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More Than Nature: Why Do Tourists Return to Ecotourism? Exploring the Dimensions of Memorable Tourist Experiences as a Determinant of Revisit and Recommend Intention

Sjafril Amir[1], Widji Astuti[2], Grahita Chandrarin[3]

Abstract

This study aims to identify the dimensions of memorable tourist experiences (MTEs) that influence the intention to revisit (IRev) or recommend (IRec) ecotourism destinations in Indonesia. The dimensions analyzed were hedonism (HDN), novelty (NOV), involvement (INV), local culture (LCC), refreshment (REF), meaningfulness (MEA), and knowledge (KNW). Data were collected through questionnaires from 400 tourists visiting three national parks in Indonesia. Results showed that INV, NOV, and MEA significantly affected revisit and recommendation intentions, while HDN and KNW had no significant effects. Furthermore, LCC and REF only influenced revisit intention. These results suggest that MTEsin ecotourism focus on INV, NOV, and MEA values. This study contributes to the tourism literature and guides destination managers to enhance tourists' revisit intentions.

Keywords: *Ecotourism, Memorable Tourism Experiences, Revisit Intention.*

Introduction

Tourist experiences play a vital role in the tourism business, representing the core of the leisure business (Zhang et al., 2018; Loureiro, 2014). The concept of experience often describes emotions in everyday life (Caru & Cova, 2007) and has emerged as a megatrend (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011). Various scholars interpret "experience" in different ways, for example, as habitual daily activities (Caru & Cova, 2007), as temporary phenomena unique to the individual (Volo, 2009), or as memorable, enjoyable encounters (Oh et al., 2007). In tourism, memorable experiences give destinations a competitive advantage by fostering lasting positive impressions that encourage tourists to revisit or recommend the destination to others (Kim et al., 2012; Kim, 2016).

The significance of MTEs lies in their contribution to destination sustainability and competitiveness, directly impacting tourists' future visitation decisions (Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Yin et al., 2023). Tourists can bond emotionally with a destination through rich experiential exploration, enhancing loyalty (Kirillova et al., 2017). Positive and negative emotions arising from interactions between tourists, locals, and the environment influence their behavior and, by extension, a destination's competitiveness (Sharma et al., 2022). According to Kim (2014), destinations across all types of tourism should aim to create memorable experiences for visitors.

Ecotourism emphasizes natural beauty, nature conservation, and the uniqueness of local culture (Millar et al. 2012; Puhakka, 2012; Nezakatia et al., 2015; Cabral & Dhar, 2020; Xaba & Adanlawo, 2024; Obradović et al., 2023; Ajuhari et al., 2023), which provides a memorable experience in attracting tourists to visit. The psychological bond formed with nature can minimize environmental damage (Pourhossein et al., 2023) and stimulate revisit (Paul & Roy, 2023). Revisit intention is the readiness of tourists to revisit the same destination (Gohary et al., 2020; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021), which is the attention of destination marketers (Huong et al., 2022). Tourists expect destinations to provide memorable and meaningful experiences (Ruhanen, 2019; Castellani et al., 2020; Sthapit et al, 2022).

[1] Merdeka University Malang, Indonesia, Email: sjafrilamir1969@gmail.com, (Corresponding Author)
[2] Merdeka University Malang, Indonesia
[3] Merdeka University Malang, Indonesia.

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Visitors return because of positive experiences gained during the first visit (Tan, 2017). Travel experiences that are told to others become memorable experiences (Piramanayagam et al., 2020), which encourages the willingness to return (Tsai, 2016), manifested by the intention to revisit or intention to recommend (Lin, 2014). The research results related to the influence of the dimensions of MTEs on the intention to revisit various tourism contexts are inconsistent. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2022) found in the context of cultural tourism in Kashan, Iran, that only LCC dimension influenced revisit intention, while other dimensions such as HDN, NOV, REF, MEA, INV, and KNW had no significant effect. Meanwhile, Tran (2022), in the community-based tourism in Vietnam, found that all dimensions of MTEs influenced revisit intention.

These inconsistent findings present an opportunity to revisit the issue using the MTEs dimensions proposed by Kim et al. (2012). This study aims to contribute to the tourism literature, particularly in ecotourism. In addition to providing scientific insights, the study also offers practical guidance for ecotourism managers to focus on the dimensions of experiences most appreciated by tourists, thereby enhancing revisit intentions.

Literature Review

Memorable Tourism Experience (MTEs)

The primary goal for tourists is to gain memorable experiences through their travels (McKinsey, 2017), which stimulates tourism managers to meet tourists' expectations, as these experiences affect future tourist behavior (Ritchie & Hudson, 2009; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Memorable experiences are selectively built, not all experience (Zhang et al., 2016) and are stored in human memory for a long time (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Positive experiences with a destination will form a positive attitude toward the destination, while negative experiences lead to adverse reactions (Huong et al., 2022). MTEs best predict future tourist behavior (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Chandralal et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2018).

MTEs have been studied using various dimensions across different tourism contexts. Some studies (e.g., Kim et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2018; Kutlu & Ayyildiz, 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021) used the dimensions of HDN, NVL, LCC, REF, MEA, INV, and KNW. Tran (2022) added two dimensions, surprising experience and adverse feelings, to complement the framework of Kim et al. (2012). Other scholars (e.g., Kirillova et al., 2017; Spielmann et al. 2018; Buzova et al., 2020; Chirakranont & Sakdiyakorn, 2022), have proposed different attributes using dimensions like authenticity, usefulness, meaning, multisensory, and transformative experiences. Kruger et al. (2017) suggested dimensions such as spiritual, mental, and physiological experiences. The dimensions of MTEs proposed by Kim et al. (2012) are relevant in ecotourism as they offer measurable attributes that align with the conditions found in ecotourism destinations.

HDN is a lifestyle that focuses on fulfilling personal desires, such as pleasure, joy, and satisfaction. NOV describes the psychological feeling tourists experience when encountering something new during their travels, differing from their daily routines. LCC encompasses the positive impressions tourists gain from the local people's traditions, customs, values, and lifestyles. REF is an experience that provides tourists with physical, mental and emotional refreshment. MEA means achieving deep meaning from a tourist trip that gives insight into a broader perspective than just travelling. INV relates to the involvement of tourists in their tourist experience. At the same time, KNW refers to information or facts tourists obtain during tourist activities (Kim et al., 2012).

Revisit Intention

The success of product marketing is known from the interest (intention) to repurchase. In tourism products, the intention to repurchase is manifested in the intention to revisit the destination (Kotler & Keller, 2016). One of the factors affect the intention to revisit is creating a MTEs. MTEs strongly influence tourists' intention to return (Nguyen et al., 2020). Empirical evidence of the influence of MTEson the intention to revisit is revealed by Tiwari et al. (2022; 2023); Tran (2022); Cheung et al. (2021); Rasoolimanesh et al.

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(2021; 2022); Kutlu and Ayyildiz (2021); Melón et al. (2021); Kim (2018); Zhang et al. (2018); Mahdzar et al. (2015).

Revisit intention is closely related to tourist satisfaction, cultural interest, involvement, and lifestyle (Baghirov et al., 2023). Several researchers have put forward several dimensions of revisit intention. The dimensions of revisit and recommend intention are used by Lin (2014). Broader dimensions are put forward by Pantas et al. (2020), namely future visits, tourist priorities, frequent visits, revisit willingness, revisit plans, and attempts to revisit. Lin's (2014) dimensions are relevant for use in ecotourism to represent tourist intentions (internal) and intentions to recommend (external).

Methodology

The methodology utilized to answer the research objectives related to the dimensions of MTEs: HDN, NVL, REF, MEA, LCC, INV, and KNW that influence IRev and IRec.

Research Design

A quantitative method was used in this study. The quantitative method allows for systematic hypothesis testing through numerical data measurement and statistical analysis and provides objective results. The dimensions of MTEs use the results of Kim et al. (2012), while the intention to revisit and intention to recommend (Lin, 2014).

Sample and Research Location

The research sample was selected with purposive sampling, consisting of 400 tourists who visited three National Parks in Indonesia: Bromo Tengger Semeru, Baluran, and Alas Purwo. The selection of research locations was based on the distinctiveness and abundance of the tourism experience, like panoramic beauty, biodiversity, and interactions with local culture, thus offering a rich context for this study.

Data Collection Technique

Data was gathered through a survey utilizing a closed questionnaire administered to 450 participants, to achieve a minimum of 80% completion rate (360 questionnaires) to guarantee adequate representation of the tourist demographic. Data collection was taken out from June to July 2024. The questionnaires were distributed considering a time that was not too busy to improve the quality of responses in crowded locations. The questionnaire was first tested on a limited number of respondents to ensure the clarity and readability of the statement items. The principles of research ethics were upheld, including written consent from respondents and confidentiality of data maintained only for research purposes.

Research Instrument

Each research variable was measured with Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The research instrument was adapted from previous studies to ensure validity and reliability, with adjustments made for the ecotourism context. The variables HDN, NVL, LCC, REF, MEA, INV, and KNW, were each measured using two items. Examples of items include: evokes joy, engenders happiness, offers new experiences, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, impressed by the amicability of the local communities. The local culture presents an intriguing aspect, escape from routine, relief from fatigue, a trip of significant value, an imperative journey, aspire to visit, desire to engage in destination, enhances knowledge about nature, and enhances understanding of National Parks (Kim et al., 2012; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). IRev encompasses two elements: desire to revisit promptly and intention to return promptly. IRec comprises two components: speaking favorably about the destination and propose to the others (Abbasi et al., 2021; Adam et al., 2023).

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Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Least Squares (PLS) approach. SEM-PLS was chosen because it can analyze several relationships simultaneously in the research model (Henseler et al., 2015) and effectively handles data that may not meet the assumption of a normal distribution from a small sample (Hair et al., 2012).

Research Results

Respondent Description

Four hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed to respondents, with 35 incomplete responses and 15 damaged questionnaires, leaving 400 complete questionnaires for further examination. The effective representativeness rate was 88.89%, surpassing the minimum threshold of 75%. The demographic characteristics of the sample included gender (male = 74.25% = 297 people; female = 25.75% = 103 people), age (20-30 years = 25.00% = 100 people; 31-40 years = 50.00% = 200 people; 41-50 years = 19.00% = 75 people; ≥ 50 years = 6.00% = 25 people), and education level (high school = 59.00% = 235 people; higher education = 38.00% = 150 people; others = 4.00% = 15 people). Most respondents were aged 31-40 years and had completed at least high school, indicating that most tourists had an educational background sufficient to understand the values of ecotourism, which may support their revisit intentions.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability Analysis

Reliability was assessed using outer loading values greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2014). The examination showed that all dimensions had outer loading values exceeding 0.70, indicating strong reliability for the research instrument (Figure 2). Table 1 shows the lowest composite reliability value in REF and INV of 0.873 and the highest in MEA of 0.929. High-reliability values indicate that the instrument used can be relied on to measure latent variables consistently. Composite reliability, homogeneity, and reliability were declared good because they met the criteria with all Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 ($\alpha > 0.7$), rho_A values above 0.7, AVE values above 0.5, ensuring good convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Hedonism (HDN)	0.742	0.743	0.886	0.795
Refreshment (REF)	0.708	0.709	0.873	0.774
Novelty (NVL)	0.770	0.770	0.897	0.813
Meaningfulness (MEA)	0.847	0.854	0.929	0.867
Local culture (LCC)	0.775	0.779	0.899	0.816
Knowledge (KNW)	0.814	0.819	0.915	0.843
Involvement (INV)	0.710	0.712	0.873	0.775
Intention to revisit (IRev)	0.750	0.750	0.889	0.800
Intention to recommend (IRec)	0.738	0.739	0.884	0.792

Note: Output SmartPLS; Construct Reliability and Validity

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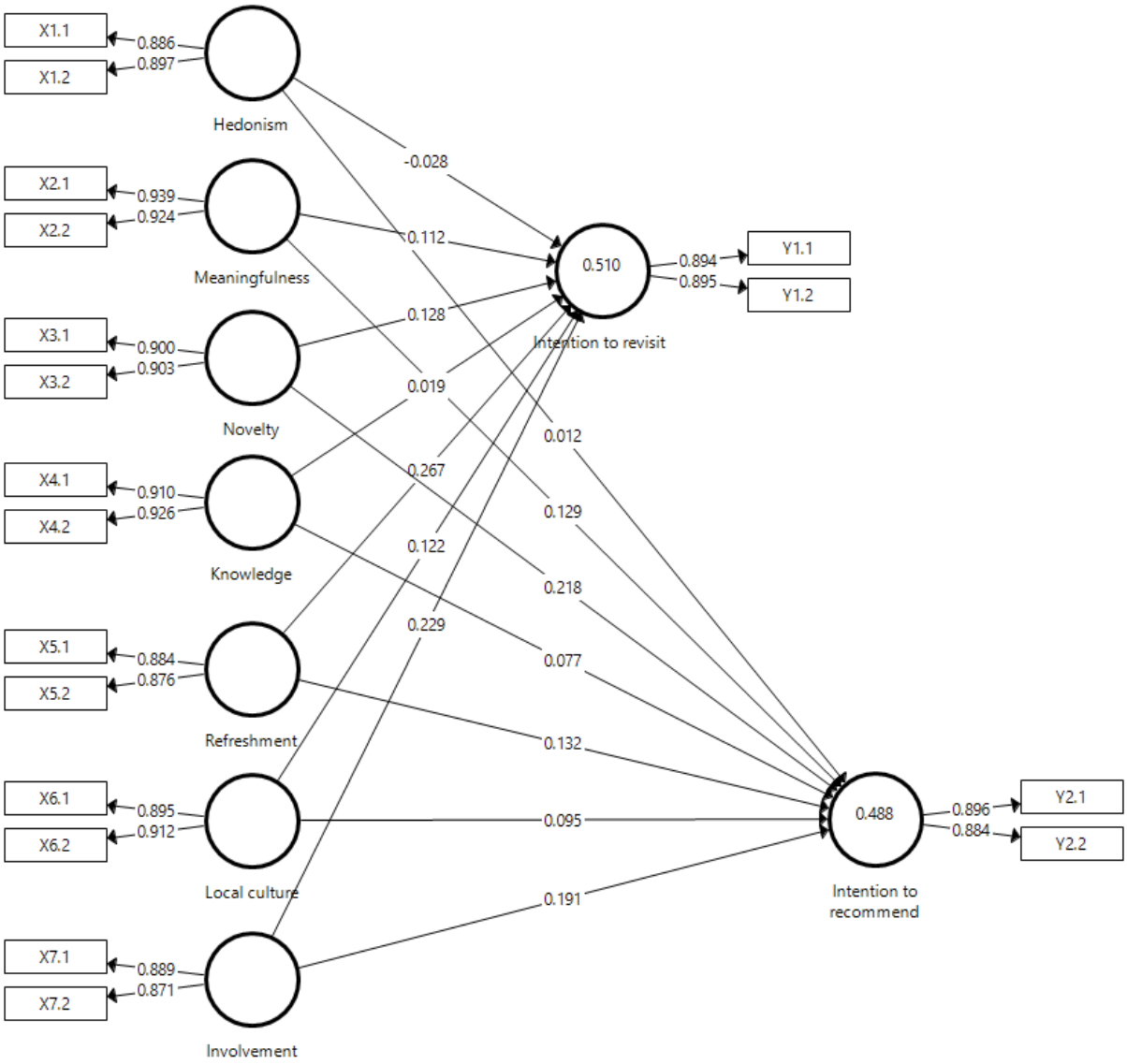

Figure 2. Outer Loading; PLS Algorithm

Validity Analysis

Discriminant validity was confirmed when all dimensions showed high correlations with their respective constructs compared to other constructs. The cross-loading analysis (Table 2) and Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3) demonstrated that all dimensions strongly correlated with their constructs, confirming that the research model was valid.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Cross-Loading)

	HDN	MEA	NVL	KNW	REF	LCC	INV	IRev	IRec
X1.1	0.886	0.340	0.641	0.465	0.736	0.663	0.701	0.512	0.515
X1.2	0.897	0.425	0.614	0.470	0.798	0.591	0.594	0.559	0.520
X2.1	0.413	0.939	0.382	0.648	0.454	0.397	0.366	0.407	0.445
X2.2	0.387	0.924	0.347	0.626	0.426	0.349	0.354	0.387	0.384

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X3.1	0.662	0.335	0.900	0.425	0.683	0.591	0.643	0.543	0.536
X3.2	0.607	0.371	0.903	0.466	0.668	0.555	0.610	0.534	0.559
X4.1	0.461	0.639	0.438	0.910	0.484	0.424	0.465	0.415	0.427
X4.2	0.501	0.619	0.469	0.926	0.512	0.488	0.475	0.441	0.482
X5.1	0.709	0.409	0.701	0.457	0.884	0.625	0.669	0.578	0.550
X5.2	0.808	0.424	0.616	0.500	0.876	0.610	0.582	0.566	0.526
X6.1	0.627	0.347	0.572	0.430	0.608	0.895	0.727	0.538	0.487
X6.2	0.641	0.378	0.576	0.468	0.659	0.912	0.724	0.562	0.556
X7.1	0.603	0.287	0.649	0.396	0.621	0.609	0.889	0.584	0.553
X7.2	0.676	0.398	0.571	0.509	0.633	0.812	0.871	0.538	0.522
Y1.1	0.552	0.362	0.534	0.381	0.588	0.536	0.578	0.894	0.746
Y1.2	0.524	0.401	0.535	0.454	0.575	0.554	0.564	0.895	0.740
Y2.1	0.550	0.356	0.565	0.438	0.568	0.542	0.569	0.740	0.896
Y2.2	0.482	0.441	0.515	0.446	0.520	0.487	0.517	0.738	0.884

Note: Discriminant validity is indicated by bold values, indicating higher cross-loading compared to the related construct—SmartPLS; discriminant validity.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)

	HDN	REC	REV	INV	KNW	LCC	MEA	NOV	REF
HDN	0.892								
REC	0.580	0.890							
REV	0.601	0.830	0.895						
INV	0.725	0.611	0.638	0.880					
KNW	0.525	0.496	0.467	0.512	0.918				
LCC	0.702	0.578	0.609	0.803	0.498	0.903			
MEA	0.430	0.447	0.427	0.387	0.684	0.402	0.931		
NOV	0.703	0.607	0.598	0.694	0.494	0.635	0.392	0.902	
REF	0.861	0.612	0.650	0.712	0.543	0.702	0.473	0.749	0.880

Note: Output SmartPLS; Discriminant Validity Fornell-Larcker

Outlier Identification and Multicollinearity

Outlier analysis using latent variable correlations (Table 4) revealed no significance values exceeding 1.96 at a 0.05 significance level, indicating the data was accessible from outliers that could distort the results. Additionally, multicollinearity analysis through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (Table 5) showed all VIF values were below 5, meaning no multicollinearity issues were present between variables, ensuring that relationships between variables in the model could be accurately analyzed without distortion from excessive correlations (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4. Latent Variable Correlation

	HDN	INV	KNW	LCC	MEA	NVL	REF	REC	REV
HDN	1.000	0.725	0.525	0.702	0.430	0.703	0.861	0.580	0.601
INV	0.725	1.000	0.512	0.803	0.387	0.694	0.712	0.611	0.638

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KNW	0.525	0.512	1.000	0.498	0.684	0.494	0.543	0.496	0.467
LCC	0.702	0.803	0.498	1.000	0.402	0.635	0.702	0.578	0.609
MEA	0.430	0.387	0.684	0.402	1.000	0.392	0.473	0.447	0.427
NOV	0.703	0.694	0.494	0.635	0.392	1.000	0.749	0.607	0.598
REF	0.861	0.712	0.543	0.702	0.473	0.749	1.000	0.612	0.650
REC	0.580	0.611	0.496	0.578	0.447	0.607	0.612	1.000	0.830
REV	0.601	0.638	0.467	0.609	0.427	0.598	0.650	0.830	1.000

Note: Output SmartPLS; Latent variable

Table 5. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	Intention to recommend	Intention to revisit
Hedonism	4.372	4.372
Involvement	3.586	3.586
Knowledge	2.249	2.249
Local culture	3.177	3.177
Meaningfulness	1.942	1.942
Novelty	2.624	2.624
Refreshment	4.881	4.881

Note: Output SmartPLS; Collinearity Statistics

Structural Fit

R Square (R^2)

R^2 relate the magnitude of the variation of endogen variables that exogen variables can explain, while R^2 is adjusted after correction. The R^2 value criteria, according to Chin (1998), are 0.19 as "weak," 0.33 as "moderate," and 0.67 as "considerable." The results of the analysis, the adjusted R^2 value for IRec variable is 0.479, and IRev is 0.501. This result is significant; the exogenous variables (HDN, INV, KNW, LCC, MEA, NOV, and REF) can explain 47.9% of the variability in IRec and 50.1% in IRev. According to Chin's criteria, this result is categorized as a moderate level, indicating that the variables tested have a notable impact in explaining the IRev tourists. Table 6 presents the R^2 values.

Table 6. R square (R^2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Intention to recommend (IRec)	0.488	0.479
Intention to revisit (IRev)	0.510	0.501

Note: Output SmartPLS; R square

F Square (f^2)

The influence of each exogen variable on the endogen variable is measured through the f^2 value, with the criteria of f^2 value = 0.02 little, 0.15 moderate, while 0.35 has a big influence Hair et al. (2019). The f^2 value identifies which variables significantly shape tourist intentions (IRev or IRec). The analysis results of the f^2 value show that HDN does not influence IRec or IRev while the KNW variable weakly influences IRec but

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does not affect the IRev. In contrast, INV, MEA, REF, and LCC show weak influences on both intentions. The NOV dimension has a strong influence on IRec but a weak influence on IRev. Table 7 presents the f^2 values.

Table 7. F square (f^2)

	Intention to recommend	Intention to revisit
Hedonism	0.000	0.000
Involvement	0.020	0.030
Knowledge	0.005	0.000
Local culture	0.006	0.010
Meaningfulness	0.017	0.013
Novelty	0.036	0.013
Refreshment	0.007	0.030

Note: Output SmartPLS; f square

Q Square (Q^2)

The Q^2 value is utilized for the evaluation of model prediction precision and the validity of parameter estimations. Comprehending the concept of Q^2 as articulated by Hair et al. (2019), the ratings were 0. 00 for low, 0. 25 for moderate, and 0. 50 for high. Based on the analysis results, it is noted that the Q^2 value attained lies within the moderate range. Table 8 presents the Q^2 values.

Table 8. Q square (Q^2)

	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Intention to recommend (IRec)	800.000	500.730	0.374
Intention to revisit (IRev)	800.000	487.130	0.391

Note: Output SmartPLS; Construct Cross-Validated Redundancy

SEM Analysis Results

The results of the SEM analysis suggest that HDN and KNW have no significant impact on IRev or IRec. On the contrary, the effects of INV, MEA, and NOV on both influences are considerable. Furthermore, the influence of LCC and REF on the choice to IRev varies from their influence on the choice to IRec. The findings provide support for Tran (2022) assertion that engagement and significance play pivotal roles in influencing tourists' inclination to revisit. The absence of influence from HDN and KNW on the IRev and IRec highlights a disparity in anticipated outcomes between ecotourism tourists and individuals exploring conventional tourist spots (Chi & Pham, 2022). Ecotourism travelers place a higher value on authentic and meaningful experiences rather than entertainment, pleasure, or general knowledge as delineated by Wearing & Neil (2009) and Millar et al. (2012).

In cases where a notable beneficial impact is observed, it signifies that the adjustment of exogenous variables such as HDN, REF, NVL, MEA, LCC, KNW, and INV yields a favorable outcome in the endogenous variables of IRec and IRev, and conversely. These results show that visitors who experience new, meaningful interactions with the destination and local culture create lasting memories and impact their desire to return and recommend it to others. Contrastingly, the absence of impact from HDN and KNW indicates that ecotourists do not consider these aspects important. They prioritize genuine, profound, and

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distinctive experiences over pleasure, thrill, or learning opportunities. Table 9 displays the complete findings from the SEM analysis.

Table 9. Influence Between Variables

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Effect
HDN -> Intention to recommend	0.012	0.012	0.072	0.172	0.863	Not significant
HDN -> Intention to revisit	-0.028	-0.030	0.073	0.388	0.698	Not significant
INV -> Intention to recommend	0.191	0.188	0.070	2.716	0.007	Significant
INV-> Intention to revisit	0.229	0.228	0.056	4.069	0.000	Significant
KNW -> Intention to recommend	0.077	0.083	0.055	1.406	0.160	Not significant
KNW -> Intention to revisit	0.019	0.019	0.054	0.347	0.729	Not significant
LCC -> Intention to recommend	0.095	0.098	0.065	1.458	0.146	Not significant
LCC -> Intention to revisit	0.122	0.123	0.060	2.045	0.041	Significant
MEA -> Intention to recommend	0.129	0.122	0.055	2.323	0.021	Significant
MEA -> Intention to revisit	0.112	0.111	0.050	2.222	0.027	Significant
NOV -> Intention to recommend	0.218	0.213	0.058	3.750	0.000	Significant
NOV -> Intention to revisit	0.128	0.124	0.056	2.291	0.022	Significant
REF -> Intention to recommend	0.132	0.139	0.076	1.747	0.081	Not significant
REF -> Intention to revisit	0.267	0.274	0.071	3.776	0.000	Significant

Note: Output SmartPLS; path coefficients

Discussion

The study's primary results show that HDN and KNW variables have no impact on the IRev or IRec. Ecotourists expect different things than tourists visiting traditional destinations (Chi & Pham, 2022). Ecotourists seek meaningful experiences over entertainment or pleasure (Millar et al., 2012). Ecotourists are drawn to meaningful experiences, new adventures, and opportunities to engage with the environment, making trips to ecotourism locations more fulfilling (Ajuhari et al., 2023; Paul & Roy, 2023).

Novelty an important role in attracting tourists to ecotourism destinations. Tourists want to explore new destinations to encounter novelty, distinctive and unparalleled experiences (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Tourists partake in unforgettable experiences such as beholding stunning natural vistas, relate to local inhabitants, relate to wildlife, and obtain knowledge about the indigenous culture. Acquired expertise may provide distinctive viewpoints and deeper importance that are not commonly encountered in conventional tourism practices. Consequently, it is essential for managers of ecotourism destinations to meticulously manage the equilibrium between authenticity and commercialization to uphold the distinctive charm of the destination and protect the genuineness of its natural environment and culture (Baghirov et al., 2023).

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The research findings suggest that the engagement of tourists in ecotourism activities significantly influences their inclination to revisit and recommend. The study aligns with the findings of Tran (2022). Tourists engaged in activities in ecotourism destinations, such as partaking in environmental conservation endeavors and engaging with animals, local inhabitants, and indigenous culture, frequently establish a profound emotional bond with the destination. Participation in activities at a given destination can have a substantial effect on tourists and play a critical role in determining their likelihood to revisit or endorse the location to others (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021).

Engaging in ecotourism activities to deviate from customary habits may enhance the probability of individuals revisiting the destination. Nevertheless, it might not necessarily grow the likelihood of them recommending the location to others (Brochado et al., 2022; Terasaki et al., 2023; Tiwari et al., (2023). Immersing yourself in natural wonders, interacting with local communities, and exploring environmentally conscious destinations can reduce travel fatigue. Participating in these activities facilitates mental and physical rejuvenation, ultimately fostering a longing to replicate that rejuvenating experience through revisitation. This corresponds with a study by Sharma et al. (2022), a study was conducted that elucidated how the cognitive benefits of ecotourism influence tourists' desire to reengage in such positive experiences.

The warmth and distinctiveness of the indigenous culture have an effect on visitors that makes them wish to return, although it does not sway their inclination to recommend it to others. As stated by (Piramanayagam et al., 2020), ecotourists value authentic cultural experiences, considering that individuals who are not engaged in ecotourism might not fully comprehend or appreciate such experiences. Tourists who have had a memorable experience with the local culture may not necessarily feel inclined to recommend it to individuals who do not share their interests. Managers of ecotourism destinations can utilize these findings to give tourists with exclusive chance to engage with nature, culture, and the local community. Marketing strategies that focus on experiential elements can enhance the probability of recurring visits from tourists to ecotourism destinations and attract new visitors with common interests.

Conclusion

The results of this study underscore the significance of INV, MEA, and NOV in influencing tourists' intentions to revisit and recommend ecotourism destinations. In contrast, LCC and REF only significantly influence revisit intention. At the same time, HDN and KNW do not show any significant effect, indicating that tourists value more profound, authentic experiences than pleasure, happiness, or general knowledge, which are more prominent in conventional tourism.

This study gives predominant contribution to tourism by identifying the dimensions of MTEs that impact IRev and IRec to ecotourism destinations. Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of ecotourism tourists, where INV, MEA, and NOV are the most significant factors in shaping tourists' behavior. Practically, the findings guide destination managers in designing marketing strategies that create meaningful experiences and active engagement for tourists. Activities like environmental conservation efforts, wildlife interactions, and local cultural festivals could play a key role in fostering emotional connections that increase tourists' desire to return.

This research has several limitations when interpreting the results. This research was only carried out in three national parks in Indonesia, so the results cannot be fully generalized to all ecotourism destinations. The research used limited sample with quantitative approach, so it could not capture broader perceptions. Lastly, the short research time limited the ability to observe the dynamics of changes in tourist behavior over time. These limitations open up opportunities for further research in the future.

Future research should be conducted in ecotourism with disparate characteristics to increase the generalization of the research result. Qualitative data to support quantitative data, will obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the variables studied, for example through interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). A more extended time and a more comprehensive sample demand for various demographic groups are also recommended to better understand the differences in preferences between

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tourist segments. Thus, a wealth of insight is obtained regarding MTEsand the intention to revisit ecotourism.

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