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## The Sierra Leone – Gullah Geechee Connection – Deepening the Connection: A tourist satisfaction study

**Abstract.** Sierra Leone is one of several countries along the Rice Coast of West Africa. Gullah Geechee people live in the coastal region of the United States from Pender County, North Carolina to St. Johns County, Florida. The essential tie between Sierra Leoneans and Gullah Geechee people is rice. The purpose of the article is to present information that assess satisfaction, perceptions, preferences and characteristics of a tour of Gullah Geechee people to Sierra Leone. The study data enabled the analysis and identification of tourist satisfaction, as well as provided understanding of potential trip improvements. Implications from the study bring Sierra Leone into the fold of heritage tours as seen in Ghana and Senegal, people discovering their roots, enabling social investments in developing nations and can be of service to the Government of Sierra Leone.

**Keywords:** Sierra Leone, Gullah Geechee, tourism, tourist satisfaction

**JEL Codes:** Z320, Z390

**Suggested citation:** Massally, A., Holladay, P. J., McGough, F. M., King, R. (2021). The Sierra Leone – Gullah Geechee Connection – Deepening the Connection: A tourist satisfaction study. *Studia Periegetica*, 2(34), 27-43. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0015.0504>

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## 1. Introduction

Sierra Leone is one of several countries along the Rice Coast of West Africa where thousands of Africans were first enslaved in the transatlantic slave trade (Roberts & Holladay, 2019). The Rice Coast stretched from what was Senegambia to Sierra Leone or what is the current-day region from Senegal to Liberia (Fields-Black, 2008). These West Africans were specifically targeted by slave traders for their knowledge of rice cultivation, specifically wet rice farming systems such as those being established in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia (Carney, 2000). Among the rice farmers in Sierra Leone, the Temne people were particularly successful “by manipulating water regimes and developing a sophisticated irrigation infrastructure” (Carney, 2001, pp. 65).

These enslaved West African were the ancestors of the Gullah Geechee (Roberts & Holladay, 2019). Gullah Geechee people live in the coastal region of the United States from Pender County, North Carolina to St. Johns County, Florida (Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, 2021a). The essential tie between Sierra Leoneans and Gullah Geechee people is rice, rice production and cultivation (Opala, 1987). Fambul Tik, a United States-based Sierra Leonean organization, whose name translates into ‘Family Tree’, has guided experiences between the Gullah Geechee people and Sierra Leoneans since 2006 (Fambul Tik, 2020). The organization led a study tour of a group of African Americans, most of them Gullah Geechee, to Sierra Leone from December 2019 to January 2020.

There were several intentions for the tour that were based on the core themes of slavery, resistance and abolition (Fambul Tik, 2019). The tour was to raise awareness of Gullah Geechee and its ties to West Africa and have cultural exchanges like a visit to the village of Rogbonko. This is a rural village of about 500 people that is helping to preserve the tradition of crafting “shuku blai”, a Temne name for a type of finely made and ornamented coil-weave basket, and for Fambul Tik to explore ways to connect Gullah Geechee and Sierra Leonean people in the future. After the experience, a satisfaction survey was administered to the Gullah Geechee tourists.

The purpose of the article is to present information that assess satisfaction, perceptions, preferences and characteristics of the tour to Sierra Leone. In addition, this article highlights the value of the trip in terms of the historic connections between Sierra Leonean and Gullah Geechee people. To gather data, a broad-spectrum survey was administered post-trip to the Gullah Geechee tourists. The survey included items such as accommodation, transportation, content knowledge, customer service, amenities, and the time of the year for such travel. The study enables the analysis and identification of subtle trends, regardless of whether they are positive or negative, as well as provide opportunities to improve where necessary.

## 2. The Sierra Leone – Gullah Geechee Context

Gullah Geechee are descendants of enslaved West Africans. Most modern-day Gullah Geechee people live along the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, a 12,000 square mile, federal National Heritage Area designated by the U.S. Congress that encompasses the coastal areas and the Atlantic Ocean barrier islands of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida (Fig. 1). Gullah Geechee have their own culture of crafts, storytelling, foodways, music, spirituality and language (Roberts & Holladay, 2019). The language is a defining characteristic of the Gullah Geechee as distinct people and is a creole that blends African and European languages (Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, 2021a). The retention of Gullah Geechee unique identity, culture and language was largely due to geographic isolation; plantation slave owners generally avoided visiting the coastal islands that many Gullah Geechee lived on for fear of disease and dangerous animals (Roberts & Holladay, 2019).

After the end of the United States Civil War, the islands and coastal plantations were abandoned leaving Gullah Geechee people to continue life on their own (Roberts & Holladay, 2019). Although there are Gullah Geechee spanning from North Carolina to Florida on the lower Atlantic coast, most live in the area where Lowcountry plantations on barrier islands in South Carolina and Georgia that used the salt marshes to grow Sea Island cotton, rice and indigo. (Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, 2021a; Florida State College at Jacksonville, n.d.). Gullah Geechee people with Sierra Leonean ancestry are largely from the Temne of the Northern Province of Sierra Leone who were skilled at rice agriculture (Benton & Shabazz, 2009). These Temne people were mainly transported from Bunce Island slave castle at the head of the Sierra Leone River to New World plantations (Basu, 2008).

Although not originally intended to investigate the Sierra Leone – Gullah Geechee connection, pioneering research that built the foundations of the ties between the two groups began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with work by the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner (Turner, 1949) and The Georgia Writers Project search for African heritage, beliefs and folklore (Granger, 1940). Part of Lorenzo Dow Turner's work was the creation of audio recordings. The anthropologist Joseph Opala studied these recordings in the 1970's and discovered the linguistic connection between Sierra Leone and Gullah Geechee languages (Opala, 1987; Cooper, 2017).

This was noticed by Sierra Leone President Joseph Saidu Momoh who brought a delegation from Georgia and South Carolina to Sierra Leone in 1989 (Cooper, 2017). Joseph Opala was instrumental in this first trip of Gullah Geechee people to Sierra Leone and in 1995 took the Moran family of Harris Neck, Georgia to

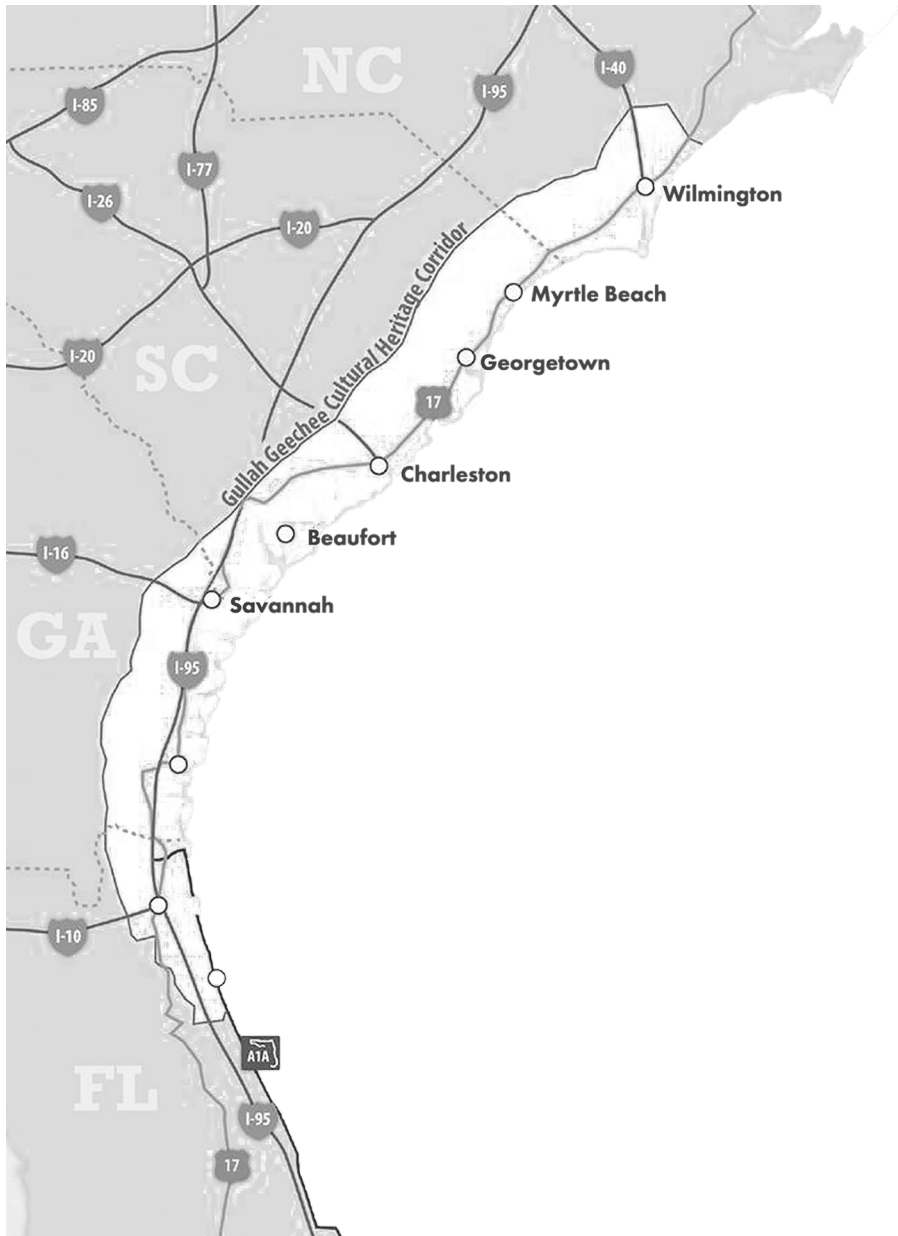


Fig. 1. The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. This Corridor is where most modern-day Gullah Geechee people live and includes North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida

Source: Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (2021b).

a Mende Village in Sierra Leone (Campbell, 2011). This village is where a song Lorenzo Dow Turner had recorded from a Moran family ancestor named Amelia Dawley in the 1930's in Georgia, had originated (Cooper, 2017). This reunion trip was made into a documentary film called *The Language You Cry In* (Thomas-Houston, 1999). Another example of continued interest is evident in the 2005 trip of Thomalind Martin Polite of Charleston, South Carolina, who received an invitation from the Sierra Leone government to visit Sierra Leone (Yale Macmillan Center, n.d.).

Researchers had traced Thomalind to her ancestor Priscilla who was a 10-year old girl when she was captured and enslaved in Sierra Leone over 250 years ago (Goffe, 2005). Now there is more intentional interest exploring the connections between people of Sierra Leone and the Lowcountry of the United States beyond individual connections (Blyden, 2015; DeCorse, 2015). To foster the relationship and to promote cultural exchange and explore connections, a group of Gullah Geechee visited Sierra Leone in 2019, which was captured in the documentary film by South Carolina ETV entitled *Gullah Roots* (Koyer, 2020). Respondent satisfaction of that 2019 trip is the focus of this article.

### 3. Theoretical framework of tourist satisfaction

Measuring tourist satisfaction of a trip is paramount to the perception of a trip but also to having repeat clients (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). Tourist satisfaction measures have traditionally included factors such as opportunities, costs, food and accommodation (Pizam, Neumann, & Reichel, 1978). Tourist satisfaction is often allied with variables such as tourist motivation (Dann, 1981), destination image (Pike, 2002), experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and quality (Crompton & Love, 1995).

Tourist satisfaction measurements aid in the understanding of both visitor expectations and trip improvements (Latu & Everett, 2000). For example, Hosany & Witham (2010) examined cruisers' experience specifically focused on satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the trip. The study highlighted ways that the cruise liner marketing and promotions could use these experiential data to create a better trip environment. Studies on tourist satisfaction have focused on soundscapes (Liu et al., 2018), destination management during the Covid-19 pandemic (Constantoglou, 2020), participation in creative tourism learning experiences (Remoaldo, Ghanian, & Alves, 2020), novelty seeking (Albaity & Melhem, 2017), comfort (Cicerali, Cicerali, & Saldamli, 2017), and adventure (Tapar, Dhaigude, & Jawed, 2017) among many others.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Study Site

Sierra Leone is a country in West Africa of about 8 million people bordered by Guinea and Liberia. Sierra Leone has had slow growth as a tourism destination receiving less than 100,000 international visitors per year on average (The World Bank, 2021). Difficulties in branding, marketing, policy, planning and human capital have all contributed to this (Brown, 2020). Country-level data specific to cultural heritage tourism in Sierra Leone is unavailable at this time.

While the official language is English, most Sierra Leoneans speak Krio as a common language. The country has a tropical climate with widespread wetlands, marsh and coastal plains with sandy beaches near the capital of Freetown. For this study, there were four main destinations centered around the core themes of slavery, resistance and abolition. The tour group visited Bunce Island, a slave fortress in Sierra Leone that was built to send enslaved Africans directly to plantations in South Carolina and Georgia. Next, the tourists visited Old Yagala in the northern and mountainous region of Sierra Leone, where Africans resisted the slave trade. The third part of the tour was a visit to Freetown, which was a depot for formerly enslaved people that were either taken to Freetown from the West or “recaptured” at sea and dropped off in Freetown. There was also a visit to Rogbonko Mathaka, the shuku blay (sweet grass basket) capital of Sierra Leone; this is a shared tradition between the two groups. There were also some other features of the tour designed to emphasize the ‘Sierra Leone-Gullah Connection’ such as a visit to Senehun Ngola, the place where a Mende song still being sung in the United States, originated.

### 4.2. Research Design

Understanding tourists’ perceptions is important for successful sustainable tourism development (Xu et al., 2016). This research uses a case study approach (Yin, 2017), which involves data collection, evaluation, analysis and context (Gillham, 2010), and is a way to report research that has been studied in-depth (Wolcott, 2008). To understand the perceptions of trip respondents to Sierra Leone, a semi-structured questionnaire was used to survey the group. One of the co-authors of this article is also on the Fambul Tik leadership team and was on this trip. He facilitated the recruitment of participants after the trip. An email was sent to each of the trip participants with a hyperlink to the online survey and an invitation

to participate. The survey dealt with expectations, preferences and characteristics of African Americans on a historical study tour to Sierra Leone. The survey consisted of questions that were close-ended (e.g. yes/no) and open-ended (i.e. opportunity to describe in the respondent’s own words). In total, the survey was administered to 54 people who took the trip with 22 respondents completing it for a 41% response rate, which is higher than average for online survey recruitment (e.g. Poynton, DeFouw, & Morizio, 2019). The survey measured overall trip experience with 10 questions (Table 1).

The survey measured tourist satisfaction (Table 2) with 29 items adapted from Andriotis, Agiomirgianakis, & Mihiotis (2008). The final section requested basic demographic information.

Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool, was used to conduct the survey research. It was sent by email to all the respondents from the trip with a link to the online survey. Open-ended questions were analyzed with NVivo, a qualitative data analy-

Table 1. Overall trip experience – 10 questions

No.	Overall trip experience	Measure
1.	Were you familiar with Sierra Leone before this trip? If yes, please tell us in a few words how you learned about Sierra Leone	Dichotomous yes/no. Open-ended follow-up.
2.	Please tell us in a few words what your primary motivation for this trip was.	Open-ended
3.	What was your favorite part of the trip?	Open-ended
4.	What was your most important learning experience?	Open-ended
5.	Do you have any suggestions to improve the trip?	Open-ended
6.	Would you go on a trip like this again?	Dichotomous yes/no.
7.	Would you recommend this trip to a friend?	Dichotomous yes/no.
8.	How did you learn about this trip?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• webpage</li> <li>• social media</li> <li>• advertisement</li> <li>• word of mouth</li> <li>• email</li> <li>• other (please explain)</li> </ul>
9.	Did you get sick while you were on this trip?	Dichotomous yes/no.
10.	Did you have to see a doctor while you were on this trip? If yes, please explain in broad terms.	Dichotomous yes/no. Open-ended follow-up.

Source: own research.

Table 2. Tourist satisfaction items – 29 items

No.	Tourist satisfaction items
1.	Feelings of personal safety and security
2.	Availability of restaurants
3.	Friendliness of local residents
4.	Cleanliness of accommodations
5.	Attractiveness of natural environment
6.	Attitude of local shopkeepers and staff
7.	Quality of food
8.	Level of language communication
9.	Quality standard of accommodations
10.	Availability of museums and historical places
11.	Availability of daily tour services
12.	Availability of health services
13.	Comfort of local transport services
14.	Distance between the lodging and the destination airport
15.	Value for money
16.	Level of hygiene and sanitation
17.	Network (accessibility) of local transport services
18.	Cleanliness of the destination airport
19.	Responsiveness to customer complaints
20.	Availability of written material in your language
21.	Attitude of local drivers
22.	Environmental quality
23.	Level of local transportation prices
24.	Level of souvenir and gift prices
25.	Level of attractions prices
26.	Speed of check-in and check-out at the destination airport
27.	Existence of Information Centers
28.	Signage (directions)
29.	Availability of facilities and services at destination airport

Source: own research.

sis software. Data was coded and labels assigned using NVivo 11 software. Ease of analysis, consistency and completeness are possible through the use of the coding stripes tool within NVivo (Johnston, 2006).



## 5. Results

### 5.1. Demographics of sample

Demographics covered age, education, gender, race, and household income. Most respondents (36%) were 66+ years old, with an average age of 55 years old. Most respondents (60%) had at least a bachelor's degree with others (40%) a graduate degree. Almost half (43%) chose not to answer the annual household income. For those that did, the majority (19%) earned more than \$100,000 (USD) per family per year. Most respondents (52%) were women and most (90%) identified their race as black.

### 5.2. Overall trip experience

Half of the respondents (41%,  $n = 9$ ) were familiar with Sierra Leone before this trip. Most had learned about Sierra Leone from a family member or educational opportunity and four respondents were either born in Sierra Leone or had traveled/lived there before. The primary motivation for the trip was mainly about building connections and understanding. For example, one respondent said, *“to learn about the similarities between the Gullah culture and Sierra Leone”*. Another said, *“I was anxious to go to the West Coast of Africa because I was told that most of us came from that area”*. The favorite part of the trip for most was interacting with Sierra Leoneans in various villages and the educational tours. One respondent said, *“travel to the different towns and villages, and the ceremonies we witnessed.”* Another said, *“Bunce Island – The emotional/spiritual connection to the space.”*

These thoughts were seen again in the responses to what was the most important learning experience. One respondent said, *“The time we spent at Bunce Island and at the village in Kabala was so amazing. I learned so much about the last moments of the lives of the Africans before they were sold and taken away from Sierra Leone. It was also so awesome to see the work of the basket makers and the similarities between our Sweetgrass baskets and theirs.”* Suggestions for improvement of the trip focused on better accommodations, time management and more pre-trip preparation. Most respondents (88%,  $n = 14$ ) indicated that they would go on a trip like this again. Most respondents who answered this question (88%,  $n = 15$ ) indicated that they would recommend this trip to a friend. Most respondents who answered this question (61%,  $n = 11$ ) learned about this trip by word-of-mouth. Most respondents who answered this question (69%,  $n = 11$ ) indicated that they did not have to see a doctor on this trip. Of those that did, the issues were minor such as feet swelling, mild nausea or allergies.

### 5.3. Tourist satisfaction

The results for the tourist satisfaction items are below (Table 3).

Table 3. Tourist satisfaction items responses (%)

Question	Extremely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Feelings of personal safety and security	58	32	0	11	0
Availability of restaurants	11	50	11	22	6
Friendliness of local residents	78	22	0	0	0
Cleanliness of accommodations	11	44	6	22	17
Attractiveness of natural environment	50	44	0	6	0
Attitude of local shopkeepers and staff	37	58	5	0	0
Quality of food	22	61	6	11	0
Level of language communication	42	47	11	0	0
Quality standard of accommodations	0	44	11	33	11
Availability of museums and historical places	67	22	11	0	0
Availability of daily tour services	39	50	0	11	0
Availability of health services	42	16	32	5	5
Comfort of local transport services	11	67	11	6	6
Distance between the lodging and the destination airport	21	47	26	5	0
Value for money	61	28	6	6	0
Level of hygiene and sanitation	5	37	16	32	11
Network (accessibility) of local transport services	6	56	28	11	0
Cleanliness of the destination airport	32	42	21	0	5
Responsiveness to customer complaints	35	47	6	6	6
Availability of written material in your language	42	32	26	0	0
Attitude of local drivers	56	28	11	6	0
Environmental quality	16	21	37	26	0
Level of local transportation prices	12	29	59	0	0
Level of souvenir and gift prices	37	47	16	0	0

Table 3 – cont.

Question	Extremely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied
Level of attractions prices	25	25	50	0	0
Speed of check-in and check-out at the destination airport	11	32	26	21	11
Existence of Information Centers	11	22	50	11	6
Signage (directions)	16	21	47	5	11
Availability of facilities and services at destination airport	17	50	22	6	6

Source: own research.

## 6. Discussion

This article examined Gullah Geechee tourists’ satisfaction with a trip to Sierra Leone. The tour was designed to connect Gullah Geechee respondents with their heritage from West Africa. The unique model of this tour was based on the history of slavery, resistance to it, and its final abolition. The trip followed the course of history by visiting Bunce Island where tens of thousands of Africans were taken to the North American Colonies (Basu, 2008). Then the guests had a rare opportunity to visit Old Yagala, a location in Sierra Leone where some Africans resisted the slave trade (Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, 2018). Finally, they went to Freetown where they learned about the African Americans who returned to Sierra Leone via Nova Scotia in 1792 (Walker, 1992).

The study data enabled the analysis and identification of tourist satisfaction, as well as provided understanding of potential trip improvements. In addition, this research has helped Fambul Tik refine their tourism offering and services to build a better program for Gullah Geechee cultural heritage tours to Sierra Leone. Half of the tourists were familiar with Sierra Leone before the trip. Destination familiarity can have an influence on a tourist’s intention to visit a destination (Lee & Tussyadiah, 2012). In this case, those familiar with Sierra Leone had either been born there or had traveled and/or lived there previously. The other half who were unfamiliar with Sierra Leone can be assumed to have taken the trip because of the close network of friends and family within the Gullah Geechee community that took this trip. Social networks and social influence like this are explanatory for travel behaviors (Kim, Rasouli, & Timmermans, 2018). Indeed, some respond-

ents said that they had learned about Sierra Leone from a family member and the majority of respondents had learned about the trip via word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) are highly influential in tourism marketing (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2018). It would be advisable for Fambul Tik to bolster this type of marketing for future trips to Sierra Leone. Indeed, results from this study support this assertion as nearly all the respondents indicated that they would recommend this trip to a friend.

Data indicated that the primary motivation was about building connections and understanding. Tourist motivations to build connections is important to consider. As in the sample of tourists in this article, wealthier and better educated seniors may be motivated by discovery (Sellick, 2004). There was also the undeniable attraction of Gullah Geechee people learning from their West African heritage; learning is a salient trend in tourism to Africa (Novelli, Adu-Abmpong, & Ribeiro, 2020). In fact, the respondents' mentioned that their favorite part of the trip other than spending time with Sierra Leoneans in various villages, was the educational tours such as Bunce Island. Further, these experiential components were also seen in the responses about what was the most important learning experience.

Suggestions for improvement of the trip focused primarily on better accommodations. Respondents were especially concerned about the quality of standard accommodations (44%), cleanliness of accommodations (39%) and level of hygiene (43%). A level of expectation was not met in terms of accommodations, which may be based on United States' standards or other trips respondents had participated. It is imperative to share challenges that are to be encountered and set expectations with tourists so that there is better understanding of the types of accommodations prior to the trip so the respondents understand what they are getting for the budget. Additionally, the planners might consider seeking accommodations that may have basic amenities but that have a focus on cleanliness and hygiene appear to be the expectation of the respondents. Some respondents (28%) indicated that they wanted to see more restaurant availability. More trip preparation prior to departure would help to address the concerns mentioned in the findings of the study.

Time management concerns were mentioned in the qualitative analysis. Getting to and from events in a timely fashion had its challenges. In addition, there was concern about the speed of check-in and check-out at the airport and hotels. Some of the challenges identified and reported cut across the tourism and hospitality industry. The findings can be shared with the Sierra Leone government as they provide concrete examples of how improvements in policy, infrastructure, or both can occur. The Sierra Leonean government, could respond by creating and nurturing the enabling environment in areas where minimal improvements may have a big impact on overall perceptions. Some areas to address can the speed of check-in and check-out at hotels and airports, hotel management training to ad-

dress tourist needs, and environmental quality. On the positive side, respondents indicated their experiences were overall positive. They were satisfied with the cultural exchanges, for example, friendliness of local residents (100%) and attitude of local drivers (88%) as well as satisfied with the heritage exploration and the availability of daily tour services (89%) and of museums and historical places (89%). The majority of respondents (89%) also indicated r safety and security. An overwhelming majority (89%) indicated they were satisfied with the value they got for their monies spent, which is a key metric in tourism satisfaction and revisit intentions studies (Sun, Chi, & Xu, 2013).

## **7. Limitations of the study**

This is a case study that focused on one tour experience to Sierra Leone. Although the outcomes of the study support previous findings and provide a wealth of information, caution should be maintained in making generalizations to other heritage tours. Also, 41% of 54 respondents responded to the survey, and there is little demographic information to determine why they chose not to complete the study.

## **8. Conclusion**

Today every business or country that focuses on heritage tourism should examine the experiences it offers. In this case study, a focus on the tourism sector is most important. There are concerns beyond the scope of the heritage tours that need to be addressed if heritage tourism is going to take off in Sierra Leone. One area that can be addressed by the agency is providing pre-departure preparation to manage expectations. As more and more people are becoming interested in their ancestry and heritage connections it is imperative to perfect any offers based on shared heritage experiences. The need to create and provide a unique and inspiring heritage tour experience has become even more important as the competition increases. The people-side of tourism should be a key ingredient in the design, development and provision of experiences. The ability to build relationships and maintain credibility by operating with integrity and transparency with heritage tourists is a premium. “People tourism” must be developed further so that in settings that have infrastructure constraints, hotel management challenges and budding tourism opportunities it can still occur, with modified expectations. The value of the experience is still high, especially when residents can share their history and culture with sojourners. The Gullah Geechee tourists in this study

said that the experiences in the villages were highlights of the trip. Guests must get informed on the country they will visit; in this case, Sierra Leone.

Implications from the study and the trip are huge as it brings Sierra Leone into the fold of heritage tours as we have seen in Ghana and Senegal. With the doors opening with DNA testing and people discovering their roots, it opens up the door for heritage tours, exploring possibilities of dual citizenship and enabling social and even financial investments in developing nations. A trip of this kind can be of service to the Government of Sierra Leone to have a more coordinated focus on the heritage tourism as well as general tourism.

Further research could examine similar experiences as the current study, when the concerns are addressed. In addition, a study of other groups that go to Sierra Leone can be conducted to further understand the needs and experiences of other groups such as short-term study abroad groups, tourists from European groups, non-heritage travel and eco-tours to understand the impetus, interests, and concerns, to gather a more comprehensive understanding of what can be offered that is of interest and how to address challenges in Sierra Leone.

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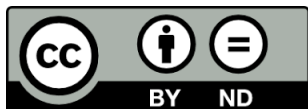


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## Pogłębienie relacji pomiędzy Sierra Leone a Afroamerykanami Gullah Geechee – badanie satysfakcji turystów

**Streszczenie.** Sierra Leone to jeden z krajów położonych na wybrzeżu Afryki Zachodniej, gdzie dominują uprawy ryżu. Afroamerykanie nazywający się mianem Gullah Geechee żyją w południowej części wschodniego wybrzeża Stanów Zjednoczonych, począwszy od hrabstwa Pender w Karolinie Północnej aż do hrabstwa St. Johns na Florydzie. Zasadniczym ogniwem łączącym mieszkańców Sierra Leone i osoby identyfikujące się jako członkowie grupy etnicznej Gullah Geechee jest ryż. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie informacji oceniających zadowolenie, wrażenia, preferencje i charakterystykę wycieczki do Sierra Leone, w której wzięli udział przedstawiciele Gullah Geechee. Oprócz analizy poziomu zadowolenia turystów dane z badania umożliwiły określenie aspektów wycieczki, które można by poprawić. Wyniki badania mogą być wykorzystane przy organizacji przyszłych wycieczek do Sierra Leone pod kątem dziedzictwa kulturowego, na podobieństwo tych, jakie odbywają się w Ghanie i Senegalu. Wycieczki tego typu umożliwiają turystom poznawanie swoich korzeni, stanowią okazję do inwestycji społecznych w krajach rozwijających się i mogą być przydatne z punktu widzenia władz Sierra Leone.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Sierra Leone, Gullah Geechee, turystyka, zadowolenie turystów



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