

## A look at the consumption behaviors along Ghana's Slave Routes

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### Abstract

*This study examines the consumption behaviors of four types of visitors to sites associated with the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TAST) in Ghana. A questionnaire was used to elicit information regarding sites they intended or actually visited, perceived differences regarding site experiences and impressions of the heritage product itself. The results show that visitors were highly selective in their consumption patterns, although the sites in the country's south were the major attractions and generators for all purposes. There is evidence that trip motive and connection to slavery influence consumption behavior, as some visitors are willing to invest effort, expense and time to consume truly unique learning experiences. The findings were interpreted as evidence that site managers may need to design strategies using visitor profile and consumption patterns to deliver a coordinated and integrated appeal to the target visitor group.*

**Keywords: Transatlantic Slave Trade, Slave Routes, slavery heritage experience, Ghana, consumption behavior, personal connection to slavery, trip purpose**

### Introduction

In an earlier paper, four types of international visitors to sites associated with the Transatlantic Slave Trade (TAST) in Ghana were presented, based on visitors' connection to slavery and their trip purpose (see Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015). The four segments are summarized below to orient the reader:

1. The *connected slavery heritage* (CH) visitor felt a sense of personal connection to slavery and intended to trace their ancestral roots. This resulted in an affirmation of self-identity with certain segments of the host community and a deeper engagement at the site.

2. The *connected vacationer* (CV) also felt personally connected to slavery but was seeking a touring experience. This group sought a low engagement and low involvement at slavery sites because they did not see the past in more positive terms than the present.
3. The '*not connected bicultural*' (NB) had no personal connection to slavery and was travelling for pleasure or to visit family or friends, but while at the destination, they had a substantial desire to learn and understand the past.
4. The '*not connected Caucasian*' (NC) had no sense of any personal connection to slavery and had multiple trip motives ranging from vacation, educational, volunteering, visiting friends and relatives to business. This tourist had a substantial interest in being able to collect experience of places designated as World Heritage Sites (WHS), albeit in a rather superficial manner.

Each of the four discrete groups of visitors had different knowledge or level of awareness of the destination as a whole, highlighting their different slavery heritage experiences and engagements. However, the study did not delve into their consumption patterns. It was apparent then that merely analyzing each segment's motives, knowledge and attitudes toward slavery and benefits sought at slavery-related sites did not reveal the influences that resulted in the types of attractions they were likely to consume. This is particularly true of Ghana, which boasts a wide array of slavery heritage products, some of which rank among the top 'must-see' places and attractions in the country. As such, there is some degree of compulsion to visit, thus reducing the effect of possible factors that may influence planned and actual consumption behaviors (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002). This perspective must be considered for a clear understanding of the nature of demand for, or

consumption of, slavery heritage attractions in Ghana. Indeed, the main lesson that tourism researchers have learned from visits to slavery-related sites is that such places are multi-sold and multi-consumed (Teye & Timothy, 2004). However, it is likely that each of the four segments may have different propensities for visiting certain types of slavery-related sites that reflected their connection to slavery and trip purpose.

The current study builds on the findings of the previous study by examining the influence of visitors' connection to slavery and trip motive on patterns of consumption of slavery-related sites along Ghana's Slave Routes. The specific objectives are threefold: (a) to examine the actual and planned intensity of the consumption of slavery heritage sites by the four segments, (b) to explore the reasons why the places they wanted to visit would be markedly different from the places they actually visited, and (c) to evaluate their impressions of different slavery heritage sites within the spatial context. An analysis of consumption behaviors along the Slave Routes will not only provide valuable information to the destination planning process but also offers both the tourist industry and tourism oriented governmental agencies the opportunity to understand consumption behavior among different user groups. Moreover, such analysis may help local travel agents to monitor and hence design strategies and marketing programs using the most effective and useful information to reach tourists.

### **Tourist consumption of slavery heritage products in Ghana**

A number of authors have commented on Ghana's tourism development trajectory (Asiedu, 2004; Konadu-Agyemang, 2001; Teye, 1999). It will therefore not be repeated

here. Instead, the current paper provides the context for a better appreciation of the consumption environment in which visitors find themselves.

Tourism, a relative newcomer in terms of its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is currently the third largest earner of foreign exchange after merchandise exports (gold and cocoa) and remittances from Ghanaians abroad (Bank of Ghana, 2007). The growth of inbound tourism has been quite impressive, given that before the 1980s, it was not widely accepted as one of the potential economic activities (Asiedu, 2004). Its scale and significance at the national level is revealed in a brief examination of tourism statistics.

Arrivals and receipts have been growing, except for slight dips in arrivals in 2002 and 2005. Tourism receipts increased from USD \$627 million in 2005 to USD \$1,634 million in 2011, although this increase was below the targeted \$1.5 billion projected goal set by the Ministry of Tourism in its now expired 15-year integrated *Tourism Development Plan* (Ministry of Tourism, 1996). There were also consistent increases in the country of origin of tourists from the top 13 generating markets. The principal generating source markets are Overseas Ghanaians as well as visitors from neighboring countries, notably from Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo. However, the majority of visitors from the West African sub-region are traders and not necessarily holidaymakers likely to visit tourist sites. Other top origins are the UK, the USA, France and the Netherlands.

Nature-oriented tourists can visit the Kakum National Park, one of the few rain forest national parks in the West African sub-region. The park is also known for its canopy walkway, one of the only two on the African continent. The Mole National Park

has become a destination and field laboratory helping researchers to understand the impact of human activities on protected areas (Brashares, Arcese & Sam, 2001). Ghana's pristine beaches have also become popular with both Ghanaian and Western European visitors. In the last 15 years, however, major tourism growth has come partly because of the growing popularity of the country as a slavery heritage destination. As the country's infrastructure improved, the southern Slave Route sites (boasting a disproportionately high number of forts and castles, designated as WHS) have experienced robust visitation. Available statistics show that the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles welcomed more than 110,000 visitors in 2013, accounting for approximately 10% of all arrivals to Ghana (Anon, 2013). However, it has been a mixed blessing for formal tourism development efforts on Ghana's Slave Routes.

Many studies have focused on how TAST-related sites can be promoted to diasporan Africans, particularly African-Americans. For example, Withers (1995) stressed in his marketing report the need to position Ghana as a prime African-American destination with excellent cultural offerings. Following from this, Abane and Abanga (2004) proposed a framework for developing an effective marketing strategy for Ghana, based on the African-American market segment. Timothy and Teye (2004) identified five reasons why African-Americans constitute an ethnic market for slavery heritage tourism, three of which relate to the fact that they constitute the single largest group of African descent in any country, increasing disposable income and a common linguistic market. Mensah and Amissah (2009) also suggest that Ghana capitalize on her shared cultural and historical heritage with African-Americans.

However, these claims of a potential market demand for tourism based on slave descent rest on very little (if any) empirical evidence. A search of the literature reveals very little up-to-date information on the attitudes of African-Americans towards slavery heritage tourism. In fact, research suggests that little enthusiasm for this type of tourism exists among diasporan Africans (Dann & Seaton, 2001). It is not unreasonable to observe that, despite the apparent potential for tourism to accentuate diasporan Africans visits to Ghana, little attention has been given to this specific market segment. Perhaps, it is because diasporan Africans often use multiple or country of origin passports, which underestimates the volume of traffic and the value of participating in slavery heritage tourism. Additionally, the usual approach is for researchers to interview diasporan Africans who have chosen to visit Ghana. In this case, the study does not systematically focus on a general level of interest in slavery heritage tourism. Bruner (1996) suggests that African-Americans come to Ghana to seek their ancestry and to experience one of the very sites from which their ancestors were cruelly maltreated before they began the torturous journey to the New World; similar arguments have been advanced by Kemp (2000), Richards (2002), and Mowatt and Chancellor (2011).

This theme of a growing demand and interest in slavery heritage tourism among African-Americans is repeated almost as a mantra in a series of consultancy reports and academic literature to the extent that Boakye and Dei (2007) suggested that Ghana's Slave Routes be presented as pilgrimage sites because of the soul-connection attached to them. They suggest that a special name like 'pilgrims' instead of the normal 'tourists' be given to people who visit such places to emphasize the seriousness of experience of the person on pilgrimage as well as the local communities on the Slave Routes. However, as

rightly noted by Teye and Timothy (2004), both Caucasians and non-African people have an interest in visiting TAST-related sites for a variety of reasons, and their itineraries are the same as those of tourists of African descent. Similarly, Yankholmes and Akyeampong (2010) have argued that 'roots' tourism has become increasingly popular among Western European tourists (particularly people of mixed race or mulattos).

Following the country's general development trajectory, the flow of tourists between places on the Slave Routes reflects a core-periphery dichotomy. The concentration of tourism investments in the southern part of the country limits demand for attractions in the northern part and reflects the locational advantage enjoyed by the former (Schramm, 2008). Even on the southern Slave Routes, the industry has the tendency to accumulate spatially: Cape Coast and Elmina castles hold a greater share of the slavery heritage tourism market, and stops near them are unable to even benefit from bundling. This situation poses many challenges not only in terms of examining the size and characteristics of current and potential market but also for any enterprise that seeks to promote those sites for specific markets.

Accurate and detailed spatial distribution data on tourists' demand for TAST-related sites are hard to obtain; only the Cape Coast and Elmina castles keep records of visits, recording numbers and time of arrivals, and the names, addresses, nationalities, and comments by visitors. However, there are at least two reasons why the data collected at these two places are misleading and sometimes useless for any applied or theoretical analysis of consumption behavior. First, the visitor logbook does not distinguish between tourists and non-tourists, nor does it identify primary trip purpose. Second, the logbook

does not specify those who make the spur-of-the moment decision to visit and random non-group visitors at peak times.

Finally, although the proportion of domestic tourists (particularly social groups and school excursions) outnumbers that of international visitors, there is more emphasis on the latter because domestic tourists are not seen as a major income generator for TAST-related sites, nor do they provide the much-needed foreign exchange for the country. Therefore, aggregate analyses only provide superficial insights into what is being consumed, and why.

### **The Study**

The study builds on the earlier work by examining the planned and actual consumption behaviors of visitors to Ghana based on their personal connection to slavery and trip motives. The method adopted here is similar to the one used in the previous study (for detailed discussion of the method employed, see Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015).

Primary data were collected at five former slave trade centers, namely Cape Coast, Elmina, Assin Manso, Bono Manso and Salaga, using a self-administered questionnaire.

Salaga (8°31'N, 0°31'W) was selected because it was a significant trading hub in its own right that later became the grand slave emporium (Akurang-Parry, 2001; Johnson, 1965; Lovejoy, 1980; Perbi, 2004). Assin Manso (5°31'N, 1°10'W) is where the Slave River is located in which captives from the northern hinterlands were bathed and sorted out for Anomabo, Cape Coast or Elmina (Ward, 1966). The Slave River has an information center describing the TAST and guides show visitors an iron slave shackle recovered from the riverbed and the graves of two reburied descendants of slaves. The



town hosts the annual Emancipation Day festival, a holiday commemorating the abolition of chattel slavery in the British colonies of the Caribbean in 1834 (Hasty, 2002) and has become a popular destination for diasporan Africans tracing their roots. Bono Manso, however, was the premier settlement of the Bono Kingdom, as well as a place where captives from the north were purportedly brought to the town's market area (Effah-Gyamfi, 1985; Meyerowitz, 1962).

*Insert Figure 1 approximately here*

Of the trading centers along the coast of Guinea, Cape Coast and Elmina were the most effective points of contact between the European traders and elite African merchants (Dickson, 1969). This position gives the fort communities here a distinctive character from those mentioned in the preceding paragraph (see Figure 1). Elmina Castle is the oldest surviving masonry fortress outside Europe (van Dantzig, 1980). Ten kilometers west of this castle is Fort Carolusburg (known as Cape Coast Castle), built by the Swedes, but finally becoming a British possession in 1664. Each castle has underground dungeons, with the capacity of holding up to 1,000 captives (Anquandah, 1999). The United States Agency for International Development, the Smithsonian Institution and ICOMOS rehabilitated the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles and St. Jago fort from 1992 to 1998 under the Natural Resource Conservation and Historic Preservation Project. The rehabilitation works made them tourism icons, irrespective of their checkered history.

A team of fieldworkers approached visitors at each of the study locations, asked for their willingness to participate in the research study, and provided a copy of the questionnaire and a pen to them. Prior to participating in the survey, potential

respondents were asked to answer two questions. They had to indicate 1) whether they were travelling for slavery heritage tourism or genealogy reasons (Yes/No) and 2) whether they were personally affected or knew someone directly affected by the TAST (Yes/No).

Elsewhere in the questionnaire, they were provided with a list of TAST-related sites and were asked to indicate which places they had visited on their current trip. Those who had been to at least one site on the list were then provided with another list of places and, with the aid of a Juster scale (Gendall *et al.*, 1991), they were asked: ‘what is the probability you would want to visit or experience these other sites’ (using a likelihood-of-visit scale, with the categories ‘no chance’, ‘almost no chance’; ‘very slight possibility’; ‘slight possibility’; ‘some possibility’; ‘fair possibility’; ‘fairly good possibility’; ‘probable’; ‘very probable’; ‘almost sure’; ‘certain’, and ‘practically certain’). The reasons for using the Juster Scale were to capture the different stages of their tour that could be used to analyze the data and overcome the issues of respondents’ knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of the importance of certain TAST-related sites.

Using the same scale, respondents were then asked the probability that their experiences at each of the study locations would be different from the current site they were touring and why. They were additionally asked which site they would select if they could visit only one. The questionnaire also included 13 pre-scripted statements related to their impressions of the appeal of the northern and southern Slave Routes sites. The responses were registered on a 7-point scale, with 7 representing the highest level of agreement with the statement. An ‘I don’t know’ option was included to capture

respondents' uncertainties (Oppenheim, 1992). A range of trip and socio-demographic data were also collected as part of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was completed by 550 respondents (of whom 228 were sampled from Elmina, 243 from Cape Coast, 45 from Assin Manso, 7 from Bono Manso and 27 from Salaga) between March and August 2012. One-way ANOVA with *Games-Howell post hoc* analysis and chi-square test were used to compare the four cohorts of visitors. Where statistically significant differences were identified, the results were examined further to determine whether the differences could be attributed to one group. All levels of significance were set at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

The results of the current study should be viewed within the context of its limitations. One limitation involved the use of a questionnaire to capture actual and planned intensity of consumption of slavery heritage sites. This approach may have imposed great cognitive burden on respondents coupled with question order effects, response choice order effects and recall bias. A second limitation is that the dataset captured respondents at discrete point locations. It does not reflect their planned versus realized attraction visits.

## **Study results and discussion**

### ***Visitor characteristics***

As in the previous study, the 'CH' visitors were the relatively oldest cohort, mostly well educated, middle-class Black or African-Americans from the U.S. With respect to trip profile, the majority of them were first-timers, but those with accumulated destination travel experience had visited Ghana between 3 and 6 times in the preceding 5 years. They stayed in Ghana for an average of 19.3 nights, implying that they regarded Ghana as their

primary destination. This qualifies their intrinsic motivation for self-exploration and interest in ancestry information. This profile is consistent with other studies. Basu (2005) notes that ‘root’ seekers take some time to re-establish connection to their perceived ancestral homeland. However, given that the ‘CH’ visitors were descendants of slaves and have not been resident in Ghana, it is doubtful whether they expected to feel at ‘home’ in a place in which they never lived. They also tended to travel as part of a full or partial package tour, with an average party size of 19.7 people. In the case of the ‘CV’, most of them were between the ages of 25 and 34 and of mixed ethnic backgrounds from the U.S/Canada and European countries. They had significantly shorter average lengths of stay (11.3 nights in Ghana).

The ‘NB’ visitors recorded the highest educational qualifications, with 55.8% of them having graduate or postgraduate qualifications. Many were Black (any origin) or mixed race, of whom British formed the largest. They were visiting Ghana as part of a full or partial tour and recorded a higher average party size of 20.6 people. The mean length of stay in Ghana for this group was 9.4 nights, while their average mean nights away from home was 12.6 nights.

The ‘NC’ visitors were young, compared to the other cohorts. Sixty-five percent (65.0%) of the respondents came from the European countries that were instrumental in the TAST. The results showed that 19.4% of them had twice previously travelled to Ghana. The mean length of stay in Ghana for this group was 23.7 nights, while their total trip away from home was 31.25 nights, implying that this group had much time to travel around the country and possibly to neighboring countries.

### *Travel patterns*

We may recall that an overarching question in the current study concerns the potential interest of tourists to visit TAST-related sites and the nature of that interest. First, respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood of a visit to a TAST-related site other than where the survey captured them. Table 1 shows the items used in the Juster Scale and the scores associated with each item. The results indicate that 'CH' cohorts were the most active visitors, with most of them strongly intending to visit 12 places, 7 of which they were the only group intending to visit (slave markets, though, feature strongly on their tours). However, the 'NB' and 'NC' visitors, not surprisingly, account for much of the mean scores on items of seeing the renowned forts and castles at Elmina, Cape Coast and Osu. However, no one intended to go to Fort Groß Friedrichsburg.

*Insert Table 1 about here.*

This suggests that the consumption patterns of TAST-related sites are highly selective. As noted by Schramm (2008), the disproportionate demand for slavery heritage sites is, to a large extent, influenced by relatively short tourist length of stay, inflexible itineraries and concentration of tourism investments in the south. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that factors of constraints, rather than choice, account for this phenomenon. Many TAST-related sites are remotely located (in most cases, public transportation is unavailable, unreliable and not-well connected to the attractions). This limitation is far more prominent on the northern Slave Routes. For example, Salaga, the popular slave market site, suffers from its remote location and the absence of regular public transport. The 97-km (60-mile) access road from Tamale, the regional capital, is deplorable, and many of the buses that ply the route are in a poor state of repair. Studies

have shown that visitors' choice of transport (Tideswell & Faulkner, 1999) and the spatial configuration of the destination (Lew & McKercher, 2006) play a role in tourists' consumption patterns. Table 1 demonstrates how the remoteness and absence of regular public transport restrict visitation to the northern Slave Route sites.

The places visited by the respondents are shown in Table 2. Four observations are worthy of note here. First, the 'CH' visitors frequent multiple slave sites, while the rest of the sample only visit the big four attractions (Cape Coast, Elmina, Fort St. Jago and Osu). The majority of the 'NC' and 'NB' visitors also visit James Town, while only 'CH' visitors go to Anomabo. Second, there is a marginal visitation trend towards the southern Slave Route sites. Visits to Osu accounted for a significant proportion of tourist traffic. This was to be expected, as Osu is a very popular destination among both Ghanaian and foreign revelers because of its high-end eateries, boutiques and gift/souvenir shops (Yankholmes & Akyeampong, 2010). Nonetheless, its popularity does not necessarily translate into tourists visiting TAST-related sites in the community. The Osu Castle is a magnificent monument but well out of bounds to tourists (school tours and researchers are granted access by the Office of the President) even though it is no longer the seat of government.

*Insert Table 2 about here.*

As Table 2 suggests, the Cape Coast and Elmina castles are clearly the most visited of Ghana's slavery-related attractions. Stopovers to the two castles seem to feature strongly on tours of all of the cohorts; and certainly, the two castles benefit from one another because of their close proximity. Surprisingly, several other nearby forts, which are otherwise obscure, do not benefit from the pull exerted by the Cape Coast and Elmina

castles (as an exception, Fort St. Jago and Anomabo could be said to benefit from the markets of the two castles).

Differences were apparent as illustrated by the number of ‘CH’ visitors to the northern Slave Route sites. This is consistent with the results in Table 1 and may be attributed to the fact that most of this group purchased package tours that took in popular slave sites on the northern Slave Routes. The ‘NB’ and the ‘NC’ visitors, however, provide a notable exception on organized tours to the northern Slave Route sites. In fact, at the time of the survey, the 10 ‘NC’ visitors sampled at the Salaga Slave Market were also avid lovers of nature who were on a holiday trip to the Mole National Park and took the opportunity to tour around in their rented four-wheel drive vehicle.

The visitors were asked whether they expected their experiences to be markedly different at the sites they intended to visit. The Juster Scale was used here along with the items in Table 2 to gauge the likelihood of different experiences at the sites visited or intended to be visited. Nearly 400 (384 of 550) responses were received (response rate 69.8%), and tests for non-response bias indicated none was present. Table 3 portrays the ‘CH’ visitors as significantly likely to think their experiences would be different from the site where they were surveyed. Thus, a visit or intended visit to other TAST-related sites generates higher expectations among the four sub-samples of respondents.

*Insert Table 3 about here.*

Respondents were then asked to explain why they felt their visit or intended visit to other sites would be different. The responses were categorized into key themes for easy interpretation. The results are shown in Table 4. A chi-squared test showed that a statistically significant relationship exists between the visiting groups and their

perception that going to other TAST-related sites would potentially yield markedly different slavery heritage experience ( $\chi^2(9) = 207.739, \rho < 0.05$ ). That is, in comparison with the other groups, the ‘CH’ visitors felt differences in slavery heritage experience were likely because of the cultural significance of the asset. They felt that non-designated WHSs on the Slave Routes presented a much more symbolic, realistic and deeper experience of the past. As one respondent suggested:

The north may shed more light on the history, creation and implementation of slavery (# 211).

Another said:

The different places have different icons, which mean different things for different people. For me, the Slave River has more spiritual, emotional or physical healing or benefit than the ‘European’ slave dungeons (# 261).

*Insert Table 4 about here*

Both the ‘CV’ and ‘NB’ respondents felt that a potential different slavery heritage experience was dependent on the on-site tour guide services. However, it was clear that they both focused on different things regarding the role of on-site tour guides. The ‘CV’ tourists expected local tour guides to not only educate them but also to stimulate their emotional connection to the site so as to permit reflection on their sacredness. By contrast, the ‘NB’ visitors, although open to the significance of the site, expected the tour guide to present information in an interesting yet non-threatening manner. The following are some comments made about on-site tour guides’ role in controlling the behavior of visitors:

Depends on your local guide ... Have visited *Elmina* and it was very interesting, more shocking and real than Cape Coast Castle though. (# 163)



I visited the slave dungeons in Elmina Castle and Cape Coast Castle but when I recall the guide's narrations I know each [castle] express a different aspect of the experiences of my ancestors (# 216).

Inspiring tour of the castle. Shameful history but cultural sensitivity is important. Our guide [name withheld] kept it real for us... the slave trade is an important historical event, which people need to know about (# 222)

We must as a people continue to be proud of our heritage and culture as our history did not begin with our ancestors' enslavement but rather with the kingdoms of Mali, Songhai and Ghana (# 251).

The 'NC' visitors felt potential experiences were likely to be different, given the surroundings of the site. Respondents' comments tended to recognize the socio-cultural impacts that European traders and settlers had on the indigenous people. Consequently, they were so keen to make a distinction between European nations and their profound cultural influence on the Guinea Coast:

Each has its own history because different Europeans constructed the forts (# 016).

Because I am Dutch I may experience *Elmina* in a different way than Cape Coast for instance, because the Dutch were in Elmina in the past. Nevertheless I don't think I should personally feel guilty for the things my ancestors have done (# 110).

Since not all the Slave Route sites were built by the same European countries, my experiences would be different (# 185).

[...] I am not so interested in all of them. When I have seen one or two occupied by the English; I have seen most of them and got enough information (# 407).

Thus, the spatial selectivity of the forts and castles illustrates differences in consumption behaviors even among this cohort. Given their comments, though, it is interesting to speculate on how this group absorbs available interpretation at the forts and castles; likewise, one may wonder at their shock reaction to familiar physical splendor of the forts

and castles and their impact. Perhaps, given their multiple trip purposes, this cohort does not want to “waste time” during their touring, and the nature of experiences received depends relatively on the site they feel best meet their needs.

***Impressions on north-south Slave Routes attraction sites that appealed to visitors***

A particularly useful way to understand visitors’ consumption behaviors is to assess their impressions at both the northern and southern Slave Route sites. These impressions were ascertained by considering their responses to 11 statements on a 7-point Likert scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” to 7 being “strongly agree”. One-way ANOVA was undertaken to assess whether the four subgroups differed in their evaluation of the historical and spatio-temporal features of the sites. The scores were found to significantly vary with the four visiting groups on six items (Table 5). The results indicated that the ‘CH’ visitors had neutral views about whether TAST-related sites in the south were of international significance and emotionally engaging, or whether they were symbolic reminders of collective slave memory, more than those in north. They also expressed similar views regarding their edutainment value. However, this group was more likely than the others to disagree with the statement that the effort (in terms of time and cost) required to travel to the northern parts of the country was not worthwhile. While the respondents were not asked to supply reasons for the responses, personal communication with some diasporan Africans revealed that, given the personal commitment to retrace roots, the process of identifying some TAST-related sites as culturally and historically significant or attractive demeans their visit and denigrates the memory of their ancestors.

They noted that each slave site is interesting and unique, even though it is difficult to consume in many instances.

*Insert Table 5 about here*

This finding is consistent with the results relating to the sites visited (Table 2) and their perceived reasons behind their differential experiences at TAST-related sites (Table 3). Thus, their existential quest to retrace roots influenced their personal experiences and subsequent valuation of the sites, confirming Fennell's (1996) characterization that special interest tourists moved more extensively through the destination, pursuing their interest, than those with general motivations.

Alternatively, the 'NC' visitors look for extrinsic meaning of TAST-related sites. They appear to appreciate the tourism value of the southern Slave Route sites. Interestingly, however, they had the lowest mean scores on the item on international significance of the southern over the northern Slave Route sites. They were also more interested in conserving such relics as part of collective slave memory, perhaps to confirm or confront present beliefs.

Post hoc analyses were conducted to examine how the mean impression scores varied by the visitor groups. The analysis revealed that the 'CH' visitors were more likely than the 'NC' group to think that TAST-related sites in the south are of more international significance than those in the north. They were also more likely than the 'NC' visitors to think that slave sites in the south created more of an emotional connection than those in the north. Interestingly, the 'CV' group was more likely than the 'CH' visitors to believe that TAST-related sites in the south provided more participatory, engaging and entertaining experiences or created more of an emotional connection than

those in the north. In fact, they felt the interpretation of the slave sites in the south were better than those in the north.

Apparently, the ‘NC’ visitors in the present study felt more strongly than the two connected groups that TAST-related sites in the south were worth conserving as part of the collective slave memory, more than those in the north. They also believed less than the ‘CH’ group that the effort, expense and time required to consume sites in the north were worthwhile, and they had less interest in seeing the slave markets compared to the forts and castles. Nevertheless, the pattern of means across the four groups was consistent with their connection to slavery and trip purpose, with the ‘CH’ and ‘CV’ groups looking for consistency in experiences, while the ‘NC’ and ‘NB’ were unwilling to risk expense and the investment of effort.

## **Conclusion**

The current study examined the consumption behaviors of four cohorts of visitors to sites along the Slave Routes, assuming that their personal connection to slavery and trip purpose could effectively indicate how they seek and consume slavery heritage experiences. The results of the study have substantial academic and practical implications. First, spatial constraints influence the way visitors travel to TAST-related sites. While there is a huge array of TAST-related sites, those along the southern Slave Routes were visited more frequently than those of the northern Slave Routes; the visitation decision appears to be based on the tourism appeal of the attractions, not on their immutable cultural and historical values. Indeed, what does emerge from the study is the important role of the scale of the attractiveness of TAST-related sites. As shown by

the visitors' expressions of choice and preference for places visited, it seems that the net tourism flows of TAST-related sites along the southern Slave Routes were more of a function of the level of development than of the cultural or historic role. Trip patterns of the 'CH' visitors suggest that this group has the highest consumption pattern of diverse TAST-related sites. Comparatively, pleasure-seeking visitors had visited or intended to visit only the 'popular', most accessible and renowned sites (see Tables 1 and 2). This contradicts earlier findings by Tideswell and Faulkener (1999) that visitors with multiple trip purposes visit more places, thus displaying more extensive movement patterns. Perhaps the confrontational nature of TAST-related sites as well as the spectacle of the performance of the 'CH' visitors explains this phenomenon. However, this finding is interesting in lieu of calls for the Ghanaian authorities to market the country to diasporan African travelers. In the current case, so many 'NC' holidaymakers were frequenting the southern Slave Route sites. More importantly, this group is also likely to visit the northern Slave Routes site, as has been noted by Teye and Timothy (2004) and Yankholmes and Akyeampong (2010). As such, if packaged with other northern attractions (e.g., national parks and wildlife sanctuaries), there seems to be the potential to increase visitation to the slave heritage sites in the north, particularly by this market.

Second, a personal connection to slavery and trip motive seemed to play a pivotal role in the consumption patterns of visitors along the Slave Routes. The 'CH' group wants an uncommodified experience presented at the slave markets rather than a commodified experience at the famed forts and castles. Their preference tends toward the lesser-known locales on the northern Slave Routes, in part because they perceive them to be more symbolic reminders of the past. The 'CV' chooses to visit the well-known forts

and castles, although they sometimes veer off the beaten track to seek out slave market sites to learn about the past. The ‘NB’ and ‘NC’ are the greatest consumers of the famous forts and castles along the southern Slave Routes. They are most likely to visit the four most famous slavery heritage sites and less likely to travel widely along the southern Slave Routes because the experience would be superficial. This situation points to the fact that the more the tourist feels personally connected to slavery and engaged in a quest to retrace their roots, the more positive they would feel about the northern slave sites. If it were a goal of the Ghana Tourism Authority to disperse visitation to the north, educational and marketing programs that elaborate on the cultural and historical significance of the sites, differentiating them from the southern ones, would be a first step. Additionally, interpretive services centered on story-telling and performances would increase interest to sites devoid of ‘bricks and mortar’ infrastructure (Ryan & Dewar, 1995). Finally, the difficulty to access the sites is probably the largest hurdle to overcome (Schramm, 2008).

Future research is clearly required on the planned and realized consumption behaviors of tourists. In particular, it would be interesting to test the validity of Woodside and Dubelaar’s (2002) proposition that planned and realized attraction visits play an *a priori* role as stimuli that are antecedent to tourism behavior. This is quite important, particularly when data collection for the current study coincided with the staging of two major slavery events, i.e., the Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) and Emancipation Day celebrations. It is probable that the ‘NC’ visitors were seeking to make the most of their travel experience and needed to consume the sites efficiently and rapidly, while the ‘CH’ may not return as pleasure tourism grows on the Slave Routes.

Notwithstanding, these findings can be used as a basis by other researchers for investigating in more detail the touring behavior along Ghana's Slave Routes. While some slavery-related sites are 'must-do' experiences and sights to visit, this study has revealed consumption behaviors of visitors using a new way of segmentation. Motivation for travel to Ghana can include slavery heritage/genealogy, vacation, business, voluntourism, and other combined and nuanced reasons. A personal connection to slavery, and one's sense of identity can also affect the extent to which the TAST-related sites are consumed. Further research is, however, needed to refine visitor segments as they continue to evolve.

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