

## Visitor Behavior in Ecotourism in Bandar Lampung: A Cultural Semiotic Study on Ecotourism Destination Attributes

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**Abstract**-This study aims to analyze the influence of ecotourism destination attributes on visitors' intentions for visiting, revisiting, and recommending in Bandar Lampung. Using a cultural semiotics approach, this research focuses on the attributes present in ecotourism destinations and identifies and interprets signs, symbols, and meanings that may influence visitors' interest. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative elements. Interviews with visitors, managers, and local communities provide in-depth qualitative insights into their perceptions and experiences regarding the ecotourism destination. These qualitative data are then analyzed alongside the quantitative data to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of destination attributes on visitors' intentions. The survey, involving 116 respondents, used a research instrument containing 39 questions, designed based on purchase decision theory and marketing mix. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, correlation tests, and multinomial regression. The findings of this study reveal that visitors tend to interpret cultural symbols based on their personal experiences and social backgrounds. For example, some visitors associate certain symbols with modern values, while others understand them in the context of deeper traditions. Therefore, interpretations of cultural symbols can vary depending on individual perspectives, reflecting the complexity of understanding culture in a broader context. These findings also emphasize that visitor behavior is greatly influenced by how they interpret symbols and meanings within the cultural ecosystem in Bandar Lampung. Furthermore, the study reveals how ecotourism attributes shape visitor experience and satisfaction, as well as the role of local cultural elements in deepening their understanding of ecotourism. Therefore, the findings of this study provide a significant contribution to the development of sustainable ecotourism, emphasizing the importance of cultural aspects in the design and management of nature-based tourism destinations.

**Keywords:** Cultural Semiotics, Ecotourism Destination Attributes, Meaning Interpretation, Symbols and Signs, Visitor Intention.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Visitor behavior in ecotourism is a crucial aspect of developing the tourism sector based on environmental and cultural preservation. Ecotourism, which aims to provide ecological

and economic benefits, depends not only on the natural beauty but also on how visitors interact with the cultural and environmental attributes present at the destination. Bandar Lampung, as the capital of Lampung Province, holds great

potential to be developed as an attractive ecotourism destination, with its abundant natural and cultural resources. Tourism provides direct contributions, such as for tourist destinations, accommodations, and transportation, as well as indirect contributions to many other industries, such as retail, property, healthcare, and food and beverages in countries around the world (WTTC, 2024). The international tourism sector experienced a significant decline in 2020, with the number of trips reaching only 406.32 million, and tourism revenue dropping to USD 561.00 billion (UNWTO, 2024). This decline, reaching 62.35% in visits and 72.27% in income, was driven by travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Indonesia, the tourism sector also plays a large role in the domestic economy.

The contribution of tourism to Indonesia's GDP currently stands at 2.20%, down from 5.00% in 2019 (UNWTO, 2024). However, Indonesia's tourism sector is showing signs of recovery, with the number of international tourists increasing to 11.677 million in 2023, growing by 98.30% compared to the previous year's 5.889 million tourists. Nevertheless, this figure has not yet reached its peak in 2019, which recorded 16.106 million international tourists (BPS, 2025). Additionally, the rise in domestic tourism in Indonesia has been driven by interregional travelers. In 2023, the number of domestic tourists was recorded at 893.667 million, with around 1.639% or 13.760 million of them visiting Lampung Province (BPS, 2025). Lampung ranked eleventh in terms of priority for domestic tourists, contributing a regional income of IDR 54.702 billion (BPS, 2025).

Tourism in Lampung is dominated by two main types: artificial and natural tourism. According to the 2023 report from BPS Indonesia, the province has 44 artificial tourist attractions and 41 natural tourist attractions. This number has grown nearly fourfold over the past four years, reflecting the increasing diversity of destination options available to the public and tourists in Lampung. Artificial tourism now exists alongside natural tourism and often provides more comprehensive services and facilities for visitors. Out of the 130 officially registered tourist sites, Lampung ranks second after Bali in terms of the management of tourist attractions dominated by the private sector, with a share of 86.02% (BPS, 2024). The opening of broader opportunities for the private sector creates the potential for new destinations and types of tourism, which, in turn, could lead to

more intense competition in the future. Ecotourism, as an approach to the development and growth of tourist destinations, offers a solution to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on nature and local communities.

According to the UNWTO definition, ecotourism is a form of tourism that aims to provide travel experiences while caring for the preservation of cultural traditions and the conservation of nature (UNWTO, 2024). Lampung has three significant conservation areas: the Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park, Way Kambas National Park, and Wan Abdul Rachman Great Forest Park (Tahura WAR). Tahura WAR, covering an area of 22,249.31 hectares, was designated as a conservation area through the Minister of Forestry's Decree No.742/Kpts-II/1992 on July 21, 1992. This area was later converted into a conservation forest under Minister of Forestry Decree No.408/Kpts-II/1993, covering parts of Bandar Lampung City and Pesawaran Regency. The Lampung Provincial Tourism and Creative Economy Office has recorded nine main tourist destinations in Bandar Lampung, including the Gita Persada Butterfly Park, Lembah Hijau, and Batu Putu Waterfall, which are examples of ecotourism destinations in the province.

However, the biggest challenge for the development of ecotourism in Lampung is the decline in visitor numbers, despite the variety of available tourist destinations. The market for ecotourism destinations has become more niche, amid the rapid development of artificial and non-ecotourism natural destinations that better align with the needs of the general public. Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to understand visitors' intentions in ecotourism. Similar to purchase intentions in marketing contexts, this study is grounded in the idea that the decision to visit is also the result of a process involving the establishment of needs, information search, and evaluation of available options (Solomon, 2005).

To address the decline in ecotourism visitors in Bandar Lampung, local communities have renovated these ecotourism destinations by adding attributes containing local cultural symbols. These ecotourism destination attributes include various elements, such as nature, culture, and symbols with specific meanings that can enrich the visitor experience. The renovation of ecotourism destinations by local communities through the addition of cultural attributes plays a crucial role in enriching the visitor experience and strengthening their connection to the place.

The incorporation of cultural elements can influence visitor behavior, such as increasing the likelihood of revisiting or recommending the destination to others. In this context, semiotics—the study of signs and symbols—becomes highly relevant for analyzing how cultural elements, such as traditional architecture, local art, or cultural rituals, function as symbols that influence visitors' perceptions and interpretations. Examples of cultural semiotic elements in ecotourism that may impact visitors' perceptions include the use of traditional motifs in the design of accommodation buildings or the introduction of local symbols, such as statues or carvings, representing specific cultural values. For instance, an ecotourism destination showcasing traditional carving art or local cultural performances can enhance visitors' appreciation of the cultural heritage present, as well as provide a deeper and more authentic experience. Thus, the application of cultural elements in ecotourism not only enriches the aesthetic value of the destination but also deepens visitors' emotional and intellectual experiences of the place.

In the context of ecotourism development in Lampung, cultural semiotics plays a crucial role in understanding how visitors interpret and assign meaning to the elements present in ecotourism destinations. Semiotics, as the study of signs and symbols in social life, provides valuable insights into how visitors perceive the attributes at ecotourism destinations and how those meanings influence their behavior while visiting those places. Previous studies have shown that cultural factors have a significant impact on ecotourism visitors' behavior, in terms of their expectations, experiences, and satisfaction. For example, ecotourism destinations closely associated with local culture, such as customs, rituals, and arts, can attract visitors who are interested in having authentic experiences (Voase, 2021). The concept of ecotourism offers a different experience by integrating aspects of nature conservation and local community empowerment. However, the understanding of visitor behavior toward ecotourism, particularly regarding the cultural attributes at the destination, is still limited. Additionally, some previous studies have only addressed ecotourism in general terms, without delving deeply into cultural aspects.

Research conducted by Trisdiana et al. (n.d) found that Batu Lapis Beach has great potential for ecotourism development and could

become an attractive ecotourism destination. The study by Altab et al. (2020) stated that Padang Cermin District in Pesawaran Regency is highly suitable for marine ecotourism development, although the availability of facilities and infrastructure remains low. Ahmad et al. (n.d.) revealed that aspects such as beauty, comfort, accommodation, and water sources significantly influence visitors' perceptions. Moreover, aspects like promotion, tourist facilities, transportation, walking paths, piers, and networks also play important roles in shaping visitor perceptions. (Lalika et al., 2020) added that adequate infrastructure and facilities are important factors that can attract visitors.

Djausal et al. (2025) showed that customer involvement studies are crucial for companies aiming to strengthen relationships with customers, build a positive brand image, and improve overall business performance. Hardani HD's (2019) research also found that, to promote the potential of Mangrove Baros tourism, it is important for ecotourism authorities to develop better facilities and infrastructure. Although these studies provide insights into ecotourism in Bandar Lampung, most focus on the physical aspects and infrastructure of destinations without delving deeply into the cultural attributes within ecotourism. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the attributes of ecotourism destinations from a cultural semiotics perspective, to understand how the symbols and signs embedded in local cultural elements can influence visitor intentions and their overall experience during their visit.

Previous research focuses on the relationship between visitor behavior and cultural symbols within the context of ecotourism has yet to be widely explored. Many studies have not examined how visitors interpret the cultural symbols present at ecotourism destinations and how these interpretations may influence their intention to visit or recommend the place. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the role of cultural symbols and semiotics in shaping visitor behavior, as well as their impact on decision-making within the context of ecotourism. The primary contribution of this research is to deepen the understanding of the interaction between local culture and visitors in the ecotourism context, which can enrich the existing literature and provide valuable insights for more effective and sustainable management of ecotourism destinations.

Several studies on language and culture

highlight their significant relevance across various contexts. Research by (Muta'allim et al., 2020) & (Muta'allim et al., 2021); (Sofyan et al., 2022); (Yudistira et al., 2022); (Akhmad Sofyan et al., 2022); & (Sudi et al., 2025) emphasizes the function and use of language in social interaction, learning, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), filmmaking, and peace studies. Meanwhile, studies focusing on culture and cross-cultural communication, such as those by (Muta'allim et al., 2021); (Hairus Salikin et al., 2021); & (Yudistira, R., 2023), explore how messages are conveyed through language and specific codes understood only by their respective communities.

Research on economic management and improvement has also been conducted by (Muta'allim et al., 2022), focusing on the economic development of the Kangean community through the traditional buffalo racing event. However, this research differs by concentrating on increasing tourist visitations through the enhancement of ecotourism destination attributes. To boost visitor numbers, various strategies are needed, including digital marketing, promotion, the use of language, cultural semiotics, and more, as discussed by (Ago et al., 2024); (Zainal et al., 2024); & (Muhammadiah et al., 2025). While several studies on ecotourism have been conducted, few have examined ecotourism from the perspective of destination attributes. Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap.

This study seeks to analyze the impact of ecotourism destination attributes on visitor intentions in Bandar Lampung. Using a cultural semiotics approach, the research focuses on the attributes found in ecotourism destinations. Semiotic theory will be applied to identify and interpret the signs, symbols, and meanings embedded in these attributes, which can influence visitors' attraction to the destinations. The cultural semiotics perspective is crucial for understanding how signs, symbols, and cultural practices interact with visitors and how meaning is formed through their perceptions (Eco, 1976 & Hall, 1997).

Destination attributes, such as natural scenery, tourism facilities, interactions with local communities, and surrounding cultural elements, shape visitors' meaningful experiences. This study will analyze how these elements are perceived by visitors through their cultural lens and how they construct meaning from their experiences while visiting ecotourism

destinations. Given the rapid development of ecotourism in Bandar Lampung, understanding whether these attributes influence visitors' behavior in choosing destinations and engaging with the environment is vital. By applying cultural semiotics, the study will assess the role of symbols in ecotourism destinations—whether related to nature, local culture, or tourism facilities—in shaping visitors' perceptions and behaviors. This understanding is essential for designing more sustainable ecotourism management strategies that are sensitive to local cultural values.

## **II. METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, focusing on the behavior of ecotourism visitors in Bandar Lampung and the symbolic meanings that visitors attach to cultural and natural attributes at ecotourism destinations. The primary objective of this research is to describe and analyze the influence of ecotourism destination attributes on visitors' intentions in Bandar Lampung. A cultural semiotics approach was chosen for this study, as it allows the researcher to explore the symbolic meanings formed by visitors regarding various ecotourism elements. Data collection for this research was conducted through a survey involving 116 respondents who had experience visiting ecotourism destinations in Lampung Province. The sample was selected using a non-random sampling method (Neuman, 2014).

The data collected consists of four main sections. First, the respondent characteristics, including gender, age, monthly expenditure, occupation, and frequency of travel per year. Second, information search preferences, which are categorized by media type (social media, print media, electronic media, directional signs or posters, etc.) and information sources (ecotourism managers, ecotourism destination news, general public reviews, and reviews from family and peers). In total, eight factors were evaluated on a scale of 1 (very low) to 6 (very high). Third, the evaluation of ecotourism destination attributes, based on marketing mix variables, includes 24 factors rated on a scale of 1 (very unimportant) to 6 (very important). Fourth, visit intention, which covers six factors considered by respondents when deciding their intention to visit an ecotourism destination. Data analysis for the survey used descriptive statistical analysis, along with correlation and multinomial regression analysis, to test the influence of

several independent variables on the dependent variable (Field, 2009). All data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22.00 software.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION RESULT

This study surveyed 116 respondents, both directly and indirectly. Of the total respondents, 76 (65.5%) were women, and 40 (34.5%) were men. The majority of respondents were in the adolescent and young adult age groups. Respondents were identified based on their frequency of travel per year. Most, 70 respondents (60.4%), reported traveling more than three times annually. Specifically, 30 (25.9%) traveled five times or more, 11 (9.5%)

traveled four times, and 29 (25.0%) traveled three times. Meanwhile, 22 respondents (19.0%) traveled twice, and 21 (18.1%) traveled once during the past year. A total of 43 respondents (37.1%) traveled less than three times annually, while 3 respondents (2.6%) did not travel at all in the past year. This data suggests that for most respondents, traveling is a regular activity throughout the year. The fact that a majority travels at least three times annually, with some traveling more than five times, indicates that tourism has become an essential part of their lifestyle. This is further supported by respondents' expenditure data, which is generally above the Regional Minimum Wage (RMW) of Bandar Lampung, set at Rp 2,991,349.

Table 1. Respondents' Tourism Priorities

|                      |                | Creation and Recreation | Educational Culture | Religious Spirituality | Ecotourism Nature | Leisure Tourism |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <i>N</i>             | <i>Valid</i>   | 116                     | 116                 | 116                    | 116               | 116             |
|                      | <i>Missing</i> | 0                       | 0                   | 0                      | 0                 | 0               |
| <i>Mean</i>          |                | 3,45                    | 3,12                | 2,93                   | 2,88              | 2,62            |
| <i>Median</i>        |                | 4,00                    | 3,00                | 3,00                   | 3,00              | 2,00            |
| <i>Mode</i>          |                | 5                       | 3                   | 2                      | 1                 | 1               |
| <i>St. Deviation</i> |                | 1,39                    | 1,14                | 1,35                   | 1,43              | 1,62            |
| <i>Skewness</i>      |                | -0,35                   | -0,06               | 0,06                   | 0,11              | 0,16            |
| <i>Kurtosis</i>      |                | -1,21                   | -0,65               | -1,21                  | -1,32             | -1,51           |
| <i>Minimum</i>       |                | 1                       | 1                   | 1                      | 1                 | 1               |
| <i>Maximum</i>       |                | 5                       | 5                   | 5                      | 5                 | 5               |
| <i>Sum</i>           |                | 400                     | 362                 | 340                    | 334               | 304             |

The type of tourism most prioritized by respondents is leisure tourism, which ranks highest compared to the other four types. Leisure tourism received an average priority score of 2.62 (the lower the score, the higher the priority, equivalent to 59.50 on a 0-100 scale). In second place is nature and ecotourism, with an average score of 2.88 (equivalent to 53.00). Religious or spiritual tourism ranks third with an average score of 2.93 (equivalent to 51.75). Two other types, cultural and educational tourism, and man-

made tourism, received average scores of 3.12 and 3.45 (equivalent to 47.00 and 38.75), indicating they are ranked below half of the respondents' priorities. While nature and ecotourism rank second, they are not the respondents' top choice, trailing behind leisure tourism. Specifically, only 27 respondents prioritized nature and ecotourism, with 24 placing it second. Out of 116 total respondents, 65 placed nature and ecotourism as their third, fourth, or even lowest priority."

Table 2. Information Search Intensity and Tourism Considerations

|                      |                | Information Search Intensity for Tourism | Ecotourism Evaluation Intensity Compared to Other Types of Tourism |
|----------------------|----------------|--|--|
| <i>N</i>             | <i>Valid</i>   | 116                                      | 116  |
|                      | <i>Missing</i> | 0  | 0  |
| <i>Mean</i>          |                | 3,60                                     | 3,85   |
| <i>Median</i>        |                | 3,00                                     | 4,00   |
| <i>Mode</i>          |                | 3  | 4  |
| <i>St. Deviation</i> |                | 1,21                                     | 1,14   |
| <i>Skewness</i>      |                | -0,14                                    | -0,00  |

|                 |       |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| <i>Kurtosis</i> | -0,47 | -0,24 |
| <i>Minimum</i>  | 1     | 1     |
| <i>Maximum</i>  | 6     | 6     |
| <i>Sum</i>      | 401   | 447   |

Another key finding from this survey is the behavior of respondents in seeking information. Generally, the level of information search regarding tourism among respondents is relatively low, with an average score of 3.60 (equivalent to 52.00 on a 0-100 scale). This indicates that respondents rarely search for tourism-related information, despite frequently seeking information on other aspects of daily life. Additionally, respondents tend to rarely evaluate or consider their options before visiting ecotourism sites, compared to other types of tourism, with an average score of 3.85 (equivalent to 57.00).

It is important to note that this evaluation is only relevant when respondents are considering visiting nature or ecotourism destinations, which are not their top priority; leisure tourism takes precedence. This suggests that respondents tend to make more thoughtful decisions when considering ecotourism destinations, rather than doing so spontaneously.

A general overview of respondents'

evaluation of information search shows an average score of 4.283 (or 71.38 on a 0-100 scale). This reflects that respondents view information search as an important factor in deciding to visit ecotourism destinations. In terms of media usage, respondents are more likely to rely on social media (average 4.82) and electronic media (average 4.34) as sources of information, both surpassing the use of print media and directional guides (average scores of 3.34 and 3.32, respectively). Respondents also prefer information from family and friends (average 4.20) as well as the travel experiences of others (average 4.03). On the other hand, information from news coverage about ecotourism destinations or official communications from ecotourism managers receives lower ratings (average scores of 3.73 and 3.38). Overall, respondents show a stronger preference for media selection (average of 4.17 across all indicators) than for the sources of information themselves (average of 3.99), when considering visits to ecotourism sites.

Table 3. Information Search Preferences

| Indicators  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean Factors | Mean Variable |
|---|------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Social Media Information Search Preference                    | 4,82 | 1,801          | 4,167        | 4,283         |
| Electronic Media Information Search Preference                | 4,34 | 1,376          |              |               |
| Print Media Information Search Preference                     | 3,34 | 1,493          |              |               |
| Directional Guides/Poster Information Search Preference       | 3,22 | 1,357          |              |               |
| Tourism Manager Information Search Preference                 | 3,38 | 1,437          | 3,989        |               |
| Tourism News Information Search Preference                    | 3,73 | 1,506          |              |               |
| Travel Experience Reviews Information Search Preference       | 4,03 | 1,694          | 3,989        |               |
| Family, Friends, and Colleagues Information Search Preference | 4,20 | 1,611          |              |               |

An analysis of respondents' evaluations regarding important tourism attributes for deciding to visit ecotourism destinations reveals that, out of the eight factors analyzed, physical factors and human resources received the highest average scores, at 5.12 and 5.08, respectively. Among physical factors, cleanliness and maintenance of the destination were rated as the most important, with a score of 5.47, followed by the diversity of available facilities (5.04). In

contrast, ornamental factors or additional facilities were rated the lowest, with a score of 4.85. For human resources, respondents prioritized excellent and competent service from staff, as well as staff friendliness, with scores of 5.19 and 5.14, respectively. Conversely, the presence of visitors with similar interests was considered the least important factor, with a score of 4.92.

Table 4. Evaluation of Ecotourism Attribute Components (Marketing Mix)

| Indicators  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean Factors | Mean Variable |
|---|------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Product Evaluation - Flora Diversity                                      | 4,25 | 1,432          | 4,73         |               |
| Product Evaluation - Fauna Diversity                                      | 4,49 | 1,374          |              |               |
| Product Evaluation - Ecotourism Beauty                                    | 5,22 | 1,277          |              |               |
| Product Evaluation - Ecotourism Uniqueness                                | 4,97 | 1,205          |              |               |
| Price Evaluation - Entrance Fee   | 4,66 | 1,415          | 4,76         |               |
| Price Evaluation - Facility Fees at Ecotourism                            | 4,79 | 1,335          |              |               |
| Price Evaluation - Cost of Traveling to Ecotourism                        | 4,83 | 1,321          |              |               |
| Place Evaluation - Ease of Access to the Location                         | 5,07 | 1,290          | 4,77         |               |
| Place Evaluation - Ecotourism Area Easy to Explore                        | 4,99 | 1,205          |              |               |
| Place Evaluation - Proximity to Other Attractions/Businesses              | 4,24 | 1,586          |              |               |
| Promotion Evaluation - Attractive   | 4,51 | 1,399          | 4,65         |               |
| Promotion Evaluation - Informative  | 4,81 | 1,237          |              |               |
| Promotion Evaluation - Use of Appropriate Media                           | 4,64 | 1,465          |              |               |
| Physical Evaluation - Availability of Various Facilities                  | 5,04 | 1,247          | 5,12         | 4,842         |
| Physical Evaluation - Clean and Well-maintained                           | 5,47 | 1,107          |              |               |
| Physical Evaluation - Presence of Ornaments and Other Supporting Features | 4,85 | 1,307          |              |               |
| People Evaluation - Friendly and Pleasant Staff                           | 5,14 | 1,201          | 5,08         |               |
| People Evaluation - Excellent and Competent Staff Service                 | 5,19 | 1,278          |              |               |
| People Evaluation - Visitors with Similar Interests                       | 4,92 | 1,346          |              |               |
| Process Evaluation - Variety of Activities Available                      | 4,90 | 1,261          | 4,72         |               |
| Process Evaluation - Involvement of Visitors                              | 4,49 | 1,429          |              |               |
| Process Evaluation - Availability of Entertainment or Enjoyable Elements  | 4,76 | 1,290          |              |               |
| Additional Evaluation - Ecotourism Free from Pollution                    | 5,26 | 1,210          | 4,91         |               |
| Additional Evaluation - Popularity of Ecotourism                          | 4,55 | 1,379          |              |               |

The next highest-rated factors are value-added and place, with average scores of 4.91 and 4.77, respectively. For the value-added factor in ecotourism, the presence of pollution-free destinations and the popularity of the ecotourism destination received average scores of 5.26 and 4.55. Regarding the place factor, ease of access to the location was the highest-rated indicator (5.07). Two other indicators—ease of exploring the ecotourism area and proximity to other business attractions—received lower ratings, with scores of 4.99 and 4.24, respectively. The price and product factors of ecotourism were also considered important, with average scores of 4.76 and 4.73. For price, respondents prioritized the cost of getting to the location (4.83), followed by the cost of facilities and entrance fees (4.79 and 4.66). This indicates that respondents are more sensitive to the overall cost of the trip rather than just the on-site prices. Meanwhile, for the product factor, the two most important indicators

were the beauty of ecotourism and its uniqueness, with scores of 5.22 and 4.97. In contrast, the diversity of fauna and flora received lower ratings (4.49 and 4.25), suggesting that respondents value visual and distinctive ecotourism experiences over more in-depth ecological aspects.

The process and promotion factors received the lowest ratings, with average scores of 4.72 and 4.65, respectively. For the process factor, entertainment or enjoyment at the ecotourism site received the highest rating (4.74), while the variety of activities and visitor involvement were rated lower (4.90 and 4.76). This shows that respondents prioritize fun aspects when choosing an ecotourism destination. For the promotion factor, clear and informative information was the most valued (4.81), while the use of appropriate media and appealing promotional packaging received lower scores (4.64 and 4.51, respectively). Finally, the

survey also gauged respondents' intention to visit ecotourism destinations. Seventy respondents (60.40%) gave high ratings (6 and 5), while 44 respondents (37.9%) rated it medium (4 and 3).

Only 2 respondents gave low ratings. Overall, the respondents' intention to visit ecotourism destinations had an average score of 4.71 (equivalent to 74.20 on a 0-100 scale).

Table 5. Respondents' Intention to Visit Ecotourism

|                      |                | Information Search<br>Intensity for Tourism |
|----------------------|----------------|---|
| <i>N</i>             | <i>Valid</i>   | 116   |
|                      | <i>Missing</i> | 0   |
| <i>Mean</i>          |                | 4,71  |
| <i>Median</i>        |                | 5,00  |
| <i>Mode</i>          |                | 5   |
| <i>St. Deviation</i> |                | 1,09  |
| <i>Skewness</i>      |                | -0,59                                       |
| <i>Kurtosis</i>      |                | -0,02                                       |
| <i>Minimum</i>       |                | 1   |
| <i>Maximum</i>       |                | 6   |
| <i>Sum</i>           |                | 546   |

The purpose of testing the validity of variables is to assess the adequacy of the instruments and the variables within them before conducting impact tests. In the case of the information search preference variable, two indicators under the media factor were excluded from the media factor construct due to their low correlation values: information search through mass media ( $r = 0.632$ ) and information search through signposts or posters ( $r = 0.406$ ). Meanwhile, the other two indicators—preference for searching via social media ( $r = 0.924$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and search through electronic media ( $r = 0.866$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )—showed higher correlation values and were retained for further analysis. For the information preference factor, the indicator for preference towards information provided by eco-tourism destination managers ( $r = 0.574$ ) was also excluded from the analysis due to its low correlation. However, other indicators in this factor, such as preference for information from tourism news, preference based on reviews from the general public, and preference for information from family members, met the adequacy criteria with correlation values ranging from 0.722 to 0.852 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The reliability value for all the instruments measuring respondent preferences in information search, based on Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.855, indicates a high level of reliability. Validity testing of the importance of eco-tourism destination attributes based on the marketing mix showed different results. All indicators under the product factor, which include flora diversity,

fauna diversity, destination beauty, and eco-tourism destination uniqueness, showed significant correlation values between 0.789 and 0.893 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, under the price factor, indicators such as entrance ticket prices, facility costs at eco-tourism sites, and transportation costs to eco-tourism destinations, also met the adequacy criteria with correlation values ranging from 0.834 to 0.915 ( $p < 0.05$ ). For the place factor, although the correlation values of the indicators were slightly lower, ranging from 0.809 to 0.887 ( $p < 0.05$ ), they were still considered suitable for further analysis.

The next validity test was conducted on the promotion, physical, and human resources factors. For the promotion factor, the involved indicators, such as attractive promotion, informative promotion, and promotion through appropriate media, all met the adequacy criteria with correlation values ranging from 0.856 to 0.930 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, for the physical factor, indicators like the availability of various facilities, a clean and well-maintained site, and the presence of ornaments, all met the adequacy criteria ( $r = 0.843$  to  $0.906$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Lastly, for the human resources factor, the three indicators used—friendly and pleasant staff, competent staff, and the presence of tourists with similar interests—were also deemed valid with correlation values between 0.892 and 0.955 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The final validity test on the process and added value factors yielded results similar to previous tests. Indicators within the process



factor, including the number of activity options, visitor involvement, and the presence of entertainment or enjoyment elements, all showed relatively high correlation values ( $r = 0.833-0.899$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), making them suitable for use. Similarly, the added value factor, which represents an additional element in the marketing mix for this study, also demonstrated significant correlation values ( $r = 0.797-0.848$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Two indicators within this factor—eco-tourism being pollution-free and the popularity of eco-tourism destinations—met the adequacy criteria. Overall, the eight factors in the eco-tourism destination attribute evaluation variable had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.929, indicating that the instruments used to measure eco-tourism attributes, including the factors and their indicators, are highly reliable and appropriate for this research.

This study's impact analysis involves two main variables: visitor preferences in information search (comprising two factors with a total of five indicators) and visitors' evaluation of various eco-tourism destination attributes based on marketing mix elements (comprising eight factors with a total of 25 indicators). The results of the first impact test show that these two independent variables, when analyzed together (simultaneously), are capable of influencing the intention of potential tourists to visit eco-tourism destinations. The obtained R-Square value of 0.135 ( $F = 8.833$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates that these two variables, when combined, can explain 13.50% of the variation in visit intention. While this value is relatively small, the results suggest that these two variables should be considered important factors to focus on for eco-tourism managers. However, this finding also indicates that 86.50% of the variation in visit intention

remains unexplained by these two variables, suggesting the existence of other important variables that need to be considered in future studies.

Subsequently, the results of the partial impact test show that each independent variable significantly influences tourists' intention to visit. The variable of respondents' preferences in information search showed a significant effect on visit intention, with an impact value of 0.347 ( $t = 3.037$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This means that every one-unit increase in the preference for information search by potential tourists will increase their visit intention by 0.347 times. Conversely, a decrease in the preference for information search will reduce their visit intention by 0.347 times. The variable of evaluating eco-tourism destination attributes based on the marketing mix elements also demonstrated a significant positive effect on visit intention, with an impact value of 0.232 ( $t = 2.120$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

This implies that each one-unit increase in the evaluation of destination attributes by respondents will raise their visit intention by 0.232 times. Conversely, a decrease in the evaluation of these attributes will decrease their intention to visit by 0.232. The constant value in this impact test was 2.235 ( $t = 3.637$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a significant effect. This means that even without any changes in the preferences or evaluations, the intention to visit will still increase by 2.235 points. Even if the preference and evaluation values in the minds of respondents or potential tourists are zero, the intention value will remain 2.235 (on a 0-6 scale) to visit the eco-tourism destination. This relatively high constant value also suggests that there are other important variables with a significant impact, which have not yet been included in this research model.

Table 7. Results of the Multinomial Regression Test

| <i>Model Summary</i> |                   |                 |                          |                                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Model</i>         | <i>R</i>          | <i>R Square</i> | <i>Adjusted R Square</i> | <i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i> |
| 1                    | .368 <sup>a</sup> | .135            | .120                     | 1.020                             |

a. *Predictors: (Constant), Information Preferences, Eco-Tourism Attribute Evaluation*

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup> |            |                |     |             |       |                   |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| Model              |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
| 1                  | Regression | 18.392         | 2   | 9.196       | 8.833 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 117.642        | 113 | 1.041       |       |                   |
|                    | Total      | 136.034        | 115 |             |       |                   |

a. *Dependent Variable: Visiting Intention*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Information Preferences, Eco-Tourism Attribute Evaluation*

| <i>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></i> |                                  |                                    |                   |                                  |          |             |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| <i>Model</i>                    |                                  | <i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i> |                   | <i>Standardized Coefficients</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
|                                 |                                  | <i>B</i>                           | <i>Std. Error</i> | <i>Beta</i>                      |          |             |
| 1                               | (Constant)                       | 2.235                              | .615              |                                  | 3.637    | .000        |
|                                 | Information Preferences          | .347                               | .114              | .273                             | 3.037    | .003        |
|                                 | Eco-Tourism Attribute Evaluation | .232                               | .110              | .191                             | 2.120    | .036        |
|                                 |                                  |                                    |                   |                                  |          |             |

a. Dependent Variable: Viisiting Intention

All the results from the previous tests require special attention, especially from eco-tourism destination managers, as well as from the government and eco-tourism advocates. The decline in the intention or interest of the public to visit various eco-tourism destinations, as observed today, indicates the influence resulting from the decreased preferences of potential tourists in searching for information about eco-tourism, including reduced exposure to such information. The low evaluation of various factors related to eco-tourism destination attributes, compared to other tourist attractions, is another reason for this decline. The focus of improvements should be directed by eco-tourism destination managers across all the factors within

each influential variable.

## DISCUSSION

The previous test results indicate a strong relationship between the information search preferences of respondents and the evaluation of eco-tourism attributes based on marketing mix elements. Figure 1 illustrates this relationship in general, where high performance in one variable is followed by high performance in the other variable. The majority of the study sample aligns with this finding, where respondents showing high performance in both variables generally also have a high intention to visit eco-tourism destinations.

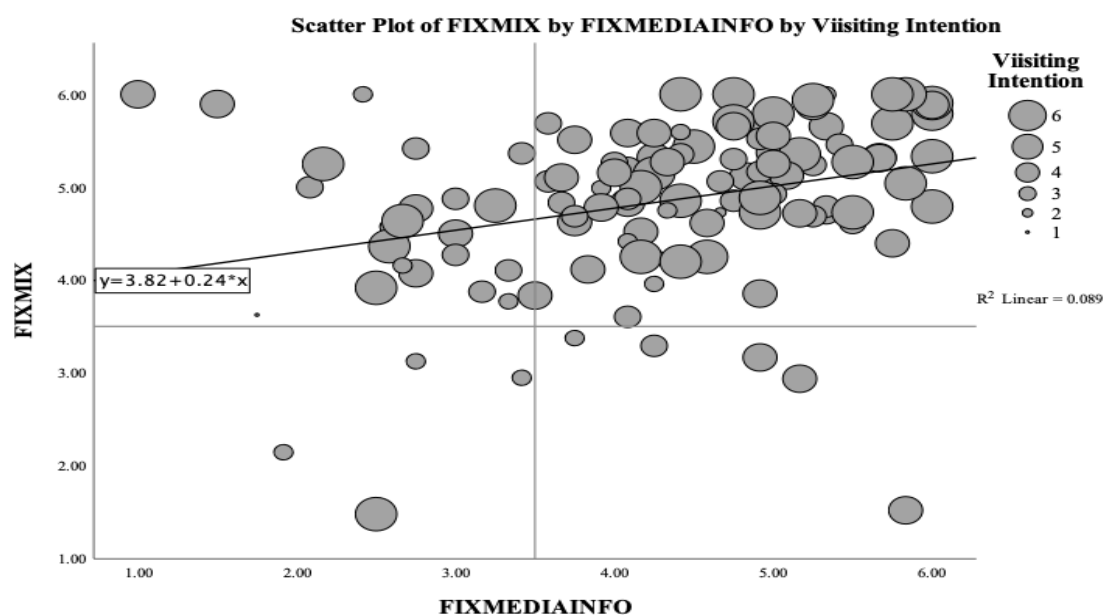


Figure 1. Scatter Plot of Information Preferences and Eco-Tourism Attribute Evaluation Variables

Based on the analysis of variables and respondent characteristics in this study, no significant differences were found between variables across the different respondent characteristics. However, three unique patterns emerged regarding the performance of variables among respondent groups. First, the male

respondent group tended to rate the information search preference factor higher than the female group, indicating that information search is considered highly important by male respondents. Conversely, female respondents demonstrated higher performance in evaluating eco-tourism attributes. Another unique pattern

was observed in the group of employees (both civil servants and private-sector employees) and entrepreneurs (self-employed and business owners), who placed more emphasis on the evaluation of eco-tourism attributes when making travel decisions compared to groups such as students, university students, and housewives. This group also recorded higher visit frequency to eco-tourism destinations compared to the other groups.

The study also uncovered several other important insights based on the test results and data overview. Although the information search preference variable did not perform the highest in the respondents' ratings (with an average of 4.283), it surprisingly had the greatest impact on visit intention. The information preference factor showed a stronger relationship with visit intention compared to the media factor, particularly in indicators like media coverage of destinations, reviews from the general public, and information from family and friends. This was actually contrary to the respondents' ratings of these three factors. Therefore, eco-tourism destination managers in Bandarlampung need to understand that these three types of information should be offered to the public as potential visitors. This study also indicates that potential visitors are not particularly interested in information provided by the destination managers (which had the lowest average rating and showed no significant relationship with visit intention).

### **Utilizing Social Media and Electronics to Increase Visitor Intensity**

The use of social media, digital, and electronic media needs to be enhanced. These two factors show the highest average values and have a significant positive relationship with the intention to visit ecotourism destinations. Therefore, ecotourism destination managers need to expand their promotional strategies, not limited to creating banners, billboards, directional signs, or mass media promotions. Managers should also consider creating official accounts on various digital platforms and collaborate with electronic media to strengthen exposure and increase the appeal of ecotourism destinations to tourists. Programs developed on social media and electronic media should also be managed carefully, as the public is generally less interested in news solely from the perspective of the managers. To address this, managers can organize promotions, programs, and activities

that involve the general public and encourage positive responses and comments. The use of influencers can also be a strategic step to increase visibility and attract more visitors.

As with the information search preference variable, the evaluation of ecotourism attributes also shows differences in respondents' performance ratings and a strong relationship between this variable and the intention to visit ecotourism. The variables that have the greatest influence on visit intentions, in order, are: physical aspects, human resources, location, price, product, process, and promotion. Meanwhile, in terms of purchase intentions, the key factors are: product, physical aspects, process, human resources, and promotion. The product factor includes all indicators closely related to increasing visit intentions. The beauty of ecotourism attractions and the diversity of fauna and flora need to be a primary focus. Although often seen as an element that cannot be changed, ecotourism managers can manage and utilize this potential while prioritizing conservation and learning principles, which are the core of ecotourism. To preserve the beauty and diversity of fauna and flora, managers can design programs that involve visitors in the maintenance of the destination or educational activities within it. Creativity and innovation in developing the beauty of tourist attractions while maintaining the diversity of fauna and flora will be a key factor in increasing the intention to visit the destination.

The physical factor is also considered important by respondents, in line with the strong relationship of indicators in this factor to visit intentions. Cleanliness and orderliness of the destination, as well as the availability of various facilities, are two key aspects that need attention. However, the presence of ornaments or decorations in the ecotourism destination is not considered very important by respondents and has a low correlation with visit intentions. Therefore, ecotourism managers must ensure the cleanliness and orderliness of all areas before expecting visitors. Regarding maintenance and the diversity of facilities, managers can explore collaboration potential between the managers and visitors. For instance, managers could provide educational facilities for interested visitors. Waste management activities could also be part of the facilities that enrich the ecotourism destination. Additionally, facilities that support the conservation of fauna and flora diversity can serve as an additional attraction.

### **Process and Human Resources Factors in Enhancing Visit Intention**

The process factor is considered important by respondents, particularly in terms of the number of activity options, visitor involvement, and entertainment elements. However, entertainment does not show a significant relationship with the intention to visit ecotourism destinations. Therefore, ecotourism destination managers need to follow up by offering a variety of activities that directly involve visitors, as previously mentioned. Ecotourism destinations should also be open to being utilized by visitors for various needs, without damaging the environment and the biodiversity present. Entertainment elements can be aligned with collaborative activities involving visitors in various programs provided by the managers.

The next important factor is human resources. The presence of friendly and competent staff is highly valued by respondents. However, the factor of visitors' interest in environmental and nature management is the most important aspect. Therefore, ecotourism managers need to improve staff training and competency development by collaborating with relevant educational institutions in the fields of nature conservation and the protection of fauna and flora. This collaboration can build long-term relationships between domestic and international educational institutions and ecotourism destinations. Additionally, managers can also collaborate with related communities to ensure that visitors share the same interest in environmental preservation. Ecotourism destinations could even become leaders in forming new communities that support environmental conservation.

Price and location factors do not show a significant relationship with visit intention, although both are considered important by respondents. These factors are heavily influenced by external parties, including business players and the government. The price factor, which includes travel costs, facilities, and entrance fees, is closely related to the availability of access roads and transportation modes to the location, most of which are managed by the government. Ecotourism managers need to communicate with the government and private sectors to improve accessibility to ecotourism destinations. Additionally, collaboration with transportation providers is essential to enhance visitor comfort. The location factor, which involves ease of access, visitor mobility within the destination,

and proximity to other tourist attractions or businesses, also needs to be managed well. Ecotourism managers should open communication with local governments, especially regarding business permits, road construction, and other policies. Furthermore, collaboration with other business players can help ensure better accessibility.

### **Promotion: Using the Right Media to Raise Awareness**

Promotion is a factor closely related to information search preferences. Therefore, ecotourism promotion should be managed by selecting the right media and providing relevant information. The use of social media and electronic media that feature positive news and reviews from the public, family, and colleagues is necessary to increase potential tourists' interest. Ecotourism destination managers should also ensure that every promotion carried out is informative, offering a clear picture of the product, the physical condition of the destination, the activities, and the available human resources. Furthermore, educating the public about the importance of ecotourism and environmental preservation, as well as involving the community in conservation activities, should be an essential part of every promotional material.

The findings of this study align with purchase decision theory in management and economics. When making purchasing decisions, people go through several stages, starting from need recognition, information search, option evaluation, to the intention to purchase or visit. This study finds that the lack of maximization in the information search and evaluation process by respondents explains why ecotourism destinations are currently underappreciated. Most of the solutions to this problem depend on the innovative capabilities of ecotourism destination managers. Managers need to improve media management and information production to ensure that ecotourism destinations become part of the public's awareness and the primary choice for travel. Moreover, managing and developing the attributes of ecotourism destinations should be done to maintain their appeal and ensure that these destinations remain competitive compared to other tourist destinations.

## **Interpretation of Visitor Behavior towards Ecotourism Attributes**

A cultural semiotic analysis of visitors' behavior interpretation towards eco-tourism attributes in Bandar Lampung reveals profound symbolic meanings in various eco-tourism elements in the region. Attributes such as biodiversity, sustainability, local community involvement, and environmental education not only have practical meanings but also symbolic ones that reflect the cultural values and ideologies of both visitors and the local community. Biodiversity, such as tropical forests and marine ecosystems in Bandar Lampung, for example, is seen as a symbol of nature that is still "untouched" and "pristine," which must be preserved. For visitors, this nature is not just a tourist object but a symbol of wealth that must be protected for the sustainability of the Earth. The concepts of sustainability and conservation, as symbols of environmental preservation, are understood as a collective responsibility, inviting visitors to engage in environmental preservation efforts, such as reducing plastic waste and protecting endangered species.

Environmental education, in this context, serves as a symbol of cultural transformation, where visitors not only gain information but also change their attitudes and behaviors to support environmental conservation efforts. On the other hand, the involvement of the local community in eco-tourism in Bandar Lampung becomes a symbol of social and cultural empowerment, strengthening the relationship between visitors and the local community, and adding deeper meaning to an authentic and mutually beneficial tourism experience. Visitors' actions, such as taking home their waste, purchasing local products, or participating in conservation activities, serve as indicators that they understand and appreciate the sustainability values embedded in eco-tourism. This analysis shows that eco-tourism in Bandar Lampung also reflects a cultural identity that connects the local community with visitors in a joint effort to preserve nature and culture. The main challenge in this context is how to maintain the symbolic meaning of sustainability amid the rapid growth of tourism, while the existing opportunity lies in the ability to educate more people about the importance of sustainability and conservation. Overall, through a cultural semiotic approach, eco-tourism destination managers can gain a deeper understanding of how these symbols

shape visitor behavior and design more meaningful and sustainable tourism experiences.

## **Symbolic Meaning of Eco-Tourism Attributes from a Cultural Semiotic Perspective**

The symbolic meaning of eco-tourism attributes in Bandar Lampung, when viewed through the lens of cultural semiotics, involves a dynamic interaction between natural and cultural symbols that shape a meaningful experience for visitors. In this context, natural attributes such as biodiversity, natural beauty, and ecosystem sustainability function as symbols of life that must be preserved and protected. The direct experience with nature not only offers visual enjoyment but also awakens visitors' awareness about the importance of maintaining the balance of nature. For example, destinations such as the Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park and marine ecosystems in Bandar Lampung convey a strong message about the scarcity and urgency of environmental conservation. The pristine tropical forests and vibrant coral reefs become symbols of natural wealth that are vulnerable to damage and change. Visitors see these natural wonders not only as tourist attractions but as symbols that remind them of the importance of preserving and protecting these natural legacies for future generations.

On the other hand, cultural attributes also play a significant role in shaping the symbolic meaning within eco-tourism. The involvement of local communities, through their roles as tour guides or artisans, brings cultural symbols that represent traditions and local wisdom that need to be respected and preserved. Interaction with cultural products, such as traditional crafts or local culinary tourism, enriches the visitors' experience and connects them to authentic cultural values, while also strengthening the social bond between visitors and the local community.

These two attributes—nature and culture—work synergistically in shaping visitors' perception that eco-tourism in Bandar Lampung is not just a recreational activity but also part of conservation and social empowerment efforts. Visitors are encouraged to understand that eco-tourism offers benefits not only to them but also to the local community and the environment. Therefore, eco-tourism in Bandar Lampung, through the symbols of nature and culture, creates an experience that is not only entertaining

but also educational, fostering more responsible actions toward the environment and society. Thus, through a cultural semiotic approach, we can see that eco-tourism in Bandar Lampung is not just about nature tourism, but a medium for transmitting messages of conservation, sustainability, and the strengthening of cultural identity, which can change visitors' behaviors and attitudes toward a more responsible and sustainable lifestyle.

### **The Influence of Eco-Tourism Destination Attributes on Visitor Intentions**

The influence of eco-tourism destination attributes on visitor intentions is highly significant, as these attributes play a key role in shaping visitors' perceptions and decisions to either visit or return to a destination. Attributes such as biodiversity, natural quality, conservation activities, sustainability, and interaction with local culture directly affect visitors' intention to return or recommend the destination to others. If an eco-tourism destination has appealing attributes, such as well-preserved nature, environmentally friendly facilities, and authentic local community involvement, visitors will feel more emotionally connected and develop a sense of responsibility toward environmental preservation. Rich biodiversity and well-maintained natural environments provide a more profound experience for visitors, which in turn increases their intention to visit again or recommend the destination to others.

Well-managed conservation programs and the involvement of local communities in eco-tourism management influence visitors' perceptions of the importance of sustainability and social responsibility. This further strengthens visitors' intention to return, as they feel that their visit directly contributes to environmental preservation and the empowerment of the local community. Furthermore, environmental education, which is often part of the eco-tourism experience, adds extra value for visitors, especially those concerned with sustainability and conservation issues. Through these educational activities, visitors not only gain knowledge but also change their attitudes and behaviors to more actively support environmental preservation efforts. Therefore, the attributes present at eco-tourism destinations not only influence visitors' immediate experiences but also shape their intention to choose that destination again in the future. Destinations that provide a deep and sustainable

experience are more likely to build long-term relationships with visitors, who will continue to support and prioritize eco-tourism sustainability.

### **Implications of Visitor Behavior on Eco-Tourism Sustainability**

Visitor behavior plays a crucial role in supporting eco-tourism sustainability in Bandar Lampung. Visitors who are aware of environmental and cultural issues can significantly contribute to creating a sustainable eco-tourism ecosystem. For example, visitors who follow conservation rules, such as not littering, avoiding harm to flora and fauna, and supporting conservation programs, can help minimize the negative impact on nature. Additionally, visitors who care about local culture are more likely to appreciate local products, crafts, and traditions, contributing to the economic empowerment of local communities. Such behavior fosters a mutually beneficial relationship between visitors and the local community while having a positive impact on the sustainability of both the natural ecosystem and the local culture in Bandar Lampung. Therefore, it is essential for eco-tourism destination managers to continue raising visitors' awareness about the importance of environmental and cultural preservation so that eco-tourism can develop sustainably and provide long-term benefits.

The relationship between visitors and the preservation of nature and local culture in Bandar Lampung is close and interdependent. Visitors to eco-tourism destinations are not only involved in recreational activities but also become part of the efforts to preserve nature and local culture. When visitors choose destinations that prioritize sustainability and conservation, they contribute to environmental preservation through participation in programs such as tree planting or protecting endangered species. On the other hand, interaction with the local community—such as buying handicrafts or participating in cultural festivals—plays a role in preserving local culture. This creates a reciprocal relationship where visitors gain an authentic cultural experience, while local communities benefit economically, supporting the continuity of their traditions. The success of eco-tourism in Bandar Lampung greatly depends on the harmonious relationship between visitors and the efforts to preserve both nature and local culture.

Research on visitor behavior towards eco-tourism attributes in Bandar Lampung provides

significant contributions to the development of eco-tourism in the region. By understanding how visitors interpret and respond to eco-tourism elements, destination managers can design more effective and sustainable programs. This research helps identify factors influencing visitors' decisions, such as environmental awareness, preferences for nature tourism, and involvement in social and cultural activities. The information gathered from this research enables destination managers to optimize the tourism experience, making it not only engaging but also educational for visitors about the importance of preserving nature and local culture.

Moreover, this research also provides insights into how to enhance collaboration between visitors and the local community in managing eco-tourism, which can lead to economic empowerment for the local population. Thus, this research plays a vital role in formulating policies and strategies that support eco-tourism sustainability and ensure that the positive impacts on nature and culture continue into the future.

Research on eco-tourism visitor behavior in Bandar Lampung, using a cultural semiotic approach to destination attributes, makes a significant contribution to understanding how visitors interpret and respond to eco-tourism elements such as nature, local culture, and community involvement. This approach reveals the symbolic meanings embedded in biodiversity, conservation programs, and interactions with local communities, as well as how these elements influence visitors' decisions to revisit a destination or recommend it to others. By utilizing cultural semiotics theory, this research provides deep insights into how visitors form meanings from the symbols present in eco-tourism elements. For instance, the biodiversity and conservation programs at eco-tourism destinations in Bandar Lampung are not just seen as natural objects but also as symbols of sustainability and environmental preservation that must be maintained by visitors. Furthermore, interactions with local communities—whether through cultural activities, handicrafts, or local traditions—add deeper meaning for visitors, shaping an emotional connection with the destination.

This research also offers valuable insights for destination managers in designing more integrated tourism experiences, emphasizing the importance of natural and cultural symbols in creating meaningful and emotional experiences

for visitors. Destination managers can use these findings to design programs that promote sustainability and cultural preservation, which can enhance visitors' intentions to return or recommend the destination to others. Moreover, the research highlights the critical role of the local community in eco-tourism. The local community is not only a provider of tourism services but also an active agent of change in supporting environmental and cultural preservation. Their involvement in eco-tourism management creates a mutually beneficial relationship, where the local community gains economic benefits while visitors receive authentic cultural experiences.

The implications of this research are valuable for destination managers, local communities, and eco-tourism development policies in Bandar Lampung. The study encourages the development of more effective marketing strategies and policies that support the empowerment of local communities and environmental preservation. By basing policies on a better understanding of the symbolic meanings within eco-tourism, managers can design experiences that are not only attractive but also sustainable. Therefore, this research emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to eco-tourism management that integrates both natural and cultural elements. Through this approach, eco-tourism destinations can create sustainable, educational experiences that have a positive impact on visitors, local communities, and the ecosystem's sustainability.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

This study aims to analyze the impact of eco-tourism destination attributes on visitor intentions in Bandar Lampung using a cultural semiotics approach. This study reveals a significant relationship between cultural attributes in ecotourism destinations and visitor behavior, which has not been widely explored quantitatively before. These findings provide new insights into how cultural symbols and semiotic elements influence visitors' perceptions and decisions, as well as open up opportunities for further research related to the management of ecotourism destinations that are more rooted in cultural values. By linking the results of this study back to its initial objective, which is to understand the impact of cultural elements on visitors' intentions, this research strengthens our understanding of the importance of culture in attracting visitor interest. The contributions of

this study are highly relevant in supporting the development of sustainable ecotourism and can serve as a reference for more effective destination management that is sensitive to local wisdom.

This finding provides a clearer picture of the relationship between eco-tourism attributes and visitor behavior, which includes elements of nature, local culture, and community interaction. The study also identifies important variables that were previously not incorporated into eco-tourism models, which can serve as a basis for developing more comprehensive and effective eco-tourism strategies. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of how visitors interpret the symbols and meanings present in the cultural ecosystem of Bandar Lampung. This suggests that visitors are not only influenced by the physical elements of nature but also by cultural symbols embedded in the traditions and daily life of the local community. By understanding these symbolic meanings, eco-tourism managers can design more profound and meaningful experiences for visitors, enhancing their satisfaction and increasing the likelihood of their return or recommendations.

This contribution also strengthens the importance of a cultural approach in eco-tourism management, which involves not only nature but also social and cultural interactions that influence visitors' perceptions of eco-tourism destinations. Therefore, it is recommended that eco-tourism destination managers in Bandar Lampung prioritize the involvement of local culture in destination management. Activities that involve the local community, such as cultural festivals or art performances, will enrich visitors' experiences and strengthen their connection to the local culture.

Furthermore, destination managers, cultural festivals, and educational programs should provide clearer information regarding the cultural and natural values present at eco-tourism destinations through information boards, educational materials, or tour guides. This can increase visitors' understanding of the importance of cultural and environmental preservation while fostering their awareness of their responsibilities toward the local environment and culture. Managers can also develop educational tourism programs based on cultural semiotics, involving tour guides who can explain the symbolic meanings embedded in each natural and cultural element of the eco-tourism destination. To support environmental sustainability, it is advisable for managers to

continue providing eco-friendly facilities, such as efficient waste management, the use of renewable energy, and introducing environmentally friendly transportation options at eco-tourism destinations. Close collaboration between eco-tourism managers and the local community is vital to ensure the sustainable management of environmentally friendly eco-tourism. Empowering local communities in eco-tourism management is also key to creating long-term positive impacts on environmental and cultural sustainability.

For future research, it is recommended to delve deeper into the demographic factors of visitors, such as age, gender, education, and place of origin, which may influence their behavior in interacting with eco-tourism attributes. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to assess the long-term impact of visitor experiences on their awareness of environmental and cultural preservation. Additionally, comparing eco-tourism destinations in other parts of Indonesia, such as Bali or Yogyakarta, could provide valuable insights into differences or similarities in visitor behavior across destinations, as well as the influence of varying management approaches on their experiences. A quantitative approach could also be applied to measure visitor perceptions of eco-tourism attributes through surveys or Likert scales, to gather larger and more representative data. Finally, the development of a cultural semiotics model within the context of eco-tourism in Indonesia is crucial. This model could serve as a reference for eco-tourism managers to enhance the design and interpretation of destinations, creating more meaningful experiences for visitors while supporting the sustainability of eco-tourism in the future.

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