

## **PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT OF *THE ASU (PROKONTRA)* SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Creativity is created to support art, one of which is by making short or long films according to the topic or theme raised. Directing also means developing creativity and persuasion skills to make each individual in the team give their best. Documentary films want to give the audience a belief about what is being recorded. Documentary films are in the hands of the filmmaker and will be re-expressed in the form of audio-visual which ultimately makes the documentary a complete speech tool. This research focuses on the challenges and obstacles in the production management of the documentary film “ASU (Prokontra)” which include 3 (three) stages, namely the planning, production, and post-production functions. This documentary raises the issue of dog slaughtering in Yogyakarta. The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The data were collected through in-depth interview with the director and cameraman of the film. Moreover, secondary data on this research were obtained from the animal community website and social media (Instagram) of Jogja’s Animal Friend and news from local and national mass media. The results showed that: (i) the director conducted a research process to obtain information about dog slaughter in Yogyakarta; (ii) the director in the film “ASU (Prokontra)” used an observational approach in order to record events spontaneously and naturally. The production flow of the film “ASU (Prokontra)” emphasized an informal shooting process, without excessive technical tools and did not require prior design. And (iii) the director approached the community as a subject well. This approach was done to build trust in order to take the moment appropriately.

Keywords: production management, ASU (Prokontra) Movies, documentary film

### **ABSTRAK**

**Manajemen Produksi Film Pendek Dokumenter Asu (Prokontra).** Kreativitas diciptakan untuk menunjang seni, salah satunya dengan membuat film berdurasi pendek atau panjang sesuai dengan topik atau tema yang diangkat. Mengarahkan juga berarti mengembangkan kreativitas dan keterampilan persuasi untuk membuat setiap individu dalam tim memberikan yang terbaik. Film dokumenter ingin memberikan kepercayaan kepada penonton tentang apa yang sedang direkam. Film dokumenter berada di tangan pembuat film dan akan diekspresikan kembali dalam bentuk audio visual yang pada akhirnya menjadikan dokumenter sebagai alat bicara yang lengkap. Penelitian ini berfokus pada tantangan dan hambatan dalam manajemen produksi film dokumenter ASU (Prokontra) yang meliputi tiga tahap, yaitu fungsi perencanaan, produksi, dan pascaproduksi. Film dokumenter ini mengangkat isu tentang perjagalan anjing di kota Yogyakarta. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data diambil dari wawancara mendalam dengan sutradara film dokumenter ASU (Prokontra) dan camera person. Adapun data sekunder diperoleh dari website komunitas hewan dan media sosial (Instagram) Animal Friend Jogja dan berita-berita dari media massa lokal dan nasional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan: (1) sutradara melakukan proses riset untuk mendapatkan informasi mengenai perjagalan anjing di Yogyakarta; (2) sutradara dalam film ASU (Prokontra) menggunakan pendekatan observatif agar dapat merekam kejadian secara spontan dan natural. Alur produksi film ASU (Prokontra) menekankan pada proses shooting yang informal, tanpa adanya alat teknis yang berlebihan dan tidak memerlukan perancangan sebelumnya; dan (3) sutradara melakukan pendekatan dengan komunitas selaku subjek dengan baik. Pendekatan ini dilakukan untuk membangun kepercayaan agar mengambil momen dengan tepat.

Kata kunci: manajemen produksi, film dokumenter, Film ASU (Prokontra)

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## INTRODUCTION

Documentary films are the most popular films for the public. This type of documentary has different characteristics. Documentary films contain a factual event in life. Apart from containing facts, documentary films also encompass the filmmaker's subjectivity (Trianto, 2013). Hence, they have various discussion topics and points of view with the same theme.

Entertainment for the community is a film that can penetrate the boundaries of social class. The ability of films to reach various segments of the social class makes them have the potential to influence their audience. The strategic value of films does not only act as entertainment but can be educational media to communicate educational messages effectively and even influence one's behavior. The films produced have messages in the story packaged with different purposes. Some are entertaining and informative, and others try to include certain messages that slowly attract the audience.

Documentary films are tools to convey information creatively because they represent the facts in life. In addition to creative information media, it can also provide information according to its segment. Through this segment, the audience can easily accept the messages. Therefore, people are interested in watching documentaries. In addition to providing information creatively, it also provides a different impression from other information dissemination media and makes the packaging of a documentary film. When we enjoy documentaries, what we watch is a world of ideas.

According to Kusen Dony (2010), many believe that documentary films convey and present the truth in human life. Thus, documentary filmmakers use all available resources and means to make it happen. Indeed, the documentary filmmakers present footage from the present or the past to explore certain subjects, including historical and contemporary events, natural phenomena, profiles of celebrities, cultural arts, and all kinds of imaginable themes. Technological developments and globalization also affect human civilization which moves continuously and gives the idea (Surahman, 2016).

Documentary filmmakers attempt to communicate their ideas through a blend of image and sound. They want to give the audience a belief about what is being recorded. In the documentary, there is a recording process, there are characters of the problem to be revealed, and everything in the documentary is about something which already happened. According to Rospitasari (2021) documentary films are the result of the film industry's aspirations, identity social issues, and artistic expression. All events in the documentary film are in the hands of the filmmaker and are re-expressed in the form of audiovisual, which ultimately makes the documentary a complete speech tool.

One of the documentary films providing creative information is a short documentary entitled "ASU (Prokontra)". The author raises this documentary film as a separate reason for bringing up an in-depth fact about the phenomenon behind processed food made from dog meat. In addition, many secrets are unknown to the public about how the slaughter has taken place. Some animal lovers complain that their pet dogs are often lost and even poisoned to death. Following several cases published in several trusted media, dogs have been deliberately stolen to be sold at slaughterhouses.

This documentary illustrates the sale of dog meat satay or commonly disguised as "sate jamu" and dog meat stew or disguised as "sengsu", an abbreviation of "tongseng asu", located in Yogyakarta. The production of the "ASU (Prokontra)" film relates to the efforts to create and to add benefits in realizing new trade regulations and increasing the use of the film carried out by film producers or film business actors to preserve pets such as dogs as a form of love for animals.

The production of the "ASU (Prokontra)" film indirectly links management in the production process. According to Siregar in Rahmitasari (2017), production management is all activities related to production management to create a work of art based on the production design. The duration of "ASU (Prokontra)" film is 14 minutes and 53 seconds. The "ASU (Prokontra)" was published at Piala Maya

2018 for the first time. This documentary film was nominated as the best short movie at Piala Maya 2018 in January 2019.

This study focuses on the making of the “ASU (Prokontra)” film during the pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution stages because, with the director’s role in general responsibility, the director is also indirectly involved in other works. According to Cartwright (1996) pre-production is all of the process of organizing the content, writing the script, visualizing it, choosing the crew and talent, arranging the graphics, preparing for the production, and editing (post-production). Furthermore, after all preproduction preparations are completed, the film continues into the production stage, when it is actually shot. Post-production is a process the editing phase in advance, including the production of the music, the optical, the mixing, etc (Cleve, 2006).

The “ASU (Prokontra)” film not only provides information about whether it is *haram* or *halal* to consume dog meat but it also explains that consuming dog meat is dangerous as it affects health, such as being exposed to rabies. In making this film, the director collected several arguments from several points of view: the government, the animal community, the health perspective (veterinarians), people consuming dog meat, and dog slaughterers. The director wanted to discover why they continue to sell dog meat illegally, especially in Yogyakarta.

Research on the distribution of this film is interesting because there is no distributor for short films in Indonesia, even though its role is crucial. However, with the absence of distributors for Indonesian short films, the “ASU (Prokontra)” film has proven successful by utilizing distribution channels without relying on mainstream cinema networks in Indonesia. Cinema is an essential element related to exhibitions. Unfortunately, investors believe that short films do not sell. Accordingly, there has been no short film story screened in Indonesian cinemas.

In its distribution, the “ASU (Prokontra)” film relies on film festivals, considerably the most effective alternative space. Apart from being a playroom, the

film festival - especially overseas, is also a meeting place for investors, film festival programmers, and the social networks of friendship owned by filmmakers. Film directors can also help spread the film. The awards received by this film support the continuity of its distribution.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Documentary Films

The first film by the Lumiere brothers told about travel (travelogues) which was made around the 1890s. Documentary films present reality in various ways and are made for various purposes. Documentary films are never separated from the purpose of disseminating information, education, and propaganda for certain people or groups. Documentary films remain grounded in things as real as possible. The distance between reality and the results presented through docudrama is usually not much different. In docudrama, the reality remains the grip (Effendy, 2009:3).

Docudrama is a further development of the approach in documentary film production. The approach is taken to overcome the obstacle of the absence of a visual image of events that have occurred or will occur. To fill in the blanks, images produced from the recording process were used, directed by the director, meaning a script has been prepared. Documentary films are not just documentation collecting files and assembling without a pattern. Instead, they are made with a central theme and they also carry a particular purpose of the filmmaker. Through documentary films, the reality in real life can be represented as a means of enjoyment by anyone, either it is involved or not involved in that reality (Junaedi, 2011). Documentaries have distinctive technical characters aiming to gain convenience, speed, flexibility, effectiveness, and the authenticity of the events. Generally, documentaries have a simple form and rarely use visual effects. This type of camera is generally light (video camera) and it uses a zoom lens and a portable voice recorder so as making it possible to take pictures with a crew having minimal sound effects.

They often use the narrator to deliver the narration to convey information to the audience. Some use the interview method and footage (pictures/videos). The documentary is a development of the non-story film category. Initially, there were only two types of non-fiction films: factual and documentary. On the one hand, factual films are similar to news broadcasts on television. On the other hand, documentary films are video recordings of weddings or other ceremonies. Documentary films are the development of the concept of non-fiction films. In addition to containing facts, documentaries encompass the subjectivity of the maker. It means that what is recorded is based on existing facts, but in its presentation, it also includes the thoughts, ideas, and viewpoints of the filmmaker's ideals (Nugroho, 2007).

### **Documentary Film Production Management**

**Pre-Production.** The pre-production stage is the most crucial in every film, television production, both fiction and documentary. Film production can run smoothly and successfully because of the thorough production preparation process. Each problem must be resolved first at this pre-production stage. Normally, the implementation of pre-production takes at least two months. In this stage, all administrative and creative issues are prepared. The pre-production stage takes more time for research (Ayawaila, 2009) and includes (i) Idea discovery, that the idea of a documentary film story is a form of what is seen and heard, not based on an imaginative fantasy. Then it comes to (ii) Research, as when conducting research, you must always pay attention and think about the aspects to benefit visual images. A documentary filmmaker must have a visual vision (visualization sensitivity) from natural talent formed through cinematography education. When research is conducted, it is helpful to use an audio recording device (tape recorder) to interview the subject or resource person. Next it is the (iii) Subject approach. According to Ayawaila (Ayawaila, 2009), approaching the subject is vital, from research to shooting. The documentary approach to the respondents is different from the research approach of social scientists such

as anthropologists or sociologists. Research methods and approaches for documentary films are not through questionnaires usually carried out in social research. However, documentaries must go directly and carry communication (dialogue) between humans equal to the subject. The last part of pre-production stage is (iv) Participation and observation. Observation participation can be applied for research purposes in documentary films. In addition to observing the subject, it will be even better if you participate in the daily activities of the subject and his environment. Therefore, the sense of kinship between the production team, the subject, and the community environment is increasingly intertwined.

**Production Stage.** Shooting, recording images, and sound, are the acts of executing everything which has been planned. Every day all things must be checked to determine the eligibility of the equipment, the shots to be taken, which shots are lacking, and others. Hence, every shooting activity must be accompanied by a shooting report and interview transcript once it is completed. Documentary films do not tell an objective reality but a reality based on what is seen and recorded by the camera. This perception is used as a reference by documentary filmmakers that the visual recorded is based on the facts (Junaedi, 2011). The stages of production include (i) Shooting report. A documentary is different from a fiction film because what is needed from the shooting report here is more of a checking scene and some checking shots that the editor needs later when editing the film. (ii) Interview transcript must be performed by a sound engineer when the shooting activity in one day is finished. Nevertheless, nowadays, filmmakers are often too lazy to do it because it is considered a hassle. (iii) Post-Production is carried out after the film production stage is completed. At this stage, there are several activities such as film editing, special effects, color correction, voice and background music, and animation (Agustus, 2011). The post-production stages include:

- a. Synchronizing Picture and Sound. This process is used when images and sound are recorded separately. Sometimes we find the image and

- sound video files are not synced, meaning the sound is heard before or after the proper time.
- b. Screening Rushes. This term is taken from a film production where a filmmaker has to watch all the material to be edited. It is almost impossible to memorize or to know exactly the material taken if not by seeing it.
  - c. Selecting Shots. Before selecting the shots that will be used, we must perform logging first and make a comprehensive record of these shots to ease us in finding the material needed. In cutting and selecting shots, we select the shots we will use in the film after logging.
  - d. Editing Script, specifically for documentaries. After selecting the shots, we create an editing script. This stage serves to align the script created and the shots.
  - e. Assembly. In story films or advertisements and public service advertisements, assembly is defined as the numerical ordering of all available shots. It serves to see the global structure of the film. In documentary film production, collecting in one scene or one sequence of shots that will be edited has been preferred.
  - f. Rough Cut. Cutting and joining the shots in the film have been carried out. However, this editing is still rough, making it possible to change the cutting, structure, and plot. In the process of this rough cut, changes can be performed as much as needed, meaning that it is still possible to get rough cut 1, rough cut 2, and others. The physical form of a rough cut is that each cut is made slightly longer than the cutting point to give the editor more possibilities. At present, this stage is rarely used because in non-linear editing, cutting errors can be returned to the material as before.
  - g. Fine Cut and Trimming. At this stage, the shots have been cut and connected. If there are no problems, trimmings can be conducted. Even if there is a slight change in number, usually, there is no change in the structure.
  - h. Final Edit or Picture Lock. The final result of editing is the final agreement between the

director, producer, and editor.

- i. Online Editing. At the mini stage, an opening sequence (main title) and credit title are created. In addition, optical effects (dissolve, fade, and wipe) can be added according to the needs of the film. Other additions are also following the demands of ideas, scripts or visual effects, and animation concepts.

The platform of distribution of documentary films, Youtube media, has created a new era in terms of distribution with easier and wider audience access. In addition to easy access and a wider audience, Youtube presentation media makes it easy to become a learning medium (Nugroho, W., Suhada, I. P., Hakim, L. R., & Pungkiawan, 2019).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied the descriptive qualitative method. This research is concerned with the meaning and not determining the quantity. The data in words and pictures were gathered through interview and documentation techniques. After determining the object and time of the research, the researchers carried out data collection to obtain the necessary data and information. The data collection procedure in qualitative research involves four strategies (Creswell, 2009): (i) In-depth Interview: A data collection method used to obtain information directly from the source. Interviews in qualitative research are commonly referred to as in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are used to investigate the issue of a person's biography, the assessment by the community of how they feel, see, the problems happening, attitudes, opinions, and emotions about the problems. The requirements of an informant must be honest, keep promises, obey the rules, like to talk, not belong to one of the conflicting groups in the research setting, and have a certain view of the events. The informants in this study were the producer (1 person), the director (1 person), the cameramen (2 people), and three staff conducting the research. (ii) Documentation. It refers to collecting data, either from documents or archives, books, or relevant literature. The data taken are authentic on the film production process

produced. Qualitative data analysis is used when the data collected in the research are words, sentences, or narratives. Both are obtained in interviews and observations. This analysis stage is the main factor in assessing the quality of research where the reliability and validity of the data depend on the researchers as research instruments (Kriyantono, 2010).

## **DISCUSSION**

This study aims to determine the role of the director in carrying out the three stages of “ASU (Prokontra)” documentary production management. The purpose of this documentary is to provide information on the issue of dog slaughter in Yogyakarta. The theme of this controversial issue was previously highly considered in conceptualizing the story idea. The “ASU (Prokontra)” documentary film was made based on several arguments from various points of view to achieve the message of the documentary film. According to Junaedi (2011), documentaries are made with a central theme and a special purpose. With documentary films, the reality in real life can be brought back so that anyone can enjoy it, whether those involved or not involved in that reality. Documentary films are now a trend in the world of cinema. Filmmakers can experiment and learn a lot when involved in documentary film production. According to Nugroho (2007), a good documentary can bring the audience into the picture presented and feel excited to dig deeper into the material after watching it. The storyline conveyed in the documentary must be interesting. Supported by good shooting techniques, it is hoped that it will retain the audience’s interest in completing to watch the film. Documentary ideas and topics become crucial when viewers want to know what they do not know and wonder if something interesting is near them.

### **Pre-Production Stage**

Pre-production includes all activities carried out by the team before conducting the production process. It includes discovering ideas or concepts, team division, making licensing letters, and others. The first step in making the “ASU (Prokontra)”

documentary film was to determine the story idea or theme of the story. The informant Achmad Rezi Fahlevie, producer and director, accidentally discovered dog slaughter and rejection by the animal community in Yogyakarta. According to Gerzon R Ayawaila, the idea of a documentary film is a form of what is seen and heard, not based on an imaginative fantasy from many sources (Ayawaila, 2009). A documentary filmmaker must observe his environment, frequently communicate with all levels of society, and discuss with community groups with social and cultural activities.

### **Production Stage**

After finding story ideas and characters featured in the “ASU (Prokontra)” documentary film, the next process or step in the pre-production of the film was to prepare the requirements from the resource persons. It aimed to have an intimate approach with the resource persons to discuss the designs later in production. Documentary films do not tell an objective reality but a reality based on what is seen and recorded by the camera. This perception is used as a reference by documentary filmmakers to date. The belief in a documentary film reality is based on the facts (Junaedi, 2011).

The production process is the stage during the process of taking pictures or shooting. The process of documentary film production, particularly when shooting both interviews, stock shots, and the footage, does not have a specific schedule. When obtaining information from social media or the animal community website, the crew immediately took a moment. The crew of this documentary film was limited, solid, and they had one vision and mission, making the production process feel comfortable and relaxed.

The research was carried out merely through news or information from the internet and social media. After learning information from the social media of the animal community in Yogyakarta, Animal Friends Jogja (AFJ) held a demonstration against the illegal sale of dog meat on November 10, 2018, at Tugu Yogyakarta. This research was

conducted again during the production of the “ASU (Prokontra)” documentary.

Early introductions are vital. The filmmaker tried to approach the subjects as close as possible while building their trust. It is usually performed during the research stage. After the filmmaker felt that his presence in the subject environment was familiar, the filmmaker introduced the camera. As a sign of success and acceptance by the audience, the core of the story or message is transformed into the community. Designing the production process is an activity to formulate the entire activities carried out to realize the product design.

### Post-Production Stage

After several days of shooting, at this stage, the director and editor logged the images. Audiovisual data completed in the field were added with supporting visual data that the director obtained during the research stage with the subject. Then, the images (audiovisuals) were arranged using editing software to become a series of stories.

Figure Flow of the “ASU (Prokontra)”  
Documentary Film Production  
Production Process Stages of the “ASU  
(Prokontra)” Documentary Film

| Pre-Production   | Production  | Post-Production   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idea and concept</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Characters and source person</li> <li>• Subject approach</li> <li>• Participation and observation</li> <li>• Concept writing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shooting report</li> <li>• Interview transcript</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editing stages follow the documentary film editing process when needed.</li> </ul> |

According to Hernawan (2011), the director must fully master the ideas, messages, and conflicts. The creative process is carried out at this stage, such as adding and subtracting some images from the shooting, selecting images included and those excluded. It aims to obtain the information that the director wants to reach the audience.

The documentary film director plays a crucial role in the success of the film. According to Wibowo (2013), directing means developing persuasion skills and abilities to make everyone on the team

give their best. It involves thoughts, feelings, and actions, from planning to the end of the film. Hence, the director must develop self-knowledge, humility, humor, and perseverance, ultimately creating respect. The directing concept in this documentary is more about conveying information about the dangers of consuming dog meat through the film. The concept was formed by combining all the perspectives of dog slaughterers, animal communities, government, dog meat consumers, and a health standpoint. All of these points of view and arguments become one storyline.

In directing the documentary of the “ASU (Prokontra)” film, the director became the leader at every stage in production management (pre-production, production, and post-production). According to Nyoman L Susanthi, leadership is the key for a director. Without leadership, the director will never be able to create the desired artwork. In the production of this documentary, the director has provided opportunities for members of the production team to be creative in making works according to their respective fields. In the pre-production stage, especially when finding ideas, the director selected several arguments from the production team, such as screenwriters, camera stylists, lighting stylists, and editors. Brainstorming is a creative thinking technique used for the film production process. This stage was also included in the planning meeting, aiming to gather abundant ideas from the production team in a short time. The film director wanted to convey information on the dangers of consuming dog meat as it is not only a matter of *halal* or *haram* consumption but can lead to rabies. Consuming dog meat has side effects for health crucial to note.

In making this “ASU (Prokontra)” film, the director collected several arguments from several points of view: the government, the animal community, the health (veterinarians), people consuming dog meat, and dog slaughterers. The director wanted to know why dog butchers continue to sell dog meat illegally, especially in Yogyakarta.

## CONCLUSIONS

In managing documentary film production, strategy and improvisation are necessary. In the pre-production stage, research and treatment preparation are two main things that must be considered. It is essential to set a strategy to catch up with every moment in the production stage because moments and phenomena are unpredictable.

The director created a documentary film of "ASU (Prokontra)" to inform the public about the ins and outs of the dog meat trade. In making this story idea, the filmmaker involved various arguments as a narrative and became the content of the documentary film. These various arguments unveil that several parties are against the sale of dog meat.

The director's distribution process was the last stage after completing the pre-production, production, and post-production. The distribution was carried out directly by the film director, who managed to enter one of the film festivals in Indonesia, namely the 2019 Film Maya Festival. Director Achmad Rezi Fahlevie performed the distribution through online video playback channels such as Youtube and Vidsee. Through this channel, filmmakers get a free playroom and interact directly with the audience through the comments section. Documentary films are considered interesting to analyze because they are similar to news in terms of factuality. Documentaries are thicker with efforts to interpret facts about events considered essential and existential and are studied in depth.

However, what distinguishes and is unique from this "ASU (Prokontra)" documentary film is the director Achmad Rezi Fahlevie's observational approach, primarily recording events spontaneously and naturally. This genre emphasizes shooting informal activities without excessive technical tools and prior planning. The production management employed both Cinema Verite and Direct Cinema approaches. These approaches were carried out to manage film production at the pre-production, production, and post-production stages. There were some improvisations during the shooting, such as without asking permission first when shooting at one of the moments. In the post-production stage,

the development and construction of the storyline, conflicts, and emotions depended on footage preparation to form a story, not just a collection of information.

The strength of direct cinema is in the patience of filmmakers to wait for significant events taking place in front of the camera. These filmmakers believe that through a proper approach, the filmmakers and their camera will be accepted as part of the life of the subject. It requires approaching the subject built in a relatively long and intense period. Early introductions play an essential role, and the filmmakers try to approach the subject as closely as possible while building his trust. It can be done at the research stage. It is different from the treatment of the "ASU (Prokontra)" film director, which conducted a research process using social media to obtain information and not taking an intense approach.

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