



I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Tourism is now one of the world's biggest industries and will continue to have significant role over the coming years. Over the past several decades, the tourism industry has become one of the fastest growing industries within the services sector. The level of contribution of the tourism industry to many countries' economic growth, like in Indonesia, has shown an increase over the years. Tourism can create jobs, generate spending, stimulate business activity, support local amenities and conservation, and add to the vitality and attractiveness of places. Tourism must be properly managed, if its full potential is to be realized.

In Indonesia, tourism industry has been giving a large contribution to the country's economic growth, especially in increasing the national income as the third biggest contributor after oil and gas, and textile industry until 1997 (Tim KLH and UNDP in Roslita, 2001). Though it has showed deprivation trends for the last decades because of world economic crisis, but it still perform as a promising industry for the country to be developed in future time. Its importance is set to grow even more as the economy transforms into a post-industrial society. With the rapid economic expansion that many countries have experienced, it is highly likely that the tourism industry will be the main driver to bring about both economic and social evolution^{*)}.

^{*)} [http:// www.indonesia-gateway.web.id](http://www.indonesia-gateway.web.id)

It is the existing potentials of the diversity of cultural, arts and natural beauty of Indonesia that have become the basis of tourism development in Indonesia^{*)}. They also become important resources that play an essential role in tourism industry. Indonesia is an archipelago country in South Asia that is enriched with varied landscape forms and tropical natural beauty, as well as has a large variety of cultural assets. There are many beautiful and attractive places all over the country, either because of the cultural or natural beauty or even both of them, which become very popular tourist destination places. Indonesia is also known as one of the biggest tropical tourism destinations. It has the second longest shoreline than any other countries in the world. The coastline has long been a magnet for tourists, which has raised concerns about sustainable development. Indonesia has plenty of beaches that become the famous tourist destination places. One of the most famous beaches is the one that is located on south coast of Java Island, namely Parangtritis Beach.

Parangtritis Beach is located on the south coast of Central Java, about 27 km to the south of Yogyakarta. It is the local legend that has claimed the Parangtritis Beach as the location of the palace of Kanjeng Ratu Kidul, the ruler of the Southern Ocean invisible world. It also has an important meaning based on the history of Mataram Kingdom, which views the Parangtritis Beach as a part of *Merapi Mount – Kesultanan Palace – Parangtritis Beach* trilogy. This kind of trilogy is very strongly influenced by Javanese culture in which these three components are associated with the unity of *Agni – Udaka – Maruta* trilogy (Surono and Soelist, 1997).

*) [http:// www.indonesia-gateway.web.id](http://www.indonesia-gateway.web.id)



Regardless the truth, the Parangtritis beach is one of tourism site that is visited by plenty of visitors from other places, both from domestic and abroad. Unlike the other beaches that are normally associated with light colored sand, Parangtritis Beach is covered with black colored sand, a specialty of Javanese beaches due to the presence of volcanoes (Mahdzan, 2003). What is more, the presence of sand dunes, as one of unique natural phenomena on earth, in this area has added the quality of natural beauty of this destination. The sand dune phenomenon in this area is the only one that can be found in Indonesia, even in South East Asia. Moreover, at the site, there are many other interesting tourism objects beside its famous beach, such as Parangwedang Hot Spring, Cepuri Parangkusumo, Parangkusumo Beach, Maulana Maghribi grave yard, and Syeh Belu-Belu grave yard.

Even though Parangtritis Beach has already known as tourist destination place with its variety of tourism objects, but it is rarely including in a touring system that serve the visitors with informative and recreative interpretation within the current tourism management. The current tourism management still tends to put emphasis on the value of each separate object within the coastal area with less information about the area as a whole.

Concerning that issue, it is important to develop a touring plan for the tourism network in the coastal area of Parangtritis integrated with the interpretation of its local quality of natural, visual, and cultural factors. That interpretive touring plan may lead to the successfulness of conservation and management program since one of interpretation purposes is to support

conservation indirectly, by provoking the visitors about the significance values of the tourism objects as well as tourism sites (Damayanti, 2003).

1.2. Objectives

The main objectives of this study is studying on developing a touring plan in coastal area of Parangtritis based on its visual, natural, and cultural quality assessments. Specifically, the objectives are:

- to analyze the visual quality of the study area based on its scenic beauty estimation integrated with the visual character consideration;
- to analyze the natural and cultural quality of the coastal area of Parangtritis;
- to make an integration among the visual quality assessment result and the natural quality as well as the cultural quality to obtain a potential tourism area and potential stops within the coastal area of Parangtritis; and
- to prioritize the most preferable touring plan that will be the linkage among the potential stops or tourism objects within the coastal area of Parangtritis.

1.3. Scope of Study

The main interest of this study is developing a touring plan in coastal area of Parangtritis by assessing its potencies of visual, natural, as well as cultural elements. The assessment of natural elements will characterize the natural quality of the area. Meanwhile, visual element will be evaluated based on the scenic together with visual character assessment which later will describe the visual quality of the coastal area of Parangtritis. The last assessment will be on cultural

element. This assessment will evaluate the cultural pattern influences on the site which usually represented by a variety of cultural forms, such as festivals, architecture, historic sites, artistic performances, and heritage sites, as well as any experiences that bring one culture in contact within the area.

All those three factors will be integrated in ranking from the most potentially attractive area to the less ones for tourism within the coastal area of Parangtritis. This arrangement together with interpretation program will be considered in sequencing the visitor movement within the tourism area so that the visitors can be served not only with the experiences of enjoying the visiting but also with the informative interpretation of the sites they visit. The framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

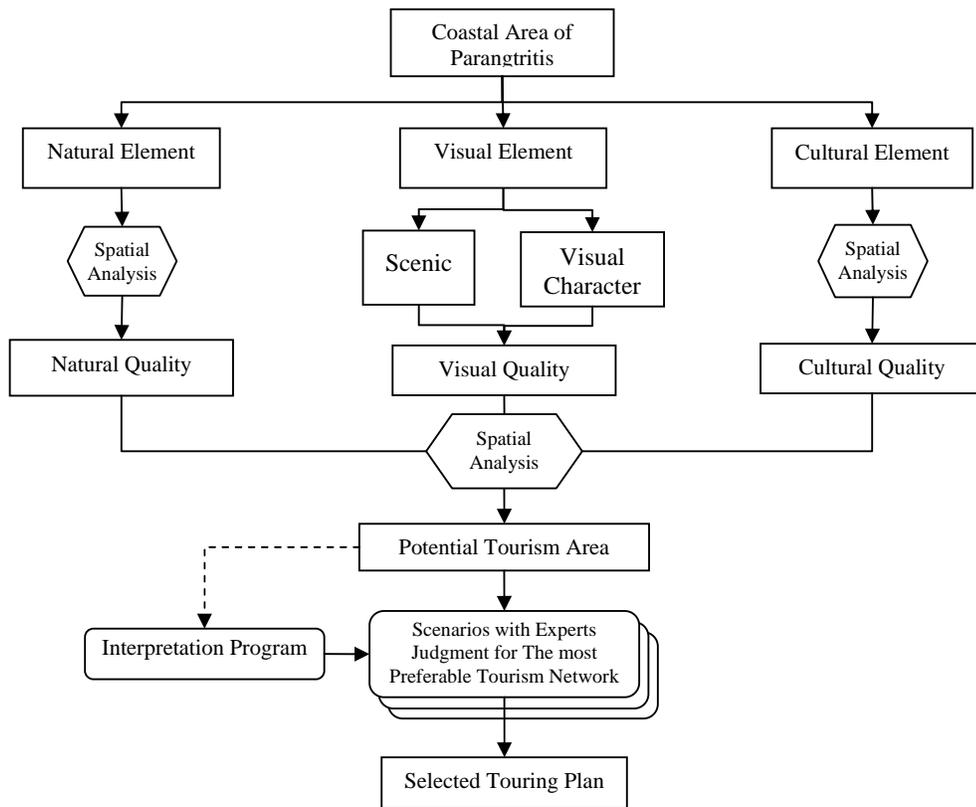


Figure 1. Framework of Study

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