CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Surakarta City, also known as Solo, is one of the major destinations in Indonesia, and it is known for its outstanding culture, history, and educational progress. Tourism is a strategic sector in the development of the creative economy and the enhancement of regional image. Surakarta City, as one of the cultural destinations in Central Java, has shown positive growth in the number of tourist visits. According to data from the Surakarta City Tourism Office published through the *Solo Data* portal, as of the end of October 2024, the number of tourist visits reached 4,515,514 (Dinas Pariwisata Kota Surakarta, 2024). This figure reflects a consistent growth trend, considering that in the first half of 2024 (January–June), the total number of visits was 2,628,721. Furthermore, the Surakarta City Government has set a target of 5.2 million tourist visits in 2025, and by May 2025, the number had already reached approximately 2.5 million (RRI Surakarta, 2025). The majority of these visits were from domestic tourists, while international tourist numbers remained relatively low. This situation highlights the need to improve the quality of tourism services, including the availability of effective media for information and communication. Solo tourism not only offers cultural attractions such as the Surakarta Palace, Mangkunegaran Temple, and Laweyan Batik Village, but also begun to develop tourism that focuses on education and technological advancement.

Solo now offers various tourist destinations that combine technology, education, and creative industries as a new tourist attraction. One of the growing educational tourism destinations is Solo Technopark, a technology area that offers tourism experiences based on innovation and industrial development. Solo Technopark is a technology innovation and development center in Surakarta City that was established in 2009. This area is a place for various industrial training, research, and technology-based business incubation. In addition to it is role as a research and education center, Solo Technopark is now starting to be known as a

technology-based educational tourism destination, which attracts industry visits from academics, students, and general tourists who are interested in innovation and technological development in Indonesia (Solo Technopark, 2025).

Solo Technopark Public Relations data shows an increase in industry visits every year. However, this progress is not matched with the availability of an experienced tour guide service. One of the main obstacles faced is the lack of teaching materials or an official Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for tour guides, especially for interns on duty at Solo Technopark. The role of tour guides is significant for the growth of Solo's educational tourism. Tour guides are not only in charge of accompanying tourists but also become a bridge of information that helps tourists understand the destination's history, innovation, and potential. Tour guides have an important role in providing experiences to tourists. A quality tour guide should be able to convey information in an engaging, accurate, and systematic way to enhance tourist understanding and satisfaction during the visit (Suryana, 2022). According to Pusparani (2024), the way a tour guide conveys information greatly influences the tourist experience. In the context of technology and education tourism, such as Solo Technopark, the challenge for tour guides becomes more difficult because they must fully understand the research, innovation, and technology that exist in the place.

However, based on the researcher's experience during an internship at Solo Technopark, particularly in the Public Relations division—whose responsibilities include organizing industrial visits—it was found that the division does not yet have a standardized guidebook to assist tour guides in conducting these visits. This has led to inconsistencies in the information delivered by the tour guides. Each guide tends to present the material based on their own interpretation and memory, without a uniform narrative structure, resulting in varied information being conveyed to different visitors. There is also a limited understanding among guides regarding technical aspects such as research, innovation, and technology, which are the main focus areas of Solo Technopark. As a result, the information presented during the tours tends to lack depth and may even be superficial. Consequently, the visitor experience becomes suboptimal. When information is not delivered in an engaging

and structured manner, the educational potential of the visit is diminished. This situation poses a risk to the reputation of Solo Technopark as a credible and impactful educational tourism destination focused on technology and innovation.

Every educational tourist destination needs clear written guidelines. Pitana and Diarta (2020) explain that travel guides can convey information in a professional and interesting way. Without uniform information standards, the effectiveness of tour guides in carrying out their duties is less than optimal, which in turn can reduce visitor satisfaction. To solve this problem, based on the background that has been described, to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the information delivered by tour guides at Solo Technopark, there is a need for an official reference guide. Therefore, the development of a tour guidebook is proposed as a standardized resource. In developing effective learning and communication tools for tour guides, especially in formal environments like Solo Technopark, a bilingual guidebook was chosen over other instruments such as mobile applications or audiovisual modules due to its accessibility, practicality, and cost efficiency. Guidebooks can be used flexibly without the need for internet access or technological proficiency, making them ideal for field use during tours. Moreover, they serve not only as a real-time reference during tourist interactions but also as a self-learning resource to improve communication and language skills. According to Wahyuningtyas et al. (2024), the use of bilingual guidebooks significantly enhanced the speaking skills of local tour guides in Wonocoyo Village through structured, context-based language exposure. The guidebook in this study is also supported by QR-coded audio narrations, allowing users to practice pronunciation and listening skills independently.

This book will serve as a written guide that contains complete information about Solo Technopark, including its history, facilities, technologies developed, and how to properly inform visitors. This guide book aims to help tour guides at Solo Technopark to provide accurate, organized, and interesting information to visitors. Standardize the content provided to tourists so that all travel guides use the same reference to explain. Improve the ability of tour guides to provide high-quality services. To facilitate interaction with foreign tourists, there is content in English

that helps tour guides explain technology concepts to foreign visitors. To develop this book, the researchers used the Research and Development (R&D) method by Borg and Gall (1983). This method was chosen because it is suitable for the type of product being developed. It is hoped that this book will be a practical, simple, and easy-to-understand tool to help tour guides do their job better. The educational tourism experience at Solo Technopark will be more organized, professional, and attractive to local and foreign tourists with this guide

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on the background presented, statements of the problem can be formulated as follows:

1. How is the process of creating a bilingual guide book for tour guides in Solo Technopark?
2. How did the Public Relations team respond to the guidebook that was being developed?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. To create a bilingual (Indonesian-English) guide book as a standardized reference for tour guides at Solo Technopark.
2. To analyze the feedback from the public relations team about the guide book.

1.4 Significance of The Study

This research is expected to provide several benefits for different stakeholders, including:

1. Provide insights into the role of standardization in tour guiding and its impact on visitor experience.
2. Serve as a reference for future research related to educational tourism development and tour guide training.
3. Offer a structured reference that helps tour guides deliver accurate, engaging, and professional information.

1.5 Research Output

The primary output of this research is a "Guidance Book for Tour Guide at Solo Technopark". This guide book contains a brief description of Solo Technopark covering parts of the Reasearch and Development Building, Solo Trade Center Building, and Sembrani and Gumarang Building, a simplified explanation of the major research projects and technological developments taking place at Solo Technopark, and Facilities, then effective communication guidelines and tips for tour guides to communicate effectively with both local and international visitors. English-Indonesian key terminology, a glossary of commonly used technical and tourism-related terms to help tour guides explain concepts in both languages. By providing this structured guide book, this research aims to improve the professionalism, consistency, and effectiveness of tour guides at Solo Technopark, ultimately enhancing the reputation and attractiveness of the destination.