

Interest in “virtual” and “real” shrimp related experiences among coastal and shrimp festival tourists in South Carolina, USA



Outline

- Why examine seafood tourism?
- Industry retention on the waterfront
- Definition of “real” vs. “virtual”
- Shrimp and Tourism in SC
- Methods
- Results
- Study Implications/Conclusions

Seafood and Coastal Tourism

- Coastal regions are increasingly important for tourism
- Eating seafood is a coastal tourist experience
- Globalization impacts on seafood (increased imports) and tourism
- Often declining economic sustainability of commercial fisheries =declining presence on the waterfront



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Industry retention on waterfront

Policy support for Water-dependent uses

- U.S. CZMA Section 303
- U.S. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation & Management Act
- South Carolina DHEC OCRM [30-1.D(51)]

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Industry retention on waterfront

Barriers

- Permitting authority - overlapping jurisdictions/regs
- Weak zoning ordinances/water-dependent use definitions
- Compatibility of neighboring uses
- Economic sustainability of the fishing industry
- Attitudes and perceptions
- Availability of financing

Real vs. Virtual?

*Brookfield, Gray, &
Hatchard, 2005*

- Explore retention of commercial fishing industry and imagery in waterfront development in four UK coastal communities.
- As direct economic dependence on commercial fishing in coastal communities declines, the fishing heritage and culture may continue to be appreciated and valued for its role in community identity and begin to occupy an iconic status
- Does industry have a “real” or “virtual” presence?

“Real Dependency”

- Product-based
- Reflects the major place occupied by real fishing and fishing-related industries in communities

(Brookfield, Gray, & Hatchard, 2005: 67)



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“Virtual Dependency”

- Image-based,
- Reflects idea of a fishing industry in a community
- Icon & branding mechanism to encourage both the tourist industry and niche markets for fish products.

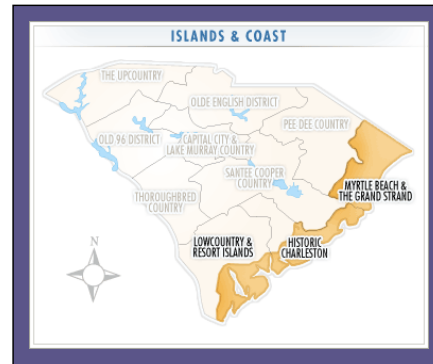
(Brookfield, Gray, & Hatchard, 2005: 67)



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SC Tourism Industry

- Top employer
- 87 m visitor days/yr (72% on coast)
- \$6.2 billion US/yr (56% on coast)
- Increased demand for coastal real estate



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South Carolina Shrimp Industry

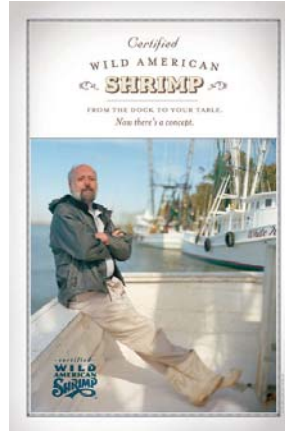
- Family businesses
- Scattered small shrimp fleets
- Declining number of docks
- Imports = price decline
- Finfish/turtle bycatch reduction
- Overcapacity
- Processing/storage limited
- SC supply <0.1% of US
- Subsidized marketing



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Strategies – niche marketing

- Local, wild caught brand
- Quality certification process
- Retail & Restaurants
- Community involvement



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Strategies - collaboration

Beaufort, SC Shrimp Festival

- Waterfront & historic downtown
- October (Fall)
- Since 1995
- Celebrates shrimp industry & "Lowcountry" experiences



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The Study - Purpose

- Examine visitor preferences for real & virtual experiences with regard to shrimp on the South Carolina coast
- Two study populations - SC coastal tourists and Beaufort Festival tourists.

Survey Methods

- S.C. Coastal Tourists
 - Visitor intercepts (July to October, 2004)
 - 4 SC coastal counties (Horry, Georgetown, Charleston & Beaufort)
 - Sampling based on 2001-2002 visitor expenditures by county
 - 27 coastal tourist venues
 - 803 addresses, 356 usable surveys, 44% response rate.
- Beaufort Shrimp Festival
 - Visitor intercepts @ October, 2004 Beaufort Shrimp Festival
 - 405 addresses, 248 usable surveys, 61.2% response rate.

Survey Methods – real vs. virtual

While visiting the SC coast, I would like to...

- **"Real" ($\alpha = 0.883$) $N=458$; $M^1=3.13$**
 - Bring home freshly caught shrimp
 - See shrimp boats when I am visiting
 - Tour a shrimp trawler that's docked
 - Time my visit when fresh locally harvested shrimp is available
 - Learn about shrimp fishing from a commercial shrimp fishermen
 - Go out on a commercial shrimp trawler
- **"Virtual" ($\alpha = 0.834$) $N=468$, $M^1=3.29$**
 - Eat fresh shrimp at local festivals or events
 - Eat shrimp cooked in traditional southern recipes
 - Learn from a chef how to cook shrimp in traditional southern recipes
 - Learn more about local shrimping heritage
 - Use a travel guide with information on where to see local shrimp boats
 - Go out on a charter boat to catch shrimp

¹Scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)



Does interest in 'real' and 'virtual' shrimp experiences differ **within** each sample?

Experience	Real		Virtual		t-test	
	N	Mean ¹ (SD)	N	Mean ¹ (SD)	t	p
SC Coastal	267	2.86 (0.93)	274	3.12 (0.88)	-9.48	<0.001
Beaufort	191	3.52 (0.77)	194	3.54 (0.66)	-0.793	>0.05

Scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)



Does interest in 'real' and 'virtual' shrimp experiences differ **between** each sample?

Group Experience	SC Coastal		Beaufort		t-test	
	N	Mean ¹ (SD)	N	Mean ¹ (SD)	t	p
Real	267	2.86 (0.93)	191	3.52 (0.77)	-8.32	<0.001
Virtual	274	3.12 (0.88)	194	3.54 (0.66)	-6.21	<0.001

¹Scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)

What do we know about SC Coastal and Beaufort Festival tourists?

Variables	SC Coastal	Beaufort
Age¹	Younger (m=49.0)	Older (m = 52.6)
Shrimp eating	Less frequent (45.5% ≥ every 2 wks)	More frequent (57.2% ≥ every 2 wks)
Trips to SC coast	Less trips (7.6% >10 trips last 2 yrs.) 4-7 days most common	More trips (22.2% >10 trips last 2 yrs.) 2-3 days most common
Beliefs	Less supportive of local shrimp & active commercial industry	More supportive of local shrimp & active commercial industry
Knowledge	Low knowledge about shrimp management & cooking	More knowledgeable about shrimp management & cooking

¹All other demographic variables (gender, education, employment, marital status, income) were non-significant.

Implications about visitors

- Destinations interested in attracting the general coastal tourist may want to highlight shrimp industry through “virtual” experiences.
- Creation of a “seafood destination” may mean strategies that retain shrimp industry presence (“real”) to attract tourist specifically oriented toward seafood.
- Frequent visitors and residents who like local may be more willing to support retention of local industry.

Future research

- Is it possible to successfully market virtual without real presence of the fishing industry?
- Do regulatory, investment and attitudinal conditions exist to permit commercial fisheries retention on the tourist focused waterfront?
- Does collaborative capacity among commercial fishermen, tourism industry and community leaders exist at the regional level?
- Does knowledge about commercial fisheries influence support for retention of commercial fisheries on the waterfront?

[Comments and Questions?]



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