

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Among the diverse ethnicities in Indonesia, Javanese is known to have the largest number of population that covers 40,05% of the Indonesian population, according to *Badan Pusat Statistik* data in 2010. Generally, Javanese ethnic groups settle in Central Java, East Java, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. But they are also spread across other areas such as Jakarta, Banten, Lampung, and Sumatra. Javanese culture itself is known to incorporate high philosophical values. Philosophy in Javanese culture is defined as the desire of perfection or *ngudi kawicaksanan* or local wisdom. This form of perfection also means understanding where we came from and our purpose of life or known as *wikan sangkan paran* (Purwadi, 2005, p.3). In a way it correlates with the cultural ceremonies about the cycle of life.

Within the practice of these cultural ceremonies, the inclusion of a supply or a set of carefully prepared traditional foods serves a vital element to these events. Not only that it supports, but it also enhances the overall significance of the events. As a representative to the ceremony, these foods saturates symbolism and meaning tied to the ritual itself. Not only to fulfill the party's nourishment but it also serves as a powerful symbol of salvation, remission of sins, gratitude towards God, or an effort to be able to communicate with God. In fact, in some cases, the foods themselves becomes inseparable from being the identity of the ceremony. Representing the essence of the event within its spiritual and cultural significance.

The absence or the exclusion of these sacred dishes from the ceremonial proceeding would make ceremony incomplete and non-executable since it would be considered as a disrespect to the ceremony and its underlying beliefs. That being the case, the party would exert themselves to commit and dedicate preparing the dishes months before the ceremony (Aisyah, 2017: 31). Locals who practice these ceremonies believes there are spirits that have the greater power called "Gusti

Allah”. It is within this spiritual framework that some of these traditional dishes are regarded as culinary offerings. People would manifest their hopes and prayers through the symbolism of the dish and establishing its connection with the divine forces. By emphasizing the crucial role within these dishes set in a ceremonial context, a deeper understanding of their significance and impact would be better for the people to understand more.

Unfortunately, as society proceeds to evolve with modernization, the number of cultural ceremony practices decreases. Meaning the presence of the food that holds a symbolic cultural value is then left unused or replaced with a more modernized dish. Fewer people are willing to pursue these practices. As stated by Ir. Sujanto (1991, p.190), eternalness or *kelanggengan* does not exist. Eventually all things will progress and grow into something new or in Sundanese, expressed with *owah gingsir*. The occurrence of *owah gingsir* is the cause for these cultural extinctions and it is unfortunately inevitable. Although some parts of cultural aspects do remain in cultural transformations and cultural sublimations. Generally speaking, these shifts of cultural practice are hoped to progress into something more beneficial for the Javanese society. As an example, *Slametan* could be done by serving an offering (*sesajen*) to the corresponding spirits, but with a beneficial transformation, *Slametan* could now be a practice to show gratitude to God. However with all the adjustments, it would still not be pursued if the people are no longer interested in the idea. Several factors that affect these cultural changes are leadership change, technological developments, mergers and acquisitions, and changes in the external environment (Dudovskiy, n.d.).

As an effort to preserve the cultural heritage of traditional foods served in traditional ceremonies, these pieces of information need to be recorded and documented in a complete and structured manner. Traces of Indonesian history are known to be difficult to gather. For instance, a British Indonesian historian, Peter Carey admits to be experiencing troubles when researching the history of Diponegoro since the access of information is limited. He stated that there has been too much of Indonesian history left to be wasted. He does hope that more

Indonesians appreciate and recognize their own cultural history (Priherdityo, 2015, 6 Feb).

Corresponding to this issue, the ancient Javanese society initially passed down traditions orally. Back in the day, the Javanese were not yet literately educated and expressing ideas verbally was seen as the most convenient and relatively inexpensive way of communicating. Oral communications in a collective relationship of Javanese people is deeply rooted with valuable ancestral traditions (Endraswara, 2005, p.1). But with this system of passing information it tends to have higher chances of the cultural heritage not being preserved properly and completely. Hence, to counter this problem, a written form of collective media information and documentation of this cultural heritage is needed to be created, especially in traditional food in Javanese cultural ceremonies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Elaborated as above, below is a complication that will be the focus of this research:

How to create an informative media about traditional foods used in Javanese cultural ceremonies to preserve the cultural heritage?

1.3 Scope of Problem

As a focus for the development of this final project, the author has set several scopes to limit and to be able achieve the goal of the research.

1) Demographic

a) Gender : Men and Women

b) Age : 19 - 25 years old

As a report from CNN Indonesia, Gen Z are more likely to be challenged to taste a variety of new food delicacies. This habit occurs because they are exposed from various variations of foods from various ethnicities around the world. Different from millennials where they are more interested in traditional foods.

c) Ethnicity : Javanese

Javanese is known as the largest ethnicity group in Indonesia. But as cultural assimilation through inter-ethnic marriage and cultural modernization occurs, Javanese people are vulnerable to slowly shift from their cultural traditions.

d) Expenses : Rp 1.000.000 - Rp 1.800.000 (SES C) and Rp 1.800.001 - Rp 3.000.000 (SES B).

This category is based on the Frontier category which specifies only to metropolitan areas, since it has a bigger living cost than smaller cities (Mulyadi, 2011).

e) Education : Upper secondary or bachelor's level

2) Geographic

Jakarta, a metropolis area, is the most progressive city in Indonesia which is exposed to industrialization and urbanization. Hence, would have a great target audience for this modernized solution.

3) Psychographic

Indonesian citizens who are interested in Indonesian culinary, local culture, and or history, do not completely practice their cultural customs but are also interested in learning further on forgotten or rarely raised topics of Indonesian cultural aspects.

1.4 Research Objective

With thorough analysis, the goal of this research is to create an informative media about traditional foods used in Javanese cultural ceremonies to preserve the cultural heritage.

1.5 Research Benefits

1) For the author

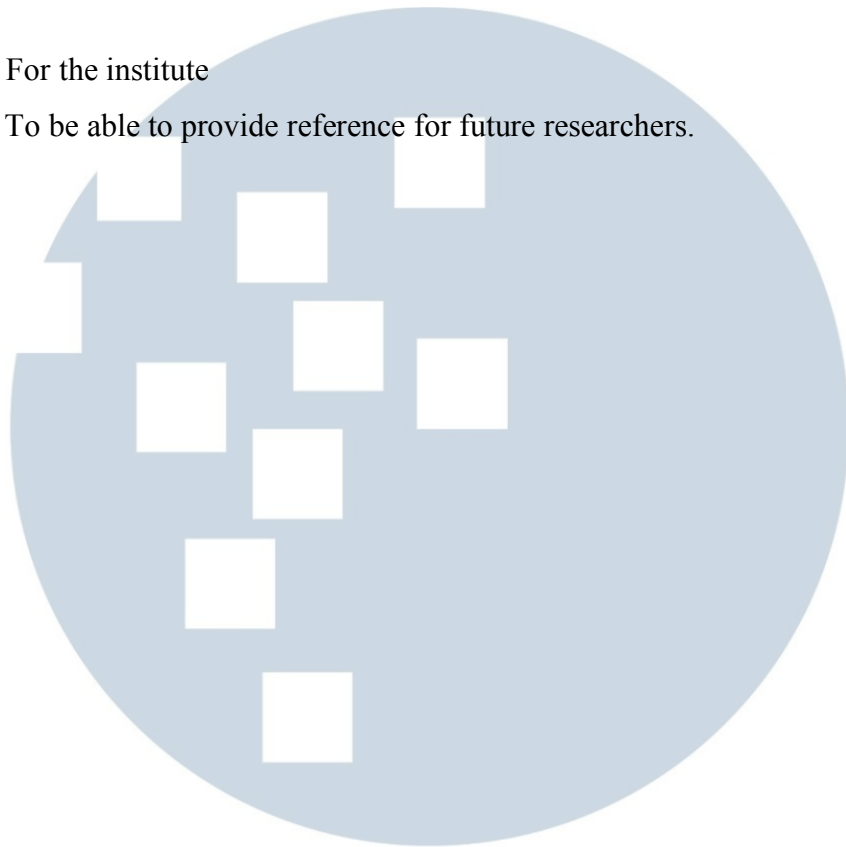
To be able to express creativity and all learnt knowledge through an artwork that also incorporates cultural aspects.

2) For the audience

To reminisce and preserve the Javanese cultural heritage and be proud of Indonesia's identity.

3) For the institute

To be able to provide reference for future researchers.



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