

Ecotheology-Based Landscape Architecture

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Abstract

The Malalayang Beach Walk I area in Manado City has strategic potential as a public space that serves not only recreational but also educational purposes. However, its utilisation has so far been limited to tourism, necessitating a new approach that integrates ecological, theological, and pedagogical dimensions. This study aims to develop an eco-theology-based landscape architecture design that can contribute to Christian education through affective public space experiences. Using the ADDIE Research and Development model, this study seeks to address the issue of the relationship between landscape architecture and ecotheology in the Malalayang Beach Walk I area, as well as to formulate concepts and design products that implicitly support Christian education through an ecological educational approach embodied in four segments of the area. The final design product serves as an ecological-educational vehicle as well as a medium for spiritual reflection. The contribution of this research lies in the development of an interdisciplinary conceptual framework between landscape architecture and Christian ecotheology, as well as the provision of practical design products that can be used as a reference for the development of sustainable public spaces.

Keywords: *landscape architecture; ecotheology; open public space.*

Introduction

Landscape architecture as one of the fastest-growing disciplines today, is not only oriented to the aesthetics of public open spaces, but can also accommodate educational ecological values that are increasingly urgent in the midst of the threat of global climate change. In Indonesia, the integration of landscape design and theological ecological education (Ecotheology) emerged as an important approach in creating open public spaces that are not only visually pleasing, but also make visitors aware of the importance of the relationship between God the creator of the universe, humans and the environment (nature) with the artificial environment in relation to landscape arrangement. In this context, the Malalayang Beach Walk I or MBW I area located in Manado City has strategic potential as a public open space that can be developed educatively through an ecotheology-based landscape architecture approach. As a Public Open Space (RTP), this MBW area can be a real forum that accommodates various functions in terms of socio-economic, ecological, tourism and educational. Since the MBW area is located on the coast of Malalayang Beach, maintaining and managing the coast is a socially meaningful spiritual and faith responsibility related to ecotheology.

Although the study of landscape architecture and ecotheology is growing, there is still little research that explicitly integrates ecological and theological values, more specifically Christian ecotheology into the architectural design of public spaces that are able to trigger visitors' affective awareness of the environment or the surrounding nature. In addition, in the practical realm, especially in the North Sulawesi region, there has not been a concrete study that maps how ecotheology in relation to the world of Christian Education to be used as a framework in the unity of landscape architectural design.

In this study, Ecotheology focuses more on the importance of spirituality and morality in protecting the environment through real actions that involve theological reflection on the role of humans in caring for the earth and moral responsibility in protecting God's creation through the flow of the man-made environment. Furthermore, just as God is the Great Architect who began all creation with a flow of order and beauty that is truly excellent (Genesis 1:31), so ecotheology must also be concerned with order,

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beauty and art. In the context of order and beauty or aesthetics, the field of landscape architecture as an art of arranging is used as a reference because it has aspects of order and aesthetics as part of the principles of science. So in response to this, landscape architecture has great potential to contribute to preserving a sustainable natural environment, because this universe is a general expression of the mind of the Almighty God, and the field of Landscape Architecture is a discipline that discusses the planning, design, and arrangement of open spaces. In other words, Landscape Architecture in this study is the art of arranging outdoor spaces so that artificial environments and the surrounding environment are created as part of the ecosystem. Landscape Architecture is considered an aesthetic mediator for ecotheology, because through the art of arranging outdoor spaces, it can contribute to praising God through the flow of artificial environmental design in the MBW I Area.

The research questions that led to this study were: (1) how can the integration of landscape architecture and ecotheology be applied in MBW I? (2) what design concepts are relevant to PAK's implicit contribution? (3) What design products are effective as affective ecological educational media? This study aims to examine the principles of landscape architecture and Christian ecotheology in the perspective of Christian Education as a conceptual basis for formulating the concept of landscape architecture design based on ecotheology which is divided into thematic segments that have been predetermined based on observation. Specifically, this research will produce a design product in the form of a 3D design model as a forum for learning about ecological theology (ecotheology) affectively for MBW I visitors.

This article contributes a scientific novelty in the form of matching the concept of landscape architecture based on Christian ecology in the perspective of Christian Education/PAK which is practically implemented in the local context in the MBW I Area. In addition, this study introduces an innovative method that utilizes 3D model simulation and social media recommendations as a process of design reflection—thus going beyond the conventional approach of passive surveys, and providing a more dynamic pedagogical impact.

The theoretical approach in this study covers two main domains: (1) landscape architecture, and public open space; 2) Christian ecotheology that is affectively integrated in the perspective of Christian education or PAK (Christian Religious Education).

Study of the Concept of Landscape Architecture Focus

Landscape Architecture is the art of arranging outdoor spaces including design, planning, or land management, the arrangement of natural and man-made elements through the application of cultural and scientific knowledge, with concern for conservation and resource management, aiming to make the resulting environment have a useful and pleasant purpose (Booth, Norman K., 1983). Furthermore, Norman T. Newton in his book entitled *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* argues that Landscape Architecture is a combination of art and science that aims to manage the earth's surface and the spaces above it, with the aim of creating an efficient, safe, healthy, and happy environment for humans. *Hubbard* in his book *An Introduction to The Study of Landscape Design*, argues that landscape architecture is essentially an art, and its most important function is to create and preserve beauty in the surrounding environment and in the natural environment, which has to do with improving the comfort, convenience, and health of urban dwellers, in which in the midst of the hustle and bustle of urban dwellers are in dire need of the beautiful and soothing sights and sounds that nature, with the help of landscape art can provide, (Henry Vincent Hubbard, T. K., 1917).

Landscape Architecture and Artificial Environment

Landscape Architecture and Artificial Environment is a discipline that combines art, science and engineering to design an outdoor space in an artificial environment so that it has aesthetic value. The attraction of the MBW I area which is equipped with several spots for attractions, culinary and spots for photos (*Instagrammable*) which can be an attraction for visitors. In addition, there are attractions or performances that color the natural tourist area, having an impact on the economic and environmental value (Forgiving, I. 2022.). Between landscape architecture and the artificial environment, there is an interaction that functions to improve or decorate the artificial environment through good design results that integrate natural and artificial elements so as to create a harmonious environment.

Ecotheology

Melissa J. Brotton in *Ecotheology in the Humanities: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding the Divine and Nature*, says that Ecotheology is the study of ecological understanding and theological inquiry that addresses the relationship between God, humans, and non-humans. Therefore, ecotheology must involve the divine dimension in the discussion of the earth, its inhabitants, and its future. According to Brotton, Ecotheology focuses more on the importance of spirituality and morality in protecting the natural environment as a form of human moral responsibility to protect God's creation. (Brotton, Melissa J, 2016). The ecotheology thought of Thomas Berry emphasized the importance of preserving and respecting nature as an integral part of spirituality and religious beliefs. In his book: *The Great Work: Our Way Into the Future*, Berry invites humans to adopt a more holistic view, where humans are considered part of nature and have the responsibility to maintain and maintain the biodiversity of nature and the balance of its ecosystems. Berry's concept of "The Great Work" refers to the collaborative efforts of humans to create a sustainable society that is in harmony with nature. He invites humans to change the paradigm of thinking and action to better respect and protect the natural environment. Thomas Berry invites us to experience or feel creation as a source of admiration and pleasure, not as a commodity for our own benefit (Thomas Berry, 1999). On the other hand Ernst M.

Conradie, in *Christianity and Ecological Theology*, writing that Ecotheology (Ecological Theology) is an attempt to take ecological wisdom in Christianity in response to environmental threats and injustices. Ecotheology offers a Christian critique of the cultural customs underlying ecological breakdown and an ecological critique of Christianity. In other words, ecotheology is not only concerned with how Christianity (PAK) and Christian Education can respond to environmental problems; but also offers an opportunity for Christian Education/PAK to carry out renewal and reform (Ernst Conradie, 2006). Leonardo Boff in his book entitled: *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm*, integrates liberation theology thought with ecological issues, and explains how the two are interrelated and essential to liberate both man and nature from oppression (Leonardo Boff, 1995). Boff's thinking provides a strong conceptual foundation for building landscape architecture that is not only ecological, but also equitable, inclusive, and spiritual. Ecology is concerned with the relationships, interactions, and dialogues of all living things (both living and non-living) among themselves and with all that exists. It includes not only nature (natural ecology) but culture and society (human ecology, social ecology, and so on). From an ecological point of view, everything that exists, coexists. Everything that coexists, has existed before. On the other hand, Celia Deane-Drummond in her book "Theology and Ecology" focuses on the integration between theology and ecology, with an emphasis on the relationship between humans, nature, and spiritual aspects with 3-dimensional reflections, namely:

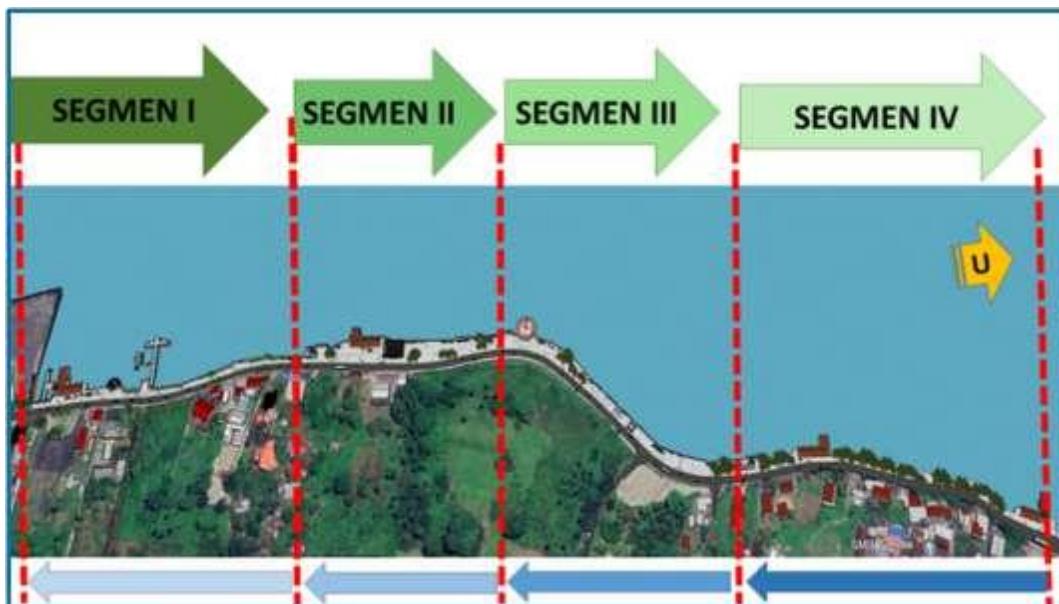
Academic Credibility (*Academic Credibility*) – a more conservative approach with an emphasis on the authority of church tradition and interpretation of biblical texts. 2) Relevant Education (*Educational Viability*) – influence *religious and cultural beliefs towards ecology*. 3) *Practical Relevance* (*Practical Relevance*) – the real impact of ecology on human lifestyles (Celia Deane-Drummond, 2006). Thomas H Groome's concerns in his book *Will There Be Faith?, A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*, among other things, about the rise of books by "new" atheists, many of which are on bestseller lists, which means that they are widely read. These authors focus on the worst version of religion by claiming that religion gives society sacred legitimacy over many evils, including environmental degradation, and all other forms of social ills, and that religion is the main oppressor of human progress (Groome, Thomas H, 2011).

Research Methods

This research uses a Research and Development approach with the ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) model. Research and Development (R&D) is a type of research used to produce a design product. It is known that ADDIE adopts the concept of INPUT – PROCESS – OUTPUT in completing phases or flows of activities to obtain a form of design product, so that it can be adapted to the design concept architecturally of the landscape. In the ADDIE model, it is possible to combine various theories so that the ADDIE process becomes systematically interrelated because ADDIE establishes rules and procedures that help shape the design according to concepts and themes in zones or segments that have been created. ADDIE is a validation process because it verifies all design products or forms produced and procedures related to the development of the design made, and validation is the main trait of ADDIE which adds credibility through analysis, evaluation and philosophical procedures, (Robert Maribe Branch, 2009). In this study, it is adjusted to the design concept and theme.

Results of Research and Discussion

The Malalayang Beach Walk I area or better known as the MBW I area is a public open space (RTP) and forms an order that affects each other between humans and the surrounding environment within the scope of the artificial environment. We see the MBW I area through the lens of landscape architecture as an aesthetic mediator between humans, nature and God. Thus, Landscape Architecture and the Artificial Environment in this study contribute to the economic quality of the community due to the existence of culinary facilities: psychological quality of mind due to the existence of attraction spots, photo spots, recreational and sports facilities; and contributing to maintaining the balance between nature and humans;



Segment Distribution Images

SEGMENT I: SPIRITUALITY AND INCREASING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS –
https://youtu.be/6bV3UCKu4C0?si=HHIQqhH_XDMoqO77



Site Plan Information - World Ball icon – Coelacanth fish – Lotus Flower

Based on the results of the research, in Segment I there is a spiritual nuance, namely the presence of a lamp with a cross decoration (cf. the division of Segment I). So that we express concern for the environment prophetically in the form of hopes and invitations.

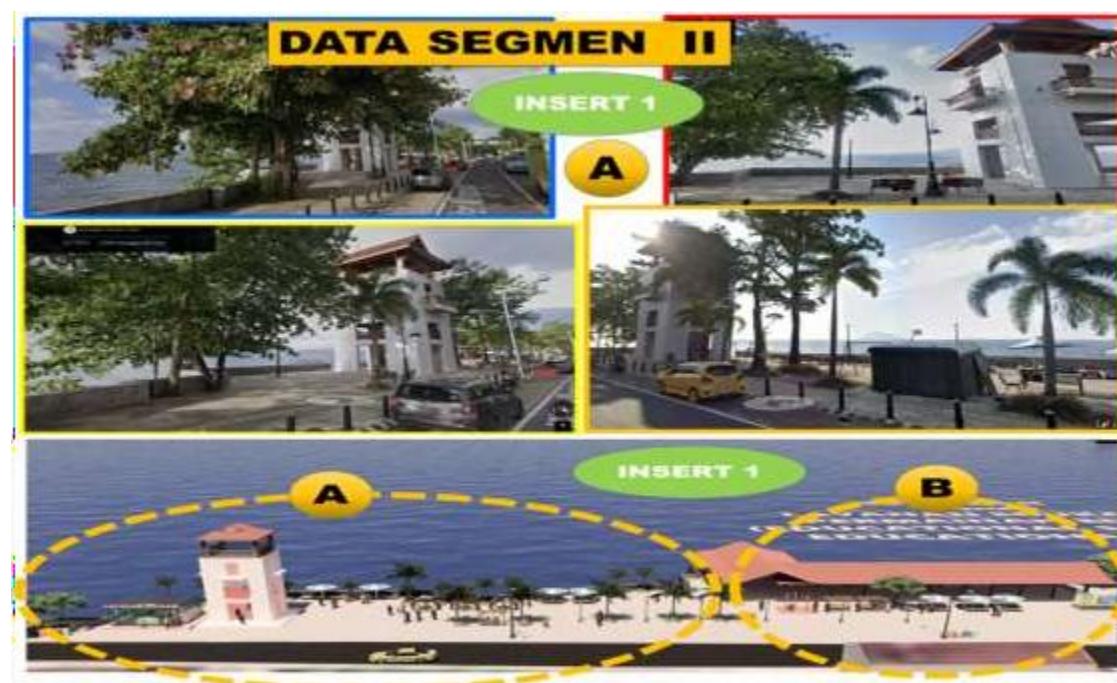
The MBW I Area Site Plan information is packaged in Billboard affirmation poster writing with nuanced colors gradation and architecturally complementary colors. The lotus flower under the icon of the globe monument and the coelacanth fish has the meaning of spirituality and is considered a symbol of purity, because even though this flower grows on dirty water, it is still clean. Ecotheologically, writings, images, quotes from the Bible verse Matthew 6:29 and the lotus flower, offer prophetic hope in an ecological context that considers that humans and nature are fellow creations of God that must be protected, and nature is preserved.



Affirmation Writing Means Prophetic

Segment II: Educational Services And Educational Games

[Https://youtu.be/_Zwdahb2g3a?si=Ej64xkmtvyvqkk0l](https://youtu.be/_Zwdahb2g3a?si=Ej64xkmtvyvqkk0l)

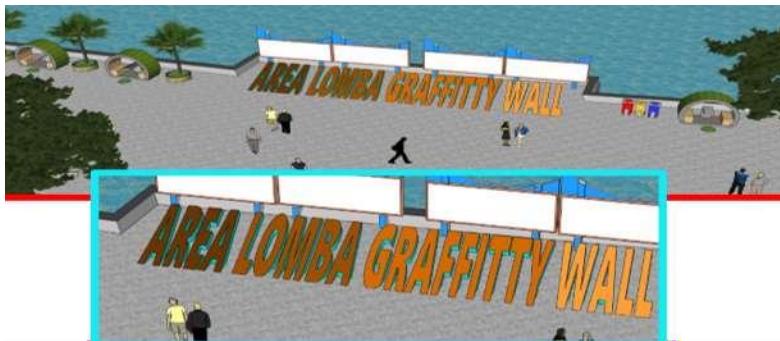


Images of existing Phenomena and one of the Product Design



Labyrinth Adventure, Giant Chess ang Grounding Area and Mural

The phenomenon that can be seen is that there are several games that are already available in this segment II area, but it is not educational for visitors, so based on observations we offer *grounding areas*, *giant chess*, *labyrinth adventure* and *graffiti wall/ mural*.

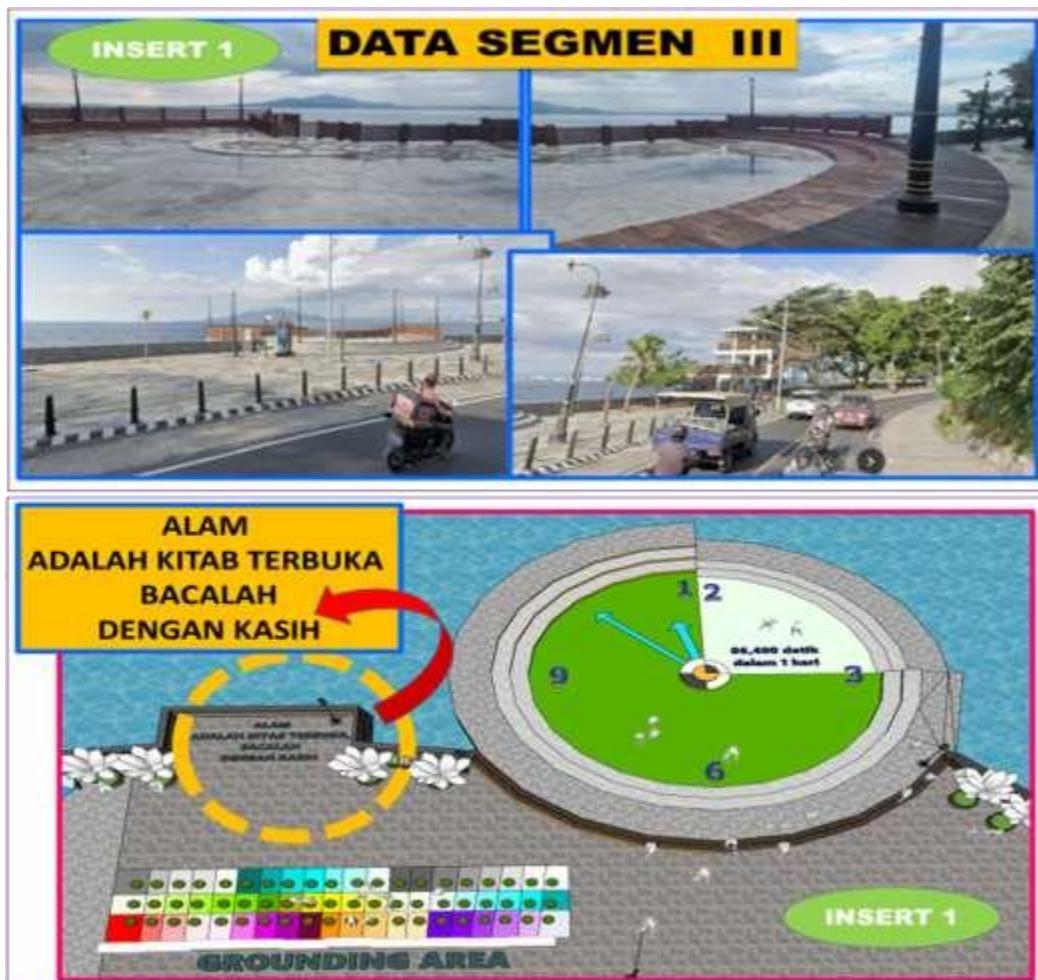


Area Lomba Graffity Wall

The *Grounding Area* is a place to exercise by walking on grass, soil, sand or rocks barefoot. Many studies say that when there is physical contact between humans and nature, it is as if there is *healing* for the human body. Through the *grounding area*, it teaches humans that nature can heal and ecotheologically, humans become aware that God's created nature that is managed and arranged architecturally the landscape is an egalitarian form of humans. In this case, through architectural design, the landscape can be a mediator between God, nature and man. The game of *Giant Chess* and *Labyrinth Adventure* is a game that has a natural and educational feel. There are nuances of ecotheology education implicitly contained in these two games, because while playing you can enjoy the sun and marine nature which are good for health. *Graffity walls* and murals can be a forum for education by the Manado City government as a place for environmentalists and artists to express their work through moral messages or ecological messages in the form of posters that can be seen by many passers-by. Besides that, it can be a place for competitions with an environmental theme. The researcher assumes that even though the people who see the posters are only fleeting, if they always pass through them, then all the images of the posters and moral writings can be recorded in the human subconscious, and one day they will do what is written or seen on the poster. Because something is always seen, the brain will pattern it into a habit that must be done.

SEGMENT III: LIFE AND ART

<https://youtu.be/BU6zyWkZt8Y?si=w1rQSMCWknoX0lRr>



Mini theatre, Grounding graded areas and prophetic writings

The phenomenon that exists, in the area of segemen III there is already a mini theater, and it can function as a place for various cultural events, music and other demonstrations in open spaces. Based on the results of this mini theater research that needs to be improved in terms of aesthetics, we offer a graded green color to balance the slightly bluish color of the sea by adding a pattern of clock shapes, with the writing of numbers: **86,400 seconds in 1 day** to remind visitors and educate ecotheologically about the time and opportunities that God gives to humans. As if reminding visitors prophetically **what time is it in your life now?** Architecturally speaking, the yellow color in the middle of the clockwise circle pattern presents the impression of emphasis and accentuation as the focal *point* of this theater circle. The focal point aims to create a focus of attention and enhance the visual impression complemented by a *grounding area* with graded colors.

SEGMENT IV: EDUCATIONAL AND CONSERVATION SERVICES –

<https://youtu.be/BU6zyWkZt8Y?si=w1rQSMCWknoX0IRr>

Based on observations, the conditions in this area show that there are several culinary facilities in the building provided by the government, public toilets and some shade umbrellas, but the conditions look deserted.



Images of existing Phenomena and one of the Product Design

In this case, landscape architecture plays an important role in arranging this area by designing and putting up motivational affirmation posters related to ecology and theology. The writing on the poster contains the prophetic meaning of ecotheology and implicitly contains the meaning of ecopedagogy. The inscriptions of the affirmation poster are as follows:

- a. TREES PROVIDE OXYGEN FOR ALL LIVING THINGS
- b. DON'T CUT ME DOWN (meaning don't cut down trees carelessly).
- c. LET'S CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT (in the presentation on this poster followed by a picture of how long the waste is destroyed and merged with the soil, there is even waste that is almost not destroyed at all). Trees can symbolize strength, fertility, and life, and can represent harmony and tolerance between religious people.



Picture one of the Product Design



Pictures of Tree and Magrove Planting

In relation to this area, the Manado City government planted several trees, so we made this area a kind of mini City Forest with various existing trees left behind, and in the design we added several types of trees such as mangroves and palms, so that the impression of being an urban forest is more clear. There are also palm trees planted in concrete pots, so that the concrete pots can be used as seating and relaxing for visitors. In this area, it is equipped with the installation of an Education Service 2 building, which is to provide education and information about matters related to nature conservation and climate change. In accordance with the theme in segment IV, namely Educational Services and Conservation. So that the public who visit the MBW I Area can come to the Education Service 2 in

accordance with the operating hours that have been determined by the developer to get the education and information needed. In addition, an information board about the tree is placed on each tree.

Table 1. Practical Implications of Ecotheology-Based Landscape Architecture In the Malalayang Beach Walk I Area – Manado City

Elemen Landscape	Design Forms	Programme Ecotheology Bermakna Ecopedagogy	Benefit
a. Spiritual Reflection Zone	Semicircular gazebo, contemplation paths and cross-shaped lights, local beach plants, reflection billboards with Scripture quotes and affirmative prophetic sentences (SEGMENTS I -IV)	thematic worship, a place of reflection / contemplation	Fostering spiritual awareness that nature is God's creation that must be taken care of
b. Ecology Education	Mini eco-park with local vegetation (mangroves, ketapang, palms, and other types of trees), educational information boards, installations/art buildings from recycling. (SEGMENTS I-IV).	Education of local flora, recycling workshops,	Public education on coastal ecology, combining science with the value of faith
c. Environmentally Friendly Circulation	Permeable pedestrian paths, bicycle paths, recycled wood seats, murals themed "love the earth" (SEGMENTS 1-IV)	Eco-Walk Tour, passing through each segment with ecological and spiritual nuances	Forming eco-friendly behavior while traveling
d. Social-Ecological Space	Open amphitheater by the beach, mangrove planting area with the community (SEGMENT III-IV)	Ecological-spiritual festival, tree planting action, beach cleanup, conservation education workshop	Forming social solidarity, linking faith with ecological action
e. Education of Children and Adolescents	Open area for creative activities for children & adolescents, outdoor study space (SEGMENT I-IV)	Sunday School on the Beach, recycling crafts, mural and graffiti competitions with ecological themes	Instilling ecological awareness from an early age based on religious teachings
f. Integration of Educational Technology	QR Code on the information board, Malalayang Eco-Walk digital application (SEGMENT I-IV)	Access information on Bible verses, ecological facts, eco-friendly tips via gadgets	Improving ecological literacy in a modern way, attracting young people

Conclusion

The findings in this study are:

- 1) the integration between landscape architecture and ecotheology in the MBW I Area is carried out by making physical spaces as spiritual and educational mediums that reflect the relationship between humans, nature, and God, and landscape architecture as an aesthetic mediator responsible for arranging outdoor spaces according to the rules, while ecotheology provides the foundation of spiritual and moral values about the responsibility to protect nature/environment God's creation, through every element of the existing outer space and the educational affirmation poster;

2) create design concepts that are implicitly not directly teaching, but convey the values of the Christian faith through spatial experiences, symbols, and prophetic visual messages. This design facilitates *learning by seeing and learning by experiencing* through four space segments labeled with different themes for each segment, namely: Segment I Theme of Spirituality and Raising an Environmental Awareness; Segment II Theme of Educational Services and Conservation; Segment III Life and Art; Segment IV Education and Conservation Services; **3)** The design products produced are in physical or tangible, educational and communicative form which aims to indirectly shape the awareness of the visiting community about the importance of protecting nature as part of faith, and make the MBW I Area an open learning space. The findings of this study can provide recommendations to local governments to help formulate policies in the management of sustainable tourist areas as well as the protection of the coastal environment of MBW Beach.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the dissertation research entitled "Eco-Theology-Based Landscape Architecture in the Malalayang Beach Walk I Area" cover several main aspects related to sustainable environmental planning, implementation, education, and policy in the form of Models of intangible products from landscape architecture based on ecotheology, namely making a framework of a vital foundation model that is integrated between landscape architecture, ecotheology and ecopedagogy such as the Foundations of Religion and the Foundations of Spiritual Morality.

The following are the proposed recommendations: Religious Foundations and Spiritual Moral Foundations - can be in the form of PAK education in the form of curriculum discourses on ecotheology-ecopedagogy in schools, universities, the environment and discourse on environmental awareness month. Specifically, universities as higher education are the main contributors in achieving the sustainability of the natural environment through science and skills/skills learned to be practiced by their graduates in off-campus habitats, including in the MBW I Area

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