

## **Bundling Attractions for Rural Tourism Development**

### **Abstract**

Tourism is often regarded as a viable solution to economic crisis, especially for remote areas without many development options. While many tourism destinations have strong cultural or heritage assets, not all destinations have primary attractions that can bring visitors to the region. Rather than developing special interest “themes,” rural areas that do not have enough of any one type of tourism resource to act as a primary draw may consider bundling different attraction types to increase visitation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the preferences of visitors to secondary heritage sites and explore the relationship between heritage tourism and alternative, non-heritage activities in rural areas. Findings revealed that motivation to visit small-scale heritage sites consisted of two dimensions: Learning and Recreation. The two motivational dimensions influenced visitors’ interest in different heritage attractions and likelihood of visiting heritage tourism “scenarios.” As for alternative activities, there was a cluster of “popular” activities that were enjoyed by both learning-oriented and recreation-oriented respondents, but recreation-oriented visitors were more interested in nature-based activities and sport-related activities than learning-oriented visitors. Findings can help rural communities improve secondary attractions and diversify their tourism product by bundling heritage attractions with non-heritage activities.

### **Keywords**

heritage tourism, attractions, motivation, rural tourism, special interest tourism

### **Introduction**

Tourism has often been regarded as a panacea for economic crisis (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008; Truong, Hall, & Garry, 2014). Especially for poor, rural areas without many development options, tourism may be a viable solution as it utilizes the natural and cultural assets of the region (Chok, Macbeth, & Warren, 2007; Goodwin, 2008; Oppermann, 1996). Although rural tourism has been an important segment of the tourism industry since the 1960s (Sharpley, 2004), rural communities still face many challenges in developing sustainable tourism, such as limited resources, insufficient level of market appeal, and lack of business and marketing experience (du Cros, 2001; McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011; Roberts & Hall, 2001). While many places possess some form of natural and cultural heritage, some resources are only of local significance, and do not have the appeal of primary attractions to draw visitors to the region (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Therefore, rural communities that only have secondary and tertiary attractions often attempt to increase the magnitude of their

tourism product, either by building flagship attractions (Sharpley, 2007) or combining several smaller attractions together (McKercher & Ho, 2006).

A common approach to bundle small attractions together is around a theme, such as heritage trail, farm trail, and other cultural, historic or environmental themes (e.g., Hayes & MacLeod, 2007; Knowd, 2006; Olsen, 2003). Whether such clusters take the form of routes, trails, precincts, or tours, it usually involves the same attraction type (Gunn, 2002). Many of these “themes” have been identified as special interest tourism, such as cultural tourism, heritage tourism, ecotourism, indigenous tourism, health tourism, wine tourism, sports tourism, adventure tourism, and more (Douglas, Douglas, & Derrett, 2001). As people have different special interests, numerous typologies have also been developed to classify both tourists and tourism products (e.g., Arnegger, Woltering, & Job, 2010; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; McKercher, 2002). However, there have been few studies on how different types of special interest tourism interact with one another. For example, nature-based attractions are not only visited by outdoorsy nature lovers, and heritage sites attract more than just history buffs. McKercher and Chan (2005) argued that special interest activity participation should not be considered a “proxy” for their motivation and trip purpose. As such, tourists who participate in one type of special interest tourism may have an interest in other types of activities as well. When clustering different attractions, is it possible to go beyond a theme and mix different types of activities together?

For rural areas that may not necessarily have enough of any one type of tourism attraction to act as a primary draw, it is important to explore the relationship between different types of tourism so that various activities or attraction types may be bundled together to bring more visitors to the region. Among the common tourism attractions found in rural regions (e.g., farm tourism, ecotourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism), this study will start with heritage tourism and explore its relationship with other activities. According to the European Association for Information on Local Development (AEIDL): “in terms of culture, there are few rural regions which are under privileged. Full of history, traditions, forged by the work of generations of men and women, they usually possess a rich heritage or a strong cultural identity” (AEIDL, 1994, qtd. in Roberts & Hall, 2001, p. 159). MacDonald and Jolliffe (2003) also found culture and heritage to be well-preserved in rural areas, particularly for places in face of economic decline, where people were more likely to turn to their heritage in remembrance of “the good old days.” Although every place has its own unique history and heritage, not all heritage sites can become successful attractions (McKercher, Ho, & du Cros, 2004). Therefore, it is important to investigate the motivation of visitors to heritages sites and their interest in different heritage attractions as well as other non-heritage related activities.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the preferences of visitors to secondary heritage sites and explore the relationship between heritage tourism and other touristic

activities in rural areas. Specifically, visitors to seven small-scale heritage sites in a rural county in southeastern United States were surveyed to 1) understand their motivation to visit the sites, and 2) examine the relationships between one's heritage tourism motivation and level of interest in different types of heritages sites/activities, five heritage tourism "scenarios," and alternative non-heritage activities, such as shopping, sports, and nature-based activities. Findings can help rural communities in need of tourism development diversify their tourism product and consider ways to bundle heritage attractions with other types of tourist activities.

### **Attractions and rural sustainability**

To be more sustainable, rural communities often seek to diversify their economic base by developing tourism (Roberts & Hall, 2001). However, not all places are blessed with iconic natural or cultural resources that can draw tourists to the region. A common issue faced by many rural destinations and second-tier cities is that they may have a few quality attractions, but no "major magnet" to pull in visitors (Law, 2002). An attraction can offer a wide range of products to the tourists. To increase visitation and revenue, more and more attractions are making use of existing resources to develop new core products for different market segments (Leask, 2008). Besides the *core product*—the core activity or experience that attracts tourists to visit, attractions also provide *tangible products* (e.g., the actual roller coaster or historic house), *facilitating products* (e.g., transport and accommodation), *supporting products* (e.g., dining and shopping), and *augmented products* (e.g., ambience, tourist services) (Boniface, Cooper, & Cooper, 2012; Wanhill, 2008). While tourism products can be analyzed based on their level of centrality in the overall travel experience, it should be noted that attractions can also be ranked by their level of appeal to the visitors, ranging from international recognition with wide or specialized appeal, national recognition with wide or specialized appeal, to regional appeal and local appeal (Butler, 1991; Prideaux, 2008). Leiper (1990) proposed a hierarchy of tourist attractions. *Primary* attractions are capable of bringing tourists to the region and shape the image of the destination. *Secondary* attractions may be popular, but do not influence one's destination choice. *Tertiary* attractions lack awareness, and tourists discover them by accident or visit because of convenience.

In the case of tertiary attractions, location and access are particularly important. Minor and isolated attractions in remote areas may be considered not worth the time and effort by tourists, who are on a "space-time budget" (McKercher & du Cros, 2002; Prideaux, 2008; Sharpley, 2004). Although rural areas can provide a wide range of tourism and recreation activities (see Gunn, 2002, p. 45; Roberts & Hall, 2001, p. 2), these assets may be too diverse and fragmented, lacking the appeal of primary attractions and receiving relatively low level of visitation (Roberts & Hall, 2001; Sharpley, 2007). As such, with the exception of the few natural wonders and archeological treasures of the world, most tourism activities in

peripheral rural areas are relatively passive and small scale (Busby & Rendle, 2000). For example, Oppermann (1996) found that for two-thirds of the rural tourism operators in southern Germany, tourism-related income only accounts for less than 20% of their total net-income. Most agrotourism businesses in Cyprus faced the problem of low occupancy rates, ranging from 20% to 70% (Sharpley, 2002). With the development of mega resorts as well as rural home-stay programs, rural tourism in Malaysia was even more challenging (Liu, 2006). On one hand, mega resorts became self-contained tourism enclaves that provided few spillover benefits to the rest of the state. On the other hand, small-scale home-stay operators that were not in proximity to major attractions did not have enough visitors to sustain their business.

Liu's (2006) study on different types of rural tourism establishments demonstrated that scale and location pose serious challenges for the attraction and accommodation sectors in rural areas. Places that only have smaller, secondary attractions generally take two approaches to increase the magnitude of their tourism product: 1) create large, purpose-built attractions, and 2) bundle smaller attractions together. First, although sustainable tourism usually takes the form of small-scale localized projects, Sharpley (2007) argued that building flagship or mega-attractions can be an alternative approach to achieve sustainable rural tourism development. Di Domenico and Miller (2012) also found several cases of independent small farms becoming more profitable when they convert family farms into purpose-built, growth-oriented farm-based tourism attractions. Second, in tourism planning, attractions gain by being clustered (Botti, Peypoch, & Solonandrasana, 2008; Gunn, 2002). Porter (1998) first introduced the concept of clusters—"geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field"—as a way to achieve competitive success (p. 78). Clusters are crucial to regional development because they increase productivity, innovation, and new business formation. Tourism clusters could also be developed alongside the main industries of a region, to create synergy and a distinct image of the destination, such as the wine tourism cluster in California (Porter, 1998), the sports tourism cluster in the Alpine region (Weiermair & Steinhauser, 2003), and the Motor Valley cluster in Italy (Alberti & Giusti, 2012). For less developed destinations, smaller attractions can also be grouped and promoted together to increase the appeal of the region (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). These clusters usually involve a common theme, such as heritage trails (Hayes & MacLeod, 2007), farm trails (Knowd, 2006), music trails (Wilson, 2006), literary routes (Scarfuto, 2013), and themed driving routes (Olsen, 2003).

A concept similar to clusters is the notion of bundling. In economics, bundling refers to offering two or more products together, with a price usually lower than the sum of individual items (Schwartz & Cohen, 1999). In tourism and hospitality, examples of product price bundling include value meals at fast food restaurants and hotel rooms with breakfast (Nicolau & Sellers, 2012). Bundling is also considered a positioning strategy for destinations and

tourism businesses to enhance their competitive advantage (Gratzer & Winiwarter, 2003). For example, sport events could be bundled with other attractions at the host destination to attract different segments, and neighboring tourism organizations could create a coherent bundling strategy for the region through collaboration and joint advertising (Chalip & McGuirly, 2004; March & Wilkinson, 2009). It should be noted that while clusters and product bundling can be formed by suppliers to create synergy, bundling could also take place from the consumer's perspective. Among all the attractions available at a destination, tourists can choose and bundle their own activities based on personal interests and lifestyle (Mazanec, Zins, & Dolnicar, 1998; Wickens, 2002).

The development of tourism clusters and bundling of tourist activities coincide with the emergence of special interest tourism (Hall & Weiler, 1992). With the growing demand for more sophisticated tourism products and quality experiences (Derrett, 2001), tourism moves from large-scale general interest tourism to specialized focuses based on geographic location (e.g., urban tourism), affinity groups (e.g., senior tourism), and special interest activities, such as heritage tourism, sport tourism, food tourism, and health tourism (Trauer, 2006). While it is not surprising that tourists choose tourism products that satisfies their interests, the ultimate "special interest tourists" choose destinations based on the particular interests they want to pursue (Brotherton & Himmetoglu, 1997). Although many forms of special interest tourism exist, McKercher and Chan (2005) argued that most special interest segments were identified through activity participation, and that activities should not be considered a "proxy" for motivation and trip purpose. Tourists may visit certain sites out of convenience or social obligation. As such, tourists who participate in one type of special interest tourism may have an interest in other activities as well. However, there have been few studies on the relationship between different forms of special interest tourism.

Killion (2001) pointed out that diversity is a major challenge for rural tourism. Rural areas need to develop a tourism product with the drawing power to "attract visitors out of urban settings" as well as "steer them away from competing rural destinations" (p. 166). For destinations that lack large-scale, primary attractions or special interest "themes," it may be necessary to consider the relationship between different types of special interest tourism to create a more diversified product. As suggested by Sharpley (2004), research on rural tourism should explore the needs of "the diverse range of visitors who consume the countryside for an equally diverse range of purposes" (p. 379). For example, a study by Frochot (2005) segmented rural tourists into 4 groups: Actives, Relaxers, Gazers, and Rurals, and found the groups to differ in their activity participation rate. However, without focusing on special interest themes, it was difficult to distinguish the "interests" of the groups as opposed to the "activeness" of their travel style. More research is needed to identify the inter-relationships between different components of the rural tourism product and find ways to effectively manage rural resources for sustainable development.

While developing new tourism products is one way to broaden the economic base of rural areas, the conditions of rural sustainability go beyond economic gains. Marsden (2003) argued that for rural development to become more sustainable, the focus should shift from food production and service/experience consumption to an integrated network of local agents, activities, and sustainable rural livelihoods. van der Ploeg et al. (2008) described the interrelations between people, resources, and activities within rural societies as a “web,” and it is through the processes of co-production and co-evolution that a more sustainable rural economy and better quality of life can be achieved. McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) also pointed out that sustainable rural tourism is not so much about replacing traditional occupations (e.g., agriculture) with tourism activities, but developing an interrelated system amongst different sectors to “generate knowledge, share learning and ultimately achieve lasting change” (p. 190). This study proposes the notion of bundling different types of attractions together, which is not only a means of product diversification, but also a way to incorporate multiple actors in the rural web to enhance rural sustainability. Moreover, combining different special interest activities could create a more comprehensive and educational rural experience for visitors. By positioning tourism within the multifunctionality of rural areas, the production and consumption of “mixed” tourism experiences can help both visitors and locals re-appreciate the values of rural heritage and lifestyle, and contribute to long-term sustainable development (Kim & Jamal, 2015; van der Ploeg et al., 2008).

### **Heritage tourism as a rural tourism product**

Rural tourism consists of a wide range of activities and special interests (Bramwell & Lane, 1994; Frochot, 2005). Although rural areas are often associated with farms and nature, culture and heritage are also valuable resources for rural tourism, including not only historical sites but also living heritage, such as rural customs, traditions, and folklore (Dewailly, 1998; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). Common heritage sites found in rural areas may include: historic houses, plantations, forts, battlefields, archaeological sites, and religious sites, all of which may be attractive to visitors. Previous studies have attempted to segment rural tourists based on the benefits they seek. Kastenholz, Davis, and Paul (1999) identified four factors in the perceived benefits of visiting rural areas in Portugal, including: Culture and tradition, Social and active hedonism, Calm and unpolluted environment, and Informed, well-priced independent travel. Another study by Frochot (2005) identified four benefit segments as well: Outdoors, Rurality, Relaxation, and Sport. Molera and Albaladejo (2007) also identified five types of benefits sought by rural tourists, including: Nature and peacefulness, Physical and cultural activities, Family, Trip features, and Rural life. Although the contexts of these studies differ, overall the main benefits of rural tourism include: the natural environment, culture and rural lifestyle, and the ease and reasonable price of travel.

Based on their motivation or benefits sought, it is possible to categorize rural tourists

into different groups. While some studies segmented rural tourists based on their level of activeness/relaxation (e.g., Frochot, 2005; Molera & Albaladejo, 2007; Park & Yoon, 2009), other studies focused more on their activity interests. For example, Kastenholz, Davis, and Paul (1999) distinguished between “environmental ruralists” who were more attracted by natural environments and activities and “traditional ruralists” who were more engaged in culture, history, and traditional way of life. Devesa, Laguna, and Palacios (2010) identified “cultural” rural visitors who preferred monuments and sightseeing versus “nature” rural visitor who liked visiting natural parks and contact with nature. In addition, there are rural tourists who value a wide variety of activities. The study by Kastenholz, Davis, and Paul (1999) found “want-it-all ruralists” who enjoyed socializing, sports, as well as cultural/folklore events. Park and Yoon (2009) also identified one cluster of “want-it-all tourists” who had the highest score on all factors of rural tourism motivation, including: relaxation, socialization, learning, family togetherness, novelty, and excitement. These studies have shown that rural tourists have a wide range of interests, and some of them may have a special interest in heritage tourism.

Heritage tourism research has also examined the motivation and preferences of heritage tourists, and some of which may be applied to the rural context. According to Poria, Butler, and Airey (2004), heritage tourists sought three types of experiences when they to visit the Wailing Wall: heritage/emotional experience, recreational experience, and cultural/educational experience. Poria, Reichel, and Biran (2006b) found similar dimensions in their investigation of tourist motivation to visit Anne Frank House (i.e., “To feel connected with your heritage,” “To be emotionally involved,” “To have fun,” and “To learn”) and an additional dimension of “To bequeath to children.” In addition to motivation, another way to understand heritage tourists is by the activities they do and the types of sites they visit. Kerstetter, Confer, and Bricker (1998) identified four types of industrial heritage attractions (i.e., flood sites, railroad sites, battlefields and forts, and mines) and revealed the unique characteristics of visitors to each type of site. Huh, Uysal, and McCleary (2006) examined different types of cultural heritage attractions and destination attributes, and identified two clusters of tourists based on their satisfaction with the attractions. For activity-based segmentation, McKercher, Ho, du Cros, and Chow (2002) analyzed the visitation rates of 38 cultural activities and attractions in Hong Kong and identified six cultural tourist segments: Cultural generalists, Icon culturalist, Chinese heritage culturalist, Tsim Sha Tsui nodal culturalist, Colonial culturalist, and Sino-colonial culturalist. Dolnicar (2002) also used activity variables to segment cultural tourists into nine groups, including: Standard culture tour participant, Super active culture freak, Inactive culture tourist, Organized excursion lover, Event-focused, Individual culture explorers, Theatre, musical and opera lovers, Super lean culture tour participant, and Organized culture tourists.

Although some of the cultural tourism market segments identified in previous studies

seem destination-specific (e.g., Tsim Sha Tsui nodal culturalist), their findings shed some light on the preferences of different segments. For example, in McKercher et al.'s (2002) study, "icon culturalists" tend to visit the mainstream cultural attractions, while "cultural generalists" prefer to visit obscure sites rather than well-known sites. Dolnicar's (2002) study also identified the "individual culture explorers" who enjoy shopping, sightseeing and visiting museums rather than taking organized tours, and the "event-focused" group who is active in visiting local or regional events. On the other hand, there is also the "theatre, musical and opera lovers" group who love performance arts but have not interest in events at all. For rural destinations, it is important to explore within the cultural heritage tourist market and understand which types of heritage tourists may be more interested in rural heritage, lifestyle, and traditions.

While previous studies have examined heritage tourism motivation and activity participation, the analyses focused more on heritage-related activities and attractions. However, these "heritage tourists" may not necessarily be motivated by heritage and take interest in other types of activities. In MacDonald and Jolliffe's (2003) study on cultural rural tourism, they pointed out that cultural rural tourists might "also enjoy other activities in a rural setting such as nature, adventure, sports, festivals, crafts, and general sightseeing" (p. 308). Marsh (1991) demonstrated a connection between shopping and heritage tourism in his case study of museum gift shops. Gallardo and Stein (2007) examined the development of heritage tourism and nature-based tourism in the rural south of the United States. Although they focused on the local perspective rather than tourists, they found that the local community believed heritage attractions and natural resources could come together to tell the local story, which combined the aesthetic beauty of the region and its rich diverse heritage. Seeing food as an important part of rural heritage, Sidali, Kastenholz, and Bianchi (2013) also discussed the relationship between food tourism and eno-gastronomic heritage. To better promote food tourism in rural regions, they proposed that "local food" should be marketed not only as food produced locally by local farmers, but also food that represents the specific culinary traditions of the region.

One of the major challenges of rural tourism is how to increase the appeal of small-scale rural attractions (Roberts & Hall, 2001). As opposed to building flagship attractions or developing special interest tourism, an alternative approach is to bundle different types of secondary attractions together to create a "mixed" rural tourism experience. Previous studies have identified potential relationships between heritage tourism and shopping, food, and nature-based tourism. Rural tourism literature has also examined the diverse interests of rural tourists. However, the specific interrelationship between rural heritage and alternative activities is less studied. Therefore, this study addresses the need by investigating the preferences of visitors to small-scale heritage sites and exploring the relationship between heritage tourism and other touristic activities in rural areas.

## Methods

To investigate the relationship between heritage tourism and other visitor activities in rural areas, a face-to-face, on-site survey was conducted to gather the opinions of visitors to seven secondary and tertiary heritage sites in southeastern United States. The questionnaire was part of a larger project to develop an action plan to increase the sustainable use of natural and historic resources for recreation as a catalyst to improve the economy of Union County, South Carolina, USA.

Union County is located in the Upstate area of South Carolina, with a population of approximately 28,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a). Originally an agricultural society, its economy has gradually shifted to textile-related industries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the movement of the textile industry overseas in the 1990s was devastating for the community (Warner, 2013). Currently, Union County's economy is relatively weak compared to the rest of the state as well as nation, with lower income and higher unemployment rates. For example, its percentage of persons below poverty level from 2008 to 2012 was 21.5%, which was higher than the state average of 17.6% and the national average of 14.9% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a; 2014b). To diversify its economy, the county is attempting to make better use of its tourism and recreational assets. Although there is no regionally-significant tourism product within the area, there are numerous nature and historically-based resources, with thirty-one heritage sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. National Park Service (NPS, 2011). Therefore, this region is suitable for collecting data on visitors to smaller heritage attractions with limited appeal.

A total of 323 visitors were sampled at seven different heritage sites throughout the Upstate of South Carolina. These sites varied in their agency stewardship (see Table 1). Rose Hill differed from other locations because it was the only "in county" sampling site. Other sites were not in Union County, but were selected for higher visitation and the scheduling of special events during the sampling period. A survey booth was set up at the sampling locations. At sites with fewer visitors, every single visitor who walked by the booth was approached and invited to participate in the study. At sites with higher visitation, systematic random sampling was used, and every 3rd visitor who walked by the survey booth was intercepted. Sampling took place from June to October, 2010. Surveys were distributed during weekends or special events on 13 different "sampling" days. However, because no events were held at Rose Hill during the sampling period, only three visitors were surveyed over two different sampling days. Therefore, the Rose Hill data was not included in the data analysis. Of the remaining 320 questionnaires obtained, 8 more were excluded in the data analysis due to incomplete responses (if more than 50% of the questionnaire was unanswered), resulting in a final sample size of 312. Table 2 presents the profile of survey respondents. Respondents were slightly older and better-educated, which corresponds to the

common profile of cultural tourists in previous studies (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

[Table 1]

[Table 2]

The visitor survey included questions on visitor characteristics, trip characteristics, heritage tourism motivations, interest in heritage attractions and alternative activities, expenditures, and familiarity with the region. The total number of items in the questionnaire was 133. Specifically, the heritage tourism motivation scale was developed based on the works of Poria and colleagues, and modified in the context of small-scale, secondary heritage sites (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2004; Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006a; 2006b). Items were measured on a seven-point scale of agreement, from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree, which was commonly used in previous studies on leisure and tourism motivations (e.g., Fodness, 1994; Weissinger & Bandalos, 1995). For tourist attractions and activities, a list of different types of heritage attractions was generated based on the works of Dolnicar (2002), Kerstetter, Confer, and Bricker (1998), and McKercher, Ho, du Cros, and Chow (2002), and a list of alternative activities (besides heritage tourism) was created, which originated from the tourist activity types by Hsieh, O'Leary, and Morrison (1992), but modified according to the actual activities available near the study sites. Moreover, five heritage tourism "scenarios" were developed for the questionnaire, including: a living history festival, a self-guided audio/podcast tour, a reenactment of significant historic incidents, a "dark" heritage program, and a weekend getaway (See Table 6). These "scenarios" provided a short description of the attraction and some relevant activities to paint a better picture of potential heritage attractions in the area. Respondents' interest in or likelihood of visiting heritage attractions, scenarios, and alternative activities were measured on a four-point scale, from 1=Not at All Interested to 4=Very Interested or 1=Definitely Would Not Visit to 4=Definitely Would Visit. A four-point scale was utilized for these questions to force respondents to take a stand on the dichotomies (Morganosky & Buckley, 1987; Garland, 1991). As respondents' intention "to visit or not to visit" would have significant implications for the region's tourism development, it was important to encourage respondents to make a choice rather than taking a neutral stand.

## **Findings**

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to identify the underlying dimensions of heritage tourism motivation. As the motivation scale was designed based on underlying constructs from previous literature, principal axis factoring with varimax rotation was conducted to derive a theoretical solution (Brown, 2009; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The analysis resulted in two factors, which combined to explain 67.53% of the variance (Table 3). Ten out of the eleven items loaded highly on one of the two factors. Factor 1 represented the Learning dimension, with six items, and factor 2 represented the Recreation dimension, with

four items. One item (i.e., “It is part of your own heritage.” Mean=4.96) was discarded from the analysis due to a factor loading score of 0.368 ( $< 0.40$ ). Assumptions were met as the KMO value was higher than 0.80 and the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant at the 0.001 level. Reliability testing of the scale resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.914 for Learning, 0.802 for Recreation, and a total scale reliability of 0.889.

[Table 3]

To examine the relationship between respondents’ heritage tourism motivation and their interest in different types of heritage attractions, respondents were asked to indicate their level of interest in twenty heritage activities/attractions on a four-point scale (from 1=Not at All Interested to 4=Very interested). Subsequently, the attractions were categorized into three types: Original Historic Sites (e.g., battlefields, historic houses), Built Heritage Attractions (e.g., museums, monuments), and Performed Heritage (e.g., reenactments, performances), and the average score of the items in each category was computed (Table 4). Next, three separate regression models were built, with the two motivation dimensions as independent variables and one type of heritage attraction as the dependent variable in each model. After excluding the outliers (i.e., cases with residuals outside three standard deviations) ( $n=11$ ), the issue of multi-collinearity and the assumption of independence of errors were examined. The problem of multi-collinearity was absent in all three models, as the tolerance values for the independent variables ranged from 0.747 to 0.803 (higher than the 0.30 as suggested by Hair et al.). The assumption of independence of errors was also not violated, as the Durbin-Watson statistic ranged from 1.937 to 2.111 (within the acceptance range of 1.50 to 2.50 as suggested by Hair et al.).

[Table 4]

Results of the multiple regression analysis (see Table 5) indicated that the motivation to learn had significant positive effects on one’s interest in original historic sites ( $\beta=0.480$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and built heritage attractions ( $\beta=0.353$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), while the effects of the recreational dimension were not significant at the 0.05 level (original:  $\beta=-0.096$ ; built:  $\beta=0.086$ ). In the performed heritage model, however, both learning ( $\beta=0.149$ ,  $p=0.035$ ) and recreation ( $\beta=0.209$ ,  $p=0.003$ ) had significant effects on the respondents’ interest in performed heritage activities, although the overall effect size was smaller than that of the original sites model and built attractions model.

[Table 5]

In addition to the list of heritage attractions, five heritage tourism “scenarios” were developed, and respondents’ likelihood of visiting each scenario is presented in Table 6. Next, multiple regression analysis was conducted with the two motivation dimensions as independent variables and heritage tourism scenarios as dependent variables, respectively (Table 7). Results indicated that the motivation to learn had significant and positive effects on one’s likelihood of visiting a living history festival ( $\beta=0.218$ ,  $p=0.002$ ), a Revolutionary War

reenactment ( $\beta=0.399$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and a self-guided driving tour ( $\beta=0.262$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). On the other hand, the motivation for recreation had positive effects on one's likelihood of visiting an annual farm festival ( $\beta=0.167$ ,  $p=0.019$ ) and a weekend getaway ( $\beta=0.313$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The issues of multi-collinearity and independence of errors were examined, with no violations (tolerance: 0.746~0.749; Durbin-Watson: 1.765~2.145).

[Table 6]

[Table 7]

Finally, to explore whether there is a relationship between heritage tourism motivation and non-heritage related activities, correlation analysis was conducted (Table 8). Findings revealed significant and positive relationships between the motivation for Learning and six alternative activities, including Visiting farms/farmer's markets, Attending festivals, Eating local foods, Shopping, Scenic driving on roads, and Riding a horse on trails (in the order of significance), and between the motivation for Recreation and nine alternative activities, including Shopping, Eating local foods, Attending festivals, Scenic driving on roads, Walking for pleasure/Hiking, Watching wildlife or birds, Visiting farms/farmer's markets, Riding a horse on trails, and Attending a motorsport event (in the order of significance).

[Table 8]

## **Discussion**

This study examined the opinions and preferences of visitors to secondary heritage sites in a rural county in southeastern United States. First, to understand the tourism appeal of these heritage sites, 83.4% of the survey respondents indicated that visiting the sampling sites was the primary purpose of their trip. As such, most visitors did not discover these sites by accident or stop by on the way to another destination. Moreover, approximately 40% of the respondents lived within the same county (of the sampling sites) and 60% were from outside the county. With regard to their motivation to visit, the item "It is a popular tourist attraction" had the lowest mean score among all eleven items. Therefore, the sampling sites may be considered secondary attractions with local and regional level of appeal (Butler, 1991; Leiper, 1990).

Further analysis revealed that respondents' motivation to visit these heritage sites consisted of two dimensions: Learning and Recreation. Respondents' different motivations for learning and recreation were reflected in their interest in different types of heritage attractions and likelihood of visiting different heritage tourism "scenarios." Visitors who were more learning-oriented were more interested in original historic sites (e.g., battlefields and plantations) and built heritage attractions (e.g., museums and memorials), while those who were recreation-oriented were more interested in performed heritage, such as music, dance, festivals, and arts and crafts. A similar dichotomous pattern existed in their preferred heritage tourism "scenarios." Respondents who were more learning-oriented were more likely to visit

a living history festival, a Revolutionary War reenactment, and a self-guided driving tour, while those who were recreation-oriented preferred a weekend getaway and an annual farm festival. It is interesting that although a living history festival and an annual farm festival were both portrayed as rural heritage events, they were perceived differently by the respondents. The history festival seemed more attractive to visitors who were more motivated to learn, while the farm festival appealed to those who sought recreation. Festivals are a common way for rural communities to bring in more visitors and build a sense of local pride (Janiskee & Drews, 1998). Among different festival themes, such as food, history, folkways, spring blossoms, and fall harvest, it is necessary to identify the themes which are more popular with different groups of rural visitors (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002).

Finally, with regard to the relationship between one's heritage tourism motivation and likelihood of participating in alternative activities, there was a cluster of "popular" activities that were enjoyed by both learning-oriented and recreation-oriented respondents, including: "Shopping," "Eating local foods," and "Attending festivals." These activities are common and perhaps appealing to the majority of mass and special interest tourists alike. A significant relationship was also found between heritage tourism and farm tourism activities (i.e., "Visiting farms/farmer's markets"), which is not surprising given the importance of farms as rural heritage (Roberts & Hall, 2001). For nature-based activities, the recreation-oriented visitors were also more interested in "Walking for pleasure/Hiking" and "Watching wildlife or birds," while the learning-oriented visitors did not have an apparent interest in nature-based activities. On the other hand, neither motivation dimension was related to "Fishing" and "Hunting." Among different sports, "Scenic driving on roads" and "Riding a horse on trails" were found to be significantly related to both learning and recreation, "Attending a motorsport event" was only appealing to the more recreation-oriented visitors, and other sports (i.e., Mountain biking, Paddling on a river, and Riding ATV's or off-road motorcycles) were found to be unrelated to heritage tourism motivation. Within the list of alternative activities, a clear pattern emerged in that visitors to heritage sites might be more interested in sports and nature-based activities that are less aggressive and less physically demanding.

Comparing the two motivational dimensions, it was not surprising that those who visited heritages sites for recreational purposes were interested in more alternative activities than those whose purpose was more learning-oriented. Even amongst the "popular" activities, the relationships between recreation and alternative activities were stronger than that between learning and alternative activities. Findings support McKercher and Ho's (2006) argument that cultural tourism products may be perceived as secondary attractions by some tourists, and visited for their recreational and entertaining benefits. For learning-oriented heritage tourists, while they might be less interested in sports and nature-based activities, they were still attracted by some alternative activities such as festivals and farmer's markets. Kastenholz,

Davis, and Paul (1999) profiled the needs of four types of rural tourists: Traditional ruralist, Environmental ruralist, Want-it-all ruralist, and Independent ruralist. In comparing Traditional ruralist and Want-it-all ruralist, it was found that both groups shared an interest in culture and heritage. However, Traditional ruralists were more interested in culture, history, rural life, and agriculture, while Want-it-all ruralists enjoyed cultural and folklore events as well as sports. The findings of this study demonstrated a similar pattern in the alternative activity preferences of learning-oriented versus recreation-oriented heritage tourists.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the preferences of visitors to secondary heritage sites and explored the relationship between heritage tourism and other touristic activities in rural areas. Findings contribute to the literature on rural tourism, heritage tourism, and special interest tourism. First, this study proposed an alternative approach to increase the appeal of rural destinations. Besides building flagship attractions and clustering smaller attractions around a common theme (Sharpley, 2007), a third way to increase the magnitude of the rural tourism product is to bundle different types of attractions together. Since the emergence of special interest tourism as a new phenomenon vis-a-vis mass tourism, destinations often choose to develop certain types of tourism, and tourists are often grouped into distinct special interest segments (Hall & Weiler, 1992). However, scholars have also questioned whether special interest tourism is really special (McKercher & Chan, 2005). As people may have a range of interests, it is necessary to consider if and how these “special interests” may be mixed. This exploratory study provides a better understanding of the relationship between heritage tourism and other types of special interest tourism.

The study findings have practical implications for rural tourism development. Many rural areas are not without existing or potential tourism resources, but lack an iconic attraction to draw visitors to the region. The study supports bundling strategies for rural area development that activate common rural tourism attractors such as farm tourism, cultural/heritage tourism, nature-based tourism, sports/adventure tourism, highlighting that these should not be considered separate options. If, as is often the case, these forms of special interest tourism represent distinct markets, then the only development option for rural communities is to focus on a theme and build a flagship attraction. However, this study demonstrated that visitors to heritage sites are also interested in some nature-based activities, less aggressive sports, and perhaps being a sports spectator rather than participant. The study provides evidence from visitor preferences that co-marketing might be an effective way to attract more tourists, and places that lack strong, primary attractions may consider bundling rural heritage sites with nature-based tourism and less adventurous forms of outdoor recreation. The difference between attractions and tourism products should also be noted. Attractions may provide a variety of products for different market segments. As such, rural

destinations can think beyond bundling different special-interest activities together, but creating a mixed rural tourism experience that can cater to the needs of different individuals in a travel party. As noted earlier, these strategies have been observed by other researchers, and this study adds additional understanding about why they work for rural communities. In places that currently lack the financial support to build new attractions or further develop a specialized product, this study sheds light on alternative approaches to make use of existing yet fragmented tourism resources.

This study was conducted as part of a project to help a rural community in southeastern United States develop actionable strategies to increase the recreational use of their natural and historic resources. As data collection took place within the region, findings reflect the opinions of mostly regional, domestic visitors, but cannot represent the visitors to rural heritage sites in other parts of the world. Due to the nature and small scale of the study sites, some dimensions of heritage tourism motivation from previous studies were not included in the scale or did not emerge as a separate dimension (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2004; Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006b). Future research can examine other types of heritage sites, such as religious sites and agricultural heritage sites, to explore other dimensions of heritage motivation (e.g., to be emotionally involved, to bequeath to children) and how they relate to alternative activities in rural areas. Moreover, because of geographical constraints, the list of alternative activities in the questionnaire was limited to the activities available in that region. For example, activities such as skiing and scuba diving were not included. However, the issues presented in this study are widely applicable, and many rural destinations would face similar challenges. Future research can investigate other special interest segments in a wider context, such as outdoor recreationists' interest in art and culture. In addition, since tourists with dual or multiple special interests are not that uncommon, the next step is to go beyond "interest" and examine actual visitation. More research is needed to determine if different types of activities, or combination of attractions, would influence people's travel decisions. Many rural areas can offer a variety of experiences to visitors, but receive limited visitation due to location and access. A unique combination of rural activities and mixed experiences may be a viable way to enhance the appeal of rural destinations and the effective use of rural resources.

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**Table 1. Heritage sites sampling location.**

Sampling Location	Agency	No. of Visitors Sampled	Sampling Days
Ninety Six National Historic Site	National Park Service	20	1
Cowpens National Battle Field	National Park Service	78	2
Musgrove Mill State Historic Site	South Carolina State Parks	14	2
Rose Hill Plantation State Historic Site	South Carolina State Parks	3	2
Oconee Station State Historic Site	South Carolina State Parks	13	1
Walnut Grove Plantation	Spartanburg County Historical Assoc.	80	2
Hagood Mill	Pickens County Cultural Commission	115	3

**Table 2. Profile of survey respondents.**

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	160	52.5%
	Male	145	47.5%
	Total	305	
Age	18-29	20	6.8%
	30-39	48	16.3%
	40-49	57	19.3%
	50-59	59	20.0%
	60-69	78	26.4%
	More than 70	33	11.2%
	Total	295	
Education	Some high school or less	5	1.7%
	High school graduate	38	12.5%
	Some college/technical school	72	23.8%
	College graduate	120	39.6%
	Post graduate school	68	22.4%
	Total	303	
Annual Household Income	<\$20, 000	15	5.8%
	\$20,000 – 39,999	40	15.5%
	\$40,000 – 59,999	55	21.3%
	\$60,000 – 79,999	48	18.6%
	\$80,000 – 99,999	43	16.7%
	\$100,000 – 199,999	53	20.5%
	\$200,000 – 299,999	3	1.2%
	\$300,000 and above	1	0.4%
	Total	258	
Residence	In this South Carolina county	119	39.7%
	Not in this South Carolina county	181	60.3%
	Total	300	

**Table 3. The results of principal axis factoring (varimax rotation).**

Motivation to Visit This Heritage Site	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	Loading
Factor I: Learning (Cronbach's alpha: 0.914; Variance explained: 51.0%)			
1. You want to learn about the area's historic background.	5.80	1.50	0.902
2. You want to learn about the history of South Carolina.	5.70	1.56	0.857
3. You want to learn about the history of the United States.	5.54	1.66	0.829
4. The visit to this site will contribute to your education.	5.74	1.50	0.773
5. You want to enrich your knowledge regarding the area.	5.80	1.42	0.677
6. You felt a sense of belonging to the area.	5.25	1.63	0.438
Factor II: Recreation (Cronbach's alpha: 0.802; Variance explained: 16.5%)			
1. You want to have some entertainment.	5.70	1.40	0.763
2. You want to have a day out.	5.95	1.43	0.754
3. You wanted to relax.	5.46	1.55	0.751
4. It is a popular tourist attraction.	4.87	1.41	0.481
% Variance Explained: 67.53 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling (KMO): 0.883 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: 1597.74 Significance < .001			
<sup>a</sup> . Items were measured on a 7-point scale, from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree.			

**Table 4. Interest in visiting three types of heritage attractions.**

	Mean <sup>a</sup>		Mean		Mean
<b>Original Historic Sites</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>Built Heritage Attractions</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>Performed Heritage</b>	<b>2.90</b>
-Historic houses or plantations	3.46	-Museums and exhibits	3.45	-Events and festivals	3.25
-Forts and battlefields	3.38	-Memorials and monuments	3.20	-Performances (e.g., music, dance, theatre)	3.05
-Civil War sites	3.26	-Religious sites (e.g., churches, temples)	2.91	-Reenactments	2.99
-Revolutionary War sites	3.26	-Historic libraries	2.66	-Ethnic/folk arts and crafts	2.90
-Native American sites	3.25	-Art galleries	2.65	-Traditional markets	
-Archaeological sites	3.12			-Shopping/antiquing	2.83
-Railroads and related sites	2.82			-Guided tours	2.70
-Roadside historic markers	2.65				2.60
<sup>a</sup> . Items were measured on a 4-point scale, from 1=Not at All Interested to 4=Very Interested.					

**Table 5. The results of regression analyses: attractions.**

Model	Standardized Beta		R	R-Square
	Motivation: Learning	Motivation: Recreation		
Original Historic Sites	0.480*** <sup>a</sup>	-0.096	0.440	0.193
Built Heritage Attractions	0.353***	0.086	0.398	0.159
Performed Heritage	0.149*	0.209**	0.311	0.097

<sup>a</sup>. \*\*\*:significance at 0.001 level; \*\*:significance at 0.01 level; \*:significance at 0.05 level.

**Table 6. Likelihood of visiting heritage tourism scenarios.**

Scenarios	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD
<b>A living history festival</b> , where live performances, educational demonstrations, and fun activities take you back to historical time in Union County.	2.97	0.77
<b>A Revolutionary War reenactment</b> where costumed performers re-create battles and scenes from the war in South Carolina.	2.93	0.85
<b>A self-guided driving tour</b> that showcases the region's key historical sites, including old farms, churches, Revolutionary and Civil War sites, and other key areas of interest.	2.90	0.79
<b>An annual farm festival</b> that invites local farms, artisans, and craftsmen together to show and sell heirloom vegetables, and other traditional products.	2.88	0.87
<b>A weekend getaway</b> , including fine dining, accommodations and activities that provide a chance to experience the antebellum lifestyle.	2.48	0.93

<sup>a</sup>. Items were measured on a 4-point scale, from 1=Definitely Would Not Visit to 4=Definitely Would Visit.

**Table 7. The results of regression analyses: scenarios.**

Model	Standardized Beta		R	R-Square
	Motivation: Learning	Motivation: Recreation		
A living history festival	0.218*** <sup>a</sup>	0.109	0.288	0.083
A Revolutionary War reenactment	0.399***	-0.133	0.352	0.124
A self-guided driving tour	0.262***	0.097	0.322	0.104
An annual farm festival	0.092	0.167*	0.228	0.052
A weekend getaway	-0.026	0.313***	0.301	0.091

<sup>a</sup>. \*\*\*:significance at 0.001 level; \*\*:significance at 0.01 level; \*:significance at 0.05 level.

**Table 8. Correlation matrix.**

Likelihood of Participating in Alternative Activities	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	Pearson Correlation	
			Motivation: Learning	Motivation: Recreation
Walking for pleasure/Hiking	2.75	0.96	.086	.236*** <sup>b</sup>
Watching wildlife or birds	2.42	0.93	.097	.221***
Fishing	2.07	0.97	.085	.042
Hunting	1.78	0.98	.037	-.016
Mountain biking	1.76	0.89	.016	.093
Paddling on a river	2.29	1.01	.014	.115
Scenic driving on roads	2.86	0.94	.170**	.240***
Shopping	2.33	0.98	.188**	.277***
Eating local foods	2.75	0.93	.191***	.277***
Visiting farms/farmer's markets	2.72	0.92	.203***	.208***
Attending festivals	2.90	0.93	.197***	.268***
Riding a horse on trails	2.11	1.04	.133*	.157*
Riding ATV's or off-road motorcycles	1.71	0.98	.038	.083
Attending a motorsport event	1.71	0.95	.070	.149*

<sup>a</sup> Items were measured on a 4-point scale, from 1=Definitely Would Not Visit to 4=Definitely Would Visit.

<sup>b</sup> \*\*\*:significance at 0.001 level; \*\*:significance at 0.01 level; \*:significance at 0.05 level.