

# Begging and tourism: between visual imagery and a social reality

**D Dewiyanti<sup>1</sup>, D Rosmalia<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Architecture Department, Universitas Komputer Indonesia (UNIKOM), Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Architecture Department, Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta, Indonesia

dhini.dewiyanti@email.unikom.ac.id, dinirosmalia@gmail.com

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to see visual imagery and a social reality. Cirebon is one of the tourist destination city because it has cultural value, history, and architectural value. As a location with many tourists, it becomes a place with economic potential that attracts many parties, even for beggars. Tourism and beggars, like two sides of a coin, one side prioritize physical beauty and display a positive impression, while the other side shows a beggar activity that shows the social gap of the existing society. The purpose of the paper is to explore the characteristics of beggars and the use of space by beggars. Descriptive research conducted at Sang Cipta Great Mosque, Kasepuhan, Cirebon, during the period of 2016-2017. Content analysis was obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with ten beggars and a number of tourists performing ritual activities around the mosque. The conclusion shows that beggars and tourists in Sang Cipta Great Mosque area have a mutualism symbiotic relationship that needs each other. The implications of the research have an impact on knowledge inputs for tourism businesses and contribute as inputs to government policies related to the tourism industry.

## 1. Introduction

The topic of this research is in the tourism industry which often has problems in the presence of beggars at tourist sites. Many previous studies have concluded that beggars are often regarded as a source of problems in many tourist areas in various locations in the city or country [1-4]. This study reveals another side of the topic about beggars in the tourist area. Cirebon as a religious tourist destination city has a strong attachment between tourists and beggars. One hopes for a blessing from God, while others expect to receive blessings from tourists.

Some countries are transformed from agriculture and industrial countries into a country as a tourist destination because tourism is able to contribute greatly to the state's economy [5, 6]. Tourism is also becoming one of the most prioritized sectors of the Indonesian government [7]. This informal sector became one of the significant contributors to the income of the state. Currently, Indonesia's tourism sector contributes to approximately 4% of the total economy. By 2019, the Government of Indonesia wants to increase this figure to double to 8% of GDP [8]. Beginning with Bali, now focusing on developing other local tourist destinations. Tourism encompasses all that has uniqueness, beauty, and value in the form of diversity of natural wealth, culture and man-made products that become the target or purpose of tourist visit [9]. As an activity that invites many tourists, both domestic and foreign tourists, this activity is also economically attractive [10-13]. Cirebon as one of the many tourist



destinations in Indonesia has a unique culture and traditions that blend in with the physical strength of the city. The existence of the palace, historic mosques, temples, sites, squares and so on into a tourist location visited by many tourists. The culinary and people's craft centers, become another attraction that also makes Cirebon as a tourist destination.

Like most other tourist attractions in Indonesia, even in various tourist sites in the world, tourist destination areas are often a place that is also in demand by beggars [14, 15]. Various characteristics of beggars appear in various activity: asking money to migrants, begging by expecting a pity from tourists due to their disability, selling goods by forcing and following tourists wherever, or the characteristics of beggars by displaying singing skills or other art that often perform with the minimal ability. Two activities in the form of tourism and social scene present into two opposite activities. For the tourism, there is a desire to show the positive side of the cultural and physical uniqueness of the city. But the presence of beggars will certainly reduce the value of the good impression.

This paper focuses on the use of space in tourist areas at city festivals and ritual activities. It also analyzes the motivation of beggars, the origin of the beggar and the location of begging and the implications for the existing tourists. The focus of the discussion is on Sang Ciptarasa Great Mosque, Cirebon which routinely has annual religious ritual events that also blend with the ritual activities of other tourist objects in the city of Cirebon. This study will provide an overview of the tourist spaces that occur, so it can be a consideration for the policymakers in providing policy direction and development of cities that are able to compete for the activities of tourism.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This research is done by a qualitative approach through a descriptive method. The data obtained by purposive sampling technique through the selection of participants based on a special consideration, choosing the character of the respondent based on certain criteria [16, 17]. Participants, in this case, are beggars and tourists. For this case, choose beggars who are easy to communicate with. Selected beggars are also categorized in beggars who purely ask money to migrants (2 peoples), begging with the body disability (1 people), to sell products (5 peoples), and begging by the way of performing art (2 peoples). The sellers are the easiest categories to work with. while the tourists selected as participants are tourists who are seen to have interactions with beggars. Questions to beggars: their hometown, their group, the begging motivation, the duration and the level of participation in begging activities. Questions to tourists: responses to the presence of beggars in tourism activities

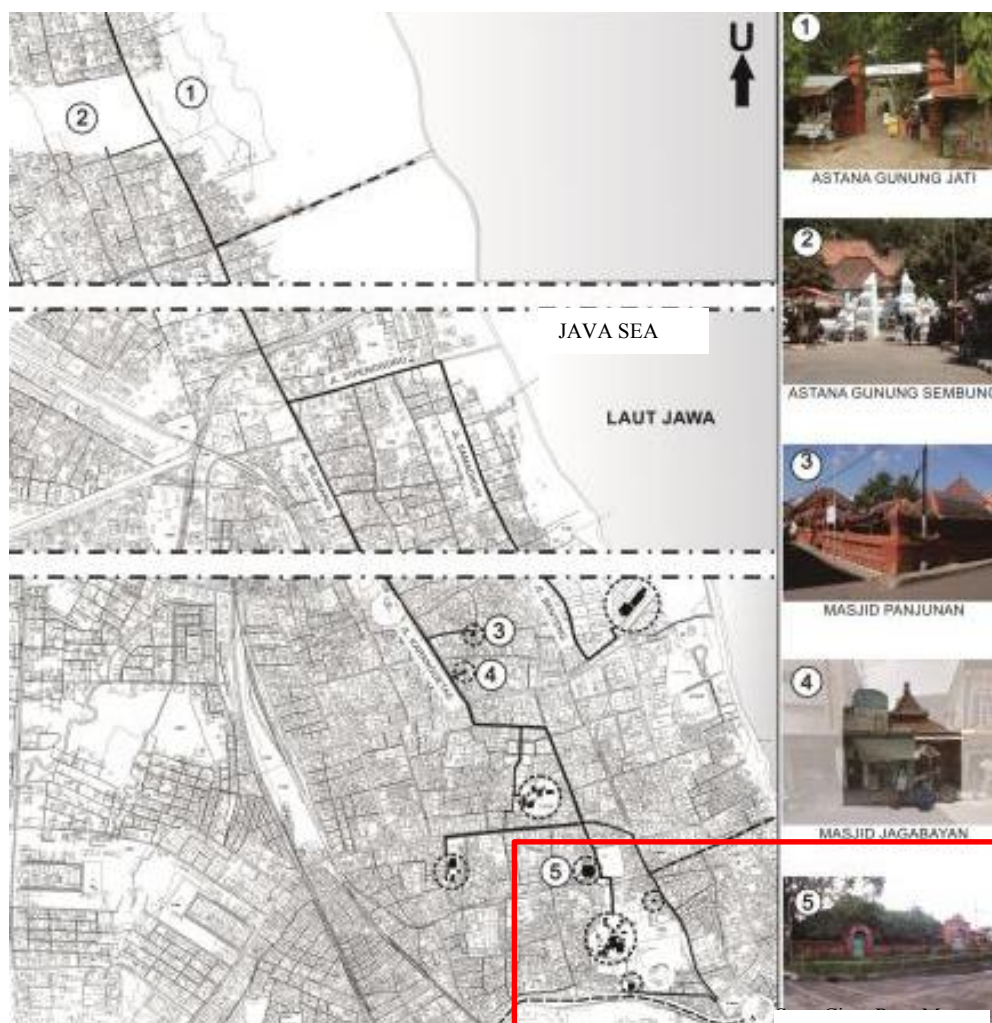
Research also conducted through the observation of the physical environment of the tourist attraction at Sang Ciptarasa Mosque and the behavior of beggars and tourists, as well as through interviews. Observation is done at a time adjusted to the time of the holiday activities conducted in the city of Cirebon. Observation is done during the festival activities or ritual activities conducted in the city of Cirebon. It takes several instruments to be able to record and obtain information so that this study produces an accurate conclusion, among others: (1) Visualize the position of beggars: mapping the position of the beggar who performs activities in Sang Cipta Rasa Great Mosque. The mapping is useful for knowing the zone of the area favored by beggars as a place of activity; (2) In-depth interviews: observations cannot be done continuously, additional information is needed in the form of in-depth interviews conducted on some beggars who can communicate well. The questions asked are: the origin of the region, the reasons for being a beggar, time of activity as well as the duration of activity, activities carried out alone or in groups, and is there any other occupation than begging.

The steps taken include the identification of the space, the data collection and the observation of the existing activities and the activities of beggars, the depictions of begging activities, and observing other aspects around the space that affect the begging activity. Content analysis is done through data selection, data reduction process, structuring, coding and interpretation of meaning [18].

## **3. Results and discussions**

The research focused on the object of Sang Cipta Rasa Great Mosque which has another name: Kasepuhan Great Mosque or Cirebon Great Mosque. Located on Jagasatu Street, Kasepuhan,

Lemahwungkuk, Cirebon City, West Java. Founded by Shaykh Sharif Hidayatullah or Sunan Gunung Jati, and became the oldest mosque in Cirebon City, West Java. Sunan Gunung Jati is one of the *Wali Songo* (9 spreaders of the Islamic teachings) that spread Islam in West Java, especially Cirebon City, and surrounding areas. Sang Cipta Rasa Great Mosque combines the style of Demak, Majapahit, and Cirebon mosque. In the *mihrab* section of the mosque, there is a lotus-shaped carving made by Sunan Kalijaga. *Mihrab* is a semicircular niche in the wall of a *mosque* that indicates the qibla; the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca and hence the direction that Muslims should face when praying. In the *mihrab*, there are also three special marked tiles that symbolize the three basic teachings of religion, namely *Faith, Islam, and Ihsan*. On the right (north) area of the mosque, there is a *zam-zam* well or Banyu Cis Sang Cipta Rasa crowded by people, especially in *Ramadhan* because it is considered to have a blessing. The event held by Cirebon City, and also use the Sang Cipta Rasa Mosque areas as part of the location area are ***1 Suro, 10 Suro, Saparan, Muludan, Rajaban, Nishfu Sya'ban, Ramadhan-an, Idul Fitri, Idul Adha, Kliwonan and so on.*** The grand mosque Sang Cipta Rasa is one part of the existing tourist route in the city of Cirebon: 1) Astana Gunung Jati, 2) Astana Gunung Sembung, 3) Panjunan Mosque, 4) Jagabaya Mosque, and 5) Sang Cipta Rasa Mosque (Figure 1).

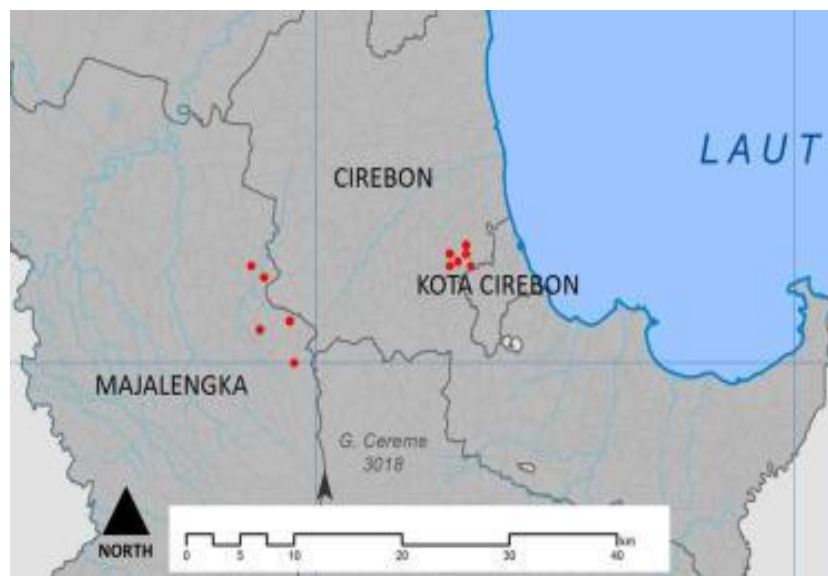


**Figure 1.** The series of religious tour routes in Cirebon city.

### 3.1. Distribution of the beggar's origin and workplace

The distribution of the beggars' villages who always comes to Sang Cipta Rasa Kasepuhan Great Mosque is from surrounding areas of Cirebon Regency, such as Kedungjaya, Astapada, Megugede,

Palir, Kedungdawa, and Kalikoa villages. Besides that, there are some from surrounding areas of Majalengka Regency, such as Jatiwangi, Sumberjaya, Leuwimunding, and Rajagaluh villages (Figure 2). Some of them come every day but another one come every week or if there are some rituals or a celebration of traditions. Each beggar comes alone or sometimes with their family or their communities. The origin of the beggars indicates that most begging activities are carried out by residents from the western area of Cirebon region, and not from residents who live in coastal areas. This phenomenon is caused by the ease of transportation to the city center which is easier than to go to the coast. The ease of transportation became one of the city's attractions that encourage economic activity [19]. Begging in the city area is more profitable because usually, tourists will give more than local residents [20, 21] This phenomenon is also caused by the condition where the coastal areas also have many ritual activities, so that residents who are lives in the central region, preferring the activities located in downtown Cirebon.



**Figure 2.** The origin of beggars.

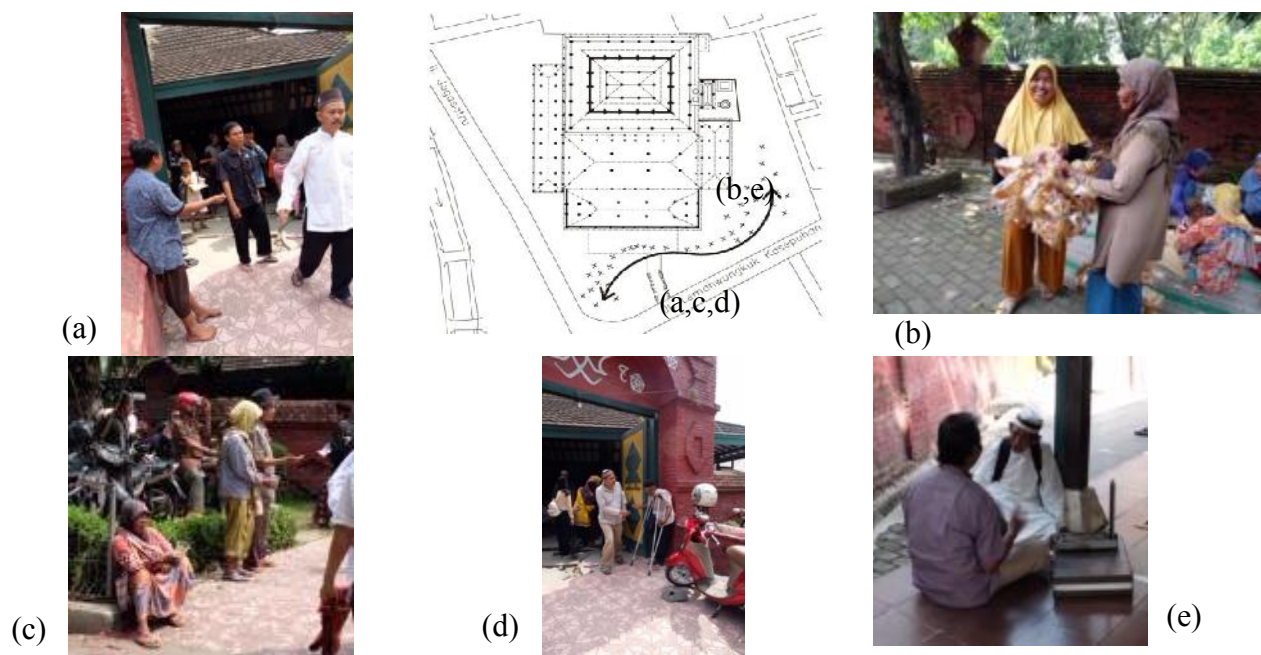
### 3.2. *Type of the beggars and the duration of activities*

The characteristics of the beggars in the mosque areas are: 1) Most are adults between 40-60 years old, male and female; 2) begging directly to the visitors; 3) act as a person with disabilities; 4) selling goods by asking for a mercy and following the visitors; 5) sell services of measuring the tension and the body weight by requesting compassion; 6) working individually although they are coming in groups from the same or the adjacent villages; 7) they are not a very poor people and have no place at all to live, because, in fact, they have a house in the village around Cirebon City. This type of beggar is not only present in developing countries, but also in developed countries [13, 22]. The begging was done by the beggars during the ritual. Sometimes they prepare themselves the day before the ritual activity takes place and already been in Cirebon before the event takes place. Departing in groups from the same village and then looking for a strategic working position. The average length of begging activity is about 3-4 hours. At certain times, they mingle with other visitors and celebrate the cultural activities or the ritual ceremonies held by a number of tourist destinations in the city of Cirebon.

### 3.3. *The position of beggar's activity*

The beggar's money-making position and those who "sell" the body's disability are in the front entrance area, with the static properties and non-moving followers. While those who sell goods or services by asking for mercy are on the inside of the mosque area and follow the direction of visitor movement (Figure 3).

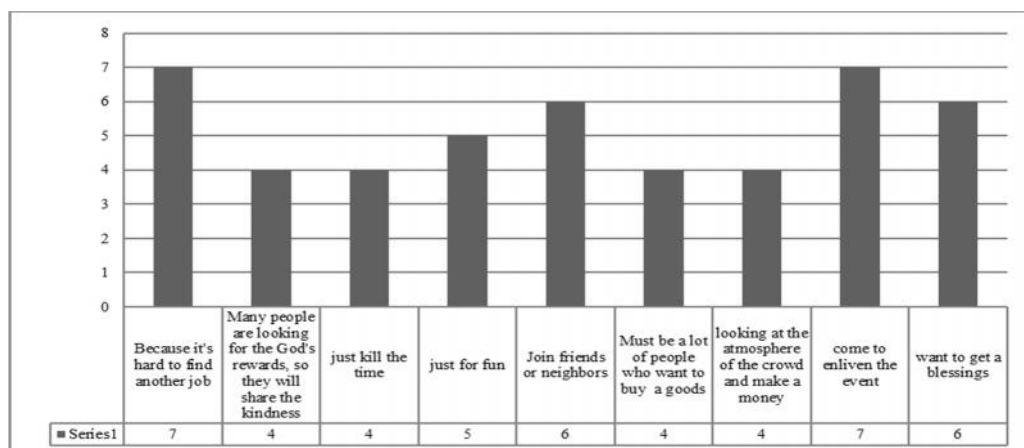




**Figure 3.** The beggar's position and activities: (a) The beggar's position on the main entrance; (b) Traders are following visitors on the courtyard area of the mosque and forcing visitors to buy; (c) The beggars who ask for money usually stand close together; (d) Showing the physical flaws is also a way of asking for money to visitors; (e) The bids for weighing and measuring blood pressure are also applied.

### 3.4. Beggar's motivation

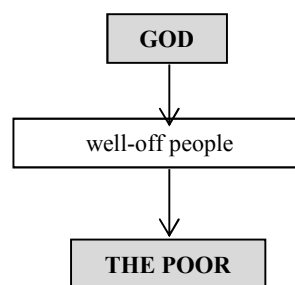
Some of the motivations of begging are done on the basis of consideration (Figure 4): a) because it's hard to find another job; b) many people are looking for the God's rewards, so they will share the kindness; c) just kill the time; d) just for fun; e) join the friends or neighbors; f) must be a lot of people who want to buy a goods; g) looking at the atmosphere of the crowd and make a money; h) come to enliven the event; i) want to get a blessings.



**Figure 4.** Beggar's motivation

### 3.5. Between tradition and religiosity

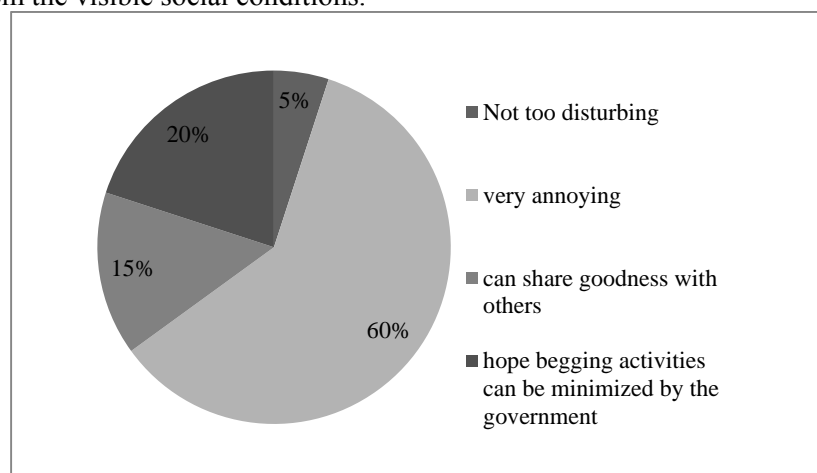
For beggars, this activity is not just about making money, but having a value that ultimately shows the value of locality. This activity is a tradition taught by parents from generation to generation. This activity shows the value of blessing from the Almighty to his family and his hometown. This activity shows the value of togetherness with the villagers as well as the importance of their participation in enlivening the cultural and the religious activities as a form of their respect for Sunan Gunung Jati, as a spreader of Islamic teachings in Western Java, Cirebon in particular. Sunan Gunung Jati is one of the figures who become a role model for the citizens of Cirebon [23-25] begging and giving as a tradition for sharing fortune and receiving blessings. People believe that giving and receiving activities at rituals are not just begging activities, but show a person's religiosity level. This activity is a moment that shows the line of relationship between God, the giver (as an intermediary) and the recipient of blessing (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Tourist response for begging activities.

### 3.6. The implications for the tourist

For some tourists, the activities of the beggars are considered disturbing, but for others especially for those who understand the tradition that has existed for a long time, this activity is considered as an ordinary activity only. For some visitors, this activity is also considered as a moment to share the fortune with others. The level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of tourists to the existence of begging practices at tourist sites also occur in some countries [26-28]. Some tourists hope that this begging activity can be eliminated by the government because it is considered to affect the image as an elegant and attractive tourist city (Figure 6). Some tourists in many studies by Andriotis [13, 29] provide an empathetic response to beggars and provide a positive response to the existing social conditions. Tourists like this are able to distinguish between the uniqueness of nature, the existing culture, and separating it from the visible social conditions.



**Figure 6.** Tourist response for begging activities.

#### 4. Conclusions

This paper concludes that the use of tourist destination areas attracts the activities of residents from the West area of Cirebon City to perform begging activities. The begging activities, not only done because of the economic factor and the business motivation only but also contains its own meaning for the perpetrator. These activities are traditionally performed and taught by their ancestors as an activity to honor the tradition which is a tribute to Sunan Gunung Jati. This action is a form of hope to get the blessing from their respected person as the God's Guardian. The activities that contain the value of the locality aspects from Cirebon City can actually collaborate with the tourism sector if it handled by the government. The role of the government, in this case, can guidance the beggars, so that their activities are not coercive that disturb the visitors, but present as a cultural uniqueness.

#### References

- [1] Pham A 2012 *Identifying and Improving the image of Vietnam Tourism as a Tourism destination among Finnish tourist*
- [2] McLennan C, Ruhanen L, Ritchie B and Pham T 2012 Dynamics of destination development: Investigating the application of transformation theory *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* **36** 2 164-90
- [3] Cholik M A 2017 The Development Of Tourism Industry In Indonesia: Current Problems And Challenges *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Management Sciences* **5** 1
- [4] Chockalingam M, Ganesh A A 2010 Problems encountered by tourists *Business and Economic Horizons* **3** 3 68-72
- [5] Hughes P 2017 The crime of begging: Punishing poverty in Australia *Parity* **30** 5 p 32
- [6] Indonesia Investments Newsletter. 2016.
- [7] Atsmara A N, Kusuma B M A 2014 Relevancy of Law No. 10 the Year 2009 about Tourism Towards Creative Economy as a New Platform of Tourism Development in Indonesia *Journal of Indonesian Tourism and Development Studies* **2** 1 pp 33-39
- [8] Goeldner C, Ritchie J B, Kotler P, Bowen J, Makens J and Cunningham W P 2017 *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies*
- [9] Bayramoglu T and Ari Y O 2015 The relationship between tourism and economic growth in greece economy: a time series analysis *Computational Methods in Social Sciences* **3** 1 89
- [10] Kum H, Aslan A and Gungor M 2015 Tourism and economic growth: The case of next 11 countries *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues* **5** 4 1075-1081
- [11] Ekanayake E and Long A E 2012 *Tourism development and economic growth in developing countries*
- [12] Athanasopoulou A 2013 Tourism as a driver of economic growth and development in the EU-27 and ASEAN regions *Research Brief The European Union Centre in Singapore*
- [13] Andriotis K 2016 Beggars–tourists' interactions: An unobtrusive typological approach *Tourism management* **52** p 64-73
- [14] Qiao G, Chen N and Prideaux B 2017 Understanding interactions between beggars and international tourists: the case of China *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* **22** 3 272-283
- [15] Khan J H 2013 Problems of Beggars: A Case Study *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences (IJMSSR)* **2** 12
- [16] Teddlie C and Tashakkori A 2011 *Mixed methods research, The Sage handbook of qualitative research* p 285-300.
- [17] Creswell J W and Creswell J D 2017 *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (Sage publications)
- [18] Guthrie J, Petty R, Yongvanich K and Ricceri F 2004 Using content analysis as a research method to inquire into intellectual capital reporting *Journal of intellectual capital* **5** 2 p 282-293
- [19] Keeling D J 1995 Transport and the world city paradigm *World cities in a world-system* p 115-

131

- [20] Khan J H *Socio-Economic Causes of Begging*
- [21] Khan J H 2014 Socio-Economic Status of Beggars in Urban Areas: A Case Study *Global Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* **3** 9
- [22] Adriaenssens S and Hendrickx J 2011 Street-level informal economic activities: estimating the yield of begging in Brussels *Urban Studies* **48** 1 p 23-40
- [23] Rosmalia D and Prasetya L E *Kosmologi Elemen Lanskap Budaya Cirebon*
- [24] Ashadi A 2013 Dakwah Wali Songo Pengaruhnya Terhadap Perkembangan Perubahan Bentuk Arsitektur Mesjid Di Jawa (Studi Kasus: Mesjid Agung Demak) *NALARs* **12** 2
- [25] Mubarman M 2016 Pergumulan Islam Dengan Budaya Lokal Di Cirebon (Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat dalam Upacara Nadran di Desa Astana, Sirnabaya, Mertasinga, Kecamatan Cirebon Utara) *Holistik* **15** 2
- [26] Marin J A and Taberner J G 2008 *Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with destination attribute: Influence on overall satisfaction and the intention to return*
- [27] Baker D A and Crompton J L 2000 Quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions *Annals of tourism research* **27** 3 p 785-804
- [28] Bigne J E, Sanchez M I and Sanchez J 2001 Tourism image, evaluation variables and after purchase behaviour: inter-relationship *Tourism management* **22** 6 p 607-616
- [29] Andriotis K and Vaughan R D 2003 Urban residents' attitudes toward tourism development: The case of Crete *Journal of travel research* **42** 2 p 172-185