear fashion, the documentary brings cultural heritage to life through human interaction, Ramadan ambiance, and enduring traditional practices. Its poetic narration, use of Javanese traditional music, and English subtitles make it accessible not only to local viewers but also to international audiences. The screening of the documentary through Diponegoro University's official platform further affirms its role as a valid educational and cultural record. Ultimately, *The Hidden Soul of Pekojan* stands as both a creative work and a meaningful contribution to cultural preservation and the formation of cross-generational awareness.