Socio-Cultural Sustainability and Tourists' Behavioural Intentions In Delta State

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***Abstract:** This study was carried out primarily to investigate the relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and tourists' behavioural intentions in Delta State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design with cross-sectional approach was adopted for the study. The population of study was large and unknown. Consequently, the sample size of 150 determined using Cochran   formula for sample size determination from an infinite population. Primary data was utilized in the study and collected with a well-structured questionnaire and administered to the tourists/visitors at various visitor attraction sites in Delta State. The questionnaire was validated through face and content validity. Statistical tools for data analyses included Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Major findings revealed that socio-cultural sustainability had moderate positive and significant relationship with revisit intention and destination loyalty respectively. The study concluded that socio-cultural sustainability issues are critical to the overall development of a particular destination because all the stakeholders are affected by them. It was recommended that tourism service providers and other stakeholders in the State should work together to ensure the preservation and conservation of tourism resources such as festivals in the State. Also, tourism service providers and other stakeholders in the State should work together to ensure the local peoples' quality of life is improved through tourism marketing and management.*

Keywords: Sustainability. Quality of Life. Festivals. Revisit Intentions. Destination Loyalty. Delta State. Nigeria.

Introduction

Tourists' behaviour towards destinations is attributable to a lot of factors such as destination products, destination image and other attributes which are capable of enhancing the destination appeal. Another factor is the phenomenon of globalisation which has led to changes in tourism demand and supply in an unprecedented manner. The resulting effect of the foregoing is the significant rise in the competitiveness at the global scale of tourism destinations for tourist arrivals (Ekeke & Olori, 2020; Santo, et al, 2022). In tourism literature, efforts are ongoing to demonstrate the basis for destination competitiveness among different countries of the world. Such efforts include development of models of competitiveness that illustrate critical factors competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003) that shape the dynamics of destination marketing and how they affect tourists' behavioural intentions towards destinations. Stakeholders are in agreement that competitiveness remains a critical element in influencing and determining the success or marketability of a tourist destination (Cronje & Plessis, 2020). However, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) while offering his own contribution to the foregoing discussion asserted that competitiveness in tourism marketing is a mirage without the guarantee of sustainability.

The foregoing explains why Moreira, and Iao, (2014) noted that the to survive the intense competition within the tourism industry demands that destinations should develop attractive destination products, build and maintain a favourable image with a view to achieving visitor satisfaction and loyalty in terms its sustainable tourism development. Sustainable development seeks to ensure a balanced development in the economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions of a territory such as a destination or a system. Sustainable development's primary focus is to seek ways to fulfil the needs of the present as well as the needs of future generations (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Sustainable tourism, which is a subset of sustainable development, is defined 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" (United Nations Environment Programme & United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2012, p. 12). Moreira, and Iao, (2014) posited that the quest to achieve visitor satisfaction and loyalty for its sustainable tourism development places a demand on the tourism industry such as destinations to build and maintain a favourable image as well as developing attractive tourism offerings. This is aimed at enhancing positive behavioural intentions of the tourists towards such destinations.

It could therefore be assumed that destinations that promote socio-cultural sustainability will be in a position to stimulate positive behavioural intentions of the tourists/visitors towards such destinations. There is a large volume of

empirical literature on various dimensions of socio-cultural sustainability, tourism, destination success and destination sustainability. Examples include studies in responsible tourism impact on destination sustainability and quality of life of local community in tourism destination (Mathew & Sreejesh 2017) Tourists' perceptions of the sustainability of destination, satisfaction, and revisit intention (Rasoolimanesh, Chee, & Ari Ragavan, 2023), repeat tourism, destination image and behavioural intentions: implications for sustainable development in South Africa (Van Dyk, Tkaczynski, & Slabbert, 2019), tourism sustainability and tourists behavioural intentions in South-south Nigeria in Akwa Ibom State (Sonari-Otobo, & Ekeke, 2020), perceived city sustainability and tourist behavioural intentions. Conti, Dias, & Pereira, (2023).

Other empirical studies include, the management of sustainability for destinations (Chon & Mayer, 1995) the role of government, visitors, local people on destination sustainability (Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Hassan, 2000), roles of enterprises on the destination sustainability (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000; 2003;Yüzbaşıoğlu, et al.,2014), destination marketing (Baker & Cameron, 2008; Park & Gretzel, 2007), tourism growth (Chingarande & Saayman, 2018), governance (Borges et al., 2013), the quality of events and tourist experience (Dalgıç & Birdir 2020), or stakeholder collaboration (McComb et al., 2017).

Despite the fact that extant studies have made useful contributions and insights on sustainable tourism and customer behaviour, there is limited empirical research on the extent to which socio-cultural sustainability affects tourists' behavioural intentions towards destinations in Nigeria to the best of our knowledge. This has created a gap that needs to be bridged. Therefore, this current study was initiated to determine the relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and tourists' behavioural intentions.

RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework

Socio-cultural sustainability

Socio-Cultural sustainability is defined as healthy and fertile life which is in harmony with nature. The definition tend to suggest that the survival and life of the society is dependent on the preservation and conservation/protection of the cultural resources of the host community. Solıs-Radilla et al., (2019) posited that socio-cultural sustainability is strategically linked with the relationship between the people and the surrounding environment and that of the conservation/protection of the cultural resources of the host community. To promote socio-cultural sustainability there is need to checkmate overtourism which could prove harmful because of its ability to engender the loss of the tourist destination's cultural identity. The dimensions of both environmental and socio-cultural sustainability forms the aggregate tourism resources–which describes the factors that determine the attractiveness of the tourist destination. This invariably influences tourist demand (Hanafiah & Zulkifly, 2019).

Tourist Behavioural Intentions

Behavioural intention describes an individual's willingness to participate in or perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 2012). In the present research, behavioural intention has to do with the intention towards a destination where sustainable tourism is practised. Such behaviour could be revisiting a particular destination, saying positive things about the destination to family and friends. It could also involve behavioural loyalty towards a destination. Such behaviour could occur on the basis of destination experiences offered by destinations. In this current study, revisit intentions and brand loyalty are the two measures of destination loyalty used in the study.

Revisit Intention: Revisit intention describes the probability that a tourist or traveller will continue based on his own decision to re-visit a particular destination. In comparison with potential customers in a typical marketplace, repeat or experienced customers are assumed to be the best at comprehending and evaluating basic attributes and information of an online store based on their experience with the brand or seller (Kim & Gupta, 2009). It is the positive experiences tourists are offered at tourism destinations that enhances their intentions to revisit the destination. It also ensures that they embark on positive word of mouth communications s about the destination to their friends and family. Positive word-of-mouth communication is argued to represent a very important source of information for potential tourists. (Chi & Qu, 2008). Baker and Crompton, (2000) and Kozak (2001) found satisfaction as an antecedent of revisit intentions, while Chen and Gursoy, (2001) and Kozak, (2001) found past vacation experience as an antecedent of revisit intentions.

Destination Loyalty: In the view of Lee and Cunningham (2001) customer loyalty is described as the tendency of customers which is based on previous experiences with the brand and their expectations for the future to continue to be consumers or customers of existing suppliers or organizations again. Destination loyalty describes the tendency of tourists to be loyal to a particular destination based on past destination experiences. Hossain, et al., (2017) is of the view that destination loyalty plays the role of an important benchmark in the quest to develop destination marketing and business strategy. Lee (2004) observed that academics pay considerable attention to different concepts for destination loyalty and their distinctiveness, including the way it is measured and the influence on the ultimate results. Hossain, et al., (2017) found that perceived satisfaction was a main antecedent of destination loyalty.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB): The TPB (Ajzen, 1991) is premised on the fact that a particular act is likely to occur based on its degree of intention. The TPB, has three variables that influence intention: Subjective Norm (SN), Attitude (ATT), and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC). The TPB serves as a helpful instrument for describing a person's participation in activities that are of their own volition, such as their involvement in sustainable tourism that promotes preservation and conservation of natural resources (Lwoga, 2017). Ajzen, (1991) posited that the theory is very useful in the quest to anticipate intentions and subsequent behaviours. In the tourism industry attitude is regarded as the subjective sentiments that a tourist or traveller towards visitor attractions, places, hotels, brands or experience. This attitudinal inclination is based on their impressions of particular factors (Moutinho, 1987). Subjective norm (SN) describes how individuals interprets societal pressure in their daily life encounters. Put differently, it describes if a particular behaviour is an acceptable norm by the people or if it is objectionable. On the other hand, PBC explains human behaviour as an individual's confidence in the accessibility of opportunities and assets that are required to undertake an activity (Ajzen, 1991). In this current study, the narratives tend to demonstrate and conceptualise attitude towards a destination that promotes socio-cultural sustainability.

Empirical Review

Socio-Cultural Sustainability and Tourists' Behavioural Intentions

Siddiqui, Bano, and Hamid, (2023) empirically studied the factors influencing tourists' engagement in the sustainable conservation of cultural heritage destinations. A SEM analysis revealed that the following hypotheses were significant and thus supported: attitude and intention subjective norms and intention place identity and intention, destination image and intention and sustainable intelligence and intention. However, the relationship between perceived behavioural control and intention was not significant and was thus rejected. The findings add to a further comprehensive understanding of sustainable heritage management through deeper insight into visitors' decision-making approach to protecting cultural heritage destinations.

Wang, et al., (2023) examined how perceived pluralistic values influenced postmodern tourists to visit renovated heritage sites continuously. The study used interviews with 27 postmodern tourists in developing a measurement scale of pluralistic values, which consisted of 9 items in two dimensions (open-to-change and fusional culture). The research effort therefore generated primary data through 382 postmodern tourists with the use of questionnaires.The results showed that pluralistic values affected the tourists' attitudes towards a visited heritage destination and other postmodern heritage sites. The two attitudes affected the intention of tourists to visit other postmodern heritage sites.

Yuan, et al (2023) investigated the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) brand loyalty based on consumer perception. Effects of unfavorable perceptions of CSR initiatives was emphasised in the study and how emotional contagion affects brand loyalty. The results noted the significance of CSR and how it influences consumer attitudes toward brands. The study which targeted young consumers found that brand disloyalty was caused by negative attitudes toward a company's CSR actions, and brand perception had the capacity to increase this effect.

In the island of Mauritius, Ramkissoon, and Uysal, (2011) investigated the effects of perceived authenticity, information search behaviour, motivation, and destination imagery on behavioural intentions of tourists to consume cultural attractions. Data were generated from a sample of 150 tourists at selected cultural and natural heritage sites. The findings showed that a significant positive relationship exist between perceived authenticity and cultural

behavioural intentions of tourists. Destination imagery had an influence on tourists' cultural intentions. A negative influence was found between information search behaviour and tourists' cultural intentions. Motivation was not found to have any influence tourists' cultural intentions. Perceived authenticity was found to have a moderating effect on the respective established relationships. (i.e., between motivation, information search behaviour, destination imagery and cultural behavioural intentions of tourists).

Soliman, and Abou-Shouk, (2017) investigated the factors that could influence the behavioural intention of international tourists to take geotours. The findings revealed that behavioural intention of taking geotours was effectively influenced by cultural heritage, geotourists' attributes, attitudes towards geotours, and subjective norms.

Bazazo, et al (2017) examined the influence of attitudes towards ecotourism benefits (using the variables of economic development, cultural preservation, social development, environmental protection and community capacity building) on destination loyalty of Wadi-Rum located in Jordan. With data generated from 297 local residents of Wadi-Rum, the study found that significant positive influence exist between attitudes towards ecotourism benefits and destination loyalty. Also, the results indicated no significant difference in the influence of attitudes towards ecotourism benefits on destination loyalty attributable to gender. In terms of age and educational level there was no significant difference.

The following hypotheses were derived from the foregoing in their null structures;

H01: There is no significant relationship between socio cultural sustainability and revisit intention in Delta State.
H02: There is no significant relationship between socio cultural sustainability and destination loyalty in Delta state.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive survey design with cross-sectional approach that attempted to establish the relationship between the destination sustainability and tourists' behavioural intentions (independent and dependent variables) in Delta state. The target population for this study was infinite because it comprised of tourists that were found at visitor attraction sites in Delta State. The accessible population consisted of fun seekers at various attraction sites in Delta State. Given the nature of the study, the population size is large and unknown as it could not be numerically determined.

The sample size that used in this study was determined from the population of the study using Cochran's formula at 0.05 level of significance. The Cochran formula was utilised to determine the sample size from unknown population.

The formula is shown below;

$$n = Z^2 \frac{(pq)}{e^2}$$

Where n = sample size sought

Z = Standard deviation for the desired confidence value.

p = probability or percentages of positive responses

q = probability or percentage of negative response

e = level of significance

When p = 0.89, q = 0.11

Z = 1.96

e = 0.05

$$1.96^2 \frac{(0.89 \ x \ 0.11)}{0.05^2} = 3.842. \frac{0.0979}{0.0025}$$

3.842 x 39.16

= 150

Thus, the sampling procedure that was used in selecting 150 sample size from the unknown population size is the convenience sampling which is non-probability sampling technique. This sampling technique was adopted by the researcher because the available tourists at the visitor attraction sites in Delta State were easily accessible. The data used in this study was collected through primary sources. The primary data was obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires on respondents.

The questionnaire for this study was divided into three; section A, B, C. Section A sought information on the demographic profiles of the respondents, section B sought data on social-cultural sustainability and has in it 4 items, whereas section C sought data on tourists' behaviour intentions and also had 8 items in it. 5-pointslikert scale was adopted in structuring the questionnaire; strongly agree(SA)=5, agree(A)=4,Undecided(UD)=3, disagree(D)=2, strongly disagree(SD)=1. The major variables in this study are the independent and the dependent variables. The independent variable of the study was socio-cultural sustainability while the dependent variable of the study is tourists' behavioural intentions. The independent variable was measured with items adapted from Asmelash, and Kumar, (2019) and Ngo, and Creutz, (2022). The dependent variable was measured using revisit intention and destination loyalty as the measures of tourists' behavioural intentions. The variables were measured at an ordinal scale ranking.

The face and content validity on the questionnaire was based on subjective evaluation of the instrument by the supervisor. This assessment ascertained the face and content validity. On the basis of this review, few changes were made to some of the items. The reliability of the research instrument was ascertained with the use of Cronbach Alpha during the Pilot study where 30 questionnaires were administered. From Table 1A below, the value of the Cronbach Alpha is .851 and it shows that the data collection instrument was internally consistent.

Table 1A Reliability

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.851	12

Table 1B: Composite Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Socio-Cultural Sustainability	.756
Revisit Intentions	.793
Destination Loyalty	.786

Table 3.1A and Table 3.1B above shows the results of reliability analysis for the 12 items instrument and that of the individual constructs respectively using Cronbach's Alpha. The implication of the information in Table 1A and 1B indicates internal consistency as the Chronbach's Alpha on all variables were greater than 0.7. It is therefore concluded that the measurement scales are reliable and the data thereof suitable for analysis

This study was aimed at examining the relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and tourists' behavioural intentions in Delta State. Based on this, subjecting the stated hypothesised relationships to statistical test requires analyses was carried out using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient assisted by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Formula for Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is thus;

$$R = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2][n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of Questionnaire

Table 2 and Table 3 below are used to analyse the questionnaire in terms of distribution and demographic profile of respondents respectively.

Table 2 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent
Distributed	150	100%
Not retrieved	8	5.33%
Retrieved	142	94.67%
Useful response	142	94.67%
Not used	-	NIL

One hundred and fifty questionnaires (150) representing (100%) were administered, One hundred and forty two (142) copies (94.67%) were retrieved while 8 copies (5.33%) were not retrieved. The one hundred and forty two (142) copies representing 94.67% were all useful and therefore used for statistical analysis. Data collected from respondents were statistically treated as indicated on the table below:

Table 3 Demographic profile of respondents

S/No	Demographic variables	No	Percent
1	**Gender**		
	Male	86	60.56
	Female	56	37.44
	Total	142	100.00
2	**Age**		
	< 20 years	21	14.79
	20 – 29 years	58	40.84
	30 – 39 years	36	25.36
	> 40 years	27	19.01
	Total	142	100.00
3	**Highest Education Qualification**		
	FSCL	7	4.92
	SSCE/GCC	29	20.42
	HND/B.Sc	42	29.58
	MA/M.Sc/MBA	53	37.32
	Ph.D	11	7.76
	Total	142	100.00
4	**Number of years of patronage**		
	<2yrs	32	22.53
	2-4yrs	38	26.76
	5-8yrs	58	40.85
	9yrs>	14	9.86
	Total	142	100.00

Table 2 above shows the information on demographic profile of respondents. The table shows that 86 respondents (60.56%) were male while 56 respondents (37.44%) were female. This implies that male respondents were of the majority.

The information on age brackets of the respondents in section 2 of Table 2 above shows that 21 respondents (14.79%) was less than 20 years, 58 respondents (40.84%) were within 20 – 29 years, 36 respondents (25.36%) were within 30 – 39 years while 27 respondents (19.01%) were greater than 40 years. This information shows that majority of the respondents were within 20-29 years.

Section 3 of Table 2 above shows information on the respondents' level of education. They were represented as follows: FSLC (7) (4.92%), SSCE/GCE (29) (20.42%),   while HND/B.SC (42) (29.58%), MA/MSC/MBA (53) (37.32%) and Ph.D (11)(7.76) From the information it shows that respondents with MA/MSC/MBA are of the majority.

Section five of Table 2 records the number of years you have patronized visitor attraction sites. The representation are as follows; <2yearas (32) (22.53%), 2-4years (38) (26.76%), 5-8years (58)(40.85%), >9years (14)(9.86%). From the information it shows that respondents who have worked for 5 - 8 years are of majority.

BIVERIATE ANALYSIS

The variables were correlated to ascertain the degree of relationship existing between them. . The techniques ranges from: very strong, strong, moderate, weak and very weak with various indicated calibration.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

DECISION RULE

If	PV	<	0.05		=	Reject	Ho
	PV	>	0.05	=	Accept	Ho	

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 1

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and revisit intentions

HA_1: There is significant relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and revisit intentions

Relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and revisit intentions

Table 4 Correlation   Analysis showing the relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and revisit intentions

Correlations

		Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Revisit Intention
Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	1	.537**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	142	142
Revisit Intention	Pearson Correlation	.537**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	142	142

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

Table 4 above shows the result of the Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis which indicates that there is a moderate and positive correlation between socio-cultural sustainability and revisit intention in Delta State of Nigeria with r=.537. The p value =.006 which is less than 0.05, meaning that the correlation is significant. The R Square is .288 which is an indication that 28.8% of the variance in revisit intention can be explained by the changes in independent variables of socio-cultural   sustainability. It means therefore that socio-cultural   sustainability has positive and significant relationship with revisit intentions. Accordingly therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis;

HA_1: There is significant relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and revisit intentions

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 2

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and destination loyalty

HA_2: There is significant relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and destination loyalty

Relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and destination loyalty

Table 5 Correlation   Analysis showing the relationship between socio-cultural sustainability   and destination loyalty

Correlations

		Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Destination Loyalty
Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Pearson Correlation	1	.551**

			.000
	N	142	142
Destination Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.551**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	142	142

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

Table 5 above shows the result of the Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis which indicates that there is a moderate and positive correlation between socio-cultural sustainability and destination loyalty in Delta State of Nigeria with r=.551. The p value =.000 which is less than 0.05, meaning that the correlation is significant. The R Square is .304 which is an indication that 30.4% of the variance in destination loyalty can be explained by the changes in independent variables of socio-cultural sustainability. It means therefore that socio-cultural sustainability has positive and significant relationship with destination loyalty. Accordingly therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis;

HA_2: There is significant relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and destination loyalty

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and revisit intention

The test of hypothesis three using Product Moment Correlation Analysis, showed that socio-cultural sustainability is significantly correlated with intention to revisit Delta State as a destination (r=0.537; p=.006). Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted as there is a significant positive relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and revisit intention in the context of tourism destination. This finding is consistent with the findings of Soliman and Abou-Shouk (2017) who found that cultural heritage influence behavioural intentions of international tourists.

The degree of loyalty of tourists to a particular destination is expressed in their willingness or intention to revisit the destination as well as their intention to recommend the destination to others such as family, friends and colleagues (Oppermann, 2000). When a destination is crime free and the diversity of socio-cultural activities goes a long way to enhance the well-being of the residents, it will create a conducive environment for tourism to thrive.

Relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and destination loyalty

From Product Moment Correlation Analysis, socio-cultural sustainability is significantly correlated with destination loyalty of tourists to Delta State (r=0.557; p=.000). Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted as there is a significant positive relationship between socio-cultural sustainability and destination loyalty in the context of tourism destination. This finding is consistent with the findings of Bazazo, et al (2017).

Uncles, Grahame, and Hammond, (2003) noted that loyalty is a display of customers' attitude in terms of brands, product categories, stores, services as well as destinations. According to Oppermann, (2000), the level or degree of loyalty of tourists to a given destination is practically expressed in their intention to revisit the destination in addition to their intention to recommend the destination to others. It should therefore be noted that destinations where there is sustainable socio-cultural development in terms of residents' well-being, crime free environment, diversity of socio-cultural activities, the destination loyalty of tourists will be enhanced.

Conclusion

This study has been able to provide valuable and important information for tourism service organisations and other stakeholders on the perception of sustainability issues in Delta State as a tourism destination. It also facilitates the ability of tourism service providers to identify areas of improvements as expected by the tourists. It should therefore be noted that sustainability issues are critical to the overall development of a particular destination because all the stakeholders are affected by them. For example, if the issues that define socio-cultural sustainability affect the destination loyalty and the revisit intention of tourists to such a destination, then efforts should be made to improve quality of life, conservation and preservation of cultural heritage of such destinations. Accordingly therefore, tourism

stakeholders in Delta State should create a coordinating body that should take care of destination management on a sustainable level.

Recommendations

    i.   Socio-cultural sustainability is a significant determinant of revisit intention in Delta State($r = 0.537; p=0.006; p < 0.05$). Tourism service providers and other stakeholders in the State should work together to ensure the preservation and conservation of tourism resources such as festivals in the State.

    ii.   Socio-cultural sustainability is a significant determinant of destination loyalty in Delta State. Tourism service providers and other stakeholders in the State should work together to ensure the local peoples' quality of life is improved through tourism marketing and management.

Suggestion for further research
Further research effort should be directed towards investigating environmental sustainability issues in Eco-tourism locations in Deltas State.

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