

Exploring Community Survival Practices During The Covid-19 Pandemic Through Documentary Filmmaking Insights From Research on The Slopes of Mount Merapi

Rizky Annissa Farhani¹ and Rocky Prasetyo Jati²

^{1,2} Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Budi Luhur, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia

Email: rizkyafarhani@gmail.com¹; rocky@budiluhur.ac.id²

Abstract: Documentary films are new strategies to deal with the types of data needed by researchers and analysts. Documentary films have also proven to be a methodologically in-depth research approach. This study aims to determine how production management makes "Erupsi dan Pandemi" films during the filmmaking process during the covid-19 pandemic. In this article, we examine and apply the method of creating a documentary on the people of Merapi's slopes and how they cope with the challenges of the 'covid-19 pandemic' and 'alarm eruptions.' The study of related literature supports the creation of selected works to conduct documentaries, observations, documentation, and in-depth interviews. The results showed that finding ideas, determining the purpose of making films, conducting research and observations, making production plans, determining production budgets, and providing equipment and crew management in the pre-production stage. Then at the production stage is briefing, monitoring the filming process while still implementing health protocols. Especially at the last stage, post-production is done by logging, mixing transcripts, scripts, and editing.

Keywords: documentary filmmaking, resilience, volcanic eruption

1. Introduction

Mount Merapi is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. On November 5, 2020, the *Balai Penyelidikan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Kebencanaan Geologi* (BPPTKG) or Geological Disaster Technology Research and Development Center informed that the Merapi eruption had occurred again, and the status of Mount Merapi's activity had changed from level II Alert to level III or Alert. Kalitengah Lor, Cangkringan District, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region Province is one of the villages which is only 5 Kilometers from the slopes of Merapi. For this reason, the Sleman district government appealed to the Merapi community to evacuate to the refugee barracks at the Glagaharjo village hall, especially for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, pregnant women, and people with disabilities.

The case of the spread of the coronavirus or covid-19, which spreads so quickly, makes people's work movements increasingly limited, and it is necessary to reduce interactions with many people. In the case of many refugees who gathered in the refugee barracks, the implementing staff of the refugee barracks focused more on the health of refugees.

Provision of insulation between the beds of the refugees, always wearing masks, providing sinks always to wash their hands, and holding regular health checks for the refugees while in the refugee barracks.

In order to maintain the survival of the family, the people of Merapi are trying to survive during eruptions and pandemics. Their survival strategy is from a religious perspective by praying to their God. From a social perspective, they help each other among their fellow citizens. From an economic perspective, residents who are cut off from their livelihood activities try to find other activities to fulfill their daily needs, such as looking for firewood in the forest and caring for other people's cows.

With these data, the author and filmmaker made the documentary "Erupsi dan Pandemi." The author chose documentary films because documentaries have proven to be a methodologically in-depth research approach. Through documentary films, information can be conveyed uniquely while affecting viewers emotionally [1]. The selection of portrait documentary in the documentary "Erupsi dan Pandemi" is because the author as a Creator argues that the portrait documentary can represent the message that the Creator will convey by focusing on the lives of the Merapi residents who survived during the eruption as well as the covid-19 pandemic. Films with portrait documentaries usually describe life experiences considered related to aspects of human interest [2].

In making the documentary "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*," it is inseparable from production management. Production management starts from pre-production, production to post-production. The author acts as a producer who is responsible for the management of documentary film production. *Production management* is defined as all work that involves managing or regulating production to produce a work based on the production design itself [3]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, adjustments are needed during the production period. Management is the activity of managing uncertainty. Individuals and organizations can carry out various responses to uncertainty, such as reducing, maintaining, or adapting [3].

The importance of implementing health protocols for film crews was very much noticed during the documentary "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*". In this study, the author found several previous studies with different objects. Research conducted by Akser entitled "*Cinema, Life and Other Viruses: The Future of Filmmaking, Film Education and Film Studies In the Age Of Covid-19 Pandemic*" explains the devastating impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on filmmaking, distribution and film exhibitions, and film teaching at HE institutions [4]. Now, there are new protocols that actors and crew must adhere to during the production process to stay safe. Research conducted by Akser shows that the film industry is making efforts to survive during a pandemic by maintaining that the film industry can continue to move during the pandemic and post-pandemic. In addition, another study explained the documentary film "*Blashes*" produced by a production house in Klaten, namely Rumah Documentary. The documentary film "*Blashes*" carries out a relatively long production process so that production management plays an active role in the production process. From the results of the filmmaking process, it can be seen that the "*Blashes*" film management model [5]. Another study conducted by Freya Billington and Neil Fox with the title "*Film production and the intersection of technology, education*

and culture in a post-COVID-19 climate" explains the cultural shift in the manufacturing process. Films may emerge from the post-COVID-19 film industry, which may have a long-lasting positive impact on the film production learning space. The filmmaking process more generally prioritizes digital accessories such as laptops, cameras, software, and broadband resources for the film and television industry in the UK more broadly [6].

Documentary films are part of the mass media [7], [8]. Mass communication conveys messages through the media to be accepted by large audiences on a large scale and spread throughout the world. Communication can be done with media or without media. The communication that uses the media widely is called mass media. Documentary films are a series of factual events and opinions from natural events, social and cultural issues depicted in audiovisual and displayed in television journalistic format. Documentary films start from an idea and ideas that go through a creative process. There is a recording process in a documentary, characters of the problem to be revealed, and everything in the documentary departs from what happened [9]. Documentaries are divided into several types that we need to know [10]. Quoting from Gerzon Ayawaila's, the types of documentaries include; documentary travel, history, comparison/contradiction, science, nostalgia, reconstruction, investigation, music, experiment/art, diary, drama, and portrait/biography [2]. In producing documentary films, it is necessary to have good production management during the process. The process includes pre-production, production, and post-production [11]. According to Robbins and Coulter, management is a process of coordinating work activities with other people so that the work done can be completed effectively and efficiently [12].

2. Methods

The documentary film production method was chosen to describe the reality of Merapi people. They struggle to survive two disaster threats: the eruption of Mount Merapi and Pandemic Covid-19. Documentary films can be recognized as part of a study in social science [13]. The documentary can not only be used as research data but can be part of the output of the research. Documentary films have a significant impact on how we perceive ourselves and the world around us. In the past, documentary filmmaking was viewed as a creative endeavor, but it is now being used as a means of conducting and engaging in research [14].

The debate on producing documentary films as part of the research continues [15], [16]. However, researchers argue that the documentary production process has followed the qualitative method [17]. Researchers use documentaries to explore the activities of the research subjects; this is undoubtedly always.

The author of this study also acts as a filmmaker in implementing documentary films. The object of this study is the production process of documentary films "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*" The qualitative research approach is supported by data collection techniques, namely related literature studies, observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews [18]. The initial process of collecting data by the creator is research, such as searching for material and essential data from the internet. Then look for related literature studies from the last research journal. After conducting research, this research showed observations of

sites in Glagaharjo Village, Yogyakarta, to collect information data from several parties who could become resource people with the format of interviews and visit the intended audience location for more information and to find out much about conditions in the region.

3. Documentary Filmmaking

In creating the documentary film "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*" starting from the pre-production, production to post-production processes. The film category is information to provide informative shows to the audience by presenting data, reality, audio-visual, and statements from sources. The format of the documentary film "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*" is a type of portrait documentary with 21 minutes. The process of making it is done in teams by 2-3 people. The target audience in this documentary are teenagers aged 12-17 years, adults aged 18-40 years, and parents aged 40 years and over with a gender focus for men and women. Making the documentary "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*" took a long time, which was approximately two months.

The pre-production activity for the documentary film "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*" is early before entering the production stage. Starting seeing news about eruption amid the covid-19 pandemic, the creator came up with the idea to make a documentary to provide an overview of how the fate of the refugees was while in the refugee barracks. After finding an idea, the creator focuses on the idea and designs the storyline to become a film. The creator and the director discuss developing the ideas found to arrange the production design appropriately. The creators also set the goals for the film. The purpose of making this film is to find out the survival strategy of the Merapi community in dealing with the eruption preparedness period and the covid-19 pandemic. Because, by evacuating to the refugee barracks, of course, there will be a crowd of people in the refugee barracks. Meanwhile, the coronavirus or covid-19 is easy to spread, especially for groups vulnerable to covid-19, such as children, nursing mothers, the elderly, and the disabled. This group is a priority in the refugee barracks.

In documentaries, research is a significant factor [9]. Research is fundamental to support the idea that has been planned. At the research stage, due to regional restrictions during the covid-19 pandemic, the creator used internet technology during the research process. This internet technology became one of the solutions in obtaining the data the creator needed. After doing enough research via the internet, the creator then conducts field research. Due to the covid-19 pandemic situation, before conducting research and observations at the location, the film-maker and the crew carried out a *Gnose test* and an *antigen swab* first to ensure that all crews involved were in good health and tested negative for covid-19.



Figure 1: The crews routinely test for covid-19

After confirming that all the crew involved were healthy and tested negative for COVID-19, the filmmaker conducted field research and observations at the Glagaharjo village, Sleman. By doing research and observation, the filmmaker can determine the storyline that suits the conditions at the location. In addition to knowing and knowing the actual conditions at the shooting location, with research, can find interesting and suitable subjects to be the primary sources for the documentary film "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*". The field research stage or visual research is carried out to provide an overview to the crew, especially to camerapersons, to get to know the visual appearance of an area, activity, or appearance of the characters in the documentary [19]. Making a documentary requires careful planning for creative concepts and technical aspects to facilitate the production process. The filmmaker's creative and technical concept planning is making a film statement and storyline, making a TOR (*Term of Reference*), making a synopsis, compiling *Treatment*, compiling *shooting scripts*, and collecting equipment/equipment needed to compile a list of resource persons. The filmmaker makes a filmed statement that outlines the direction in making a documentary film [20].

The statement from the documentary "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*" is an effort by Merapi residents who are facing an eruption in 2020 at the same time as the COVID-19 pandemic. The storyline in the documentary becomes part of the body of the film to be worked on. What is written in the storyline is the film itself [9]. The storyline of the documentary film "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*" is divided into three segments. The first segment will explain Mount Merapi, and then the second segment will explain what the people in charge of the refugee camps do. The third segment will explain one of the Merapi residents who felt the impact of the Merapi eruption preparedness during the covid-19 pandemic and the closing of the documentary film "*Erupsi dan Pandemi*". After that, I created a *Term of Reference (TOR)*. TOR is the stage for the filmmaker to explain the problem, point of view, and things prioritized in making this work. TOR aims to show the main points of the material raised. After makes a TOR, then creates a Synopsis. *The synopsis* is a summary that describes the contents of a film as a prologue to a film. This synopsis can make it easier for the audience to make a clear and straightforward description of the contents of the documentary. The filmmaker compiled *Treatment*, which is the sketch that can provide an overview of the approach content of the story.

The production stage will run smoothly if it has fulfilled the pre-production stage that has been designed with the team. At this stage, the role of the filmmaker of the work is to create a shooting script. The benefits of shooting scripts and knowing the images that will be needed, the filmmaker will also know what images have not been recorded later, and the shooting script can help make a shooting schedule [20]. The filmmaker also monitors the shooting process to follow the plans that have been prepared at the beginning. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all crew also continue to apply health protocols during the production process.

Then, the filmmaker sets a schedule to ensure interview appointments or the willingness of the interviewees to provide the required data and information [19]. When collecting data through interview sessions, some of the filmmaker's met sources followed health protocols such as wearing masks, but some did not. For this reason, during the documentary film production process, the entire crew must adapt to several health protocols that have been set. All crew must apply several rules regarding health protocols, such as maintaining a distance from every resource person encountered or at interviews and always wearing masks.



Figure 2: Using a mask when interviewing informants

In crew management, the filmmaker is very concerned about the safety and health of the crew because the coronavirus or covid-19 is very easily transmitted from one person to another. The creators realized that nothing was more important than the safety and health of the crew during the process of making the documentary. All crew members have been confirmed to be healthy, and no one has tested positive for covid-19. The crew perform routine antigen tests before starting production and after completion of the production process. In addition, to maintain health protocols, the Creator also prepared hand sanitizers, several boxes of mask stock and brought several types of vitamins to maintain the immune system of the documentary film crew " *Erupsi dan Pandemi*". A documentary filmmaker must be open to changes that may occur in the field due to the need for adjustments to field conditions [19].



Figure 3: Additional Equipment for Filmmakers

The next stage is to prepare a production budget and equipment according to the needs needed for the production process. In the production process of the documentary film “*Erupsi dan Pandemi*”, some equipment such as cameras, tripods, drones, additional lenses such as fixed lenses, clip-ons, memory cards, and spare batteries are needed to make taking pictures easier. After going through the pre-production stage for a long time, the next is the production stage. Before starting the shooting process, the creator did a briefing first. It is essential to conduct a briefing and re-check the equipment to be used before starting production. As much as possible must work according to the planned schedule, so the filming process is completed on time. The co-creator and the crew still adhere to health protocols such as washing hands before and after production. The creators also always use masks and keep their distance according to the health protocols set by the government.

The last stage is post-production; at this stage, there are several activities, such as logging, mixing, editing, transcripts, and scripts. The logging stage is to review and record the results of the shooting that has been done. Next, do the mixing and interview transcripts. The filmmaker cannot monitor the editing process with the editor at the editing stage because the government regulations regarding restrictions on community activities due to covid-19 are in progress. Therefore, monitoring the editing process is carried out using the *Google Meet* video-conferencing application.

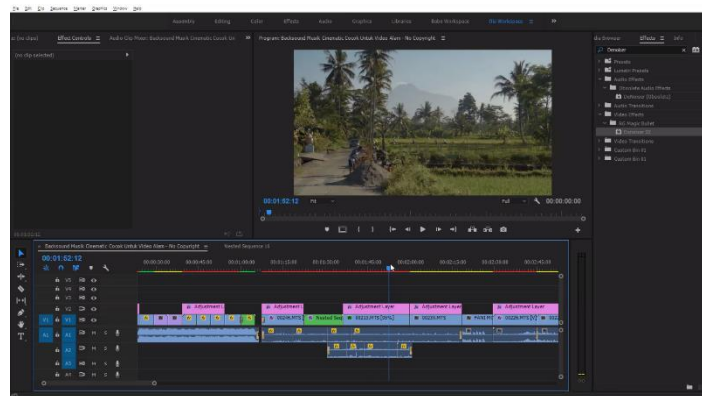


Figure 4: Monitoring the Editing Process Online

Implementation during the production process did not go perfectly according to plan. There were several obstacles during the production process, such as a change in the shooting schedule due to having to adjust the schedule of the resource person who suddenly changed. Then, another obstacle was that the creator and crew were unable to visit several areas during the covid-19 pandemic due to regional restrictions included in the red zone and drastic changes in the weather so that some shooting schedules that had been designed were delayed. The solution was to adjust some of these obstacles during the filming process during the covid-19 pandemic by conducting interviews with resource persons through the *Google Meet* video communication service or zoom, then replacing the visualization of the red zone location that failed to be obtained with a statement from the source.

4. Conclusion

“*Erupsi dan Pandemi*” film is a documentary that tells about the survival strategies carried out by the Merapi refugees when facing the Merapi eruption preparedness in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic. Documentary films are one way to describe the reality that is happening to the Merapi community in dealing with the eruption preparedness period and the covid-19 pandemic. The creation of the eruption and pandemic documentaries is inseparable from a fairly long process, namely the pre-production, production and post-production stages.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Eko Widodo as an informant and We would also like to express my gratitude to Universitas Budi Luhur for supporting me with my research. “*Erupsi dan Pandemi*” film can be watched via: <https://youtu.be/kzYSMwGyaLg>

References

- [1] D. Borish, “Moving images, Moving Methods: Advancing Documentary Film for Qualitative Research,” ... *J. Qual.* ..., 2021.
- [2] G. R. Ayawaila, “Dokumenter dari ide sampai produksi,” *FFTV-IKJ Press. Jakarta*, 2008.
- [3] D. H. Rahmitasari, *Manajemen media di Indonesia*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2017.
- [4] M. Akser, “Cinema, Life and Other Viruses: The Future of Filmmaking, Film Education and Film Studies in the Age of Covid-19 Pandemic,” *CINEJ Cine. J.*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 1–13, 2020.
- [5] K. A. Muafa and F. Junaedi, “Model Manajemen Produksi Film Dokumenter Bulu Mata Karya Tonny Trimarsanto,” *CHANNEL: Jurnal Komunikasi*. core.ac.uk, 2020.
- [6] N. Fox, “Film production and the intersection of technology, education and culture in a post-COVID-19 climate//A Conversation between Dr Neil Fox (Falmouth

- University) and Freya Billington (UWE),” *Digit. Cult. Educ.*, 2020.
- [7] L. Wilkins and C. G. Christians, *The routledge handbook of mass media ethics*. Routledge, 2020.
- [8] V. Nawiroh, “Komunikasi massa,” *Bogor Ghalia Indones.*, 2016.
- [9] T. Trimarsanto, *Renita, Renita: catatan proses membuat film dokumenter*. Rumah Dokumenter, 2011.
- [10] I. Bondebjerg, “Documentary and cognitive theory: Narrative, emotion and memory,” *Media Commun.*, 2014.
- [11] V. Yuliansyah and R. P. Jati, “PICTURING THE LOCAL CULTURE: DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING ‘BALI BUJA,’” *J. Humanit. Soc. Sci. Bus.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 17–24, 2021.
- [12] S. P. Robbins and M. Coulter, *Managemnt*. 2018.
- [13] R. P. Jati, “Film Dokumenter Sebagai Metode Alternatif Penelitian Komunikasi,” *Avant Garde*, vol. 9, no. 02, pp. 141–155, 2021.
- [14] A. Fitzgerald and M. Lowe, “Acknowledging documentary filmmaking as not only an output but a research process: A case for quality research practice,” *Int. J. Qual.*, 2020.
- [15] E. M. Maccarone, “Ethical responsibilities to subjects and documentary filmmaking,” *J. Mass Media Ethics Explor. Quest. Media Moral.*, 2010.
- [16] D. M. Petrarca and J. M. Hughes, “Mobilizing Knowledge via Documentary Filmmaking — Is the Academy Ready?,” *McGill J. Educ.*, 2015.
- [17] R. Morgan, A. M. Game, and N. Slutskaya, “Qualitative research through documentary filmmaking: Questions and possibilities,” _____, *SAGE Handb. Qual. Bus. Manag. Res. methods. London SAGE*, 2018.
- [18] N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, “Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed., N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, Eds. California: SAGE, 2018.
- [19] C. Tanzil, R. Ariefiansyah, and T. Trimarsanto, *Pemula Dalam Film Dokumenter Gampang-Gampang Susah*. In-Documents, 2010.
- [20] F. Nugroho, *Cara Pinter Bikin Film Dokumenter*. 2007.