



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOHUMANIST CONCEPT IN THE GRAND MAERAKACA TOURISM SPACE, SEMARANG, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explain the implementation of ecotourism and the humanist (eco-humanist) perspective in the tourism space of Grand Maerakaca. This research has used qualitative methods to explore issues related to these concepts as implemented in Grand Maerakaca. Observations and interviews with tourists from various demographic segments were conducted to get information related to their ability to access ecotourism spaces. The results show that not all tourist providers in Grand Maerakaca implement the eco-humanist concept such as shown by the absence of local community participation and the empowerment of vulnerable groups. Besides, some tourist paths are inaccessible and dangerous for older tourists and children. Some of these are reasons why Grand Maerakaca is not attractive to tourists. The findings were analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques to obtain a perspective related to eco-humanist implementation in Grand Maerakaca. The output of this research is to suggest forms of this implementation in tourist spaces in Grand Maerakaca that can accommodate all tourists and can increase tourist visits.

KEYWORDS

eco-humanist tourism, design implementation, tourist space, tourist destination

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism in recent decades has been heavily influenced by the development of society as a whole. The rise of industrial society turned tourism into a mass leisure activity, while globalization and post-modernisation have created an increasingly fragmented, individualized and diverse field of tourism supply and demand (Richards, 2011). They have an impact on the

motives and trends that are favoured by the demand side and these are implemented in the product offers of tourism companies (Pellešová, 2020). It is important to understand current trends in the tourism industry (Delener, 2010) because the new forms of tourism are as relevant as unpredictable. Where they exist, they do so for specific sites or tours, and their overall significance in the tourism industry is still difficult to measure. Our work contributes to some tourism forecasts

and new trends where tourism governance is a vital component of the global tourism system (Patiño et al., 2016). The new trends in tourism have not only had a positive impact (such as the development of society and technology), but also negatively (including the economic crisis, global warming, climate change, natural disasters and environmental change) (Pavlović, 2021). It is a challenge for tourism stakeholders to respond to these changes in a proactive way, with the aim of achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage for their organizations (Patiño et al., 2016).

Many factors must be considered for the tourism industry to be competitive such as management of tourist areas, tourist attractions and tourist satisfaction and convenience. Many tourist destinations are successful, but not a few fail and eventually close due to tourist inconvenience and dissatisfaction (Sari et al., 2022a). Some reasons are related to entertainment, accommodation, service and quality, price and value, cleanliness, destination image, information accessibility or lack of disabled friendly infrastructure (Aliman et al., 2016; Armario, 2008; Corte et al., 2015; Durie & Kebede, 2017; Irawan, 2017; Nastabiq & Soesanto, 2021). The result is that tourists feel that the benefits or perceived value related to the enjoyment of the experience have not been achieved (Durie & Kebede, 2017; Marinao, 2018). There is also a lot of effort by tourist managers to brand their destinations using certain themes: cultural, heritage, dark, religious, medical and many more; to provide travel products that are unique and different from others (Đurašević, 2014; Richard et al., 2017; Robinson et al., 2011; Shalbfian et al., 2020). However, because they are not balanced with the careful planning of tourist space, a tourist destination cannot look after those who travel to it.

One tourist destination that is of concern to researchers and an example of such issues is Grand Maerakaca in Semarang, Indonesia. Located on an area of 23.84 hectares, it is an educational tourism park in which there are 35 miniature traditional buildings from Central Java. This destination was established in 1988 and became a favourite with the public in general. However, the popularity of educational tourism did not last long and in the years leading up to the 2010s it began to lose its visitors. It was recorded that in 2014 Grand Maerakaca had only 38,571 visitors per year, although in 2016 this had increased to 131,172, but was still unable to compete with other similar tourist destinations near Semarang (Bisnis.com, 2017; Vaksin, 2019). In 2017, Grand Maerakaca re-branded by adding several tourist attractions as an effort to increase tourist interest and visits, including mangrove tourism, water tricycles, mini trains, 4D theatres and selfie parks (Mistriani & Pratamaningtyas, 2022), and was able to increase visitor numbers to 444,415 in 2018, although following years saw a decline back to 63,000 (Prasaja et al., 2023).

The efforts that have been made by Grand Maerakaca are not fully optimal, and this is due to the lack of tourism concept planning or the implementation of a mature tourist space design concept. The amount of research that has been done at Grand Maerakaca is mostly about tourism management, the economic value of tourism sites and the quality of tourism services (Alviani et al., 2018; Mistriani & Pratamaningtyas, 2022; Prasaja et al., 2023; Ratnasari & Alriani, 2019). There has been no research that explains the quality of tourist areas seen from the implementation of the design of tourism architectural concepts. From the many concepts, researchers introduce the perspective of eco-humanism to be able to assess the implementation of tourist space design from aspects of ecology and humanist architecture. The eco-humanist tourism perspective provides an understanding that a tourist destination is successful when the fulfilment of human needs is met without harming the environment, society, culture or the economy of the tourist destination (Sari et al., 2022b). As the location of Grand Maerakaca is in the northern coastal area of Java, with the availability of natural tourist attractions such as mangroves, it will be assessed using an eco-humanist approach in order to find out which tourist space design aspects inconvenience tourists and ultimately make them reluctant to visit again. Therefore, this study was conducted to explain the implementation of tourist space design in Grand Maerakaca seen from an eco-humanist perspective.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. TOURIST NEEDS

To understand how to create a good tourist space according to the needs and preferences of tourists, it is important for managers to know the characteristics of those who come to tourist destinations that have experienced a decrease in visits. By determining the satisfaction of specific desires, preferences and needs, managers can reveal the social, economic and psychological motives characteristic of tourists (Kaleychev, 2022). Each person indeed has different personal characteristics (Amanda et al., 2018). It is important to analyse these individual differences to identify the appropriate and most profitable market segments for these destinations (Sari et al., 2022a). Every generation has its own characteristics. Millennial tourists tend to be very selective in considering whether a tourist destination is worth visiting (Jiuhardi et al., 2023). They are self-referencing rather than referring to guidance given by more mature travellers (Damanik et al., 2023). They also influence other tourists with the photos they upload on social media (Park & Santos, 2017; Sari et al.,

2021; Sari et al., 2022a), and they can find information about other tourists' experiences through online media free of charge (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019). This shows that tourist preferences can be used to highlight the advantages possessed by these destinations so that tourists have the desire to make another visit and recommend it to others (Amanda et al., 2018).

It is different for senior tourists who are not familiar with digital access and are not easily influenced by solicitations and testimonials from promoted tourist attractions. Moreover, health is often a barrier (Amaral et al., 2020). Senior tourists do not have as much travel ability as younger. Thus, tourist attractions selected are safe and do not 'test adrenaline', unlike attractions selected by millennial tourists which are exploratory and challenging. However, this does not reduce senior tourists' motivation to plan their trips personally (Amaral et al., 2020), because not all tourists are physically healthy and there are those with disabilities who desire recreation too (Sari et al., 2022a). Thus, in addition to senior and millennial tourist segments, there is also that of the disabled that need attention because at present tourist supply is still incomplete and varies widely (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2015). Therefore, the characteristics of tourists with disabilities also need to be studied in order to understand their preferences and needs when traveling to a destination. It is recorded in article 85 of the law on disabilities (*Undang-undang [UU], 2016*) that central and local governments must ensure that those with disabilities have access to cultural and tourism services. Thus, all individuals, both with special needs or without, are entitled to the same tourism services.

The needs of tourists with special needs cannot be equated with general tourists. But it should be underlined that this is not about creating separate services for the disabled in the tourism destination but having a design that is integrated and more inclusive (Sari et al., 2022a). Tourism managers must be able to create a universal tourist space for all visitors. In Indonesia itself, there are already regulations regarding technical guidelines for facilities and accessibility in buildings and surrounding environment (*Peraturan Menteri Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat, 2006*), which outline the minimum standard in a building, including the amount of space, pedestrian paths, parking areas, doors, ramps, stairs, toilets etc. With the existence of these tourism supporting facilities, at the right standard, a tourist destination will be enjoyed by all tourists, both those with special needs and those without. Thus, tourist satisfaction will be achieved because it meets the quality of service and the expectations of the customer. Vice versa, if customer expectations are not met and the quality of service is below the standard, the customer will be disappointed and may leave the service provider and maybe pass on

these problems to others (Aliman et al., 2016; Corte et al., 2015; Durie & Kebede, 2017; Irawan, 2017; Marinao, 2018; Utama et al., 2020).

2.2. ECO-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES

The eco-humanist concept is a combination of two different ones, namely ecology and humanism. These two are defined as a conceptual framework in which equal attention is paid to human and ecological well-being (Cohen, 2019; Peters & Verderber, 2017). Eco-humanism is a new paradigm that connects people, the environment and sustainability (Sari et al., 2022b). It is a human perspective for appreciating nature in every way to maintain tourist destination sustainability for generations to come. This paradigm is not only a general ideological doctrine but also a field of constructive innovation. It is used to discuss a tourist destination in terms of architecture, and to see tourist spaces as formed by humans in a nature-based tourist destination (Cohen, 2019). This needs to be considered to see if humans are wise in making decisions about the development of destinations. More clearly, this concept explains the relationship between tourist products that prioritize nature as their attraction and do not cause negative impacts, with design products that place human elements as part of universal design. Meanwhile, ecotourism and humanist architecture are two things that cannot be separated because they have an essential role in designing tourism architecture. The principle of both concepts then results in environmentally friendly tourism development designed to humanize people, hence all market segments can enjoy the design of the destination.

'Eco' in eco-humanist is not only widely translated as natural environment (ecology), but devoted to the environment in tourist areas (ecotourism). Ecology as the main element of ecotourism is a branch of biology that studies the interactions between living things and also with the surrounding environment (Anggara, 2018). Ecotourism is defined as nature-oriented and environmentally friendly tourism (Grenier et al., 1993). Ecotourism is similar to the sustainable tourism development concept that provides for the present needs both of tourists and the regions visited, and at the same time protects and ensures equal opportunity for the future (Feio & Guedes, 2013). The relationship between support for ecotourism development and perceptions of its positive impact by the local community is essential to improve the economic benefits of local livelihoods by empowering them so that they can gain tourism income and contribute to sustainability (Angessa et al., 2022). Therefore, ecotourism plays a crucial role in many rural areas dominated by nature rather than human activity and it has a huge potential as a concept to develop tourist activities due to its nature-oriented characteristics.

In accommodating ecotourism activities, it needs to be balanced with humanist concepts that are in accordance with applicable standards and principles, so that the spaces created can facilitate all kinds of tourists, including the disabled. Humanism is the principle of unconditional equality regarding the worth and dignity of all people regardless of background, society, culture and religion (Ellis, 2011; Sari & Karmilah, 2017). Architecture with a humanist approach brings a positive impact by improving the experiences of its users (Lyon, 2017). In addition, by giving aesthetic and cultural value it will provide intangible social and community benefits that extend the value beyond the environment itself (Scerri et al., 2018) and give meaningful experiences to tourists. Architecture plays a significant role in tourism sectors, in providing infrastructure to enable tourists to reach the desired destination and, once there, accommodation to host them, while also offering venues for leisure activities (Specht, 2014). Architecture also plays a role in being able to realize the theme or tourism concept into a spatial tourism design that is in accordance with standards and does not undermine its principles. It has an impact on the economy and is significant for the local population. Therefore, humanist concepts can also play a crucial role in tourist activities (Zlopaša & Solarević, 2019).

There are five principles supporting the concept of ecotourism (Cobbinah, 2015), environment conservation, cultural preservation, community participation, economic benefit and the empowerment of vulnerable groups. And there are seven principles in the humanist concept adapted from the concept of universal design (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.): equality use, flexible use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and size and space for approach and use. Figure 1 above explains the principle of universal design applied to ecotourism, thereby ensuring a tourist destination that is intended for all (both human beings and natural creatures) by paying attention to environmental aspects as well as the properly facilitating the needs of tourists. This will have an impact on the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists to come and visit the tourist destination again (Sari et al., 2021). Under the concept of eco-humanist tourism architecture, a positive impact on tourist destinations needs to be obtained without harming nature, society or culture. The long term goal is the sustainability of the destination making a good impression with a mature and consistent concept.

To achieve sustainable tourism, a tourist destination needs to pay attention to the basic principles of sustainable development, namely meeting current needs and providing for the those of future generations (Brundtland, 1987). Sustainable tourism development is tourism that takes full account of current and

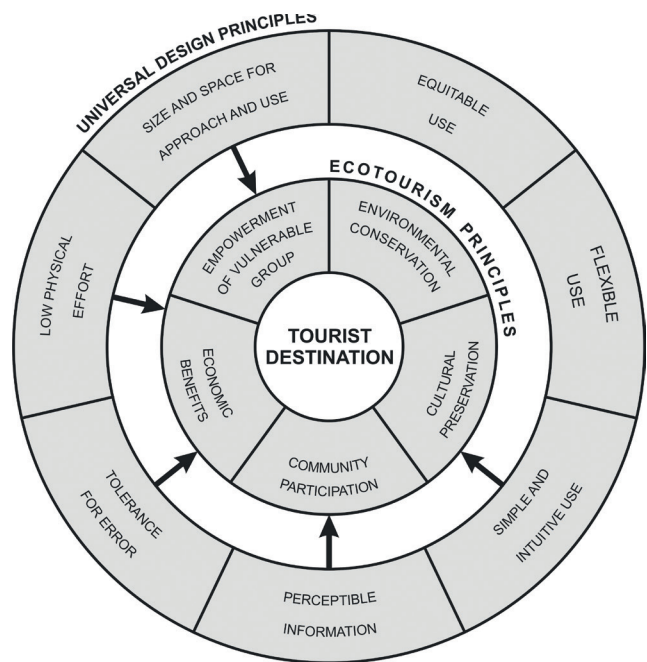


Figure 1. Universal design principles applied to ecotourism
Source: Sari et al. (2022b)

future economic, social and environmental impacts, responding to the needs of visitors, the (tourism) industry, the environment and the host community (UNWTO, 2005). Sustainable tourism development consists of three pillars, namely environmental, economic and social, which are then synergized with the principles of eco-humanist architecture and expressed into four tourism components. By balancing all aspects, there will be a very healthy reciprocity between humans and the environment because their needs, both tourists and tourism organizers, are met and the environment is not damaged due to the development of tourism destinations. Other impacts will certainly follow, such as increased community welfare and a well-maintained destination environment. Designing tourist destinations based on eco-humanist architecture will also help the community to expand tourist market segments, not only millennial tourists but all social groups can enjoy destinations. In this way, the sustainability of these tourism activities can continue and the goals of sustainability can be met, as long as the destinations keep the four components of tourism in good condition and maintained.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method to explore and explain phenomena related to the concept design implemented in tourist destinations in dialogue with the results of observations of an eco-humanist architectural perspective. Grand Maerakaca was selected as a case

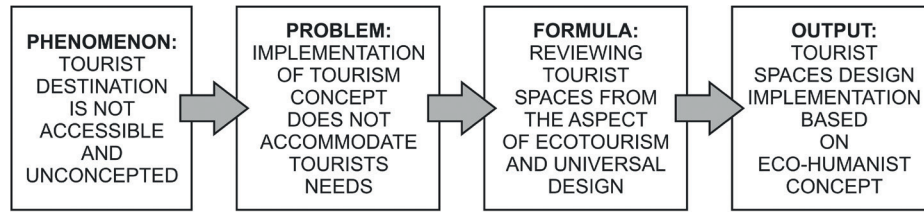


Figure 2. Research process
Source: authors

study because it is the one and only educational-park themed tourist destination in Semarang. As mentioned in the introduction, this destination has made various efforts to increase tourist arrivals to what they were during its heyday in the 1980s. However, these efforts have not been fully optimal because researchers can see that there are aspects missed by developers, such as humanist aspects or a universal design that should have become an obligation in a tourist destination. Likewise, the ecotourism aspect has not had a fully significant impact because there are several details that also need to be considered. These aspects, if considered optimally, would be able to influence the interest and motivation of tourists to come because their recreational needs have been accommodated. Thus, tourist visits in Grand Maerakaca would increase.

The researchers bring the variables of ecotourism (Cobbinah, 2015) and universal design principles (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.) to field observations and interviews in the destination. Firstly, we observe the physical condition of the area based on the ecotourism principle to find out the tourist spaces used. Secondly, we identify the design concept implemented in each of these spaces. Thirdly, we interview some informants using purposive sampling, including tourists from various demographic segments ranging from parents and adults to teenagers. The number of informants is around 40–50 depending on whether the required information has been obtained or not. Some of the open-ended questions that will be asked are about convenience and the complaints of tourists in accessing tourist spaces to know whether they can accommodate tourist needs or not. The result of observation and interview will be classified in the findings section and analyzed regarding the implementation of eco-humanist tourism. Documentation of daily activities and environmental conditions is also used as supporting data to examine the findings. In addition to getting primary data directly in the field, we also look for secondary data that can be obtained from books, journals and relevant agencies. Data was also obtained from a literature review related to geographical conditions.

The findings are then analysed using descriptive analysis techniques, namely explaining the true conditions of tourism space design implementation that

currently occur with some dialogue between relevant references. We discuss the findings with other related tourist destinations and from other perspectives to see what can be improved. The output is a form of effective implementation of tourist space design based on aspects of eco-humanist architecture. Discussions related to sustainability will also be an output of this research because the purpose of creating destinations is to synergize economic, social and environmental aspects. If any of these three aspects are not met, there will be no sustainability. In the end, the destination will never be in demand by tourists and end up by closing permanently. Thus, the results will be a solution that can be realized by Grand Maerakaca so that sustainability can be established for future generations. Figure 2 is the research flow.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. TOURIST SPACES IN GRAND MAERAKACA

Grand Maerakaca is an educationally-themed tourist destination in Indonesia, in Semarang, Central Java. This destination was adapted from an earlier educationally-themed destination in Jakarta, named Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, which was built in around 1970 and successfully provided interest for tourists at that time. As with Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, Grand Maerakaca provides several tourist attractions in the form of education on types of Javanese traditional houses along with their characteristics and uniqueness. There are 35 buildings representing the 35 regencies or cities in Central Java Province. Visitors can also see the results of the industry and handicrafts produced by each region, so they can learn about the diversity of local culture and creativity from all regions in Central Java Province. Landmarks from each region are also displayed in miniature such as the iconic satay stall representing Blora Regency and a replica of the Great Mosque of Demak representing Demak Regency (see Figure 3). When associated with the concept of ecotourism, Grand Maerakaca has implemented cultural preservation in the form of regional traditional houses along with their art and uniqueness. But such



Figure 3. Cultural tourism space in the form of miniature traditional houses and art
Source: S.R. Sari, 2023

tourist attractions are not in demand by tourists because they are considered ancient and only to be seen as in a museum. There is no authentic experience or 'thick' culture in each building that can be felt by tourists so that tourist satisfaction and interest in Grand Maerakaca is not so great.

At the beginning of the construction of Grand Maerakaca, this tourist destination could indeed be categorized as culture-based educational tourism because the majority of attractions introduce Javanese culture in the form of traditional houses and art. But along with the development of the times, Grand Maerakaca began to offer other tourist attractions such as miniature foreign cities, a suspension bridge and culinary tours. In addition, there are several tourist attractions outside the tour package which require additional fees, including fishing, golfing, boat rental, costume rental for photos, and tourist trains (see Figure 4). These support the main activities in the Grand Maerakaca destination and began to be built from 2017 as an effort to increase visits which in the previous decade had begun to decline. These efforts are to bring an economic benefit from the idea of ecotourism where the purpose of forming tourist

space is to have an impact on the economy of the destination itself. Although until now the efforts are still not effective in attracting tourists because the design of these spaces is not authentic and original, and thus uninteresting.

In addition to cultural and other attractions, there are natural attractions offered by Grand Maerakaca, namely mangrove trail tourism. The geographical condition of the Grand Maerakaca area on the coast leads to the natural growth of mangrove forests. The area that is conserved and developed into mangrove tourism makes it one of the attractions because in Semarang itself, there is no other mangrove tourism. The design of the trail brings to tourists an experience of the natural magnificence of mangroves (see Figure 5). This tourist route is used as access for managers to care for the mangroves. There is also quite a large lake that functions as a view and photo spot, while reducing the heat in the surrounding area. There are boats of various shapes that can be rented by visitors. This attraction is an educational facility to explore the natural preservation in the area and the environmental conservation principles of ecotourism have been well pursued in Grand Maerakaca. Mangrove tourism has



Figure 4. Tourist space in the form of miniature foreign countries (on the left side) and tourist trains (on the right)
Source: S.R. Sari, 2023



Figure 5. Natural tourism space in the form of mangrove tourism (on the left side) and boat tours (on the right)
Source: S.R. Sari, 2023

been quite attractive because there is no similar offer in Semarang, so tourists tend to choose Grand Maerakaca for their mangrove tourism experience.

The establishment of tourist spaces in Grand Maerakaca is entirely the authority of the provider company, PT Pusat Rekreasi dan Promosi Pembangunan (PRPP) Central Java. Based on information obtained from tourist managers, there is no role for local communities involved in the formation of tourist space. There are no local settlements around the tourist area, and a distance of about 1–2 km to some elite housing. There is not much that can be done by the local community because the development of the tourist area is fully managed by the private sector and stakeholders. This is not in line with ecotourism principles which apply the principle of community participation. Similarly with regards to the principle of empowering vulnerable groups, for instance the elderly. As for involving external parties, namely traders to sell their food in the food court area, this did not last long because Grand Maerakaca became increasingly quiet and there were no buyers, therefore the traders did not extend their contracts. These traders prefer to trade outside the Grand Maerakaca area because they

feel there is more potential to invite customers than inside (see Figure 6). The traders are not local residents, but from another area that is quite far from Grand Maerakaca, so there are not many tourist spaces formed due to community participation or empowerment.

The tourist space formed in Grand Maerakaca cannot be separated from the planning concept or themes raised by developers and owners of tourist destinations. Theme in tourism may refer to any unique feature of a destination that would create a foundation for tourism product development (Shalbfian et al., 2020). Numerous destinations use thematic tourism to develop new products, focusing on various consumer segments in order to expand visitor experience (Đurašević, 2014). Thematic tourism is a kind of journey that initially satisfies a given interest such as entertainment, a physical activity, an interest in a particular subject, or a particular type of destination (Shalbfian et al., 2020) such as ski shows, stunts, animal shows, Broadway-type musicals, puppet shows, parades, street performances and so on (Richard et al., 2017). Many tourism themes could then be raised starting from ecotourism, agrotourism, barrier-free tourism, and many more, and elaborated



Figure 6. Food court inside the tourist area empty of customers (on the left side) who prefer the food court outside (on the right)
Source: S.R. Sari, 2023

with the desired form of architectural design. By creating a unique, attractive themed space where visitors will spend time, a business can create bonds between their offer (the added values of their products or brands) and visitors (Åstrøm, 2019). The purpose of raising themes in a tourist destination is to show its uniqueness, which hopefully can contribute to socio-economic development, local livelihood improvement and visitor experience (Angessa et al., 2022).

4.2. TOURIST SPACE DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION IN GRAND MAERAKACA

There have been many changes in Grand Maerakaca in terms of tourist attractions, tourist facilities, accessibility and management. It is necessary to study further each component of this space as it relates to an aspect of universal design (Sari et al., 2022a), considering that Grand Maerakaca was created for the family tourist segment which consists of parents and children. When viewed in terms of accessibility, tourist trails in Grand Maerakaca are designed with many branches and no single path from the entrance to the exit (see Figure 7). This is intended to let tourists choose their desired attraction. However, some segments of tourists are less able to understand this kind of accessibility. Most senior visitors are confused about which path to choose for them (see Figure 7) unlike teenage tourists who can freely explore and choose any tourist path. Thus, Grand Maerakaca does not fully embrace the principle of simple and intuitive use where tourists should easily understand the form of tourist space regardless of age, educational background or experience (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.).

As the area tends to be flat, tourists should be able to enjoy destinations without getting tired. However, branching paths have the potential to make senior tourists feel exhausted. Thus, Grand Maerakaca has not fully applied the principle of low physical effort in its space design, because tourists should be able to move in destinations without having to spend



Figure 7. Branch on the tourist route at Grand Maerakaca
Source: photo of information board in Grand Maerakaca
S.R. Sari, 2023

excessive physical effort (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.). In addition to tourist trails, the implementation of steps and ramps that are too steep also has the potential to tire tourists (see Figure 8). Although the ramp is a form of implementation of the equitable use principle where the design should accommodate tourists with special needs (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.), implementation in Grand Maerakaca meets the universal requirement only of design, namely by adding wooden boards above the steps. In addition, the ramp slope is considered too steep for someone who uses his/ her own wheelchair without the assistance of others and not according to ramp standards from the regulations of the Indonesian Minister of Public Works on technical guidelines for facilities and accessibility in buildings and the environment (*Peraturan Menteri Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat*, 2006).

In addition to being steep, the steps are not equipped with railings, so senior tourists often have difficulty in climbing or descending. Though railings are a form of universal implementation of design to facilitate tourists, one problem is left-handed people (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.). This can be seen not only on the steps, but also on the mangrove tourist

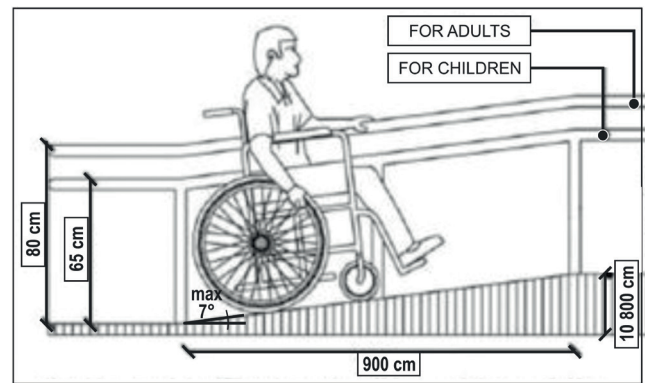


Figure 8. Implementation of a steep ramp (on the left side), not in accordance with the standards of the Minister of Public Works of the Republic of Indonesia (*Peraturan Menteri Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat*, 2006) (in the right side)
Source: S.R. Sari, 2023



Figure 9. Mangrove tourism paths (in the left side) and food court areas (in the right) that do not have railings as a safety or barrier between the land and the lake

Source: S.R. Sari, 2023



Figure 10. Tactile tourist paths are not implemented in all tourist areas (in the left side) gathering points large enough to accommodate large numbers of tourists (in the right)

Source: S.R. Sari, 2023

path and food court area directly adjacent to the lake (see Figure 9). For teenage tourists this means no limits, because they are free to walk and even sit on the banks of the lake. However, for senior tourists and children, this is quite dangerous because there are no restrictions or safeguards for them. Thus, in addition to not fully following the principle of flexible use, Grand Maerakaca is not tolerant of any error because a tourist destination should be designed safely and be harmless to its users (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.).

Grand Maerakaca does not fully apply the principle of perceptible information either, because although the area is equipped with information boards and signage, these markers only apply to physically fit tourists. Unlike visitors who have special needs, they need certain markers for wheelchairs, and tactile or other elements to provide directions through easy reception of information (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.). Grand Maerakaca applies tactile information but only in front of the entrance and not applied in the entire tourist area (see Figure 10, in the left side). In addition to tourists with special needs,

a destination must also be able to accommodate tourists regardless of their different shape, size or posture, so that these people still have free space even when in a room with others (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.). Grand Maerakaca fulfils this principle because the dimensions of trails, gathering points and tourist spaces are quite large (about 8 to 10 meters) and can accommodate large numbers (see Figure 10, in the left). Tourists can also conveniently walk along paths using the same space, both for those with wheelchairs and those who walk normally (see Figure 10, in the right side).

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. DESIGNING ECO-HUMANIST TOURIST SPACES

When viewed from the aspects of eco-humanist tourism, Grand Maerakaca has not been fully optimal for tourism activities based on environmental

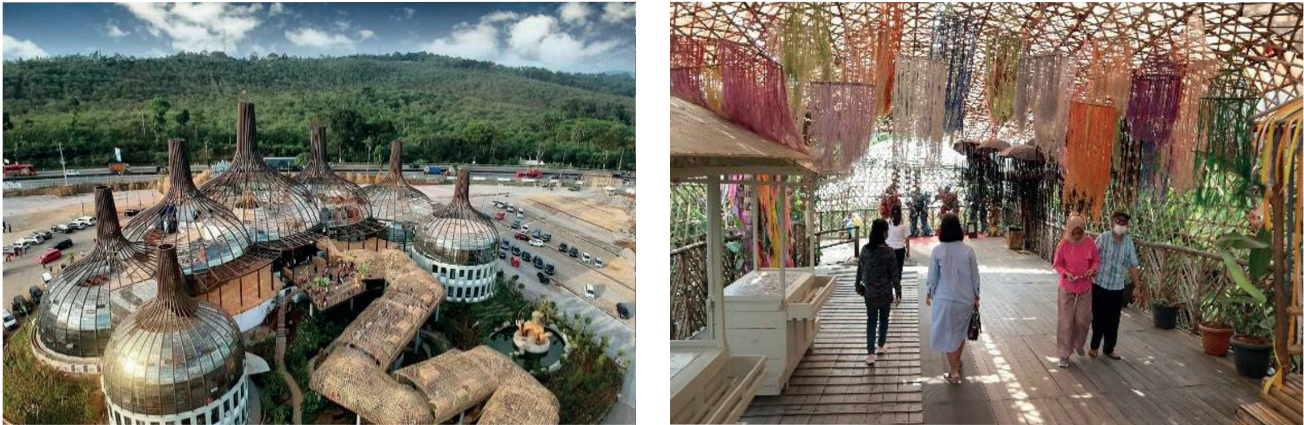


Figure 11. Dusun Semilir tourist destination seen from exterior design (in the left side) and interior (in the right)
Source: S.R. Sari, 2022

friendliness and human convenience, thus affecting the motivation of tourists to visit. Clearly, Grand Maerakaca has a decreasing the number of visitors because the experience and satisfaction of tourists are neglected. It is important for a destination to evaluate the disadvantages and advantages of various aspects in terms of service, availability of tourist attractions, effectiveness of such attractions, design of tourist spaces and other things that affect tourist satisfaction. It is also important for a tourist destination to have a mature concept which is the parent or foundation of the destination attraction (Shalbfian et al., 2020). What happened at Grand Maerakaca was that the concept raised was inconsistent with the form of design, cultural, natural and artificial tourism are all present at Grand Maerakaca but are not well integrated with each other. The innovations created are not based on careful planning or design, so the tourist space created remains unattractive to tourists.

Grand Maerakaca began to erode with the fierce competition in the world of tourism. New tourist destinations began to emerge with fresher and more contemporary concepts, and of course an integrated implementation of tourist space design. One example is seen in the tourist destination of Dusun Semilir, Semarang-Indonesia. This tourist destination, which was established in 2019 using an eco-park theme where the implementation of the tourist space design correctly utilizes natural materials. Sari et al. (2022b) have also conducted research related to the implementation of the eco-humanist concept in Dusun Semilir and almost all principles have been implemented although there are still some points that are not optimal such as the application of ramp and step designs that are too steep. Dusun Semilir continues to innovate to create interesting tourist attractions, and the implementation of the design is in line with the main concept so that tourist spaces are aligned and integrated with the theme (see Figure 11). Dusun Semilir is still one of the tourist destinations of choice for tourists because it

understands the character of its tourists, their needs and the prospects or projections for future tourism so that sustainability is maintained.

Tourist destination design is an aspect that is also as important for management. Without the architecture, a destination will not be grasped by tourists, similarly without careful management planning, a tourist space with any form of interactive architecture will have no function and die. For this reason, it is important for managers to collaborate with experts in various fields such as architecture, psychology, management, economics and others to be able to create attractive destinations, accommodate the needs of tourists, and to unconsciously be recommended to others. Therefore, the supply (tourist space) provided must be in line with demand (tourist needs). Humans themselves have four basic needs: physiological, security, belonging and love, and self-esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). These four needs do not have to be all met by tourist destinations, but at least the basic needs should be, such as the need for food, rest and security. Furthermore, other needs are gradually being met, such as togetherness and creative experiences. These needs are translated into tourist attractions, such as skating, rafting and so on. Of course, the spaces created are tailored to the segment of tourists who come, ranging from children to the elderly.

The demand or needs of tourists are aligned with the eco-humanist concept and realized in environmentally-friendly and humanist tourist spaces. Architecture plays a role in realizing these spaces (Specht, 2014) in accordance with applicable rules, but still prioritizes aesthetic principles. Architectural content that can be applied in a tourist destination (Meng, 2019) includes the design, sourcing and selection of building materials. The architectural patterns should include a comprehension of humanity, the transformation of natural elements, complementarity between architectures and the environment, and bionic architectural patterns. If the tourist area has a unique architectural style, it should

be applied as much as possible so that tourists can better understand the local folk customs. Grand Maerakaca wants to create contrasting tourism patterns, namely cultural, natural and artificial, but the three do not have similar architectural patterns, so a good impression is not found by tourists at Grand Maerakaca. It is similar with the selection of building materials. These should be beneficial to the environment, the promotion of the tourist area, and construction and maintenance. This should not only be concerned for the construction period; instead, it should be integrated overall to achieve real ecological environmentally-friendly construction.

The implementation of eco-humanist-based destination design must be aligned with the principles of tourism architecture, not only applying the principles of ecotourism and universal design, but the synergy of one tourist space with another needs to be considered. The role of architects is important here so that the design of the tourist space created does not seem patchy but is carefully planned. Cooperation between stakeholders is also important considering that the biggest challenge in tourism development in Grand Maerakaca is the influence of outside culture. In addition to architecture, it is also important to understand trends and predict future tourist preferences without losing identity or character. Because what happened in Grand Maerakaca was that changes in community trends caused the disappearance of regional culture, and this has led to changes in architectural styles in Grand Maerakaca. The growth of modern architecture indicates that there is a lack of cultural pride in communities toward their own culture. Therefore, it is important for a destination to understand the concept of tourism architecture before it is finally implemented into the design of tourist space.

6. CONCLUSION

Grand Maerakaca does not fully implement the eco-humanist concept in each of its tourist spaces. There are several principles that are not fulfilled such as the absence of local community participation and community empowerment. The goal to increase economic benefits is also not fulfilled because the attractions provided do not attract tourist interest. In addition to the principle of ecotourism, the principle of universal design is also less respected, as a result there are still many tourist trails that are inaccessible and dangerous for senior tourists or children. Eco-humanist principles are also not in line with the principles of tourism architecture where the design of one attraction with another is not in line with the main concept. Lack of cooperation with relevant stakeholders can also be a reason for the lack of implementation of tourist destinations with mature concepts. Grand

Maerakaca needs to evaluate the shortcomings and develop a mature destination so that the design implementation will be in line with the concept raised. The eco-humanist concept can be a benchmark that Grand Maerakaca could use to develop, because its tourism potential can be enhanced with the eco-humanist concept to become an environmentally-friendly, community-based, accessible destination for all segments, and beneficial for tourism operators.

Grand Maerakaca is one of the many educational-park themed destinations in Indonesia that currently do not succeed. However, from it we can understand that to become a successful destination requires various perspectives and academic fields such as social sciences, economics and the natural environment. By studying these three, it is hoped that the sustainability of a tourist destination will continue to be maintained for the next generation. Grand Maerakaca has experienced its tipping point, and it is hoped that with development it will be able to restore itself to its former glory, along with the achievement of sustainability goals. This contributes to research related to ecotourism, humanist architecture and universal design. Tourism as part of architecture should accommodate activities safely and conveniently regardless of the background of the tourists. By accommodating this, the quality of the area will be better and visits are expected to increase. This research is limited to observation and literature studies related to Grand Maerakaca, the ecotourism concept, and humanist architecture. Further research related to the eco-humanist concept with other research methods is needed to complete the results of this study.

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