CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Tourism businesses in Indonesia are rapidly growing and playing a crucial role in contributing to the country's economic growth. Ahmad (2022) explained that tourism in Indonesia significantly contributes to foreign exchange earnings, which is important for financial stability and growth. The main contributor that makes Indonesia's tourism thrive is international tourists. The number of international tourists visiting Indonesia is increasing steadily from month to month. As mentioned by Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia (2024) in August 2024, the visits of international tourists increased by 2.23% compared to July 2024. This upward growth in the tourism industry should be aligned with the quality of human resources in Indonesia, especially for people who work in the tourism field.

Various skills must be mastered to improve human resources quality and participate meaningfully in the Indonesian tourism industry. Among these, communication in English provides the most significant competitive advantage in the global market. Unfortunately for Indonesia, the level of English proficiency is not close to that of other Southeast Asian countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines, so it remains low. As mentioned by the English First English Language Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2024, Indonesia is in the 80th out of 116 countries regarding English proficiency ranking. Damayanti (2019) stated that everyone working in the tourism industry must speak English because it is necessary to communicate with visitors and provide quality services. Communicating with international tourists using English is crucial because it makes a positive impression, many foreign visitors favor nations with English-speaking tour guides and information-giving personnel. On the other hand, poor English skills can make it more difficult for foreigners to be satisfied and, when coupled with bad management techniques, can make it more difficult for Indonesia to become a popular destination. This is particularly important for renowned international tourist destinations in Indonesia, such as Bali, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta.

Among those popular cities in Indonesia, Yogyakarta is known for its rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and vibrant tourist destinations, such as Prambanan Temple, Keraton Yogyakarta, and Taman Pintar Yogyakarta. Between these attractions, Taman Pintar Yogyakarta is one of the popular destinations often visited by international tourists. Taman Pintar Yogyakarta is a recreational and educational park that promotes tourism in Yogyakarta while fostering a love of learning for people of all ages. As a popular tourist destination, Taman Pintar Yogyakarta requires various positions to ensure smooth operation and visitor satisfaction. Examples of positions include back-office positions, operational positions, and front-line positions. Among these positions, front-line positions play a crucial role as they serve as the first point of contact for visitors and shape the impression of the overall experience visitors may get at the destination. For example, the ticketing staff is one of the staff in the front-line position. Ticketing staff hold an essential task as the first face seen by visitors. This position is responsible for greeting visitors for the first time, helping them purchase tickets, and explaining the prices, facilities, and activities. In conclusion, a well-trained staff member who can communicate effectively in English is a must for Taman Pintar Yogyakarta to provide better experiences for international tourists.

Realizing that English proficiency is crucial for the tourism industry, the writer identified an opportunity to assist the service process at Taman Pintar Yogyakarta. The writer conducted a preliminary study during the internship program at Taman Pintar Yogyakarta by interviewing the public relations supervisor of the Taman Pintar Yogyakarta division. The writer asked about the number of international tourists who visit Taman Pintar Yogyakarta and the challenges they may face. The writer found that the ticketing employees of Taman Pintar Yogyakarta have difficulties in English Communication. Based on these findings, the public relations supervisor asked the writer to develop a project to create a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) with the answers to assist ticketing staff in handling international tourists. This project was later expanded into a final project by creating a pocketbook that will be designed as a self-learning medium as well as a helping hand in assisting ticketing staff in serving visitors, especially international visitors.

A pocketbook is a practical book containing topics someone can carry comfortably and efficiently. The contents of a pocketbook are in a short form and include many engaging visuals. It is also tiny enough to be taken anywhere and read anytime (Permana, 2021). Though pocketbooks are commonly referred to as books that someone can keep in their pocket, their value goes beyond that. Aside from being a portable item, it is an efficient learning tool that can be accessed and gathered within seconds.

While the digital world provides immense convenience, studies on reading comprehension show that physical texts can be superior to digital screens for information retention (Mangen, Walgermo, & Brønnick, 2013). This finding is particularly relevant in a high-traffic service environment where a tangible job aid, like a pocketbook, can reduce the cognitive load associated with navigating digital interfaces. In a dynamic workspace such as a ticketing counter, where staff work in shifts and rotate periodically, this makes a physical pocketbook more than a simple convenience; it acts as a stable and cognitively efficient resource that remains at the workstation. Unlike information on a personal device that leaves with an employee, the pocketbook ensures every staff member has immediate and reliable access to essential information. Furthermore, it is a supportive self-learning tool because it practically and structurally breaks down topics. A pocketbook in ticketing can be helpful for staff who have to deal with international tourists by providing them with practical conversational scenarios and sample sentences relevant for use.

1.2 Objective

This final project aimed to make a pocketbook as a self-learning medium for ticketing staff at Taman Pintar Yogyakarta.

1.3 Significances

The product of this final project benefited the following parties:

1.3.1 For the writer

This final project helped improve the writer's ability to develop pocketbooks and final project proposals, enhance reading comprehension of scientific journals,

refine video editing skills, and sharpen graphic design skills.

1.3.2 For the English Study Program

This final project proposal and product contributed as a reference that can be used by the English Study Program of Politeknik Negeri Jember in supporting learning based on teaching material development.

1.3.3 For Taman Pintar Yogyakarta

The product of this final project helped Taman Pintar Yogyakarta in enhancing the quality of service to tourists, especially in communicating with international tourists. The product will act as a crucial assisting tool for enhancing the overall visitor experience at Taman Pintar Yogyakarta.

1.3.4 For the Ticketing Staff of Taman Pintar Yogyakarta

The product of this final project was useful for the ticketing staff at Taman Pintar Yogyakarta as a self-learning medium to help them serve international visitors.

1.3.5 For the Students of the English Study Program

This final project proposal and product became a reference for students of the English Study Program of Jember State Polytechnic who want to make a similar final project, especially in developing pocketbook as a self-learning medium.