

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the motivation behind the research by outlining the background of the study. Following with formulates the research questions, describe the study's objectives and benefits, while also providing an overview of the expected output.

1.1 Background

Tourism has been considered as an effective way to achieve economic and social development in destinations. This perspective is supported by Sharpley and Telfer (2008), who said that the most popular reason for tourism promotion is its ability to contribute to national development, especially in developing countries. This can be said that tourism sustainability is essential to ensure its potential could be maximized in the long term. Within this broader scope, heritage tourism is one of the significant sub-sectors. According to Olsen (2010), besides helping the growth in economic sector, heritage tourism contributes to empower local society, revitalize historical urban places, boost the image of destination, and promote public solidarity. Many of these benefits highlight the strategic importance of heritage tourism in sustainable development. Consequently, the preservation and management of such sites are critical to ensuring these positive outcomes are being noticed.

Kota Lama Semarang is one of heritage tourism destination in Central Java. This attraction has a combination of historical landscape, colonial-era building, and nowadays modern accommodations surrounded in that area, along with plenty of restaurant and other lifestyle spots nearby. *Kota Lama* Semarang used to be the administrative and commercial center during the Dutch colonial period. The historical building such as *Gereja Blenduk*, old buildings, and other colonial infrastructure proved the tangible connections to Semarang rich's past. According to the Head of

Industry Culture and Tourism Office Semarang (*Disbudpar*), *Kota Lama* Semarang is the most popular destination during Eid Break in 2025 that has over two hundred thousand domestic tourist and up to seven hundred international tourists (Haq, 2025).

Beyond its physical attraction, *Kota Lama* Semarang has deeper historical stories that distinguish it from other heritage sites in Indonesia. Historically, Semarang was recognized as a port city during the colonial era. During that time *Kota Lama* Semarang was the center of government and industry (including communications, transportation, and press services) along with others supporting city facilities (Yuliati, 2019). The historical narratives behind individual buildings in *Kota Lama* Semarang have been documented in various academic journals and historical publications. Furthermore, the Semarang Municipal Cultural and Heritage Office (*Distaru*), has published descriptions for buildings designated as cultural heritage, providing functional facts and historical backgrounds that can be accessed by the barcode.

However, despite the existence of barcode descriptions and academic journal narratives for individual buildings in *Kota Lama* Semarang, the comprehensive bilingual storytelling approach that combined these historical elements into a coherent narrative for tourism purposes remains absent. As stated by Timothy (2011), that information searching and trip planning has an important role in tourism demand. Visitors usually look for meaningful information before deciding the destinations to visit. This shows that giving the comprehensive information is essential and one of the effective ways in promotional strategies.

Bilingual content plays an essential part in bridging communication gaps between domestic and international tourists, ensuring that historical narratives are accessible to broader audiences. English, widely recognized as a global lingua franca, facilitates interaction across diverse linguistic backgrounds and expands the promotional reach of heritage tourism materials. According to Budiharjo et al. (2022),

tourism information needs to be internationalized because it plays an important role to promote the regional tourism industry in Indonesia. This strategy supports the local heritage sites to a wider international tourism network and strengthens the competitive value toward tourism destinations. Furthermore, previous visitors of *Kota Lama* are not limited to local tourists but also show the presence of international tourist, enhancing the effectiveness of providing bilingual promotional materials.

Despite the recognizing of bilingual values, interactive approach is needed to deliberate the story itself. By combining the bilingual approach in interactive ways, heritage interpretation becomes more impactful for tourist. As stated by Campos and Almeida (2022), traditional heritage interpretation relied on expert-driven descriptions. In contrast, contemporary practices allow the involvement of multiple perspectives and diverse forms of historical expression. Through this approach, visitors can have the experience of heritage tourism through personal interaction with interactive story that creates deeper connection and builds up the comprehension of historical and cultural substance.

To compile these things, pop-up book is presented to be the medium of promoting *Kota Lama* Semarang. In addition, pop-up books also function as important mediums of cultural transmission. Previous research has shown that pop-up books successfully increase knowledge in other fields, such as dental health education. This positive impact in health education suggests that the medium has strong potential for knowledge transfer (Haryani & Siregar, 2022). Moreover, according to Zhou et al. (2025), through interactive, dynamic, and three-dimensional presentations of history, local culture, and unique characteristics, they enhance readers' understanding and overall reading experience. This can be said that pop-up book can serve as an effective tool for cultural and historical narratives in heritage tourist attractions.

Therefore, this study aims to design and develop cultural storytelling content in the form of an interactive bilingual tourism book titled “Unlocking *Oude Stad*: Restoring the Soul of Kota Lama Semarang.” This interactive pop-up book is designed to promote the historical identity of Semarang as a modern colonial city while providing an engaging and immersive tourism experience for both domestic and international visitors.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on the background, this study addresses the following two problem formulations:

- 1.2.1 How is the process of creating historical story of Semarang as one of the contents about history in an interactive pop-up book to promote *Kota Lama Semarang*?
- 1.2.2 How does the feedback of pop-up book title “Unlocking *Oude Stad*: Restoring the Soul of Kota Lama Semarang?”

1.3 Purpose of Research

This study is conducted with the aim of achieving the following things, such as:

- 1.3.1 To create and develop interactive bilingual historical storytelling content for a pop-up book as a promotional medium for *Kota Lama Semarang*.
- 1.3.2 To provide an interactive experience through a pop-up book that can increase tourists’ cultural understanding, and interest in visiting *Kota Lama Semarang*.

1.4 Benefit of the Study

This study is expected to provide significant benefits for tourism stakeholders, visitors, and academics.

- 1.4.1 For tourism stakeholders

This study can provide practical tools for tourism promotion strategies, especially support destination branding in *Kota Lama Semarang*.

1.4.2 For tourists and visitors

The output of the study can serve to improve tourists' interest and understanding of the historical and cultural story in *Kota Lama* Semarang.

1.4.3 For academics and researchers

This study contributes to the development of the research in heritage tourism, storytelling, and pop-up book. Moreover, provide references for future studies on bilingual tourism and promotional strategies.

1.5 Output

The output is a pop-up book that is divided by some chapters. This book is entitled "Unlocking *Oude Stad*: Restoring the Soul of Kota Lama Semarang." The first chapter is the historical bilingual story of the Semarang's rich culture and modern city in the colonial era that has never been published in one full story. The second chapter is related to the description and story about historical buildings. The third chapter is the information about accommodations, photo area and culinary area surrounding *Kota Lama* Semarang. The pop-up book itself is equipped by the maps and direction in *Kota Lama*, to help the reader have clearer visual understanding. This output has the potential to promote Semarang tourism through the interactive pop-up book. The purpose of this book is targeted to the tourists, both domestic and international in the *Kota Lama* Semarang.