



TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY AND TOURISTS' BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA: EVIDENCE FROM AKWA IBOM STATE.

Sonari-Otobo, V.A.,¹

*Ekeke, J.N.,²

1&2 Department of Hospitality Management & Tourism,
Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Port Harcourt,
Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria.

tobovea@gmail.com *Author for correspondence

Email: john.ekeke@uniport.edu.ng

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9067-3780>

Article history:

Received: November 26th 2020

Accepted: December 8th 2020

Published: December 22th 2020

Abstract:

Purpose- The study examined the effect of sustainable tourism on tourists' behavioural intentions in Nigeria.

Design/Methodology- The descriptive survey research gathered data from 150 tourists who were holidaying at various attraction sites in the eco-destination of Akwa Ibom State, South-South, Nigeria. A well-structured questionnaire containing 17 items, with four demographic items was used to elicit data from the respondents using judgemental sampling technique. The data gathered was utilised to validate the model developed for the study empirically through statistical tests with the help of SPSS.

Findings- The inferential statistical analysis revealed that the three dimensions of tourism sustainability had significant effect on destination loyalty. On the other hand, destination loyalty engenders revisit intention by tourists significantly.

Originality- The effect of economic, social and environmental sustainability on tourists' behavioural intentions in the eco-destination sector of the tourism industry is a novel contribution in the context of Nigeria.

Practical Implications- Stakeholders in the Nigerian tourism industry should abhor short term profit objectives and focus on developing sustainable tourism marketing capabilities. This will enhance preservation of tourism resources, improve community wellbeing as well as promoting long term profitability of tourism service providers. The resulting destination image as an eco-destination has the capacity to improve the tourism competitiveness of Nigeria at the global level.

Keywords: Economic Sustainability. Socio-Cultural Sustainability. Environmental Sustainability. Destination loyalty. Revisit intention. DMO.

1.INTRODUCTION

The idea of sustainability—and its three pillars of economic, environmental and social action is now part of decision making in many fields (UNEP 2005) including tourism. Torres-Delgado and Palomeque, (2012), posit that in addition to environmental issues, sustainable tourism is equally concerned with the overall balanced development of society, the environment and the economy. Guo, Jiang, and Li, (2019, p. 1) described sustainable tourism as "a development model in which tourism resources and human living environment are unified, in which tourism is well coordinated with social economy, resources and environment". In extant literature, it is generally agreed that sustainable tourism promotes the long-term coordinated development of tourism activities with society, economy, resources and the environment (UNEP, 2005).

Tourism sustainability is critical to the attraction of tourists to a destination because, as noted by Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) consumers generally develop favourable attitude towards more responsible businesses and brands. Those who are responsible for marketing the destination as a brand such as the Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) are expected to be conscious of environmental issues.

Environment issues which include climate change, was found in a global survey by McKinsey (2007) to be part of the socio-political agenda for top executives across the globe. Accordingly, the environment will continue to attract

attention from the public and political power brokers because of its implication for the future wellbeing of the society, as well as having effect on shareholder values more than any other societal issue (McKensey, as cited Pomeroy, Johnson & Noble 2009).

The foregoing has profound implications for tourism, because its success depends on natural and man-made resources which are part of the composite tourism product in tourism destinations. This is a call for the development of tourists' friendly destinations that promote sustainable tourism. When tourists perceive a destination as being sustainable, the desire to visit is enhanced (Pomeroy, et al .e 2009). From the foregoing therefore, it is expected that rapidly growing destination in Nigeria such as Akwa Ibom state with its aquatic splendour, will consciously embrace sustainable tourism principles with a view to enhancing destination loyalty and competitive advantage in the process.

Previous studies had examined the effect of sustainable tourism using different dimensions on tourists' behavioural intentions in various market contexts and locations. Few examples include: urban tourism attraction in China (Su & Huang 2018); rural tourism in Malaysia (Chin, Lo, Nair & Songan, 2016); ecotourism benefits in Wadi-Rum in Jordan (Bazazo, Nasseef, Al-Zawaideh1, Al-Zawaideh, & Al-Dhomainat, 2017); SWOT Analysis from sustainable perspective in Bangladesh (Mondal, 2018); contribution of business tourism to sustainability in Trinidad and Tobago (Ramgulam, Raghunandan-Mohammed, & Raghunandan, 2012).

To our knowledge, there seems to be no empirical evidence to show how brand tourism sustainability influences customers' behavioural intentions in the eco-destination tourism market segment of the tourism sector in Nigeria. The focus of this empirical study is to fill this gap and thus contribute to knowledge. In the light of the foregoing, the objective of the current study is to investigate the effect of sustainable tourism on tourists' behavioural intentions towards Akwa Ibom state as a local tourism eco-destination in Nigeria.

2.THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Destination marketing organisations (DMOs), tourism suppliers and other stakeholders, are aware that to achieve sustainable growth and development in a destination, they need to meet the demands of current tourists without jeopardising the ability of future generations in meeting their own touristic needs(UNEP, 2007). This explains why destinations initiate actions capable of meeting the needs of all stakeholders in their respective destinations while being conscious of the economic, socio-cultural and environmental implications of tourism.

The theory of sustainable tourism marketing is of the view that the purpose of tourism should certify four conditions: be holistic and strategic in nature, preserve ecology and processes, protect human heritage and biodiversity and sustain long-term growth in order to permit both present and future generations meet their futuristic needs, wants and expectations (Pomeroy, Johnson & Noble 2009).

The theory of sustainable tourism marketing stipulates that its implementation will be result oriented with the development and implementation of a sustainable tourism marketing strategy: market segmentation, targeting, positioning and branding plus tourism marketing mix for sustainability. The successful segmenting of the market and targeting helps the DMOs and tourism service providers to concentrate on the tourism market segments that are both economically attractive and likely to be amenable to messages that encourage them to adopt sustainable behaviours. In the same vein appropriate destination positioning strategy will ensure the implementation of the chosen image and appeal to the chosen market segment(s) using tourism marketing mix for sustainability.

3.CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Tourism Sustainability

The UNWTO (2005) defined sustainability tourism as, "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities". The practice of sustainable tourism is expected to reduce to the barest minimum the negative consequences associated with mass tourism.

The definition above, tend to comply with the three pillars of sustainability: economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability. Managing tourism for sustainability places a demand on a Destination Management Organization (DMO) to provide for a new market segment that are demanding in terms of being quality oriented by seeking new experiences in natural, unpolluted 'green' environments (Jamrozy, 2007). However, other stakeholders such as the local people and tourism service providers are expected to cooperate with the DMO in their quest to strike the right balance between competing for patronage and achieving the challenging economic, socio-cultural and environmental goals which are the pillars of tourism sustainability.

Economic Sustainability: Economic sustainability is aimed at ensuring that socio-economic benefits accruing from tourism activities gets to all stakeholders in a destination. Stakeholders includes: tourism service providers, host communities, governmental agencies, etc (UNWTO, 2005).

Socio-Cultural sustainability describes the quest for preservation of the cultural heritage of the local community. In the view of UNWTO (2005) socio-cultural sustainability connotes respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributes to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance(UNWTO, 2005).

Environmental sustainability deals with the quest for conservation of the eco system. It involves making optional use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve native heritage and biodiversity (UNWTO, 2005).

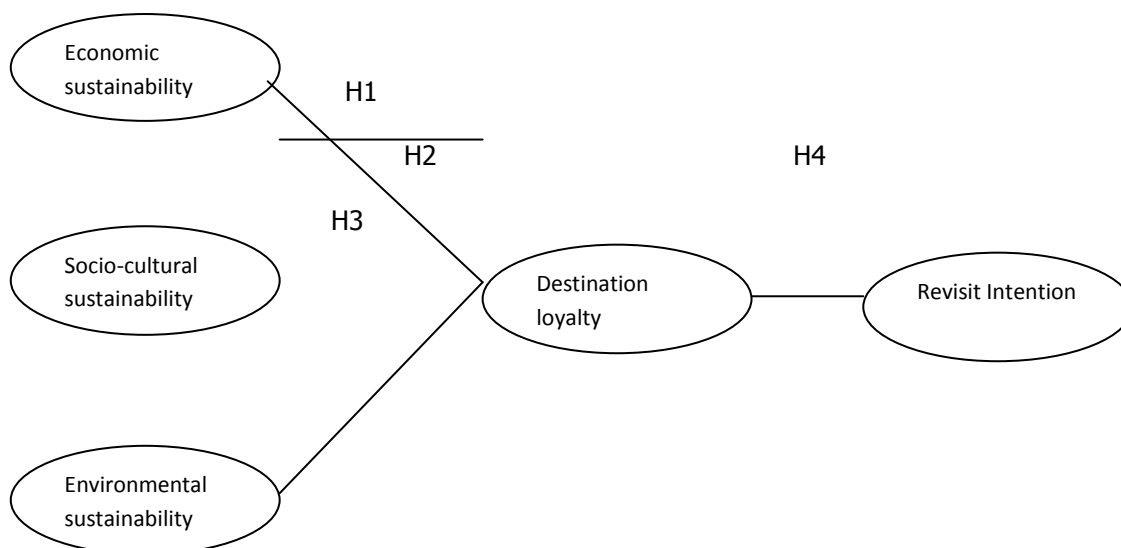
4. TOURIST BEHAVIOURIAL INTENTIONS

Destination Loyalty: Chen and Gurso (2001) describes destination loyalty as “the level of tourists’ perceptions of a destination as a recommendable place”. While taking cognizance of competitive brands in the marketplace, Cunningham (2000), described customer loyalty as the frequent purchase of a particular brand after due comparism with competitors’ alternative brand. In the same vein, Newman and Werbel (as cited in Rajesh 2013, p. 71) defined loyal customers, “as those who re-buy a brand, consider only that brand, and do no brand related information seeking”. Oliver (1999) argues that loyal customers are those who are committed to repurchasing a particular brand of product/service for a long time in the future. Rizwan, Javed, Aslan, Khan and Bibi, (2014) are of the view that customer loyalty describes a consumers’ positive attitude towards the buying of a brand and commitment to repeatedly buy the same brand in the long run.

Destination marketing managers and other tourism suppliers in a destination are interested in the concept of customer or brand loyalty because it has the capacity to enhance organizational performance of service providers through positive word of mouth, revisit intention and repetitive same brand purchases. It is on this note that Dehghan and Shahin, (2011), ascribes two goals to customer loyalty programmes of firms: increasing sales revenues by raising purchase/usage levels and fostering a closer bond with current customers. Empirical evidence from several tourism contexts show that the antecedents of destination loyalty include; destination image, attractions (such as shopping centres, ecotourism sites, safety and infrastructure), ambience, amenities, overall satisfaction, service quality etc(Chen & Tsai, 2007; Sadat & Chang 2016).

Revisit Intentions: Revisit intention describes the likelihood that a current tourist will revisit a destination in the future for touristic experiences. However, from marketing perspective the behavioural intention of tourists to revisit a particular destination after the first visit is predicated on several factors such as price, tourists’ destination satisfaction, infrastructure, destination image, and natural and cultural environment(Khuong & Nguyen, 2015)

CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT



5. Tourism Sustainability and Destination Loyalty

The proposed model of tourism sustainability-tourists’ behavioural intentions is presented in Figure 1. The model establishes a direct causal-effect relationship of tourism sustainability on destination loyalty on one hand and direct relationship between destination loyalty and revisit intention on the other. This connection is supported by earlier studies as those conducted by Bazazo, et al (2017), Ajani, et al (2019), Ramgulam, et al (2012), Jamaludin, Sam, and Sandal, (2018) Yu, and Hwang, (2019).

The model shows that the independent variable is represented by the three pillars of tourism sustainability: economic sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability and environmental sustainability which serve as the dimensions while the dependent variable, tourists’ behavioural intentions is represented by destination loyalty and revisit intention. However in this model, destination loyalty is acting as an antecedent of revisit intention.

Several empirical studies show the efforts of scholars in determining the relationship between tourism sustainability and visitors’ behavioural intentions towards destinations. Chen and Gurso (2001) investigated the relationship between tourists’ destination loyalty and their preferences towards a destination. The sampling unit were Korean outbound travellers with on-site survey at the Seoul International Airport, South Korea, in March 1997. A total of 265 useful questionnaires were analyzed out of 285 questionnaires collected from the respondents. The inferential statistics was computed with multiple regression analysis which revealed that three destination preferences, including different culture experiences, safety, and convenient transportation, had a positive relationship with tourist’s loyalty to the destination. Past trip experience was also found through path analysis to affect tourists’ destination preference.

Bazazo, et al (2017) examined the impact of attitudes towards ecotourism benefits on destination loyalty of Wadi-Rum located in Jordan. The dimensions of ecotourism used, were economic development, social development, cultural preservation, community capacity building, and environmental protection. The result from the test of hypotheses showed significant positive impact of attitudes towards ecotourism benefits on destination loyalty. Also, when attributed to gender, the results revealed that there was no significant difference in the impact of attitudes towards ecotourism benefits on destination loyalty.

Ramgulam, et al, (2012) conducted a qualitative study to determine how business tourism contributes to socio-cultural sustainability. Using thematic analysis, the result showed that business tourism was socio-culturally sustainable and should be pursued as a micro sector for diversifying the Trinidad and Tobago economy. Another finding pointed to the fact that, there are potential benefits when countries actively pursue business tourism that is in harmony with established socio-cultural practices. The study advocated for sustainability as a way forward in the management of tourism.

In Norway, Jamaludin, Sam, & Sandal, (2018) conducted a study to determine the factors that determine destination loyalty amongst international students. A sample of 378 international students at the University of Bergen, Norway participated in in 2014 through an on-line survey. With a series of hierarchical regression analyses, the study found that among short-term and long term students, orientation to mainstream and heritage culture together with psychological adaptations influenced their decision to revisit and to recommend the destination to others. The two variables were the significant predictors of destination loyalty intention.

From the foregoing discussion, testing the research model of tourism sustainability-tourists' behavioural intentions, the study is hypothesized as follows:

H1: Economic sustainability has significant effect on destination loyalty of tourists/visitors.

H2: Socio-cultural sustainability has significant effect on destination loyalty of tourists/visitors.

H3: Environmental sustainability has significant effect on destination loyalty of tourists/visitors.

H4: Destination loyalty has significant correlation with revisit intentions of tourists/visitors to Akwa Ibom State.

6.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design: Descriptive research design was adopted for the study because it allows the researcher to hypothesise several variables in measurable relationships.

Sample and data collection: The target population for study were domestic tourists/day visitors in Akwa Ibom State. The sampling unit were the individual tourists/day visitors/fun seekers at Ibom Tropicana and Ibeno beach in Akwa Ibom State. The questionnaire was used to get data from the fun seekers. The intercept survey method was used with the advantage of speed and cost effectiveness. The sampling technique adopted was the judgmental sampling technique. A sample size of 150 was determined using Freund and William's formula sample size determination from unknown population. Out of a total of 150 questionnaires distributed, 127 proved useable and were subjected to data analysis.

Measurement Instrument and Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. The items were sourced from previous works well document in extant literature. However, appropriate modifications were made with a view to fit the current research purpose and context. The three dimensions of sustainable tourism (economic, socio-cultural and environmental) were measured using items adapted from Bazazo, et al (2017) while destination loyalty items were adapted from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). The three items used for revisit intention were adapted from Schivinski and Dabrowski (2014). All the measurement items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by: Strongly Disagree [SD](1). Disagree [D](2), Agree [A](3), Agree fairly strongly(4) and Strongly Agree [SA](5) to express the degree of agreement with the items or otherwise.

Research Results

Reliability Analysis

Table 1 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.991	17

Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument. The value of the Cronbach Alpha is .991 which is above the threshold value of .7 suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). This implies that the data collection instrument is internally consistent, and therefore helpful and applicable in measuring opinions of visitors/tourists towards destination loyalty and revisit intention in the context of tourism sustainability in Akwa Ibom State .

Discriminant Validity

Table 2 Correlation Matrix

	ECO SUS	SOC SUS	ENV SUS	Destination Loyalty	Revisit Intention
ECO SUS	1.000				
SOC SUS	.916	1.000			
ENV SUS	.895	.895	1.000		
Destination Loyalty	.944	.937	.911	1.000	
Revisit Intention	.906	.839	.936	.899	1.000

Hair Jr, Black, Babin, and Anderson, (2010, p.126) defined discriminant validity as the “the degree to which two conceptually similar concepts are distinct”. To examine the discriminant validity for the measurement model used for this study, the suggested criterion by Fornell and Larcker(1981) was utilised. In line with the suggested criterion, the correlation matrix shown in Table 2 above, shows the diagonal elements which are the square root of the average variance extracted of all the latent constructs used in the study. Fornell and Larcker (1981) is of the view that the discriminant validity occurs if the diagonal elements are higher than all the off-diagonal elements in their columns and rows. This requirement proves to be the case in Table 2, thus confirming the discriminant validity.

Sampling Adequacy

Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.845
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	Df
	Sig.
	1081.325
	10
	.000

Table 3 shows the KMO and Bartlett’s Test which was conducted using Exploratory factor analysis performed on 17 exploratory items of tourism sustainability and tourists’ behavioural intentions specified in the conceptual model in Figure 1. Bartlett’s test of sphericity is significant at $p<.000$ and KMO measure of sampling adequacy is .845 which is far greater than 0.5 that has been suggested as a minimum level by Kasser (as cited in Wong & Musa 2010, p. 3417).

Data Analyses

To ascertain the effect of the study dimensions on destination loyalty, the hypothesized relationships were subjected to statistical analysis using Multiple regression analysis. On the other hand, Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between destination loyalty and revisit intention. Table 4 Multiple Regression analysis showing the effect of economic, socio-cultural and environment sustainability on destination loyalty.

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.964 ^a	.929	.928	.30752

a. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Sustainability, Economic Sustainability , Socio-cultural Sustainability

Table 5 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.590	.141		-4.184	.000
	Economic Sustainability	.453	.067	.443	6.743	.000
	Socio-cultural Sustainability	.465	.087	.353	5.343	.000
	Environmental Sustainability	.218	.065	.198	3.351	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Destination Loyalty

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 5 shows the multiple regression analysis which discloses that un-standardized beta (β) of socio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability were: ($\beta = 0.465$); ($\beta = 0.453$) and ($\beta = 0.218$) respectively, while value of R square = 0.929, F = 539.743 & $p<.000 < 0.05$. This specifies that economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability explains 92.9% variation in destination loyalty of tourists in eco-attraction sites in Akwa Ibom State, South-South, Nigeria.

The result of the regression analysis shows that all the three indicators of tourism sustainability in influencing tourist behavioural intentions made significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable (see Table 5). The three significant factors are: socio-cultural ($\beta = 0.465, p=0.000 < 0.05$), economic ($\beta = 0.453, p=0.000 < 0.05$) and environmental sustainability ($\beta = 0.218, p=0.001 < 0.05$) considering their respective degree of contribution.

This implies that all the variables made significant unique contribution to the equation.

Therefore the model can be written as:

$$\text{Destination loyalty} = 0.465(\text{SCS}) + .453(\text{ECS}) + .218 (\text{ENS}) -.590$$

The model suggest that by associating any of the three pillars of tourism sustainability with the destination brand, the empirical model can increase the level of destination loyalty and subsequent revisit intention of the tourists when other things remain constant. Accordingly therefore, changes in socio-cultural sustainability at the destination can have the biggest influence on level of tourist loyalty as its beta co-efficient $\beta = 0.465, p=0.000 < 0.05$; is the highest and significant, followed by economic sustainability, ($\beta = 0.453$) and environmental sustainability($\beta = 0.218$).

7. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES 1, 2 AND 3

Decision Rule

If $PV < 0.05$ = Hypothesis is supported
 If $PV > 0.05$ = Hypothesis is not supported

Hypothesis one: The outcome of analysis show that economic sustainability had significant effect on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.453, p=0.000 < 0.05$).

Hypothesis two: The result of analysis show that socio-cultural sustainability had significant effect on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.465, p=0.000 < 0.05$).

Hypothesis three: the outcome of analysis show that environmental sustainability had significant effect on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.218, p=0.001 < 0.05$).

From the results, the three hypotheses were all supported.

Testing of Hypotheses 4

Table 7 Correlation analysis showing the relationship between destination loyalty and revisit intention

Table 7 Correlations

		Destination Loyalty	Revisit Intention
Destination Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1	.899**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	127	127
Revisit Intention	Pearson Correlation	.899**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	127	127

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 above shows that there is a very strong, positive and significant correlation between destination loyalty by tourists who visited attraction sites in Akwa Ibom State and tourists/visitors' revisit intention with ($r= 0.899, p=000 < 0.05$). Accordingly,

H4: Destination loyalty has positive and significant relationship with revisit intention of tourists/visitors.

8. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results shown in Tables 6 and 7, provide support for the four hypotheses (H1,H2, H3 & H4) conceived for the study. Hypothesis 1 showed a significant effect of economic sustainability on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.453, p=0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, H1 is supported. This finding is consistent with the findings of Chen and Tsai (2007), Khuong and Nguyen (2015), and Chin, et al (2016).

Hypothesis 2 posited a significant effect of socio-cultural sustainability on destination loyalty. With ($\beta = 0.453, p=0.000 < 0.05$), the effect is significant. This result is consistent with the prediction of H2 and is therefore supported. Thus, a higher level of socio-cultural sustainable actions by the destination is associated with a high propensity to be a loyal visitor to the attraction centres. This finding is consistent with the finding of Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Mongkonvanit, (2002); Ramgulam, et al 2012; Jamaludin, et al 2018., and Chen and Gurso (2001)

Also, hypothesis 3 posited a significant effect of environmental sustainability on destination loyalty. With ($\beta = 0.218, p=0.000 < 0.05$), the effect is significant. The result is consistent with the prediction of H3 and therefore supported. It is equally consistent with the findings of Khuong and Nguyen (2015) and Sadat and Chang (2016).

Hypothesis 4 posited a very strong and positive relationship between destination loyalty and revisit intention of tourists/visitors ($r=.899$) and the relationship is significant ($p=.000$). The result is consistent with the prediction of H4 and therefore supported. This finding is in agreement with previous studies such as Bazazo, et al (2017) who found significant positive impact of attitudes towards ecotourism benefits on destination loyalty in Jordan. The finding is also consistent with the findings of do Valle, Silva, Mendes, and Guerreiro, (2006) in Arade, Portuguese.

9.CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of tourism sustainability on tourists' destination loyalty on one hand and the relationship between destination loyalty and revisit intentions on the other. From the review of literature four hypotheses were postulated. To test the proposed hypotheses, data were collected from five attraction sites in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The empirical results supported all the posited research hypotheses significantly. It is important to note that the study findings showed that socio-cultural sustainability has stronger effect on destination loyalty $0.453, p=0.000 < 0.05$) while economic and environmental sustainability were ($\beta = 0.453, p=0.000 < 0.05$) and ($\beta = 0.218, p=0.001 < 0.05$) respectively.

Notably, too, the relationship between destination loyalty and revisit intention was positively and significantly correlated. By implication, this finding indicates that tourism sustainability can have strong influence on destination loyalty, while loyalty towards a destination will engender revisit intentions. This is suggestive of the fact that tourists are likely to be more attracted to destinations that are managed sustainably.

10.THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, the study provides and tests a conceptual model of tourism sustainability and how it affects visitors' behavioural intentions in a tourism destination in Akwa Ibom State, South-South, Nigeria. The study shows how the three dimensions of sustainable tourism affect visitors' destination loyalty, which in turn influences their revisit intentions. The result of this study is expected to provide academics, tourism regulators, tourism service providers, destination marketing organisations and other stakeholders a better understanding of the theoretical framework.

The objective of the study was to establish how the three pillars of destination sustainability influence the behavioural intentions of visitors in a destination located in a developing country. The study contributes to the literature on tourism sustainability by empirically testing several hypotheses based on the tourism sustainability-tourists' behavioural intentions model.

11.MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The outcome of this study shows that tourism sustainability practices leads to visitors' positive behavioural attitude towards the destination as regards the visitors' commitment to remain loyal to the destination and the willingness to pay premium prices at the destination despite the availability of competing destinations. This implies that there is need to manage the destination in such a manner to achieve the following;

- Preservation and conservation of the environmental resources such as cultural and heritage resources, natural resources, amenities as well as tourism infrastructure.
- Improve the quality of life of local people through offering them employment, promoting locally owned SMEs to gain from tourism marketing activities and not over using the social amenities.

To achieve the abovementioned feats, the state government in Akwa Ibom state in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, will need to establish and strengthen the Akwa Ibom State Destination Marketing Organization (AIDMO) with a view to coordinating the tourism activities in the state towards achieving tourism sustainability. It should also be emphasized that this call is necessary because destinations are in competition with one another, hence the quest to achieve destinations competitiveness through enhancing economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability.

12.LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The fact that the sample unit for this study was limited to domestic visitors/tourists at some of the attraction sites in Akwa Ibom state, the findings will be difficult to generalize. Further research should involve both domestic and foreign visitors/tourists in all the ecotourism sites in Akwa Ibom State.

REFERENCES

1. Ajani, F., Fadairo, O.S., & Kolade, M.O(2019) Harnessing the sustainable tourism of Idanre Hills and assessment of its effects on the community. *Tourism Today* 18.
2. Bazazo, I., Nasseef, M.A., Al-Zawaideh1, A., Ali Al-Zawaideh, A., & Al-Dhomidat, M (2017). The Impact of the Attitudes towards Ecotourism Benefits on Destination Loyalty. *Journal of Management and Strategy* 8, (3), 67-79.
3. Chen, J.S & Gurso, D (2001) An Investigation of Tourists' Destination Loyalty and Preferences. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 13(2):79-85
4. Chen, C., &Tsai, D. (2007). How do destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioural intentions? *Tourism Management*, 28, 1115-1122.

5. Khuong, M. N., & Nguyen T. T.,(2015) Factors Affecting Tourists' Return Intention towards Vung Tau City, Vietnam-A Mediation Analysis of Destination Satisfaction Journal of Advanced Management Science Vol. 3, No. 4, December 2015
6. Rittichainuwat, N.B., Qu,H. & C. Mongkonvanit, C., (2002) "A study of the impact of travel satisfaction on the likelihood of travelers to revisit Thailand," Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, . 12, 19-43,
7. Chin, C.H., Lo, M.C., Nair, V., and Songan, P. (2016). Examining the effects of
8. environmental components on tourism destination competitiveness: The moderating impact of community support. Asian Academy of Management Journal, 21(Supp. 1), 75–104. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21315/aamj2016.21.supp.1.4>
9. Jamrozy, U. (2007) Marketing of tourism: a paradigm shift toward sustainability. International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 1 (2), 117-130.
10. Cunninggham, S.M., (2000) Revisiting small business. Best's Rev., 101(6). 118
11. Dehghan, A & Shahin, A.(2011) Customer Loyalty Assessment: A case study in Maddiran-the distributor of LG electronics in Iran. Business Management and Strategy 2(1), 1-23.
12. Sheresheva, M. Y., Polukhina, A. N., & Oborin, M. S. (2020). Marketing issues of sustainable tourism development in Russian regions. Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing, 6(1), 33-38. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3603422>
13. Jamaludin, N.L., Sam, D.L & Sandal, G.M (2018) Destination Motivation, Cultural Orientation, and Adaptation: International Students' Destination-Loyalty Intention Journal of International Students8, (1), 38–65
14. Sadat, M.M., & Li-Hui Chang, L., (2016) The Impact of Environmental Quality of Revisiting Intention, Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism, 17 (2), 209-223.
15. Ramgulam, N., Raghunandan-Mohammed, K., & Raghunandan, M.(2012) Exploring the Dynamics of Socio-Cultural Sustainability in Trinidad's Mice Market. American International Journal of Contemporary Research 2(6), 44-56.
16. Jamaludin, N.L., Sam, D.L., & Sandal, G.M (2018) Destination Motivation, Cultural Orientation, and Adaptation: International Students' Destination-Loyalty Intention. Journal of International Students, 8(1) 38-65
17. Yu, C & Hwang, Y.S (2019) Do the Social Responsibility Efforts of the
18. Destination Affect the Loyalty of Tourists? Sustainability, 11, 1-17.
19. Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M.B., (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand effects to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. Journal of Marketing 65 (2), 81–93.
20. do Valle, P.O., Silva, J.A., Mendes, J & Guerreiro, M.(2006)Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty intention: A Structural and Categorical Analysis International Journal of Business Science and Applied Management, 1, (1), 25-44.
21. Fornell C., & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. Journal of Market Research, 18(1), 39-50.
22. Mondal. S.H (2017-2018) Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability: The Implications to Develop Sustainable Tourism in Bangladesh. East West Journal of Business and Social Studies, Vols. 6 & 7, 2017-2018
23. Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994), Psychometric Theory (3rd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
24. Hair Jr, J. F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J & Anderson, R.E (2010) Multivariate Data Analysis(7th ed). London: Pearson
25. Su, L & Huang, Y. (2019) How does Perceived Destination Social Responsibility Impact Revisit Intentions: The Mediating Roles of Destination Preference and Relationship Quality. Sustainability 11 (133), 1-22.
26. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Tourism Organization (WTO). (2005). Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policymakers, available at:<https://www.unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284408214>. Accessed the March 10, 2020.
27. UNWTO (2018). UNWTO Tourism Highlights. 2018 Edition. <http://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism> Accessed the 15th of April 2019, at 14:50.
28. Waligo, V. M., Clarke, J., and Hawkins, R. (2013). Implementing sustainable tourism: A multi-stakeholder involvement management framework. Tourism Management, 36, pp.342-353.
29. Weaver, D. B., and Jin, X., (2016). Compassion as a neglected motivator for sustainable tourism. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 24(5), pp. 657-672.
30. World Economic Forum. (2015). WEF Report 2015. <http://reports.weforum.org/travel-and-tourismcompetitiveness-report-2015/economies/#economy=RUS>. Accessed the March 10,2020.
31. Torres-Delgado, A. & López Palomeque, F (2012). The growth and spread of the concept of sustainable tourism: The contribution of institutional initiatives to tourism policy. Tourism Management Perspectives, 4, 1–10.
32. Guo, Y., Jiang, J & Li, S (2019) A Sustainable Tourism Policy Research Review Sustainability, 11, 3187.
33. Schivinski, B & Dabrowski, D.(2014). The effect of social media communication on consumer perceptions of brands. Journal of Marketing Communication.22(2).189-214.
34. Sen, S. & Bhattacharya, C.B. (2001) Does doing good always lead to doing better? Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility. Journal of Marketing. 38, 225–243

35. Rajesh, R. (2013). Impact of Tourist Perceptions, Destination Image and Tourist Satisfaction on Destination Loyalty: A Conceptual Model. PASOS. Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural. 11(3) 67-78
36. Pomeroy, A., Johnson, L. & Noble, G. (2009). Sustainable tourism marketing: what should be in the mix?. Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference (pp. 1-8). Melbourne, Australia: Australian & New Zealand Marketing Academy.
37. Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence Customer Loyalty? Journal of Marketing, 63 (2), 23-34.
38. Rizwan, M., Aslam, J., Khan, R. & Bibi, H.(2014) The relationship of brand commitment, brand credibility, perceived quality, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty: an empirical study on Stylo shoes. Journal of Sociological Research. 5(1) 377-404.
39. Wong, K.M and Musa, G (2011) Branding satisfaction in the Airline Industry: A Comparative Study of Malaysia Airlines and Air Asia. African Journal of Business Management. 5(8) 3410-3423.