

Honours Theses, Academic Year of 2015-16

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Year:

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**Student
Name:**

Title: [Unesco World Heritage Site Visitation in Nova Scotia: Determinants of Tourist Expenditures and Economic Impacts](#)

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Abstract:

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage (WH) list recognizes and encourages the preservation of sites of outstanding historic value, both cultural and natural. The province of Nova Scotia hosts three WH sites: Old Town Lunenburg, the Joggins Fossil Cliffs, and the Landscape of Grand-Pré. All three sites reference the internationally recognized WH inscription in marketing material to increase local economic activity through tourist visitation. Existing literature, however, is inconclusive regarding the economic benefit of this designation and how to maximize it.

The presence of three WH sites in close proximity in Nova Scotia provides an opportunity to identify local economic impacts arising from visitor spending. The identification of major influences on levels of total economic output may provide guidance to regions that wish to capitalize on the WH inscription of a local site.

First, this study estimates total visitor spending and determines the resultant total

economic output in the areas surrounding Nova Scotia's three WH sites using input-output (IO) models. The effect of regional economic structure, and how tourists allocate spending across specific industries, is examined by applying hypothetical spending simulations to the IO models. It is also noted that average per-person expenditure differs significantly across sites. To account for these differences, possible determinants of tourist spending levels are discussed. Proposed factors include the cost and availability of local amenities, location of visitor origin, and the influence of the UNESCO designation on the decision to visit a site.

It is determined that across the three WH sites in Nova Scotia, differences in regional economic structure and allocation of tourist spending accounts for very little variation in total economic output. However, as individual expenditure at each location differs greatly, it is proposed that higher total output from UNESCO site visitation corresponds with a large and diverse offering of local goods and services.