

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND TOURISTS' BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study examined the relationship between economic sustainability and tourists' behavioural intentions—specifically revisits intention and destination loyalty—among tourists visiting attraction sites in Delta State, Nigeria. Anchored on Stakeholder Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the research addresses the limited empirical evidence regarding how destination sustainability dimensions influence tourists' future behavioural responses within the Nigerian context. A descriptive survey design with a cross-sectional approach was adopted. Using a convenience sampling technique, structured questionnaires were administered to tourists across selected attraction sites, yielding 142 usable responses out of 150 distributed (94.67% response rate). Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation on SPSS. The findings revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between economic sustainability and revisit intention ($r = .624$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = 38.9\%$). Similarly, economic sustainability demonstrated a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with destination loyalty ($r = .656$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = 43.0\%$). Consequently, both null hypotheses were rejected. The study concludes that economic sustainability conditions significantly influence positive post-visit tourist evaluations and future intentions. It recommends that tourism stakeholders and destination managers collaborate to establish enterprises, infrastructure, and services that meet visitors' needs while enhancing the economic well-being and living standards of host communities.

Keywords: *Economic Sustainability, Behavioural Intentions, Revisit Intention, Destination Loyalty, Sustainable Tourism, Delta State.*

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Introduction

Globalisation has intensified changes in tourism demand and supply and has increased competition among tourism destinations. Destination competitiveness, however, cannot be sustained without attention to sustainability. The thesis from which this article is extracted presents destination sustainability as a balanced concern for economic, environmental and socio-cultural conditions and links these conditions to tourists' future behavioural intentions. Sustainable tourism is understood as tourism that takes account of present and future economic, social and environmental impacts while addressing the needs of visitors, the tourism industry, the environment and host communities (UNEP & UNWTO, 2012).

This article narrows the dissertation's broad destination-sustainability model to economic sustainability. The dissertation conceptualises destination sustainability through environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions and tourists' behavioural intentions through revisit intention and destination loyalty. The selected focus is therefore directly derived from the study objectives rather than introduced as a new research construct.

□filecite□turn1file0□L51-L69□

Economic sustainability refers to safeguarding the economic needs and living standards of host populations and the economy generally. The thesis identifies indicators such as employment and business opportunities, local facilities and infrastructure, local products and services, tourist arrivals, expenditure, length of stay, occupancy and business performance. Economic viability is recognised as an important condition for long-term tourism sustainability, although destination performance cannot be assessed through economic indicators alone.

Introduction and Background to the Study

Tourism can contribute to socio-economic growth, but the thesis also acknowledges possible negative effects such as increases in prices and complications of sustainable tourism management among stakeholders. Economic sustainability therefore requires a balance between the benefits generated by tourism and the capacity of local economies and communities to support tourism over time.

The connection with behavioural intentions is grounded in the idea that tourists evaluate the products, services, prices, facilities and experiences available at destinations. The thesis notes that economic factors and prices can affect tourist satisfaction and

behaviour. If a destination provides appropriate businesses, facilities and services that meet tourist needs while supporting local economic welfare, these conditions can contribute to favourable evaluations and future intentions.

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Statement of the Problem

Tourism growth can create economic opportunities while also producing environmental deterioration and cultural damage. The thesis identifies a Nigerian research gap concerning how destination sustainability dimensions affect tourists' behavioural intentions. In particular, it notes limited empirical evidence on tourists' perspectives of sustainable tourism and on the influence of environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability on revisit intention and destination loyalty in Nigeria. This gap is important because repeat visitation and loyalty are relevant indicators of a destination's future performance.

For the present article, the problem is more specifically expressed as the need to understand whether economic sustainability is associated with the future behavioural responses of tourists in Delta State. The dissertation identifies a limited Nigerian evidence base and argues that this gap requires empirical attention.

The practical problem is also managerial. Tourism stakeholders need evidence about which sustainability conditions are associated with tourists' willingness to return and remain loyal. The original study therefore tested the relevant relationships using tourists visiting attraction sites in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

To determine the relationship between economic sustainability and tourists' behavioural intentions in Delta State, focusing on revisit intention and destination loyalty.

The purpose is deliberately narrower than the parent dissertation. It isolates one sustainability dimension and its two behavioural-intention outcomes so that the resulting manuscript has a clear journal-article contribution. The parent dissertation's objectives include separate tests for environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability against revisit intention and destination loyalty.

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between economic sustainability and revisit intention in Delta State?
- What is the relationship between economic sustainability and destination loyalty in Delta State?

Research Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant relationship between economic sustainability and revisit intention in Delta State.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between economic sustainability and destination loyalty in Delta State.

Literature Review and Theoretical / Conceptual Framework

Economic sustainability refers to safeguarding the economic needs and living standards of host populations and the economy generally. The thesis identifies indicators such as employment and business opportunities, local facilities and infrastructure, local products and services, tourist arrivals, expenditure, length of stay, occupancy and business performance. Economic viability is recognised as an important condition for long-term tourism sustainability, although destination performance cannot be assessed through economic indicators alone.

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The study's theoretical framework also supports the economic perspective. Stakeholder Theory emphasises the interdependence of destination managers, businesses, communities, tourists and government. Economic sustainability requires coordination among these stakeholders because the long-term value of tourism depends on the continued viability of the destination system.

Conceptually, the model for this article specifies the selected sustainability dimension as the independent variable and revisit intention and destination loyalty as the dependent behavioural-intention measures. This preserves the logic of the dissertation's conceptual framework while removing variables not required for the focused article.

Independent variable → Revisit intention; Independent variable → Destination loyalty.

Theoretical framework

Stakeholder Theory provides a useful foundation because tourism destinations depend on interconnected stakeholders including government, tourists, destination managers, tourism businesses and host communities. The thesis argues that these stakeholders are affected by sustainability practices and therefore should participate in destination management. The Theory of Planned Behaviour also provides an intention-based explanation

for behavioural outcomes. In the thesis, behavioural intention is treated through revisit intention and destination loyalty. Together, the theories support the argument that destination practices and tourists' perceptions of those practices can be related to future tourism behaviour.

Stakeholder Theory is especially relevant because sustainability outcomes at destinations are collective outcomes. Government, tourism businesses, residents, tourists and destination managers have different but connected interests. The dissertation therefore regards stakeholder collaboration as necessary for preserving tourism resources and maintaining destination performance.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour is relevant to revisit intention and loyalty because both are intention-oriented outcomes. The thesis describes behavioural intention as a person's willingness to perform a particular behaviour and applies TPB as an intention-based paradigm. □filecite□turn1file0□L878-L890□

Empirical perspective

The parent study reviewed literature showing that destination attributes, perceived quality, satisfaction, image, safety, perceived value and past experience can influence revisit intention and loyalty. It also notes that destination image can operate through cognitive, affective and conative evaluations. These ideas provide a basis for understanding why sustainability conditions may become part of tourists' overall destination evaluations.

For this article, the empirical expectation is that stronger perceptions of the selected sustainability dimension will correspond with more favourable behavioural intentions. This expectation is tested directly using the original dataset rather than introducing a new sample.

The dissertation's gap statement is particularly important: it reports limited empirical research on the extent to which environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability affects tourists' behavioural intentions in Nigeria. □filecite□turn1file0□L192-L199□

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey design with a cross-sectional approach. The target population consisted of tourists visiting visitor attraction sites in Delta State, while the accessible population consisted of tourists engaged in recreational activities at the sites. The population was considered large and unknown. A sample size of 150 was selected using the procedure reported in the thesis, followed by convenience sampling because tourists available at the attraction sites were accessible. Structured questionnaires were administered in English. The instrument used

a five-point Likert scale. The sustainability measures were adapted from Asmelash and Kumar (2019) and Ngo and Creutz (2022), while behavioural-intention measures covered revisit intention and destination loyalty. Face and content validity were established through supervisory review. A pilot study of 30 questionnaires produced an overall Cronbach's alpha of .891 for 28 items, while the individual constructs also exceeded .70. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for hypotheses concerning direct relationships.

The original study considered the population large and unknown and selected 150 respondents through convenience sampling. The questionnaire was divided into demographic information, destination sustainability, destination image/tourist satisfaction, and tourists' behavioural intentions. □filecite□turn4file7□L525-L573□

For the focused article, analysis is restricted to the relevant sustainability construct and the two behavioural outcomes. No new statistical procedure is claimed beyond the analyses reported in the thesis.

Validity, reliability and data analysis

Face and content validity were established through supervisory assessment. A pilot study involving 30 questionnaires produced an overall Cronbach's alpha of .891 for the 28-item instrument. The reported construct-level alpha coefficients were above .70, supporting internal consistency. □filecite□turn5file1□L194-L232□

The dissertation used SPSS version 23.0. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the magnitude of relationships between the three destination-sustainability dimensions and the behavioural-intention measures for hypotheses 1–6. □filecite□turn5file1□L233-L253□

Response profile

Of the 150 questionnaires administered, 142 (94.67%) were retrieved and all 142 were usable for analysis; eight questionnaires (5.33%) were not retrieved. The respondents comprised 86 males (60.56%) and 56 females (37.44%). The largest age group was 20–29 years (40.84%), followed by 30–39 years (25.36%). Respondents with MA/M.Sc/MBA constituted 37.32%, while 29.58% held HND/B.Sc. In terms of patronage, 40.85% reported 5–8 years of patronage.

Results and Discussions

A total of 150 questionnaires were administered, 142 were retrieved, and all 142 retrieved questionnaires were useful, giving a 94.67% usable response rate. □filecite□turn4file3□L293-L303□

Relationship	r	p	R ²
Economic sustainability → Revisit intention	.624	.000	38.9%
Economic sustainability → Destination loyalty	.656	.000	43.0%

The results demonstrate that both tested relationships are positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The direction of the coefficients is positive, indicating that higher reported sustainability conditions are associated with more favourable behavioural intentions.

Discussion of findings

Economic sustainability had a strong and positive relationship with revisit intention ($r=.624$, $p=.000$). The thesis reports an R Square of .389, indicating that 38.9% of the variance in revisit intention is associated with economic sustainability. The

null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Economic sustainability also had a strong and positive relationship with destination loyalty ($r=.656$, $p=.000$). The thesis reports an R Square of .430, indicating that 43% of the variance in destination loyalty is associated with economic sustainability. The result was statistically significant and led to rejection of the null hypothesis.

The findings indicate that economic conditions at a tourism destination matter for future tourist behaviour. The thesis recommends that tourism service providers and stakeholders work together to ensure that more businesses are established to meet tourists' needs. Such development can improve the availability of tourism services and support local economic activity.

The result is consistent with the wider literature cited in the thesis, including work associated with tourist satisfaction, perceived value, price and destination loyalty. The managerial implication is that economic sustainability should be pursued not simply as revenue generation but as a system of employment, local enterprise, facilities, services and destination competitiveness.

Interpretation of the findings

The first relationship indicates that economic sustainability is not merely a destination-management concern; it is statistically associated with a future-oriented tourist response. In practical terms, the result suggests that sustainability conditions can become part of the evaluation that tourists make when deciding whether a destination deserves another visit.

The second relationship extends the argument from a single future visit to loyalty. Loyalty represents a stronger destination relationship because it can involve repeated visitation and recommendation. The positive result therefore indicates that sustainability can contribute to destination retention and advocacy.

The findings should nevertheless be interpreted as relationships rather than proof of causality. The parent study used a cross-sectional descriptive survey and Pearson correlation. Accordingly, the results establish statistically significant associations within the sample and context rather than experimental causal effects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The article concludes that economic sustainability has a significant positive relationship with both revisit intention and destination loyalty among tourists in Delta State. The conclusion is consistent with the parent dissertation's broader finding that all three dimensions of destination sustainability had positive and significant relationships with the two behavioural-intention measures. [filecite\turn1file6\L455-L472](#)

The broader conclusion of the dissertation is that sustainability issues are critical to destination development because stakeholders are affected by them. It recommends a coordinating mechanism for sustainable destination management. [filecite\turn1file5\L381-L391](#)

Recommendations

- Stakeholders should encourage the establishment of businesses that meet tourists' needs.
- Local facilities, infrastructure, products and services should be developed in ways that support long-term destination viability.
- Economic benefits of tourism should be connected to the well-being and living standards of host communities.
- Destination managers should balance economic performance with environmental and socio-cultural sustainability.

Implications for tourism management

The findings support a stakeholder-oriented approach to destination management. Tourism service providers cannot independently create destination sustainability because the destination is a system involving communities, public authorities, tourists, attractions and businesses. Coordinated management is therefore necessary.

For destination marketing, the results suggest that sustainability can be communicated as part of the value proposition of Delta State. However, communication should be supported by actual improvements at attraction sites and in destination management. The thesis specifically recommends preservation, conservation, maintenance and appropriate visitor management as practical responses.

For future research, the parent thesis suggests further investigation of sustainability issues in ecotourism locations in Delta State. [filecite\turn2file8\L642-L643](#)

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