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Towards Sustainable Beach Tourism: Analyzing the Relationship between Beach Attractiveness, Visitor Experience, and Revisit Intention in Coastal Ghana

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Abstract

Beaches are distinctive destinations, and their attractiveness is decisive for attracting tourists, enriching their experiences, and sustaining coastal tourism. This study investigates how different dimensions of beach attractiveness—scenery and cleanliness, facilities and services, geophysical aspects, and access and comfort—affect visitors' overall beach experience and revisit intention. By utilizing structural equation modelling (SEM) in AMOS, with data from 311 respondents, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these factors contribute to beach tourism sustainability. The mediating role of overall beach experience between beach attractiveness and revisit intention was also examined. The findings indicate that beach scenery and cleanliness, geophysical aspects, and facilities and services have direct positive effects on the overall experience of beach users. The results also revealed the positive direct effects of beach scenery and cleanliness, and geophysical aspects on revisit intention. Finally, overall experience mediated the positive indirect effects of facilities and services and access and comfort dimensions on revisit intention. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing beach attractiveness and improving user experience to encourage revisitation and promote sustainable beach tourism. The results are further discussed from a demand perspective and implications are provided for beach management, policymakers, regulators, and local governments on the supply side to support the development of sustainable beach tourism in Ghana.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourists' intentions to visit specific destinations are primarily driven by destination attractiveness, which is a key component of a destination's appeal (Formica & Uysal, 2006). As distinctive and popular tourist destinations, beaches have significant economic, social, and environmental importance, attracting visitors with aesthetic appeal and unique ecological features (Alegre & Garau, 2011; Jackie-Ong & Smith, 2014; Micallef et al., 2011). The natural and human resources of beach destinations provide recreational opportunities and facilitate experience creation (Hasan et al., 2019). Consequently, beaches are preferred destinations for relief, relaxation, fun, personal treatment, and escape, making their attractiveness crucial for continued patronage and sustainability (Andersen et al., 2016; Dodds & Holmes, 2019). According to Sustainable Tourism International (2022), coastal destinations are the most visited tourist destinations globally, with over 80% (approximately 350 million people) of the world's tourists visiting them annually, spending over $143 billion (NOAA, 2018).

Given these data, Karim et al. (2023) highlighted the necessity for beach destinations to consistently understand tourists' perceptions of destination attributes, satisfaction levels, experiences, and repurchase intentions (Smith and Johnson, 2020). Beach destinations must gather such information to create competitive and sustainable tourism. Contemporary destinations compete to attract tourists by marketing their attributes such as clean and accessible beaches, basic amenities, and recreational opportunities, which serve as pull factors that encourage tourists to visit and revisit (Dodds & Holmes, 2019; Kim & Perdue, 2011). The quality of beach attributes (both natural and human) determines the leisure opportunities available, the beach experience visitors acquire, and their subsequent revisit intentions (Formica & Uysal, 2006; Krešić & Prebežac, 2011; Vaz et al., 2016).

Mustapha and Awang (2018) and Dang and Weiss (2021) further posited that unique and high-quality attributes serve as competitive edges that enhance a tourist destination's market position through positive perceptions. For distinctive destinations such as beaches, tourists' perceptions, experiences, and satisfaction, are critical inputs that must be continuously sought and implemented for product development, experience enhancement, and overall beach destination management and sustainability (Lucrezi et al., 2016; Vaz et al., 2016; Micallef & Williams, 2009).

Despite the importance of these factors, studies specifically exploring beach destination attractiveness and its relationship with user experience and revisit intentions are uncommon (Krešić & Prebežac, 2011). Although research on destination attractiveness, and revisit intentions exists in other tourism domains such as wilderness, parks, and historical sites (Ćulić et al., 2021; Reitsamer et al., 2016; Vengesayi et al., 2009), empirical studies focusing on beach destination attractiveness are limited even although beaches are primarily the most visited destinations globally. Due to their uniqueness, beach destinations require distinctive qualities to offer the required experience and satisfaction to users. Thus, assessing user perceptions of coastal destination performance has been strongly supported suggested in the current literature (Karim et al., 2023; Krešić & Prebežac, 2011; Vaz et al., 2016). Besides, the limited studies in this domain often focus on satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Karim et al., 2023; Dodds & Holmes, 2019). Consequently, research exploring the relationships between perceived beach attractiveness, beach experience, and revisit intention at coastal destinations is limited, with a noticeable gap in sub-Saharan Africa region and Ghana, where beach tourism is on the rise (Dzitse et al., 2023).

In Ghana, studies measuring the perceptions of beach destination attractiveness are currently unavailable. However, beach tourism has become an increasing daily activity, suggesting that the maintenance of desirability, competitiveness, and sustainability of beaches are crucial for the tourism industry. As postulated by Vaz et al. (2016), Micallef and Williams (2009), and Reitsamer et al. (2016), beach destination managers need visitors' assessments data on the destination performance in terms individual and overall destination elements, experiences, satisfaction and revisit intentions, and the interrelationships among these variables to craft effective management strategies. Given these gaps, this study aimed to test the relationships between perceived beach attractiveness, beach experience, and revisit intentions in the context of beach tourism in Ghana. Specifically, the study explores the direct effects of beach attractiveness dimensions on overall experience and revisit intention, and, also tests the mediating role of the overall experience in this relationship. This study seeks to demonstrate the extent to which specific dimensions of beach attractiveness, such as cleanliness and scenery, facilities and services, natural/geophysical beach aspects, and comfort and safety, directly influence visitors' overall experiences and intentions to revisit. Accordingly, Likewise, this research is expected to demonstrate the mediating role of the overall beach experience in the relationship between beach attractiveness and revisit intentions, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of how different factors contribute to tourists' decisions to return to distinctive destinations as beaches. This study therefore expects to provide empirical data and model for stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding the further development of beach destinations, by recognizing distinctive attributes, and identifying areas for improvement (Schuhmann, 2012). It also extends the destination attractiveness framework and push-and-pull theories to beach tourism, emphasizing that attractiveness attributes are critical pull factors essential for the sustainability of these destinations, particularly in

areas with limited prior research. Additionally, it integrates destination attractiveness, user experience, and revisit intentions within the context of beach destinations, providing a holistic view of tourists' behavioral intentions, which also extends the applicability of the theory of planned behavior within coastal tourism settings. Finally, by focusing on Ghana, this study offers valuable insights into an under-researched geographical area, aiding the development of sustainable beach tourism strategies and enhancing the competitiveness of beach destinations in sub-Saharan Africa.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Destination Attractiveness and Revisit Intention

Destination attractiveness is critical for tourism marketing and visitor satisfaction. A destination must have qualities that appeal to and attract potential tourists to be deemed attractive (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Tourism academics are, therefore, interested in the idea of destination appeal. Studies have been conducted on the subject, and authors have defined destination attractiveness in terms of its physical characteristics or a list of tourism assets (Kreši'c & Prebežac, 2011; Formica & Uysal, 2006). Others denote attractiveness as the perceptions and feelings that an individual holds about a destination's attributes based on whether such attributes suit the individual's requirements and demands (Vengesayi et al., 2009; Yangzhou & Ritchie, 1993). Hence, they focused on how tourists perceive a destination and its capacity to meet their demands, involving components of the distinctive attractiveness aspects of destinations, such as tourism amenities and infrastructure and the overall environment of the destination (Vengesayi et al., 2009; Formica & Uysal, 2006). Presently, beach destinations are considered all-encompassing attractive products (physical, scenery and appeal, facilities, services, and accessibility) that can be offered rather than just unique natural or environmental resources. Thus, beach destinations provide a diverse range of physical, natural, and human attributes that help to make the beach experience enjoyable and memorable (Dodds & Holmes, 2019; Lew & Larson, 2005).

However, regardless of destination attributes, tourists and users largely establish attractiveness. Hence, Lee et al. (2008) postulated that the measurement of destination attractiveness from a demand perspective (user perspective) is critical for destination management to determine what attracts visitors to their destinations. This helps enhance the supply dimensions of destinations because the demand side is based on tourists' valuations of a given destination's attributes (Kim & Perdue, 2011; Lee et al., 2008; Vengesayi et al., 2009).

On the other hand, revisit intentions in tourism involve cognitive action (Barsalou, 2008), as tourists express a desire to repeat their travel to the destination (Cavagnaro, 2017; Schumann, 2012). In practice, revisit intention is constructed along the lines of visitors' willingness to revisit a destination in the future, visitors frequenting their visits to a destination, and visitors choosing a particular destination over competing ones (Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Cavagnaro, 2017). These interconnected revisit options can be based on the actual attractiveness, experience, perception, or fulfilment gained at a given destination.

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives and Hypothesis

This study integrates and uses the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Push-and-Pull Theory as its theoretical foundation. These theories offer a dynamic context for understanding the relationships between destination attractiveness, tourism experiences, and the behavioral intention of customers in tourism. The TPB, proposed by Ajzen (1991), posits that an individual's behavior is influenced by their behavioral intentions, which are shaped by attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This model is particularly relevant to beach tourism, where the attractiveness of a beach (attitude) can significantly influence tourists' intentions to revisit. The Push-and-Pull Theory, conceptualized by Crompton (1979) and Dann (1981), delineates the factors that motivate tourists to travel (push factors) and attract them to specific destinations (pull factors). In beach tourism, pull factors, such as natural beauty, facilities, and overall appeal, play a crucial role in attracting tourists and fostering positive experiences that encourage revisit intentions.

TPB is essential for understanding tourists' intentions to revisit beach destinations. It consists of three main components: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of beach tourism, attitude refers to tourists' positive or negative evaluations of their return to the beach. A favorable attitude is likely to develop if tourists perceive the beach as attractive because of its cleanliness, scenic beauty, and amenity. Studies have shown that positive attitudes toward a destination are strong predictors of revisit intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms involve the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior. For beach tourism, subjective norms might involve the influence of family, friends, and social networks who have previously visited the beach and share their positive experiences. Endorsements from these social groups can significantly impact an individual's intention to revisit a beach (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Perceived behavioral control deals with the perceived ease or difficulty of performing a behavior influenced by past experiences and anticipated obstacles. In beach tourism, perceived behavioral control may include factors such as accessibility to the beach, cost/price considerations, and safety concerns. Tourists are more likely to intend to revisit a beach if they perceive it as accessible and safe and if previous visits are positive (Ajzen, 1991).

Push-and-Pull Theory complements TPB by providing insights into the motivations behind tourists' destination choices (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981). Push factors are internal motivations such as the desire to escape routine, seek adventure, relax, or experience new cultures. Pull factors, on the other hand, are external attributes of destinations that attract tourists. Pull factors are critical in the context of beach tourism. On beaches, scenery and cleanliness provide an aesthetic appeal. Tourists are naturally attracted to beaches that are visually appealing and well maintained. Cleanliness is a peculiar pull factor that enhances the natural beauty of a beach, making it a more attractive destination. Studies have shown that cleanliness and aesthetic appeal are significant determinants (pull factors) of tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions (Wyles et al., 2016; Karim et al., 2023). In addition, the availability and quality of facilities and services play a crucial role in the overall beach experience. In the application of this theory, Sakyi and Tengan (2022) in a destination attractiveness study identified hospitality facilities and services as essential pull factors, such as restrooms, food and beverage services, and recreational facilities which does not only enhance convenience but also add to the enjoyment of destination. Furthermore, the unique natural features of beaches, such as their geological formations and marine biodiversity, add to their appeal. These attributes create unique and memorable experiences that attract tourists and encourage them to return to their destination (Wyles et al., 2016; Lucrezi et al., 2016). Reitmaser et al. (2016) highlight the importance of natural beauty as a critical pull factor in attracting tourists and fostering repeat visits. Similarly, perceived safety and comfort of beaches are critical for attracting visitors.

From a theoretical perspective, overall beach experience plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between beach attractiveness and revisit intentions. This mediation is supported by both the theoretical perspectives. From the TPB Perspective, a positive overall beach experience influences tourists' attitudes towards the beach, reinforces positive subjective norms, and enhances perceived behavioral control. Consequently, positive perceptions and experiences increase the likelihood of revisiting intentions (Ajzen, 1991). From the Push-and-Pull Theory perspective, beach attractiveness directly contributes to a positive overall experience. This enhanced experience acts as a feedback loop, reinforcing pull factors and increasing the likelihood of tourists returning to their destination (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981). More empirically, Karim et al. (2023) found that beach cleanliness and safety significantly impacted tourists' overall experiences and intentions to revisit. Clean and safe beaches create positive attitudes and enhance perceived behavioral control, aligning with the TPB framework. Similarly, Kim and Perdue (2011) and Dodds and Holmes (2019) demonstrated that well-maintained facilities and services at beach destinations lead to higher satisfaction and stronger revisit intentions. High-quality amenities contribute to a positive overall experience, supporting the pull factors of Push-and-Pull Theory (Sakyi & Tengan, 2022). Reitsamer et al. (2016) noted that safe swimming conditions, presence of lifeguards, and a secure environment contribute to tourists' sense of comfort and well-being a critical drawing power of beaches. Thus, unique natural features enhance the overall beach experience and create favorable attitudes, reinforcing theoretical perspectives. These pull factors are crucial for developing attitudes and encouraging revisit intentions as tourists are more likely to return to destinations where they feel safe and comfortable (Dzitse & Amoah, 2024). These studies underscore the critical role of beach attractiveness in shaping overall experiences and revisit intentions.

Thus, the two theories complement each other and provide a comprehensive operational framework for understanding the influence of beach destination attractiveness on revisit intentions, mediated by overall beach experience. By focusing on the predictive dimensions of scenery and cleanliness; facilities and services; natural beauty/geophysical attributes; and access, safety, and comfort on beach experience and revisit intentions, this research aims to fill the gap in the literature and offer practical insights for enhancing beach tourism in Ghana. The findings contribute to theoretical advancements and provide empirical data to inform sustainable beach destination management and marketing strategies.

2.3. Beach Destination Attractiveness and Revisit Intention

Given the worldwide popularity of coastal destinations, beach attractiveness and revisit intention are integral to the tourism industry. Beaches have become the core element of tour packages offered to beach resorts for various activities, pleasures, and experiences (Lucrezi et al., 2016; Wyles et al., 2014). Their attractiveness involves a blend of natural beauty, environmental cleanliness, scenery, facilities, safety, comfort, cultural, and practical considerations. For tourism and recreational purposes, beach attractiveness is multifaceted and encompasses pull factors involving the natural, physical, environmental, and human elements that constitute beach destination attributes (Gonzalez & Holtmann-Ahumada, 2017; Morgan, 1999; Lew & Larson, 2005). Specifically, physical, natural, or environmental variables, including clean and appealing beach sand and water, the nature of waves docking at the beach, and the presence of breezes/winds, have a considerable impact on tourists' inclination to return (Wang & Chen, 2017). For example, Lucrezi et al. (2016) found that pristine beach conditions and appealing natural scenery significantly enhanced visitor satisfaction and promoted revisit intentions. The human aspects of beaches include facilities, entertainment, and services such as quality washrooms, food services, safety measures, boats, lifeguards, litter bins, and overall comfort and entertainment, making beach destinations attractive and encouraging tourists to return (Roca

& Villares, 2008; Ryu & Jang, 2007). Research by Mehranian and Marzuki (2018) and Martin (2004) emphasizes the importance of accessibility, cleanliness, quality of amenities and services, image, comfort, tranquility, aesthetics/scenery, crowd and noise levels, and favorable climate in shaping tourists' positive attitudes and intentions to return. Moreover, poor beach sanitary conditions remain a significant limitation affecting user experience and the sustainability of beach destinations (Karim et al., 2023; Krelling et al., 2017). For instance, Krelling et al. (2017) highlighted how litter and pollution detract from the aesthetic and environmental appeal of beaches, negatively affecting visitors' experiences and discouraging future visits.

Given these considerations, a consistent assessment of beach destination qualities is crucial for beach managers to identify priority areas needing attention and improvement towards building sustainable destinations. This leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Perceived beach destination attractiveness: (a) scenery and cleanliness, (b) facilities and services, geophysical aspects, and (d) access and comfort have a positive influence on the revisit intentions of beach users.

2.4. Beach Attractiveness and Beach Experience

The visual attractiveness and aesthetic features of beaches have been extensively documented in research as having a significant impact on visitor perceptions and overall enjoyment. Specific dimensions of beach attractiveness such as sanitation, natural beauty, beach facilities, accessibility, and safety have been shown to play critical roles in shaping the overall beach experience. Natural beauty, characterized by elements such as unspoiled sand, picturesque waves, and scenic surroundings, elicits positive emotional responses from beachgoers, fostering feelings of calm, serenity, and wonder. Studies by Schuhmann et al. (2016) and Wyles et al. (2016) highlight how these aesthetic features enhance the entire beach experience, increasing the likelihood of visitors having satisfying and memorable experiences. Sanitation, which encompasses cleanliness and environmental quality, is another crucial dimension. Research by Dzitse and Amoah (2024) indicates that well-maintained spotless beaches with minimal pollution and visible trash significantly enhance the tourist joyful emotional experience by allowing guests to fully engage with their surroundings. Hasan et al. (2020) and Dzitse et al. (2023) emphasized that cleanliness not only improves aesthetic appeal but also contributes to positive cognitive and emotional responses, leading to greater relaxation and enjoyment. Beach facilities, including amenities such as restrooms, showers, and food services, are vital for improving convenience and comfort during beach visits. Karim et al. (2023) and Lucrezi et al. (2016) found that the presence of adequate facilities directly correlates with higher satisfaction levels among visitors, making the beach experience more rewarding and memorable. Accessibility and safety are of paramount importance. Easy access to the beach, coupled with safety measures such as lifeguard presence and clear signage, significantly enhances the visitor experience. Onofri and Nunes (2013) demonstrate that these factors not only contribute to the enjoyment and perceived safety of the beach but also increase the likelihood of repeat visits. In light of these findings, the following hypothesis was proposed to further investigate the impact of beach attractiveness on the overall beach experience:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Perceived beach destination attractiveness: (a) scenery and cleanliness, (b) facilities and services, geophysical aspects, and (d) access and comfort, has a positive effect on beach users' overall experience.

2.5. The Mediating Role of Overall Beach Experience

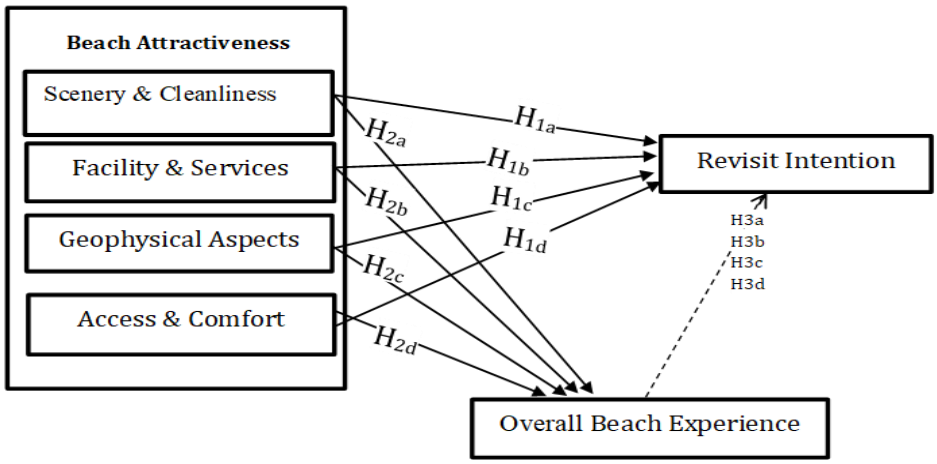
Research has consistently demonstrated that the visual attractiveness and aesthetic features of beaches significantly impact visitor perception and enjoyment. Specifically, elements such as scenic beauty, cleanliness, and amenities play crucial roles in enhancing beach experience (Schuhmann et al., 2016). A well-maintained, visually appealing beach contributes to tourists'positive experiences by fostering feelings of relaxation, enjoyment, and satisfaction (Schuhmann 2013). For instance, Schuhmann et al. (2016) highlighted that the cleanliness and natural beauty of beaches are pivotal for creating a serene and pleasant environment for visitors. Similarly, amenities such as clean restrooms, showers, and convenient seating areas further improve the overall experience, making it enjoyable and comfortable (Karim et al., 2023; Lucrezi et al., 2016). The presence of these features is critical in forming a memorable beach experience that directly influences visitors' intention to return. Studies have also emphasized the importance of the mediating role that tourist experience plays in shaping travelers' revisit intentions. Breiby and Slåtten (2018) found that a positive beach experience, characterized by enjoyment, relaxation, and satisfaction, significantly mediates the relationship between beach attractiveness and revisit intention. When visitors have a positive initial experience, they are more likely to develop a strong desire to revisit a beach. The emotional, psychological, and cognitive bonds formed during a beach visit further reinforce the mediating role of beach experience. Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011) and Alegre and Garau (2011) suggest that these bonds, fostered by positive emotions and experiences, encourage attachment and loyalty to the beach destination. This attachment significantly influences visitors' intention to return, as shown by Hosany et al. (2016) and Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011). Overall, earlier tourism studies recognized the associations between attractive destination factors, beach

experiences, and revisit intentions. This underscores the importance of developing and maintaining appealing and well-equipped beaches to ensure favorable visitor experiences, thereby enhancing the likelihood of return visits and contributing to the sustainable growth of beach tourism destinations. Understanding this mediating mechanism is crucial for effective management of beach destinations. Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Overall experience mediates a positive relationship between perceived beach attractiveness: (a) scenery and cleanliness; (b) facility and services; (c) geophysical aspects; and (d) access and comfort and revisit intention.

Figure 1 presents the expected relationships and the hypotheses.

Figure 1: Proposed Research Model



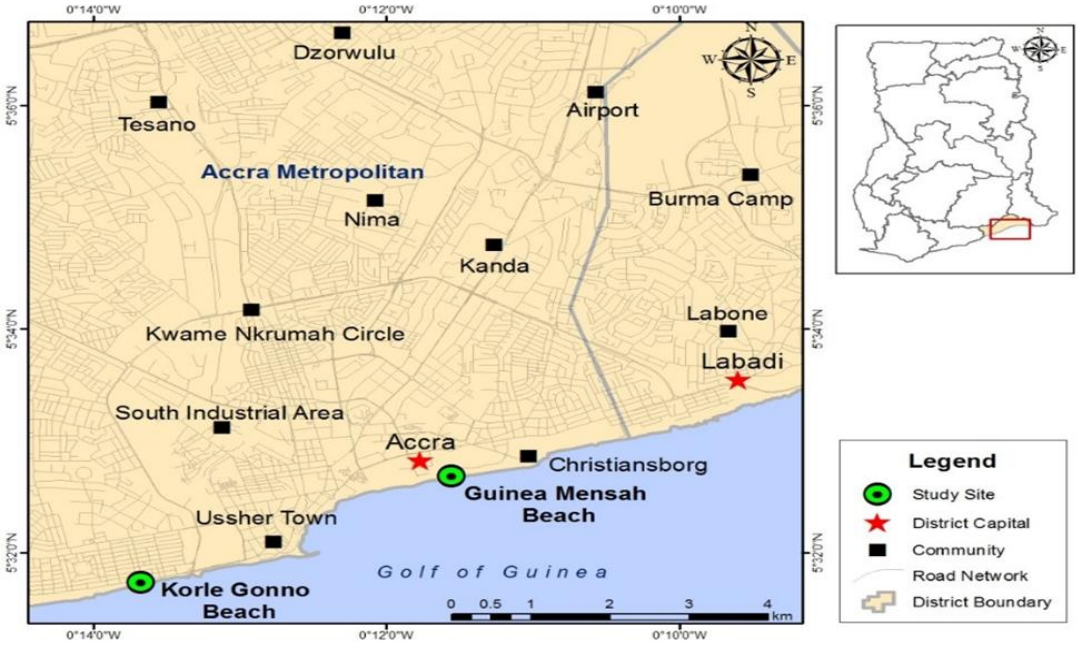
Source: (Created by Authors.)

The integration of empirical literature and theoretical dimensions to provide a comprehensive research model is crucial for understanding the influence of beach destination attractiveness on overall beach experience and revisit intention. By testing the proposed hypotheses, this study aims to fill the existing gaps in the literature and offer practical insights for enhancing beach tourism in Ghana. As illustrated in the proposed model (Figure 1), this study assesses the specific impacts of each dimension of beach attractiveness, such as scenery, cleanliness, facilities, services, and accessibility, on the overall beach experience and revisit intention as well as the mediating role of overall beach experience. These findings will contribute to theoretical advancements and provide empirical data to inform sustainable beach destination management. Understanding the specific factors that enhance beach attractiveness, affect beach experience, and revisit intentions will aid beach destination managers in making informed decisions to improve beach aesthetics, attractions, facilities, and services (Vaz et al., 2016; Micallef & Williams, 2009). This includes ensuring higher standards of cleanliness, service, and safety, which have the propensity to enhance tourist satisfaction and likelihood of return visits. Moreover, insights from this study can inform targeted marketing strategies that highlight the unique and appealing attributes of Ghanaian beaches that attract domestic and international tourists. Additionally, this research can guide policymakers in developing regulations and policies that support sustainable beach tourism, preserve natural beauty, and enhance visitor experience in Ghana and West Africa. Thus, this research provides a well-rounded understanding of how different aspects of beach attractiveness influence overall visitor experiences and their intentions to revisit, thereby offering valuable contributions to both the academic literature and practical beach tourism management.

2.6. Study setting

This study focuses on Mensah Guinea Beach and Korle Gonno Beach, which are the main tourist beaches in Accra, Ghana (Figure 2). Guinea Mensah Beach, a primary tourist destination, features predominantly sandy terrain with rock cliffs along its shoreline. Located approximately 220 m from Accra, it lies within the main tourist region, flanked by the Centre for National Culture and landmarks such as Christiansburg Castle and James Fort. Frequented by tourists from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, its coordinates are N 05˚32.594'W 000˚11.823', N 05˚32.599'W 000˚11.825', N 05˚32.609'W 000˚11.771', and N 05˚32.615'W 000˚11.773'. Korle Gonno Beach, situated 2 km west of Accra, is a 200-meter stretch characterized by a mix of rocky and sandy terrain. Popular among domestic tourists, with occasional foreign visitors, it offers ocean view facilities for leisure activities, located at N 05˚31.733'W 000˚13.537', N 05˚31.738'W 000˚13.538', N 05˚31.744'W 000˚13.480', and N 05˚31.752'W 000˚13.481'.

Figure 2: Map of The Study Area Showing Study Sites



Source: (GIS Unit, University of Cape Coast, 2021).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a cross-sectional survey that takes a quantitative approach to the research. The research was part of a supervised master's thesis that received ethical permission/approval in June 2020 from the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, for data collection.

3.1. Target Population and Sampling Size

The target population for the study was international and domestic tourists or visitors to beach destinations who were 18years or older. According to Ghanaian law, this group is mature and can make sound and personal decisions. However, data on beach visits in Ghana are currently unavailable; thus, the target population size is unknown, and non-probability sampling is used. Hence, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2009) formula for calculating the sample size for an unknown target population size was used, with a 5% error margin and a 75% target population similarity rate (0.75).

$$N = \frac{t^{2} * p\,(1-p)}{m^{2}}$$

Where **N** = desired sample size, **t** = confidence level set at 95% (standard value = 1.96), **p** = proportion of the target population that has similar characteristics (set at 75% or 0.75), **m** = the margin of error set at 5% (standard value = 0.05).

Substituting into the formula, the desired sample calculate is:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^{2} * (0.75)\,(1- 0.75)}{0.05^{2}}$$

$$n = 288.12$$

To cater for non-response, an extra ten (10) per cent of the desired sample size has been calculated which is approximately 29 respondents and is added to the sample making a total sample size for the study to be 317. This implies that a minimum of 288 responses should be used in this study (IFAD, 2009). Due to the unknown target population size, further confirmation of the appropriateness of the sample size for this type of study was carried out using power analysis. An a-priori power analysis (A-priori: compute required sample size – given α, power and effect size) was carried out using an "F-test" and "Linear multiple regression: fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero" in G-Power software (version 3.1.9.7) using the following specified indicators (effect size = 0.15 (medium effect), α = 0.05, and power = 0.95) in the input parameters. This is the most appropriate and commonly recommended parameter setting in social and business science research (Hair et al. 2017; Faul et al. 2007). Based on the mediation (proposed study) model shown in Figure 1, five (5) predictors were included in the sample size calculation. The results show that a minimum sample size of 138 responses should be sufficient for statistical estimations; hence, the use of an estimated sample size of 317, as previously calculated for this study, is appropriate (Memon et al., 2020; Hair et al. 2017).

3.2. Research Instrumentation

A final questionnaire prepared in English, consisting of three parts, was developed from a comprehensive literature review. The first part operationalized and measured the beach attractiveness attributes of 32 items: nine geophysical/natural aspects items (Gonzalez & Holtmann-Ahumada, 2017; Wyles et al., 2016 Morgan,1999); seven scenery and cleanliness items (Schumann, 2013; Wyles et al., 2014; Tudor & Williams, 2008; Rayon-Vinaa et al., 2018); seven facility/amenities and services items (Lew & Larson, 2005; Dodds & Holmes, 2019); and nine access and comfort items (Dodds & Holmes, 2019; Mehranian & Marzuki, 2018) on a 5-point Likert scale (5= very attractive;1 = very unattractive). The second part measured the overall beach user experience (four items) (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011) and revisit intention (three items) (Alegre & Cladera, 2006) on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). In keeping with the experiential cognition idea (Barsalou, 2008), this study employed a straightforward cognitive measure that allowed beach visitors to assess their subjective perceptions and impressions. The final part examined the respondents' profiles, including gender, age, marital status, education, travel party, continent of origin, and purpose of the visit.

To assess the appropriateness of the measurement instruments and situate the study in the Ghanaian context, a pilot study of twenty-two tourists was conducted at La Pleasure Beach (located 7.2 kilometres from the Accra Metropolis). The Cronbach's alpha values for the six distinct constructs were as follows: scenery and cleanliness (0.811), facility and services (0.796), geophysical aspects (0.816), access and comfort (0.811), overall beach experience (0.781), and revisit intentions (0.822). Based on these results, the reliability and validity of the scale were confirmed. Following the pre-test and considering input from two experts (one supervising professor and one tourism professional), a few minor changes were incorporated into the questionnaire form before it was used for actual data collection.

3.3. Sampling and Data Collection

The survey method was used in this study. A paper-based questionnaire was self-administered to respondents face-to-face for their responses by the researchers. The questionnaire was administered only to respondents who had been at the beach for at least two hours or more and were actively using the beach or beach facility. All respondents in the study met the inclusion criteria. Due to the lack of a sampling frame coupled with the inherent mobility of tourists, the use of probability sampling is not practicable hence, convenience sampling (a non-probability sampling technique) based on accessibility was used to recruit respondents. Although convenience sampling was used, the researchers exercised some thoughtfulness in carefully collecting data to ensure an adequate level of representativeness and avoid collecting skewed data. Thus, the researchers ensured that only individual respondents who were deemed fit were given random questionnaires. Similarly, when groups were encountered, only one person was randomly selected from a group of two to three active beach users, whereas two respondents were elected in the case of groups of four or more travellers to the beaches. This is an appropriate method to ensure an essential level of representativeness in quantitative studies that use convenience sampling (Leiner, 2014; Su et al. 2017; Khairi & Darmawan, 2021; Nguyen, 2020).

The researchers go to the beach destination from 1:00pm to 5:30pm each day throughout the data collection period. We approach and choose a respondent at random who is using the beach or beach facility. If that person meets the inclusion criteria and is willing to participate in the study, he/she is given the questionnaire to answer. The researchers will then be on standby, and if any part of the questionnaire was unclear or raised questions, respondents would ask for clarification or explanation from the researchers. This was done throughout the process to ensure accurate and complete responses. Based on the sample size, 317 questionnaires were carefully distributed at the two beaches concurrently over a three-month period from November 16, 2020, to February 3, 2021. After eliminating invalid questionnaires due to different levels of incompleteness, 311 adequate responses were used for the analysis. The use of 311 valid responses is suitable for multivariate statistical analysis techniques (e.g., CB-SEM) ((Memon et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2016).

More importantly, the participation in this study was voluntary. The respondents were required to provide consent through a comprehensive understanding of the nature and objectives of the study before they were allowed to participate. Approval letters from the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of the University of Cape Coast and Ghana Tourism Authority Department of Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation were used to obtain permission from beach facility operators and respondents before data were collected. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed to protect the rights of the respondents, as no personal data such as names or addresses were collected that could identify an individual whose response was collected. Furthermore, the researchers ensured that the data collected from the study were used solely for the purpose of the study and no third party was provided with the data. Lastly, respondents were reminded that participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.4. Data Analysis

Three statistical techniques–descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM)–were used to analyze the data. CFA was used to assess the reliability of the assessment items, and SEM was applied to examine the correlations between the latent constructs of perceived beach attractiveness, overall beach experience, and revisit intention. CFA and SEM were performed using AMOS 23, and descriptive analyses were performed using SPSS (version 25).

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

As indicated in Table 1, more females were included in this study (58.5%). The respondents were mostly between 25-34 years of age (40.1%). The majority of respondents were single (77.6%), with 70.6% completing their first degree. In terms of continent of origin, the data were skewed towards Africa (75.3%), whereas over half of the respondents (67.3%) visited the beaches for leisure/fun. Most patients visited the beaches alone (73.8%).

Table 1: Chracteristics of respondents (N=311)

Characteristics	*N*	*Per cent*
Gender		
Male	132	42.1
Female	179	57.9
Age		
<25	112	36.2
25-34	123	40.1
35+	76	23.7
Educational level		
High school	50	15.5
First degree	217	70.6
Postgraduate	44	13.9
Marital status		
Not married	240	77.6
Married	42	12.9
Ever-married	29	9.5
Continent of origin		
Africa	233	75.3
Europe	45	14.6
North America	22	6.5
Australasia	11	3.6
Travel party		
Individual visitors	228	73.8
Group visitors	83	26.2
Purpose of travel		
Business	21	6.8

Leisure/fun	208	67.3
Education/research	25	8.1
Meeting others	57	17.8

4.1. Assessment of Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted, and the convergent and divergent validity of the dimensions and related items were validated using a covariance-based maximum likelihood method with AMOS 23. The dimensions of perceived beach attractiveness and revisit intention were assessed and validated using model fit indices (χ^2 = 272.12, df = 134, p= 0.043, SRMR = 0.054, GFI = 0.932, 0.926, NFI = 0.927, IFI = 0.959, CFI = 0.959, RMSEA = 0.041, and CMIN/DF=2.031). The reliability measures in this study were high and well above acceptable levels (composite reliability > .70, Average Variance Extracted > .50, Cronbach's alphas > .70, and VIF for predictor variables <5), as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981), Monteiro et al. (2017), and Nunnally (1978). Additionally, the standardized loadings for each indicator variable exhibited good convergent validity. Table 3 presents the validity and reliability indicators for the final measurement model.

Table 2: Validity and Reliability of the Measurement Model

Beach Attributes	*Standardized Loading*	*CR*	*AVE*	*Cronbach alpha*	*Tolerance*	*VIF*
Scenery and Cleanliness (SC)		.892	.781	.849	.854	1.216
The cleanliness of beach sand	.847					
The cleanliness of beach water	.822					
The litter-free state of the beach area	.793					
Environmental appeal/beauty of beach facilities	.784					
The smell/scent from the beach area	.771					
The cleanliness of available beach urinals and toilets	.810					
Facilities & Services (FS)		.912	.812	.846	.711	1.481
Beach urinals and toilets available	.871					
The food and beverages	.856					
Lifeguards/savers at the beach	.775					
Rooms/resting/meeting spaces available	.843					
Entertainment	.894					
Availability of garbage bins at the beach	.775					
Geophysical Aspects (GA)		.921	.845	.873	.683	1.321
The beach sand	.932					
The colour of beach sand	.796					
The texture of beach sand	.862					
The landscape (scenery)	.792					
The beach water	.844					
The colour of the beach water	.799					
The sea waves	.899					
The wind/sea breeze	.881					
Access & Comfort (AC)		.898	.749	.896	.662	1.513
Access to beach	.867					
The prices of beach services	.921					
The crowd level at the beach	.890					
Noise level at the beach	.882					
Comfortability of urinals and toilets for use	.787					
Safety/sense of safety at the beach	.891					
clear signage	.772					
Overall Experience (OBE)		.872	.721	.814	0.612	1.492
Overall excitement (Excited/entertained on this beach)	.798					
Overall affection (Felt a sense of affection for this beach)	.758					
Overall Aesthetics (admire the overall aesthetics of this beach)	.752					
Overall Relaxation experience (I had the feeling of relief and relaxation here on this beach)	.893					

Revisit Intentions (RI)		.782	.698	.892
I will recommend this beach to friends & family	.867			
I intend to visit this beach in the future	.912			
I will choose beach destination amidst others	.871			

$\chi 2$ = 272.11; df = 134; p= 0.043; SRMR = 0.054; GFI = 0.932; 0.926; NFI = 0.927; IFI = 0.959; CFI = 0.959; RMSEA = 0.041; CMIN/DF= 2.031

Discriminant validity was also assessed. This was done by first reviewing the latent constructs explored to ensure that there was no cross-loading, as recommended by Hair et al. (2011) and Segars (1997). Subsequently, the square root of each latent construct's AVE and its correlation coefficient with other latent variables were compared. To achieve discriminant validity, the square root of each latent construct must be higher than its correlation coefficient with other latent variables (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), as shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix and Square Root of AVE

Items	*CS*	*FS*	*GA*	*AC*	*OBE*
Scenery & Cleanliness (CS)	[.883] *				
Facility & Services (FS)	.663	[.901] *			
Geophysical Aspect (GA)	.584	.646	[.919] *		
Access & Comfort (AC)	.665	.674	.823	[.865] *	
Overall Experience (OBE)	.394	.312	.421	.366	[.849] *
Mean	4.612	3.932	3.281	3.258	2.931
Std. Deviation	1.59	1.78	1.82	1.91	1.97

*Note: Inter-construct correlations are presented in the lower matrix triangle; AVE square roots are depicted in bold on the diagonal.

4.2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses were tested using SEM and the results are presented in Table 4 and Figure 3. The model goodness-of-fit indices (CFI = 0.986, GFI = 0.981, NFI = 0.964, SRMR = 0.037, RMSEA = 0.051, $\chi 2$ = 122.81, df= 62.00, p= 0.020, and CMIN/df=1.984) specified that the data met the acceptable threshold for addressing the hypothesized interrelation between each latent construct and observed variables. The overall model results also show that beach attractiveness has a large influence on beach revisit intentions (R^2 =0.388; f^2 = 0.633), as well as overall beach experience among visitors (R^2 =0.321; f^2 = 0.473) (Cohen, 1988).

In assessing the direct impact of each of the beach attractiveness dimensions on revisit intentions, the analysis showed that beach Scenery and Cleanliness had a positive effect on revisit intention (β = 0.425; t=3.298; p < 0.011). In addition, the Geophysical Aspects had a direct positive effect on revisit intention (β = 0.281; t=3.140; p < 0.014). Hence, Hypotheses 1a and 1c were accepted. However, Hypotheses 1b and 1d are rejected. Alternatively, the effect of beach attractiveness dimensions on the overall beach experience was explored. The analysis showed that Scenery and Cleanliness had a positive effect on the Overall Beach Experience (β = 0.212, t= 4.128; p < 0.021), and Geophysical Aspects had a positive impact on the Overall Beach Experience (β = 0.168, t= 2.621; p < 0.023). In addition, the analysis showed evidence that Facilities and Services have a positive effect on Overall Experience (β = 0.164; t= 1.235; p < 0.048); hence, Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c are confirmed. The results of the model indicated that Hypothesis 2d was not supported. Table 4 and Figure 3 present the results of the final model.

To assess the mediating role of overall experience between beach attractiveness dimensions and revisit intention, a bootstrapping approach was used, which provides estimates of indirect effects (a × b) based on means derived from "n" samples with replacement from the dataset (Hayes & Scharkow, 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). In this study, a bootstrap sample of 5,000 was used to estimate indirect effects. Bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals were calculated and the estimates of the indirect effects were interpreted as significant when zero was not contained within the confidence intervals (Scharkow, 2013). The results show that overall beach experience is a significant mediator between beach attractiveness dimensions and revisit intentions. The results also show that two indirect effects have a confidence range that does not contain zero in either the upper or lower bounds. Specifically, the results showed that overall experience mediated a positive indirect relationship between Facilities and Services and Revisit Intention (β = 0.117; BCI: 0.911,1.181; p < 0.046), with a small to moderate effect size (f^2) of 0.153. It also mediated a positive indirect effect between Access and Comfort on Revisit Intention (β = 0.101; BCI: 0.621,1.012; p < 0.031), with a small effect size of 0.098 (Cohen, 1988). This implies that Hypotheses 3b and 3d are supported, whereas 3a and 3c are not supported. The final model based on the results in Table 5 is shown in Figure 3.

Table 4: Relationships between Beach Attractiveness, Overall Beach Experience and Revisit Intention

Direct Effects

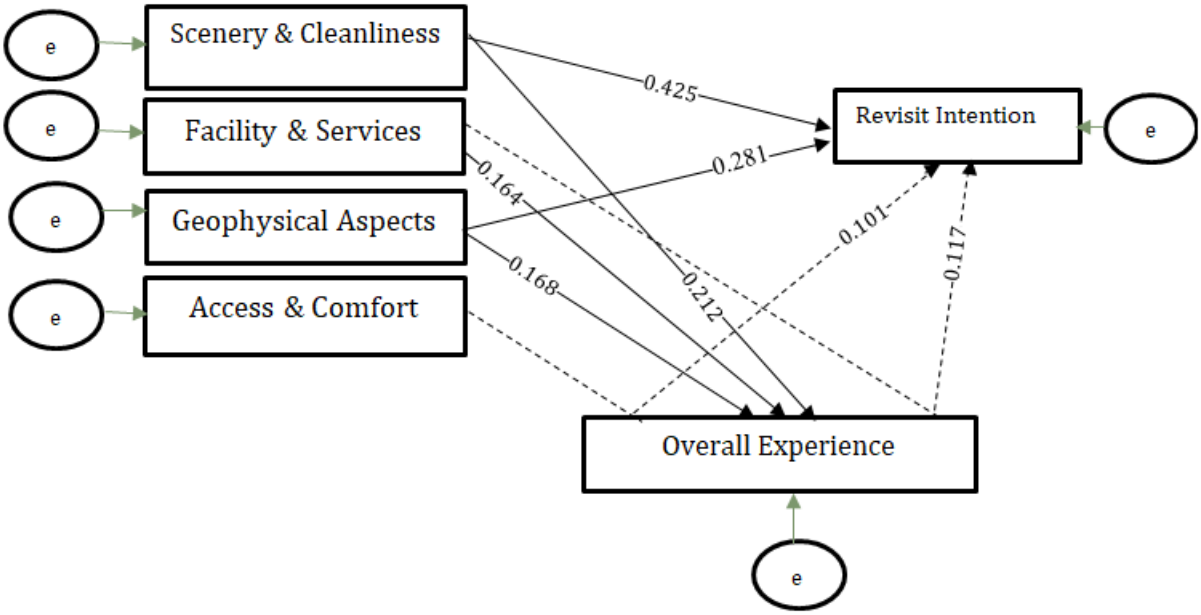
Path	*Std. β*	*S.E.*	*CR/T-value*	R^2	F^2	*p-value*	*Hypothesis*
Scenery & cleanliness → Revisit Intention	0.425	0.034	3.298	0.218	*0.279*	0.011*	Accepted
Facility & Services → Revisit Intention	0.123	0.149	1.121	0.058	0.061	0.071	Rejected
Geophysical Aspect → Revisit Intention	0.281	0.212	3.140	0.183	0.224	0.014*	Accepted
Access & Comfort → Revisit Intention	0.211	0.114	1.312	0.046	0.048.	0.063	Rejected
Scenery & Cleanliness → Overall experience	0.212	0.029	4.128	0.272	0.374	0.021*	Accepted
Facility & Services → Overall Experience	0.164	0.021	1.235	0.092	0.101	0.048*	Accepted
Geophysical Aspects → Overall Experience	0.168	0.056	2.621	0.161	0.192	0.023*	Accepted
Access & Comfort → Overall experience	0.122	0.023	1.013	0.041	0.042	0.101	Rejected

Mediation (Indirect Effects)

Path	*Std. β*	*S.E.*	*CR/T-value*	Lower bounds	Upper bounds	*p-value*	*Hypothesis*
Scenery & Cleanliness → Overall Experience → Revisit Intention	0.211	0.045	1.212	-0.112	0.121	0.065	Rejected
Facility & Services → Overall Experience → Revisit Intention	0.117*	0.182	1.398	0.231	1.181	0.046*	Accepted
Geophysical Aspects→ Overall Experience → Revisit Intention	0.008	0.016	1.010	-0.091	0.221	0.053	Rejected
Access & Comfort → Overall Experience → Revisit Intention	0.101*	0.043	2.117	0.211	1.012	0.031*	Accepted

Note: significance level at *p = < 0.05

Figure 3: The Structural (final) Model with Path Diagram based on significant Standardized Regression Weights



Note: direct effects (-); indirect effects (- -)

5. DISCUSSION

This study explored the influence of perceived beach attractiveness dimensions on beach users' revisit intention by using beach experience as a mediating variable. The results confirmed most hypotheses. As a first step, this study enhances the results of earlier research by demonstrating that destination attractiveness significantly influences tourists' experiences and revisit intentions towards a destination. Specifically, the study found that beach scenery and cleanliness (β = 0.425; p < 0.011), geophysical aspects (β = 0.281; p < 0.014) have direct positive influence on revisit intentions, confirming that beach scenery and cleanliness can be most essential attributes influence revisit intention of travelers to coastal setting (Wyles et al., 2016; Dodds & Holmes, 2019; Ellis, 2005), especially that beach cleanliness and scenery are the foremost instantaneous perceptible outlook that visitors encounter and experience when they get to

coastal destinations (Krelling et al., 2017). This finding further corroborates the fact that the pull factors of the beach, in terms of physical aspects involving access to crystal-clear beach water, sea breezes and waves, gold-colored sand, and landscapes, directly attract and influence revisit intentions (Karim et al., 2023; Wyles et al. 2016).

Facility, services, access, and comfort did not directly affect revisit intentions. This may indicate that visitors expect certain standards in facilities and services, as well as access and comfort, which are met by default or are not the primary drivers of their revisit intentions. This could also imply that beach amenities and comfort dimensions might not be the primary focus of users or the sole reason that could influence users not revisiting the beaches. Instead, characteristics such as beach cleanliness, appeal, or general beach ambience, which give visitors a sense of beach health in terms of sand and water quality and recreational usefulness, have a more significant direct influence on visitors' decisions to return (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018; Morgan, 1999). This also suggests that, in contrast to what was anticipated by Dodds and Holmes (2019) and Lew and Larson (2005), an improvement in the accessibility and enhancement of beach amenities and services may not result in a more direct effect on the intention to return or vice versa in Ghana; yet, an improvement in beach cleanliness and the quality of its physical features can be readily achieved.

The findings also showed that scenery and cleanliness ($\beta = 0.212$, $p < 0.021$), geophysical aspects ($\beta = 0.168$, $p < 0.023$), and facilities and services ($\beta = 0.164$, $p < 0.048$) had direct positive associations with overall beach experience. Predictably, when visitors view these beach attributes favorably, their overall beach experience improves (Karim et al. 2023). Thus, the findings suggest that improved visual appeal and cleanliness of the beach environment, along with its natural features and availability of amenities and services, significantly contribute to enhanced visitors' overall perception and enjoyment of their beach experiences, and vice versa. Thus, a well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing beach environment can enhance visitor satisfaction and engagement (Morgan 1999). Similarly, the positive impact of geophysical aspects underscores the importance of natural features such as coastlines, landscapes, and environmental conditions in shaping visitors' perceptions and experiences, as upheld by Karim et al. (2023), Hasan et al. (2020), Gonzalez and Holtmann-Ahumada (2017), and Lucrezi et al. (2016). Furthermore, the positive influence of facilities and services suggests that the provision of adequate facilities, amenities, and services, such as restrooms, food vendors, and recreational equipment, enhances visitors' comfort and convenience, thereby enriching their overall beach experience (Mehranian & Marzuki, 2018; Roca & Villares, 2008).

These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of beach attractiveness and emphasize the significance of various factors in shaping visitors' experiences and satisfaction levels at coastal destinations. This emphasizes the significance of maintaining clean beaches, improving services, and preserving the natural beauty of coastal destinations, because they are distinctive tourist attraction elements that collectively boost users' enjoyment and overall experience and contribute to a successful tourism sector. Access and comfort did not influence overall beach experience. Although this result may have been unexpected and contrary to previous findings (Dodds & Holmes, 2019), it emphasizes the complex nature of tourist experiences. This could mean that the quality of beach experiences may not always be determined by accessibility and comfort as their importance may range from one beach to another and among various visitor groups.

Furthermore, considering the effect sizes of the significant direct effects, the results also showed that beach scenery and cleanliness had a moderate impact on the overall beach experience ($\beta = 0.212$; $R^2=0.272$; $f^2= 0.374$) and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.425$; $R^2=0.218$ $f^2=0.272$). Thus, beach scenery and cleanliness significantly influence user experiences, and the intention to revisit beach destinations will return to the beach. Beach scenery and cleanliness exerted the strongest direct influence on visitors' experiences and intentions to revisit beaches. This shows the strength and importance of cleanliness and scenery in positive experience gain and revisit intention formation at distinctive destinations such as beaches, where users mostly have direct contact with the destination environment and resources for the performance of their touristic or recreational activities. Similarly, the impact of geophysical aspects on the overall beach experience ($\beta = 0.168$; $R^2=0.161$; $f^2= 0.192$) and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.28$; $R^2=0.183$; $f^2= 0.224$) collectively confirm the finding that tourists place a high premium on cleanliness, hygiene, good smell, and unsoiled beach sand and water as distinctive scenic attributes of beach destinations (Williams et al., 2016; Wyles et al., 2016). This is because geophysical aspects with these variables significantly influence visitors' experiences and their revisit intention to beach destinations, although the influence on the overall experience was relatively small. In addition, beach facilities and services have a significant but modest impact on the overall experience of beach users ($\beta = 0.164$; $R^2=0.092$; $f^2= 0.101$). This result highlights the importance of maintaining and improving beach facilities and services to enhance the user experience.

Moreover, this study showed that overall beach experience mediated positive relationships between facilities and services ($\beta = 0.117$, $p < 0.046$), access and comfort ($\beta = 0.101$, $p < 0.031$), and revisit intention. These findings based on the effect sizes indicate that overall beach experience is a significant mediator between access and comfort and revisit intentions ($f^2 = 0.098$), as well as between facilities and services and revisit intentions ($f^2 = 0.153$). This

mediated relationship implies that visitors' satisfaction with these factors indirectly influences their intention to revisit through cumulative experiences. This suggests that while tourists may not prioritize these specific factors when considering whether to revisit a beach destination, their perception of and satisfaction with the overall beach experience, incorporating these aspects, significantly impacts their decision-making process. For instance, a positive overall experience influenced by satisfactory facilities, services, and access may enhance visitors' perceptions of a beach destination, leading to a greater likelihood of wanting to return (Dodds & Holmes, 2019; Morgan, 1999). Moreover, the significance of the mediated relationships underscores the importance of considering holistic experiences rather than individual factors when evaluating tourists' revisit intentions and optimizing beach management strategies to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Finally, with some insignificant results, this study also indicates that perceived beach attractiveness dimensions may not be equally important in positively influencing tourist experiences and revisiting intentions simultaneously (Hosany et al., 2016; Onofri & Nunes, 2013). This also emphasizes the importance of comprehending the unique priorities and preferences of visitors, because many beach aspects may have varying effects on users in different contexts. The findings further highlight the importance of prioritizing beach aesthetics, sanitation, physical attributes, and access and comfort to provide a pleasant and memorable tourist experience that will ultimately lead to favorable return visits, benefiting the local economy and tourism sector in Ghana (Dzitse et al., 2023). Therefore, beach managers ought to intentionally offer clean, alluring, and high-quality beaches with basic amenities and services that can enhance beach experiences and drive positive intentions and actual repeat visits.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The findings provide valuable insights into the factors driving tourists' decisions to revisit beach destinations, offering significant contributions to theoretical frameworks such as the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and pull and push theory. The results of this study corroborate and extend the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by demonstrating that perceived beach attractiveness significantly influences tourists' attitudes and intentions to revisit. The TPB posits that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Our findings reinforce this theory by highlighting favorable perceptions of beach attractiveness, particularly in terms of scenery, cleanliness, and geophysical aspects, leading to positive attitudes and, consequently, strong intentions to revisit. This study shows that tourists' positive attitudes towards revisiting the beach are primarily driven by the visual appeal and environmental quality of the beach. These elements significantly shape tourists' behavioral intentions, supporting TPB's assertion that attitudes towards a behavior (in this case, revisiting a beach) are influenced by the perceived attractiveness of the destination. This finding suggests that beach managers and policymakers should focus on enhancing these attractiveness dimensions in order to positively influence tourists' attitudes and revisit intentions. Pull-and-push theory, which explains tourist motivations through external (pull) and internal (push) factors, is also enriched in this study's findings (Dann, 1977). Pull factors, such as the aesthetic appeal and environmental quality of the beaches, were found to be significant attractors for tourists. These attributes align with the pull aspect of theory, indicating that external factors play a crucial role in attracting tourists to beach destinations. This study also highlighted the role of overall positive experiences as internal motivators (push factors) that encourage repeat visits. Positive beach experiences, characterized by enjoyment, relaxation, and satisfaction, significantly mediated the relationship between beach attractiveness and revisit intentions. This aligns with the push aspect of the theory, which suggests that internal motivations derived from previous positive experiences are critical for driving repeat visits. Interestingly, while facilities and services as well as access and comfort were found to be important, they did not directly affect revisit intentions. Instead, these factors indirectly influenced revisit intentions through their contribution to the overall beach experience. This finding underscores the nuanced interplay between various attractiveness dimensions and visitor behavior, suggesting that, while some factors may not directly influence revisit intentions, they are still crucial in shaping the overall experience, which in turn affects tourists' decisions to return.

5.2. Practical and Policy Implications

These findings and their theoretical insights have significant practical and policy implications. For beach managers and policymakers, the findings underscore the need to prioritize holistic and high-quality aspects of beach attractiveness to create memorable and satisfying experiences for visitors. By focusing on enhancing scenic beauty, maintaining cleanliness, and improving geophysical aspects, beach destinations can foster positive attitudes and stronger revisit intentions. Moreover, the study suggests that, while facilities and services and access and comfort are important, their impact is more indirect. Therefore, investments in these areas should still be made, but with the understanding that their primary value lies in enhancing the overall beach experience rather than directly driving revisit intentions. This nuanced understanding can help in allocating resources to areas that most effectively enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty. From a marketing perspective, these insights can inform targeted strategies that highlight the unique and appealing attributes of beaches, particularly those focusing on their scenic and environmental

qualities. Such strategies can attract both domestic and international tourists, thereby supporting sustainable growth of beach tourism destinations.

For policymakers, the findings of this study can guide the development of regulations and policies that support sustainable beach tourism. Emphasizing the preservation of natural beauty and environmental quality and ensuring high standards of cleanliness and safety can enhance the overall tourist experience. These measures can help build a positive reputation for beach destinations, foster repeat visits, and contribute to the tourism industry's long-term sustainability and growth in the tourism and coastal tourism sectors, particularly Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study investigated the intricate dynamics between perceived beach attractiveness dimensions and beach users' revisit intentions using beach experience as a mediating variable. These findings substantiate the literature by highlighting the significant influence of destination attractiveness on tourists' experiences and intentions. Beach scenery and cleanliness, along with geophysical aspects, have emerged as primary drivers of revisit intentions, emphasizing the pivotal role of visual appeal and environmental quality in attracting and retaining visitors. This study also highlights the complex nature of tourist experiences and emphasizes the multifaceted aspects of beach attractiveness that influence visitors' perceptions and decisions to revisit. While facilities and services as well as access and comfort may not directly impact revisit intentions, their positive mediated relationships through the overall beach experience suggest an indirect influence on visitors' decisions. Beach managers should recognize the interconnectedness of these factors and focus on enhancing the overall beach experience by providing adequate facilities, amenities, and services as well as ensuring accessibility and comfort. By offering a pleasant and memorable tourist experience, beach managers can cultivate positive intentions toward repeat visits, thereby contributing to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector.

Limitations and future research

The findings of this study may not be applicable to other coastal areas or nations with distinct cultural and geographic backgrounds as it focused only on two beaches in Ghana. Future studies should examine a broader range of beach destinations in order to enhance the external validity of this research. Furthermore, the self-report surveys and convenience sampling used in this study may be subject to social desirability bias, in which respondents provide answers that align with social expectations, which could limit the generalizability of the study. To verify self-reported data, future research could employ a mixed-methods strategy that combines interviews or observations. Future studies could also investigate the impact of cultural factors on beach attractiveness and intention to return.

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Ethical Approval

The research was part of a supervised Master's thesis that received ethical permission/approval in June 2020 from the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of University of Cape Coast, Ghana, for data collection.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

DCD conceived the original project; formal writing, gathering, and analysis of data; and SD contributed to the design, implementation, and assistance in the original data collection for the research. JAD was involved in the data analysis and interpretation, and MN was involved in writing and critically editing the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

There is no potential conflict of interest in this study.