Attitude, Activity and Destination Brand Identity among Swedish Entrepreneurs in Heritage Tourism

- a case study of the UNESCO site of Decorated Farmhouses in Hälsingland

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Abstract

Being one of the fastest growing industries, tourism has a trend to offer more innovative products and services. New opportunities and challenges have come for entrepreneurs and SMEs. Heritage tourism is one type of experience-based tourism where people can get historical or cultural experience. The potential of heritage tourism has attracted many entrepreneurs. It has been recognised activities are motivated by attitude within an entrepreneurial setting, however how the destination brand identity impacts the relationship from a supplier’s perspective is not clear. This thesis investigates the influence of destination brand on the entrepreneurs in a heritage tourism. A qualitative research design was constructed and the research strategy of a case study of the Swedish World Heritage site of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland (Hälsingegårdar) was chosen. There are only seven farmhouses to represent the UNESCO site and also 34 non-listed farmhouses open to the public. After examining both groups, it could be concluded that the destination brand of a World Heritage Site will motivate the entrepreneurs to look for opportunities, which will strengthen their attitudes. However, the relationship between attitude and activity is weak due to the effect of other external factors.

Keywords: entrepreneurial attitude, business model innovation, heritage tourism, destination brand identity, UNESCO
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

As one of the fast-growing industries in the world, tourism has attracted numerous entrepreneurs to explore what it can offer. During 2015, the number of international tourists in Europe grew by about 5% in average, which means in real numbers around 608 million arrivals during 2015 (UNWTO, 2016). For Sweden, the growth of international tourists was about 10% during 2015. It was estimated that the increase has led to a development of new jobs by almost 6%. Looking also at it from the perspective of consumption, the increase from 2014 to 2015 has been estimated to be 7% (Tillväxtverket, 2016).

Tourism is defined as a social phenomenon regarding human travel for different purposes, such as business, leisure, pleasure and so on (Ateljevic & Li, 2009). Therefore, there are different categories of tourism to serve each purpose, heritage tourism, business tourism, nature-based tourism, winter tourism just to name a few. According to a study made by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, a survey was conducted showing that about 30% of the foreign tourists visit a museum, historical site or building during their visits (Tillväxtverket, 2014). This means that it is a big interest in heritage and cultural tourism.

The tourism industry is going through changes. With the introduction of experience-based tourism (or experience tourism), the traditional hospitality package of accommodation, transportation and food is gradually being replaced. Experience-based tourism (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003) involves four quadrants of experience, namely entertainment, education, escapist and aesthetics. The destination takes the role as a theatre and the tourists play their according parts. Comparing to the standard tourism, creating experience needs to be innovative. In general, according to Solvoll et al. (2015), tourism in general is moving to serve more experience-based products and services, which will require entrepreneurs to implement innovations.
In recent years, there are a few notable innovations within experience-based tourism. For example, Clydesdale (2007) summarized some creative developments for winter sports destination to enhance the visitor's experience by introducing the range of services like snowboard parks, after ski activities and so on. Hjalager (2009) mentioned in the hospitality sector, some hotel chains are offering the “Formule 1” concept to provide budget service but with relatively high standards.

Heritage tourism or cultural heritage tourism is defined as “traveling to experience the places, artefacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Gibson, 2015). Those sites could also involve cultural, historic and natural resources. Heritage sites thus offer the heritage experience. By visiting and participating activities at the heritage sites, the tourists will be indulged in the for example, natural and cultural atmosphere. Therefore, heritage sites are usually associated with experience-based tourism, and new tourism products and services are encouraged to enhance those experience.

The main difference between a World Heritage site and a heritage site is that the former is inscribed on the UNESCO list. UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and is the UN nation that encourage countries to identify, protect and preserve their natural and cultural heritage. UNESCO (2016) specified the definitions for different types of World Heritage. In short, culture heritage includes monuments, groups of buildings and sites of Outstanding Universal Value, and natural heritage consists of natural features and natural sites of Outstanding Universal Value. Outstanding Universal Value implies that the site has exceptionally significant cultural and/or natural value to the entire humanity. To be qualified for Outstanding Universal Value, the nominated site need to fulfil a special list of criteria.

1.2 Problem Statement

Previous studies have touched upon the topic of tourism destination brand. The tourism destination brand identity, as the name suggests, focuses on the destination. Even though it is required to investigate and analyse the brand from both the demand and supply perspective, the majority of the studies were dedicated to examining the concept from a demand-side
perspective (Konecnik & Go, 2008). UNESCO for example, as an important destination brand has been studied from a visitor's perspective, namely if it will foster tourism demand or not. Research has shown some different results depending on their research settings. Poria et al. (2013) found that the designation of World Heritage Site in Israel can have some negative or no impact on tourist visits. Some negative perceptions could be that World Heritage Sites are more expensive and crowded than other sites. On the other hand, according to Fredman et al. (2007), the numbers of international visitors to the Fulufjället (that was adapted as a National Park in Sweden, 2002), has increased significantly after the inscription.

The research however about tourism destination brand especially from a supplier’s or owner’s perspective is scarce. The self-identification of destination brand from a supplier’s perspective is also important since this will lead to different practices in developing tourism services and products, marketing and innovation. In Sweden, there is a growing interest in studying the use of UNESCO inscription when innovating heritage tourism service and products. Cassel and Pashkevich (2014) investigated several Swedish World Heritage Sites and concluded that the effort of storytelling of the destination is important to not only reinforce the historical or cultural significance, but also to make national and international connections.

Being inscribed on the UNESCO list is an honour, however it depends on the business owners and the heritage management organisation at the heritage site to decide whether they want to include it in the promotional materials or not. Since many World Heritage Sites in Sweden are located remotely, they tend to distinguish themselves from other sites by using phrases in marketing campaigns like “a-one-of-a-kind-encounter”, “extraordinary”, “world-class attraction” and so on, in order to attract potential visitors (Cassel & Pashkevich, 2014).

On the other hand, academia tends to treat entrepreneurship and tourism as two separate disciplines, and limited research has been conducted to examine how tourism entrepreneurship develops, not to mention the entrepreneurs within heritage tourism. Entrepreneurship relates to individuals and studies have shown how different degree of entrepreneurial attitudes could affect the probability for tourism start-ups. Evidences have shown a positive connection between those two attributes (Lunnan et al., 2006, Nybakk &
More research has been done to establish the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and market performance, the results of which are inconsistent in different research settings (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005).

However, it is unclear about how the entrepreneurial attitude could be measured and what is its connection to activity. There have been some studies that tried to link this to education and how this would affect knowledge and attitude within entrepreneurship (Pihie & Bagheri, 2010). But, especially in heritage tourism, sites are mostly owned and managed by the state or other organisations. It remains unclear in both theory and practice how entrepreneurs will perceive and act under this circumstance. Furthermore, it is needed to identify and exploit opportunities in experience-based services, and innovation and transformation in tourism (Alsos et al., 2014). In terms of the activities, Hjalager (2009) suggested to investigate the innovation in heritage tourism as the reshape, reinvention a commoditization of products and services. Furthermore, empirical studies are still missing to explain how innovations could happen and what the results are in heritage tourism.

1.3 Research Question

This thesis contributes to the literature by explaining what entrepreneurs’ perceptions of the destination brand is and how the self-identification will affect their entrepreneurial attitude and activities within heritage tourism. This thesis also examines the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and activity for entrepreneurs in a heritage tourism setting. The conceptual framework (see Figure 1.) cooperates those three elements.

The main research question is described as follows:

➢ How does a destination brand identity affect an entrepreneur's attitude towards their activities within a heritage tourism setting?
The proposed research strategy will be the case study of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland, a World Heritage Site in Sweden. As in 2017, there are in total 16 World Heritage Sites in Sweden, including 13 cultural sites, one natural, and one mixed (UNESCO, 2017).

The site of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland was inscribed in 2012, however many of the farmhouses have been open to visitors from the 1960s. A few other farms opened during the followed time but it was not until 1997 that things were formally organized for them. An initiative was taken by the County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen) and the county museum in Gävleborg to strengthen the joint effort (Akander & Morberg, 2017). The collaboration continued around three themes and joint marketing efforts were established through brochures.

The process of being nominated from UNESCO however has its twists and turns. In 2002, the first discussions of getting a UNESCO certification came up by the same County Administrative Board. It was first suggested that 15 objects to be nominated under the project name “Farms and Villages in Hälsningland”, among which there was also a mountain pasture. The first attempt to be nominated however was rejected in 2009 due to some internal
conflicts and the lack of organisations to take responsibility over the tourism business (Westlund, 2011). In addition, the Outstanding Universal Value was weak and the proposed area were too large (Sannerman, 2009).

In order to tackle those issues, Paju (2016) presented that there were two parallel processes. The first one was to create a regional support system for marketing, promoting and developing the farmhouses, led by the Regional Council of Gävleborg. A new project group was thus formed (Hälsingegårdarna: Cultural Heritage and Development). The other process was to continue the nomination process, including producing written documents and selecting the farms. It was required to bring the number down and choose specific criteria as well to demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value. It was suggested to chooses the houses that had the most spectacular painted interiors, and separate rooms or even specific houses built for parties to represent the authenticity and integrity (Akander & Morberg, 2017). The number then went down to seven farms that were put on the tentative list. Eventually, the original idea of a UNESCO site became a reality in 2012.

There are three reasons behind choosing Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland for the empirical study. First, the implication of destination brand identity, such as UNESCO inscription, from a supplier’s perspective is not clear from the literature. As a relatively new World Heritage Site, it is interesting to investigate how the destination brand is identified and put into practice. In addition, the fact that only seven farmhouses are on the UNESCO inscription list will create different recognitions and use of destination brand identity. Secondly, the studies about Swedish World Heritage Sites are limited, Students and researchers from the country have started using this site as an empirical arena for different topics related to tourism. And most importantly, as mentioned above, World Heritage Sites in general are owned and managed by governments, institutions or other organisations, however due to the history of the farmhouses, some of them are privately owned. This provides a unique setting to investigate how the owners pursue certain entrepreneurial opportunities and how the destination brand identity would influence their motivations to innovate.
1.4 Thesis Structure

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Section 2 Theoretical Background: the theories behind the thesis and some key concepts will be introduced in this section. In addition, the chosen indicators within this research and the theoretical framework are described.

Section 3 Methods: the research design and its setting will be elaborated in terms of area and subject studied. The reasons behind choosing case study as the research strategy, the sampling strategy and how data have been gathered are explained.

Section 4 Findings: based on the results from the data collected, the findings are elaborated in terms of the main concepts used in the study, namely entrepreneurial attitude, entrepreneurial activities and the effect of the destination brand of UNESCO inscription. Results are presented in terms of how listed and non-listed decorated farmhouses have differentiated themselves in the light of the concepts.

Section 5 Discussion: findings are further explained in relation to the research question and some takeaways for practitioners are indicated. Potential structural settings are also elaborated, along with explanation of other factors like different levels of stakeholders that have influenced the results.

Section 6 Conclusions: the research question is thus answered, and suggestions are given for what would promote entrepreneurship within this setting. Some of the limitations within this research have been discussed, along with some future research areas that would be beneficial to expand the research of destination brand identity, entrepreneurship and heritage tourism.
2. Theoretical Background

In this section, a literature review has been conducted to explain some concepts like entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial activity. In addition, some concepts about destination brand identity and UNESCO inscription are also included. A theoretical framework is presented at the end to provide the grounding to this research.

2.1 Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Attitude and Activity

Before introducing the concept of entrepreneurial attitude and activity, it is important to define what entrepreneurship entails. The definitions of entrepreneurship have different focuses depending on the scholars and usually they involve more than one discipline. Gartner (1990) implemented the Policy Delphi method to define entrepreneurship. Based on three phrases of questionnaires, two groups of viewpoints were observed. The majority (79%) belonged to the first group, which focused on the characteristics of entrepreneurship, with consideration to themes like entrepreneur, innovation, growth and uniqueness. Group two considered the outcomes of entrepreneurship to be more important, such as creating value, making profit and being owner-manager.

Sharma and Chrisman (1999) summarized that group one relied on one of the following variations. First, Schumpeter (1934) viewed entrepreneurship as the process of carrying out new combinations, which could include new good, method of production, market, source of supply and organization. Gartner (1988) on the other hand offered a different point of view to understand entrepreneurship, which leads to the creation of new organizations.

It could be observed that certain components of how previous scholars have constructed the definitions of entrepreneurship overlap with each other. Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) summarized three main categories towards the definition building, namely what the results are when entrepreneurs act, how and why. In the first focus, the association is established between entrepreneurship and innovation, from the perspective of economics. On the other hand, the causes of entrepreneurship consider two levels of inquiries, namely individual’s own psychological characteristics and the external environmental or sociological characteristics. The third aspect is to examine the managerial behaviour of entrepreneurship.
in two areas. The first area concerns the life cycles of new ventures and the second one is about identifying the success predictors. Based on the previous studies, Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) then proposed the following definition.

“Entrepreneurship is a process by which individuals - either on their own or inside organizations - pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently control”

- Stevenson and Jarillo (1990)

This definition is widely used and cited by other scholars (Nybakk & Hansen, 2008), which will be also used in this thesis. Individuals, especially individuals with entrepreneurial attitudes are the keys to the success of entrepreneurship. There are different indicators to measure one’s entrepreneurial attitude. Risk aversion and opportunities recognition are identified, tested and applied to the private forest owners and nature-based tourism enterprises in Norway (Lunnan et al., 2006, Nybakk & Hansen, 2008). In addition, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) (GERA, 2017) identified four individual attributes of a potential entrepreneur, namely the perceived opportunities, perceived capabilities, entrepreneurial intention and fear of failure rate. Based on the survey data from GEM, Bosma and Schutjens (2011) measured three variables towards attitude, namely fear of failure, opportunities and self-efficacy. The addition of self-efficacy is critical, since it takes into consideration with the personal knowledge and start-up skills.

Therefore, in this thesis, the following three indicators for entrepreneurial attitude will be used:

1) Risk Aversion: unlike uncertainty, risk is calculable and could be treated as a cost (Knight, 1961). Risk aversion implies that when facing similar expected return with different levels of risk, a person who is risk-averse would choose the one with lower risk. Some studies have shown that risk aversion will reduce one’s entrepreneurial attitude, while risk takers are more likely to conduct entrepreneurial behaviours (Kihlstrom & Laffont 1979, Cramer et al., 2002).

2) Opportunity Recognition: in Stevenson and Jarillo (1990)’s definition of entrepreneurship, pursuing opportunities is one of the determining feature of an entrepreneur and non-entrepreneur. The ability to recognize opportunities has been
mentioned by Schumpeter (1934), since not everyone would be able to see and realize business opportunities.

3) Business Skills: or self-efficacy is related to the perceived business skills by individuals. The capability and knowledge to start and maintain a business has a positive relation to recognize opportunities (Bosma & Schutjens, 2011). People who process balanced skill sets are more likely to become entrepreneurs (Lazear, 2005).

There have been lot of general studies regarding entrepreneurial attitude and what the motivations are towards entrepreneurship. Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2005) studied the connection between attitude and intention. They found that economic intention is a key driver to start new businesses. In addition, ownership and independence are also considered important factors.

Another study is made by Gembremeskel (2009) that investigated the connection between attitude and success in business and how this was effected by gender. The findings suggest a moderate correlation between attitude and the success within business. One of the other indicators is innovativeness and that had a clearer connection to business success. However, it was found that this was not affected by gender.

Entrepreneurial activities according to GEM (2017) reflect different stages of the business. Total early-stage entrepreneurial activity, established Business ownership and business discontinuation by name describe three phases, those who are setting up a new business and those own a business for less than 3.5 years, those for more than 3.5 years and those who have discontinued their businesses.

There have been many studies to make connections between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial activity. Bosma and Schutjens (2011) discovered that a positive self-efficacy and a perceived high opportunity rate will lead to an increase in the early-stage entrepreneurial activities. It has been also observed that tourism entrepreneurs are most likely to start their businesses with low self-efficacy, which limits their entrepreneurial activities to certain extent (Lerner & Haber, 2000, Hjalager, 2009).
It is also recognised that the type of firm will affect the connection between entrepreneurial attitude and entrepreneurial activity. According to Miller (1983), three different types are distinguished. SMEs have their power centralized at the top and are influenced directly through their management. Bigger firms with more formal controls and plans are instead influenced through well integrated product-market strategies. Organic firms are more adaptive towards its environment and have an open communication therefore the nature of the environment affects the change in entrepreneurial activities.

Innovation is one of the most important entrepreneurial activities. Sharma and Chrisman (1999) considered entrepreneurship as a process of organizational creation, renewal, and innovation inside the organization (or without). Hjalager (2009) categorised few domain innovations in tourism based on the Schumpeterian approach on entrepreneurship, which include product or service innovation, process innovation, managerial innovation, management innovation and institutional innovation. In recent years a new kind of innovation has caught the attention from the academia and business world. The concept of business model innovation focuses on the process of improving the ways of how business is done, which includes all the mentioned categories of innovation (Stampfl, 2016).

The framework of a business model usually consists of four main elements, namely value proposition, customers, infrastructure and processes, and revenues and cost-structure (Markides, 1999). Business model canvas (see Figure 2.1) as a visual representation has components that correspond to those identified elements and some new theoretical perspectives (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

Business model innovation (Casadesus-Masanell & Zhu, 2013) is “the search for new logics of the firm and new ways to create and capture value for its stakeholders; it focuses primarily on finding new ways to generate revenues and define value propositions for customers, suppliers, and partners.” Therefore, business model innovation investigates the content, structure and governance of a business activity (Amit & Zott, 2011). There are mainly three types of innovation, depending on the degree of novelty, change and trigger (Stampfl, 2016). The following table 2. has descriptions for each type.
Table 2. Type of Business Model innovation (adapted from Stampfl, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiation Criterion</th>
<th>Business Model Innovation Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Trigger                   | (1) Business model innovations initiated through product or process innovations  
                            | (2) Independent business model innovations |
| Degree of Change          | (1) Re-configuration of existing business model  
                            | (2) Development of new business model |
| Degree of Novelty         | (1) Business model is new to the world  
                            | (2) Business model is new to the industry/market  
                            | (3) Business model is new to the company |

2.2 The Destination Brand Identity of a World Heritage Site

Destination brand has been studied mostly from a consumer perceived-image approach, i.e. how the visitors perceive the destination in a tourism setting. Brand identity however is a theoretical concept from the supply side perspective. This is as explained by Kapferer (1998) as “before knowing how we are perceived, we must know who we are”. Brand identity
clearly specifies what the brand aspires to stand for. It is about firstly what association is created and how it is maintained, and secondly how the vision intends to be perceived by the target audience (Konecnik & Go, 2008).

There are a few models that have tried to explain the somewhat complex concept of brand identity. Kapferer (1998) introduced a hexagonal model called the brand identity prism. This is based on certain components that affect the brand identity, physique, personality, culture, reflection, relationship and self-image. According to Chernatony (1999), those can be adapted not only as freestanding concepts but rather looking at how they affect each other. Both the culture but also the vision of a company will have affect and drive the relationships, personality and the self-image of a company, although Chernatony (1999) suggested that brand reputation would be more appropriate to investigate rather than self-image. Also, that a coherence between a culture that is shared within a company would produce a stronger brand identity.

As a contrast to these models, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) suggested another framework that has more of a step by step approach to also simplify the complex process of the different components that affects the brand image. They suggested a three-phase analysis. First is the pre-analysis of the strategic process within a destination. This will include to consider new trends and develop an understanding for the motivation behind the visit. Secondly the analysis of the brand identity and finally a implementation process. The analysis of the brand identity will include a market analysis of target groups, a competitor analysis and identify its own true position within the market by a self-analysis. This will then be implemented according to its position and secondly to the market strategy if this differ from the desired outcome.

Destination brand identity derives from destination branding. Tsaur et al. (2016) constructed five dimensions based on the literature from destination branding and brand identity, which are destination image, quality, personality, awareness and culture. Konecnik and Go (2008) proposed a tourism destination brand identity framework based on Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000)’s work, with focuses on both the brand concept and destination’s image of Slovenia. This framework includes a tourist analysis, competitor analysis, and self-analysis to develop
local cultural characteristics and brand characteristics (or destination culture).

A destination brand identity could be a region, a country, a destination in a heritage site, or a destination on the UNESCO World Heritage List. There are now 1052 properties inscribed from 165 countries. The inscription follows a routine where the member states put up sites on a tentative list that they believe have the qualities of outstanding universal value. This list will then be reviewed by a committee that will decide if they will be inscribed (UNESCO, 2017). As an organization, UNESCO can be traced back to early 1950 with the protection of the temple of Abu Simbel. The idea that it was possible to protect heritage sites in this way led to the inauguration of the list in 1978 (Ryan & Silvanto, 2009). For many tourists, the nomination as a UNESCO site works as a measure of quality and authenticity. With the recognition from the UN, the established landmark will be under the protection of international treaties.

Studies have shown different effects of the UNESCO inscription will have on the competition and visitors. It is often perceived that a World Heritage Site will generate more traffic, however the brand identity as UNESCO does not guarantee an increase in tourists for some destinations. For example, Cuccia et al. (2016) found that in Italian touristic regions, UNESCO sites could lead to the decrease in the technical efficiency of tourism destinations, either because of over-supplying hospitality services like accommodation, or failing to meet the expectation of visitors.

Nevertheless, because of the potential business opportunities that the destination brand identity of UNESCO brings, some entrepreneurs would be more willing to invest or start-up businesses in a World Heritage Site. The perceptions of UNESCO World Heritage however differ from SMEs and it will have an impact on the relation between how they perceive themselves and how they are perceived. The self-identification or the results from self-analysis will lead to some different practices for implementing the destination brand identity.

Some local businesses for example might not take advantage of the UNESCO inscription in their promotions. Hall and Piggin (2002) investigated tourism businesses that operate in the World Heritage areas of New Zealand and almost 60% of the businesses surveyed did not use UNESCO in the promotion due to their limited knowledge of UNESCO, irrelevance to the
business and assumption that it could not change one’s decision.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

In general, the study of entrepreneurship and destination brand identity is scarce within tourism, not to mention within heritage tourism. It is still not clear how innovation happens in heritage tourism and the effects of innovation in tourism enterprises (Hjalager, 2009). There are certainly previous research regarding this issue. However, those findings did not include a consistent definition and measurement for innovation. In terms of entrepreneurship in the tourism innovation process, the motivation, the knowledge and the strategy of an entrepreneur is not covered from the current research (Hjalager, 2009). In addition, the framework of destination brand identity from a supplier side perspective is under construction. There is limited knowledge of how an entrepreneur's self-perception of the UNESCO brand identity will influence their marketing approaches and other entrepreneurial activities.

![Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework with key indicators](image)
In this thesis, the following theoretical framework (Figure 2.2) has been proposed to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and activity in heritage tourism. The degree of attitude and activity are measured by factors identified previously. And most importantly, this framework considers the potential impact from the destination brand identity of the UNESCO inscription on the relationship.
3. Methods

This section describes how the research has been conducted. First, the overview of research design is described. The research setting of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland is then introduced. In addition, the sampling techniques and data collection techniques are also described. Lastly, the coding and analysing methods are presented.

3.1 Research Design

This thesis had a qualitative research design. Saunders et al. (2016) pointed that qualitative research is related to an interpretive philosophy and it could study the meanings and relationships between what the participants have introduced. The goal of a qualitative study is to develop a conceptual framework and/or contribute to the theory. The study is exploratory and certain relationships have been established between the factors in the previous section, which needs to be further examined.

The research strategy of case study has chosen. Yin (2014) described a case study as within a real-life setting, the process of an in-depth investigation of a topic or phenomenon. The case of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland was selected to represent a heritage site. By this approach it would be able to track the change in activities through the attitudes and how this would be affected by the brand identity, in this case represented by the UNESCO inscription. This was chosen because this made it possible to conduct an in-depth study of the phenomenon, which was heavily dependent on entrepreneurs.

In addition, the research design considered the longitudinal effect between attitude and activity, i.e. the time lag. There were five years between the inscription and when this research was conducted.

3.2 Research Setting

The research setting was the case of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List from 2012. Since Hälsingland is a vast region of Sweden, only seven of the farmhouses were listed. The motivation from UNESCO to
nominate the site was:

“The large, impressive farmhouses of Hälsingland, with their highly decorative rooms for festivities, reflect an extraordinary combination of timber building and folk-art traditions, the wealth and social status of the independent farmers who built them, and the final flowering of a long cultural tradition in Hälsingland.”

- UNESCO (2012)

The timber farmhouses have their unique interior designs and forms. Farmers from as early as the 15th century started to take advantages of the local forestry, marked their lands and built houses. Starting from the 18 centuries, many farmhouses began to form the shape as they are now, with a combination of both functionality and beauty. Paintings could be found on many walls in the festival room, which often contain colourful and vivid figures (see Figure 3.1). From religious motif to elegant landscape, the wall paintings did not only impress their guests and neighbours back in time, but also the UNESCO evaluation committee. Most of the houses now have passed on through generations and have been well renovated.

Figure 3.1 The Interior of one Farmhouse
A few farmers that was living in Decorated farmhouses decided in the 60s that they wanted to increase their income by offering their homes to visitors and other farmers soon started to follow. In this summer season (2017), some 41 farms are open to visitors (Hälsingegårdar, 2017) (See Figure 3.2).

![Figure 3.2 Open farmhouses 2017 (adapted from Hälsingegårdar, 2017)](image)

All the 7 listed farm houses are open to public where 6 of them are privately owned. From the remaining 30 unlisted farmhouses 13 are privately owned. The remaining 17 farmhouses are owned by foundations, municipalities or local historical societies. Table 3.1 summarizes different ownerships of the farmhouses below. It is also estimated that there are about 1000 farms in the area that can be classified as a Hälsingegård with some of its characteristics, however most of these farms are still in use and not open to the public. It is often the house owners that take up the role as entrepreneurs for the tourism business. They are more than willing to guide the visitors and tell the stories of the house. Guests can also stay in some of the farmhouses to have a genuine experience. 2017 marks the fifth year of the inscription and special celebrations have been organised (Hälsingegårdar, 2017). Guests will be able
participle in different cultural events like Swedish cheesecake competitions, Häslingehambon (a form of folk dance), folk music concerts and a jazz festival.

Table 3.1 Ownership of the open farmhouses in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Numbers of Farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listed Farmhouses</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Farmhouses</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlisted Farmhouses</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlisted Farmhouses</td>
<td>Government, Association</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor’s Centre</td>
<td>Government, Association</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some farmhouses have experienced difficulties to attract visitors since there are too many options and many of the farmhouses are alike. As a result, some started to work with nearby farms. The Hälsingland Farm Trail (Stora Hälsingegårdars Väg), located between Alfta and Edsbyn, is one of the examples of how the farmhouses could gather their resources with each other. The visitor centre Ol-Anders (see Figure 3.3) is responsible of many of the bookings for the houses along the trail, among which are two of the inscribed farms, Jon-Lars and Pallars.

Figure 3.3 Houses from Ol-Anders
Within the area of Hälsingland, there are 4 visitor centres in total to direct tourists to the different open farms, promote and inform about the area as a UNESCO site. These visitor centres are all located in the local area of decorated farmhouses and conduct guided tours and other activities towards tourists.

3.3 Sampling

As mentioned before 41 farmhouses are now open to public in total, the number has gone down from 46 open farms in 2016. In this study, five privately-owned farmhouses were chosen to represent two areas located around the villages of Ljusdal (A1) and Alfta (A2), due to the availability and willingness to participate of the owners. Also, most of the listed farmhouses are located within these two areas (see Figure 3.4). Among the six privately owned listed farmhouses, four are located within the selected areas and three were chosen. Among the 10 privately owned unlisted farms within the areas two were chosen.

The reason behind the selection of privately-owned farmhouses was to track the entrepreneurial behaviour and how it would be affected. Therefore, it would be the best to focus on private initiatives. Other ownerships, like municipalities and historical societies, would conduct business within another setting and have a different agenda that most likely would affect the results. One example of this would be the visitor centres that are promoted by the nearby tourist offices, and they also work with other types of attractions and services for tourists. This would be misleading when they do not have a primarily role as an open farmhouse but more that of a facilitator and a promoter for other nearby farms. Mostly they are owned and operated by the municipality and have employees that are working at the information desks with other administrative tasks. This would probably affect the results when they are not primarily self-employed and have set goals in relation to other tourism activities.

For the farms owned by historical societies, the aspects would be of another type since most of them are operated within the society at a voluntarily basis. Although they are charging some fees, this would not be the primarily driver. They would be more likely to open their farm houses out of the primary interest to inform and make use of their facilities, representing the members of the society. This would also have an effect when it is operated jointly, and
the responsibilities and operations are divided among several members. It can then be difficult to capture all the different aspects of entrepreneurial attitude towards entrepreneurial activity, and how this is affected by the inscription as a UNESCO site. In addition, it is difficult to find a respondent that can be representative for how they recognize for example opportunities when this is highly individual.

![Figure 3.4 Map showing the interviewed areas (adapted from Google Maps)](image)

It was therefore decided that privately owned farms were approached that in some way had more involvements of its owner. By doing this, it could be possible to capture the aspects studied in a simple and effective way. Also by selecting two areas, some local circumstances would be avoided, which might affect the result of the study. For example, a highly-developed network among the decorated farmhouses in a small area that would not be representative for the rest of the region.

### 3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

In terms of data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the owners. Before the actual interviews, some secondary data was collected through the farmhouses’ websites and brochures collected from the visitor centre Ol-Anders to gather an overview of the farmhouses and to prepare for the interviews. The reason to choose interviews was that it gave a flexible research method that also gave opportunity to directly ask clarifying questions
and direct the respondents to elaborate interesting aspects that was important for the research, and also a freedom to follow other aspects that came up during the interview. To avoid the potential interviewer bias, it was important how the follow-up questions were asked and which aspects that were considered interesting to the two interviewers present. This meant that both interviewers independently asked follow-up questions outside the interview guide, and questions to clarify direct questions from this guide.

The respondents were first contacted by phone and asked for their participation. Most of them were positive to the study and that the subject of entrepreneurship was touched upon, but due to the limited time before the tourist season would start, many farm owners were very busy. In addition, a lot of them were busy with farming activities and other daytime jobs that they were doing beside their tourism business. Therefore, among total five interviews, only two interviews were on-site, and the others were conducted through phone calls. Table 3.2 shows the code, the area and whether on the UNESCO list for the properties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>UNESCO Inscription</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An interview guide was prepared based on the identified factors from previous section, which even included some sample interview questions (see Appendix I). Even though certain well-formulated questions were listed, the content and the order were changed to accommodate for each interview. Follow-ups occurred often when further explanations were needed towards certain answers.

The main interview language was English. Since the interviewees have different levels of language proficiency, sometimes they could not understand the questions or express themselves in English. In most cases, the interviewers would try to explain or rephrase the questions in English to guide the interviewee. However, when the interviewees could still not express themselves, the questions would be repeated in Swedish, and then they were
encouraged to answer them in English to make the interview language as coherent as possible.

The interviews were recorded under permission. Two interviewers presented during each interview. One interviewer oversaw asking questions, while the other mainly took notes but was also free to ask follow-up questions. The transcription process took place directly after the interview.

The interview materials were then collected and coded and analysis based on the conceptual framework identified in the previous section. The coding procedure used a set of priori codes based on the conceptual framework of entrepreneurial attitude, entrepreneurial activity and destination brand identity. The different themes were then highlighted in different colours in the transcriptions to track down the concepts from respondents and compare the received information.

Especially, entrepreneurial attitude was measured by risk aversion, opportunity recognition and self-efficacy. Entrepreneurial activity was measured by the business model innovation, which includes main factors like key activities, cost structure, key resources, value propositions, customer relationship and segments, and channels. The main factors were inspired by the categories from business model canvas and some of them were grouped together during the analysis process. The destination brand identity of UNESCO included the brand recognition and identification of UNESCO.
4. Findings

Findings are presented in this section, which is first divided by each indicator from the main measurements. Next the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and activity is interpreted on both listed and unlisted farms. The impact of the UNESCO inscription is then presented and finally a model is constructed to represent the relationships among key factors.

4.1 Entrepreneurial Attitude

Owners with an entrepreneurial attitude is more likely to conduct changes in business, regardless of the status of inscription. However, the unlisted farm owners have stronger attitudes and are more willing to try out new things.

4.1.1 Risk Aversion

The perceived risks were economical risk and risk of insufficient heritage management. The entrepreneurs from the unlisted farmhouses are more likely to be risk-averse since it is more difficult to get support. As one of the respondents (F4) put it.

“It was much easier to get help from the County Administrative Board with funds to fix my houses before. Now they have focused the support for the farms on the list. We haven’t got any money from then and it is a big problem because then our farms are getting worse because of this.”

One challenge for both listed and unlisted farmhouses face is the restoration costs of the buildings that is connected to an economical risk. All the open farms have building details that are subject to restoration and preservation by trained specialists. This is especially the case with the painted decorations of the interior typical of the farmhouses. It although differs when all the listed sites are protected by the heritage act issued by the County Administrative Board (länsstyrelsen in Swedish). This act states that any change or alteration of the physical environment must be supervised and approved by them. The County Administrative Board also decides and approves any craftsmen that are working at these buildings. It is voluntarily to get a protection under the heritage act, but in connection to the listing of the 7 farmhouses to the UNESCO inscription, this was a demand. It is not only the requirements that comes with the heritage act but also the financial support to restore or rebuild properties. It is also
possible for any historical building to get financial support from the County Administrative Board but they are not as prioritized as the listed farmhouses.

Another risk that both groups saw was the risk that would come with the increased number of visitors and that in some cases there was a lack of heritage management.

A respondent (F1) that was from the inscribed group put it like this.

“We don't want to have too many visitors. This is very authentic and original. If we have lots of people running in and out this will run down the house.”

Another respondent (F3) that owned an unlisted farm talked also about the danger of not protecting the heritage values.

“When the people and the money comes, there will be a lot of opportunities but I think that we need to get help so we don't destroy the genuinely that we have. Very very important so we don’t destroy our farmhouses as they for example have done in Dalarna. There is no genuinely left and when big money comes it is easy to destroy things. It’s easy to lose the heritage values and I have seen it happen already. Last summer 3 farms did get destroyed. People don’t know what they have instead they just take away all the old pieces and replace it with a sort of shabby chic style where everything is painted white. This was mostly done for business. Here it is easy to rent out rooms and earn money on it.”

4.1.2 Opportunity Recognition

When looking at the opportunity recognition that would affect the business itself, it seems to be higher among the non-listed farms, although all the farms recognise that the UNESCO listing has led to an increase in visitors. Foreign visitors especially have increased and among the listed farms, a new type of visitor can be seen that travels around the world to visit UNESCO sites.

The opportunities are not only limited to the businesses that is connected to heritage tourism but also to the region itself. Many other initiatives have sprung from the UNESCO inscription. Participant F4 recalled: “I believe that they are more opportunities now than before due to the inscription and other local companies try to benefit by using the brand of
Another decorated farmhouse (F3) talked about the opportunities that would come: “In a few years I think that a lot more people want to come to see this because it is great and special. I think that they are too few and too small to take on all that people. So, I think that we need more farms that works together to make this product complete.”

It was clear that with the inscription of the painted farmhouses, more farmhouses saw the potential to open their own farm. According to F3, “We still are on hälsingegårdar website and the people at världsarvscentre are telling the tourists about us. There are also more farms open now to tourists because of the inscription and that people saw opportunities.”

The listed farmhouses in most cases depend on especially the visitor centres to see and capture opportunities and there are 13 other private decorated farms that have opened to visitors. This suggests that the opportunity recognition is higher among the unlisted farms when they have opened on their own initiative rather than by the municipalities.

4.1.3 Self-efficacy

In terms of the business skills, it differs a lot between the owners of the decorated farmhouses. It is not connected to whether the farms are listed or not but more dependent on the individuals. All the farms have benefitted in some way to the increase in the number of visitors thanks to the inscription. This has been an opportunity by some when they have taken courses related to tourism. In many cases the tourism businesses have been operative even before the inscription by many of the farms in different forms. Some of the unlisted farms also have open to the public thanks to the inscription to the World Heritage List. But usually the initiative has been from the municipality or the local visitor centre.

It also differs how the tourism business is integrated. Some of them are running businesses as farmers and the tourism is only a small part of the business, in often cases under 20 percent. Others have daytime jobs as employees or are retired. None of the respondents were 100% dependent on the tourism business to make a living.
4.2 Entrepreneurial Activity

Business model innovation is the key factor to evaluate the entrepreneurial activities. The components examined were key activities, cost structure, resources, value propositions, customer relationship ad segments, and channels.

None of the farm owners had written business plans. Although they had various degree of planning ahead, most of them constructed the business model intuitively on results from the previous year.

In general, only one of the investigated farmhouse have conducted a business model innovation, especially in terms of the key activities. Other initiatives are led by the County Administrative Board or through the visitor centre.

The entrepreneurial activities are connected to create a tourism that are experience based. It is dependent on the owners to create this when they are provide guiding themselves at the farm houses. Also for those who are owners but are not actively participating in activities towards tourism to be open to improve the standard and to try new things to enhance the experience. This will involve all stakeholder since the experience based tourism is a creative process.

4.2.1 Key Activities

Guided tours, catering and accommodation are the most common activities among the farmhouses. Both two groups were open to guided tours in some forms, even before 2012 when they were inscribed at the list of world heritage sites. They have also similar open hours when they have the main activities during the summer season (from May to September). All the farms can take special requests as well, for example the guided tours during the winter months, but they seldom receive requests like these.

Only one unlisted farm stands out with some efforts in innovating the activities, where the entrepreneur operates two open decorated farms to visitors. A cafe was opened last year and are now open during the whole year. People could purchase locally produced food as well. They would also need more employees for that reason during the hectic summer months.
Most of the revenue streams would come from guided tours to the decorated farmhouses. Beside the guided tours, the second most common revenue stream is accommodation. This is provided by all the unlisted farms and two of the listed farms.

The guided tours are booked directly with the farms or through the visitor centres and tourism offices. There will be a difference in the price they charge will range between 50-220 SEK. It also seems that a lot of farms tries different approaches to get more revenue streams connected to the business. This includes, bookings of groups with catering, wedding receptions, music nights, galleries etc.

4.2.2 Cost Structure

The cost structure is similar to all the investigated farmhouses, where no one really spends money on marketing or tries to promote themselves actively. The biggest cost (regardless of listed by UNESCO or not) seems to be the restoration of the farmhouses and many buildings that are connected to them. Some of participants also mentioned that they have some costs in gardening and other work related to the surroundings but at the same time they pointed out that this is something that they should do anyway. This also goes for the maintenance costs.

4.2.3 Key Resources

One of the main key resources is the actual farmhouse that the whole heritage experience is built upon. As discussed before within this, there is a difference when the listed farms houses get faster and have easier access to funds from the County Administrative Board than the unlisted farms. That was also if they also were protected by the heritage protection act.

4.2.4 Value Propositions

Both the listed and the unlisted farms wanted to create an experience based tourism on heritage and around the history of the farms. Also in combination with the experience that this is somebody's home. Two accounts from F5 and F1 are listed respectively as follows:

“People come here to know about the paintings and there will be a lot of questions regarding if we live here. They expect it to be a museum.”
“I want them to experience that this is real, and this is not a museum. This farm and this partly festivity house is almost the same as last 200 years. And we still use it as what the main purpose was. This is a living farm with agriculture and this is private, and this is what I want them to experience.”

4.2.5 Customer Relationship

Few have any of their own surveys of what visitors think about the experience or who they are. Both the listed and the unlisted depend a great deal on the visitor centres and the destination management organisations. There is no real set of communications in general about this between them and the farms where they actively try to improve their offers based on that, according to F3:

“We don't sell so much. People ask us to do things and we do it. It depends on what the requests are.”

4.2.6 Customer Segments

The segments that have sprung up is the international tourists that travel actively to UNESCO heritage sites. According to F1, “Some people are just heritage visitors. Collecting heritage from the list. These are mostly foreign visitors.”

F5 pointed out an interesting observation that sometimes even when there is accommodation available at the farmhouse, some visitors would rather choose to stay in a hotel room in a nearby city.

“We noticed that there are people that travel especially just to visit World Heritage Sites. Many of these are foreign visitors. We have noticed that many of them stay in Bollnäs. We had some people that would stay here of the people that came especially for the World Heritage Site.”

There is however no noticeable difference who are coming to the listed or unlisted farms, since the farms do not unnecessarily keep the record. The visitor centres might have some
booking records for guided tours but no systematic tool to track the visitors.

4.2.7 Channels

The promoting is usually done by the farms themselves or through the visitor centres. The listed farms however are more likely to receive financial support in terms of marketing purposes. According to one participant F2, “Many ask if you get money to be listed by UNESCO but we don’t get money directly. You get help with restoration and marketing. It makes things easier if you are among the listed farms to get help with marketing in comparison with other decorated farm houses.”

There are four visitor centres connected to the World Heritage Site. They form an important function when they send customers especially to the listed farms. Many of the listed farms operates through them. This is important since they also have started to organize and take initiatives for business opportunities. The unlisted farms seem to be a little bit more self-dependent even if the visitor centres also promote them in some sense. There are though differences in marketing approach by the visitor centres.

Almost all of the farms have web pages that give information about what they offer. Also a few of them promote themselves through social media, mostly by Facebook. It does not seem to be a distinction between that listed and the unlisted farmhouses. Tourists book their guided tours by contact the farms themselves or go on present times for guided tours.

4.3 The UNESCO Inscription

As mentioned previously, among the current 41 open farmhouses, only seven of them are listed. Both the listed and unlisted farms have experienced certain increase in visitors, however lower than expectation. In general, the listed farms identify themselves as a World Heritage Site and take more advantage of the brand. The unlisted farms on the other hand understand the difference between being on the list or not, but still enjoy the effect from the inscription.
4.3.1 Brand Recognition

Expectations of the perceived brand recognition was quite high and all respondents answered that they expected quite a lot and that it would turn out to be a large increase in visitors and business opportunities. It could be seen that the direct effect was more linked towards the listed farm houses and that the non-listed farm houses also noticed the effects but that it took a bit longer time.

As two of the participants F2 and F5 recalled, “What happened was that it was a boost for all the farms. What also happened was that we had our products before with guided tours and other things but it started to come more people. We did not develop any new products because of that but what also was good was that the younger generation within our community started to notice opportunities about our history and our heritage.”

“We have both worked within the local historical society. Even there at the society’s farm we expected more visitors and even here at our own farm. The first summer it did not come as many as expected and not the second but the third summer it was more people coming in Lōka-Gården. It took some time before we notice the effects.”

4.3.2 Destination Brand Identity

Many of the farms are including the story of the UNESCO and the certification in their promotional materials. Since they are not very active in general within marketing, they do not use it actively.

Some respondents would even mention the UNESCO inscription during the guided tours. For example, from the account of F5, “When I guide here I talk about the other farms and about the World Heritage. And I think they know that we are not among the listed UNESCO farms. But it has happened that people have come here for the paintings and when I started to talk about World Heritage they haven’t known about this. And it is often people between 25 and 40 years of age, they haven’t heard about it.”

There seems to be no real competition among the farms. They are interlinked and in some
way managed and marketed by someone else. None of the farm owners really position
themselves accordingly to the tourism market around the World Heritage. As one of the
respondents (F5) puts it:

“No, I don’t think that I am different. We are among the oldest farms to be open for tourists. There is absolutely no rivalry among the farms that are listed and the ones that are not. I have been working with this for so long and there are over 1000 farms that have the right to call themselves Hälsingegård. So, we are very proud that we have 2 of them here within our community.”

One clear difference however was that the supports given towards the listed farm houses were higher from the County Administrative Board than the unlisted farms that was not under the heritage act. Both in terms of actual support but also that the UNESCO inscribed houses tended to get faster feedback to any conservation issue that needed to be addressed. This also included advice onsite.

As one of the respondents (F3) put it:

“It was much easier to get help from the County Administrative Board with funds to fix my houses before. Now they have focused the support for the farms on the list. We haven’t got any money from then and this is a big problem because then our farm is getting worse because of this.”

This is also confirmed by the respondent that is connected to one of the inscribed farms (F4).

“This farm came under the heritage protection act in 1992. And when I was put on the UNESCO list I got a lot of support with restoration and other things. If it is something that needs to be addressed they come out, and I am also a priority towards other farms.”

4.4 Summary

The following model (Figure 4.) summarizes the relationship between each indicator.
Some notable relationships are:

1) The destination brand identity of UNESCO can lead to more opportunities recognized from the supplier’s perspective. An increase in tourists have been expected and some private farmhouses start to open up after the inscription. However, the brand identity of UNESCO itself does not create motivations for innovations.

2) For the listed farmhouses, the brand management of UNESCO is a joint effort from the municipality visitor centre and themselves. Among the listed seven farmhouses are in a strong collaboration with each other, initiated by the local municipalities, which results in a strong dependence on stakeholders (see the next section for further explanation). On the other hand, unlisted farmhouses have more freedom to interpret the destination brand of UNESCO, however they only put minimum effort or have nothing for marketing.

3) There is a weak connection between the farmhouse owner’s attitude and activity. Even though most interviewees would be able to recognize potential opportunities and
future trend in the business, due to prioritization and other personal reasons, they would not pursue them by themselves. Most family-owned farmhouses would let their children to take over in the future, or let other partners innovate instead of them.  

4) Innovation efforts are limited and the main focus is still on developing new tourism products and services. Only one out of five investigated farmhouse owners have innovated the business model by setting up a cafe and selling locally-produced food.
5. Discussion

In this section, results are interpreted all together as a whole. Some implications are described for the practitioners. In addition, other external factors identified during the analysis of the results are also listed.

5.1 Implications

The tourism entrepreneurs at the site of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland in general have certain levels of entrepreneurial attitude. They can recognize the opportunities in the tourism business, however due to their different proficiency levels in business skills, some of them need support from other parties to make their ideas happen, like business skill training and partnership with other entrepreneurs. Since some farmhouses will be passed on to the next generation, those entrepreneurs need to consider the issues of how to hand over the management of farmhouses and plan the future actions.

We have seen that the unlisted farmhouses tend to have a stronger attitude towards development then the listed farmhouses. One possible explanation of this is that the listed farmhouses get support from the visitor centres in a different way than the unlisted that have to rely much more on their own creativity.

This has a strong connection to how they have innovated their business model. As we have shown in Table 2 different types of business model innovation, the unlisted farm owners initiate changes within their business model, which are triggered by visitors to improve what they offer. They innovate (or re-configure) various segments of business models, which include their new offerings and eventually new business models altogether. In terms of the degree of novelty, there is no real business model innovation that is due to the developments within heritage tourism, while it is more within the company than towards its surroundings.

Among the interviewed participants, only one farmhouse stands out since the entrepreneur is actively seeking and conducting new business opportunities, which also has successfully conducted some innovations in terms of business model. Other farms however are restricted by for example the funding, sophisticated approval procedure and so on. The tourism
business on the other hand does not contribute to a high percentage to the income, and thus the motivation is low.

The brand effect of UNESCO has not only attracted tourists from home and abroad, but also calls for better heritage tourism management for farmhouses on the list. An issue is to receive the right support from the government and the municipalities. But also, the collaboration between both the listed and unlisted farms. Especially a lot of the listed farms are dependent on the visitor centre to promote and grow their business. This has a direct effect of the activities when business started to grow in connection to the UNESCO listing. They would need more active support to create feasible products in cooperation also with other farms. A problem is that they need to get a better understanding of the market and who the visitors are to be able to create better products and experiences for this specific visitor group.

As we have seen the listed UNESCO farms received more visitors quite directly while it was a delay for the unlisted farms. Also, when the collaboration and the active work stopped for the farms, the unlisted farms were more sensitive to this development when many of the municipalities and government took over much of the initiative with the UNESCO inscription. The listed farmhouses were not that affected, which was probably since the listed farms could stand out being listed farms and actively promoted in a different way than the unlisted farms.

This becomes even more severe when the decorated farms do not really distinguish and position themselves within the tourism market. In addition, the situation among the farmhouses is more demand-driven, i.e. the tourists should find and create the services by themselves. The entrepreneurs are in most case supportive towards special requirements. One solution is to make business model innovations based on the identified opportunities among the suggestions from the visitors, with the support from farmhouses located in the same area and the visitor centres.

All this puts together a need for support of creating business models around heritage tourism and to get a framework in place. This would work as reference also to other sites where two difficulties that prevents this development to happen are presented as follows.
1. The lack of a proper business setting and the ability to create feasible products around the authenticity of the farms.

None of the farms had a business plan that guided their planning and actions from a long-term perspective. Instead they planned accordingly and changed their offers from season to season. This would make it difficult to capture trends and connect with their customers in an effective way. It would also make it more difficult to find ways to distinguish themselves from other farmhouses and other tourism offerings, to both find their own niche within the market and different ways of collaboration with other stakeholders. This is something that leads to the other difficulty for creating new business models.

2. The disconnection between the stakeholder to work more together according to a feasible business plan.

The other point is that even if business plans were to be created, a framework had to be implemented around this to take advantage of the area as a whole. As discussed before visitor centres, municipalities with other governmental institutions have the roles to help marketing the entire region. They are currently doing this but they also need to help the individual farms to position themselves towards the national and international tourists that are attracted into the area. They then need to communicate this to support the farms to create offerings based on the current visitors. There is now a gap not only between the farms in terms of lacking collaboration but also between the private and public sector in terms of adjusting offerings to a business setting. This would be a starting point to actually see who the visitors are when there are clear indications that the area of the decorated farmhouses is attracting a new type of visitor. What are their needs and expectations? Do they match up with the experience? These are question that should be answered to build feasible business around heritage. More opportunities could also be discovered by doing qualitative surveys to answer this type of questions.
For this study, those difficulties become evident when there are some of the issues that need to be addressed when developing entrepreneurship within heritage tourism. There are great potentials when we have seen the positive effects a UNESCO inscription has for a region and that a great number of visitors are looking for this type of experiences. To make use of this trend in an effective manner a stronger connection need to be created not only by stakeholders within tourism but also within heritage management to be able to protect the historical aspects. Within this our findings and suggestions can work as a starting point for a development to make more use of heritage for entrepreneurship and local development.

5.2 Heritage Tourism Management

Heritage tourism management is important for both listed and unlisted farmhouses and how to balance this with tourism business. It is encouraged to involve stakeholders especially the municipalities and allow more collaborations when conducting business model innovations (see Figure 5.).

![Figure 5. The role of heritage tourism management](image-url)
The engagement from government and municipalities are especially important however they do not support the decorated farm houses in the right way. One problem that was addressed by participant F3:

“I was involved many years before the UNESCO decided to make this so we worked a lot and we had a lot of tourists. We don’t work so hard now so we have less people now then we had 10 years ago. When the government took over certain roles it was more convenient for people to take a step back and let them fix it for us and that was of course bad for business. You don’t get business if you don’t work.”

The support needs to include some deregulations, as one participant F4 stated:

“To make rules and regulations easier. But I don’t think that it would happen because they have been talking about this for a long time. I see that it goes the other way.”

Another aspect to improve is the collaboration between the farmhouses. Currently, there are limited collaborations between the decorated farmhouses. Most collaborations were initiated by the local historical society that provided support and tried to market them jointly. As mentioned before, the Hälsingland Farm Trail (Stora Hälsinge gårdars Väg) is one of the examples. In addition, visitor centres currently act like intermediates between the farmhouses and visitors, and the farmhouses tend to depend on them. By communicating with the visitors and following their suggestions, more opportunities could be discovered.

Therefore, the two important elements from heritage tourism management. Better stakeholder involvement and more collaborations will lead to potential business model innovation for both listed and unlisted farmhouses in the following aspects (see Figure 5.):

- Key resources: by getting financial support, deregulations, business training, the farmhouses will be able to have more resources at hand to pursue their innovations.
- Customer relationship and segments: even though the farmhouses have certain access to the information for overnight guests, they are not likely to keep the record and analyse their behaviours. In addition, the farmhouses are highly dependent on the visitor centre, and other destination management organisation to maintain the relationships with visitors for guided tours. Thus, the results, comments and feedback
from the visitors need to be given back to the farmhouses, to improve their business models.

- Channel: the visitor centre, the halsingegardar.se website and individual web pages or social media accounts are currently the main communication channels. The Hälsingland Farm Trail is a great initiative to combine the marketing resources and take joint efforts. Other form of initiatives should be encouraged in other areas.

5.3 Cultural Heritage Management

One potential issue however when pursuing the business model innovation is the tension between business development and heritage management. There is always a risk when the heritage sites are overused and the actual heritage that brings the value is damaged due to improper management.

A solution for this is to build business models that also consider cultural heritage management. Two examples are to take measurements from the beginning to protect the heritage if the number of tourists will be increased, and to build models that make fewer visitors pay more by increase their heritage tourism experience. Those would then solve some of the difficulties when trying to combine the agendas of heritage management and tourism business. The heritage value and the connection it has to authenticity and experience value for visitors forms the base of the offer for the tourism and has to form the central issue within the creation of new business models.
6. Conclusions

In this section, the research question is answered and generalized. In addition, the limitations and some directions for future research are presented.

6.1 Summary

The research question in focus is: how does a destination brand identity affect an entrepreneur's attitude towards their activities within a heritage tourism setting?

The answer in short is that the destination brand will most likely increase the motivations for entrepreneurs to look for opportunities, which in turn will strengthen their attitudes. However, the relationship between their attitudes and activities is not strongly-related. It depends on other external factors, like business skills training, available resources and so on. The values from the destination brand, such as UNESCO could be recognized from entrepreneurs. However, the degree of how well the individual identities with the destination brand differs, which will manifest in terms of the marketing behaviour.

In the case study of Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland, some entrepreneurs started their tourism businesses more than 50 years ago before the inscription. They recognized opportunities by opening their farmhouses and thus gradually caught the attention from the County Administrative Board. Before the inscription arrived, the entrepreneurs and other business owners expected some increase in visitors. Even though the effect from UNESCO was not as intense as expected, those farmhouses on the list still experienced an increase from foreign visitors. It was certain that the UNESCO inscription made many farmhouses owners recognize their potentials in tourism, as well as entrepreneurs who were in the business.

Due to the special status of the ownership, the listed farmhouses identify themselves as a World Heritage Site, however not enough marketing has been pursued individually. The visitor centres in the areas are mainly responsible of helping the communication between the visitors and farmhouses, even though the visitors could approach the farmhouses by appointments. Some unlisted farmhouses saw the opportunities and started to open their houses. Unlisted farmhouses in general understand the differences between on the UNESCO
list and being on the same site. However, they do not necessarily feel the competition among them, since each farmhouse is different.

In terms of entrepreneurial attitude, the factor of opportunity recognition is obvious among the unlisted farms, while they tend to be more risk-averse due to the economic risk of maintenance. There is a weak link between entrepreneurial attitude and activity. Only one of the investigated farmhouses has conducted entrepreneurial activities that relate to business model innovation. The reasons other farms have not innovated are:

1) tourism business is not the main source of income. Some have daytime jobs that have taken most the time, while some are retired and do not have the energy.
2) the supports from authorities like local historical society, municipality and so on are limited, especially to the unlisted farms.
3) the regulations have constrained the entrepreneurs with what they can do, especially the listed farms. The approval procedure is sophisticated that entrepreneurs’ motivations are reduced.

To help the farm to tackle these problems, more stakeholders need to be involved, especially the from government and municipalities to for example, offer financial support and business skill training. In addition, collaborations among the farmhouses are also needed. This could be done with the help from the local historical society, visitor centre, or by their own initiatives.

6.2 Limitations

As other case studies, the results from the thesis need to have other validations to test the generalizability. In terms of sampling, a larger sampling size will increase the credibility. Even though this thesis considered the longitudinal effect and certain longitudinal data were obtained, it would benefit better by having a longitudinal research design to establish causality, i.e. to conduct interviews with the interviewees a few years later to compare what have achieved. More secondary data could be gathered from the promotional brochures to compare what have changed for the farmhouses and their offerings. Further, some interviews could be done with the stakeholders, for example some representatives from the visitor centres, local historical societies and municipalities to gather their points of view and see how
the support are conducted towards the listed and unlisted farmhouses.

6.3 Future Research

This thesis contributes by exploring the influence of the destination brand identity on the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and activity in a heritage tourism setting. Even though no definite link has been found, this sheds light on this issue and suggests new topics for future research, such as considering other factors that could influence the relationship, like the participation of stakeholders, and collaboration among the entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, more empirical evidences are needed to explore the concept of heritage management.

There are also opportunities to investigate how the brand of UNESCO is affecting other types of businesses connected to tourism, this could for example be cafes, local hotels and transportation providers.

UNESCO is one of the destination brand identities, so it remains unclear how other identities will affect the entrepreneurs and in which ways. In addition, heritage tourism, compared to other types of tourism, is more regulated and controlled by the state. Future research also needs to consider the differences between different types of tourism and how this will contribute to this phenomenon.
References


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Appendix I Interview Guide with Questions

Guide:
1. Background
2. Entrepreneurial Activity (Business Model Innovation)
3. Destination Brand Identity
   a. Perceived destination brand identity
   b. Actual destination brand identity
4. Entrepreneurial Attitude
   a. Risk Aversion
   b. Opportunity Recognition
   c. Business Skills (Self-efficacy)

Questions:
1. Background:
   **Interviewee:** What do you do with your tourism business?

   **Mode of operation:** What is the ownership of your business? Individual, or a joint-ownership?

   **Years of operation** How long have you been working within this business? How long has it been open for business? (If it is individually-owned, how many years?)

   **Motivation:** What motivated you to start operation/take over operations towards tourism? Income? lifestyle? retirement?
   Is this your main source of income?
   Do you work with other businesses as well?
   How much time would you say you spend managing this business, in comparison with other business or work related activities?
   How much would this business contribute to your total earnings, percentage wise?

   **Network** Do you belong to any tourism association?
**Business:** Do you have a written business plan that you follow and update? Have you set any goals for the operations? If yes: How do you track the performance? Have you designed and executed any development of services and products yourself? How has the business developed over the years in terms of services and products?

2. **Business model:**

**Seasonality:** Which months are you open to visitors? For the off seasons, what do you do instead? (The person and the business)

**Employee:** Do you have employees, in case of yes how many? Have you increased or decreased the number of employees during the past five years?

**Revenue Streams:** What are your business activities for tourists? (For example, rentals: festival celebration, weddings; accommodation, guided tours, restaurant & cafes, gift shop) What have you improved during recent five years? What do you want to develop for the future, in terms of new activities?

**Key Resources:** Have you received any support from the authorities or UNESCO, not only financial support but also business training or heritage management, other kinds of support?

**Value propositions:** What do you want your visitors to experience in your business? Farm experience? Heritage experience?

**Cost Structure:** In which areas do you spend most of your budget within the tourism business? (Labour costs? Renovation? Animals? New investment during recent years)?

**Key Stakeholders:** Who do you identify as key stakeholders? (Municipality, other farms etc.) How do you collaborate with them? Do you collaborate with other farms outside the online platforms? (www.halsingegardar.se
Customer Relationship: How do you work with visitor satisfaction? (How do you keep track of what people like and what people don't like?) FEEDBACK system
How do you improve your service and the package of service you offer?

Customer Segments: Do you keep track of who your visitors are? If so who are they roughly last year (Age groups? Where they are from etc?)

Channels: How do you conduct any marketing-related activities, when, what? (Via travel agency? tourist office? Online platforms)

Technology in use: Are you aware of these websites? (www.halsingegardar.se www.halsingland.se ) and how do you use them?
Do you have any own booking system? Financial system?

3. Destination Brand identity:
3a Perceived destination brand identity
What were your expectations about how the inscription by UNESCO would affect your business?
How did the inscription affect your business when it happened?
Did you see any new trends in industry performance before and after the inscription: different kind of visitors, more opportunities, new products or service?

3b Actual destination brand identity
Do you use the UNESCO inscription within promotion or in another way? (If yes, how, if no, why?)
Do you position yourself within the market differently in comparison to other unlisted decorated farmhouses?
What kind of support from the public sector regarding being an UNESCO site would you think would be beneficial?
4. Entrepreneurial attitude

4a Risk Aversion
Have you identified obstacles when developing or running your business? Regulations? Costs? Employees? Competitions?
If so have you thought of any potential solutions?
Are you more willing to take some risks when pursuing a promising opportunity or choose others with less risk instead? (Collaboration with an unknown business partner?)

4b Opportunity recognition
Have you discovered any new business opportunities within the past few years?
Do you see future opportunities within the industry? What kinds?
If yes, how would your business benefit from these opportunities?

4c Business skills
Have your undergone any training, course or education related to business within tourism?
Have you ever started up a new business from the very beginning?
Do you have other relevant experiences that you have used particularly for the tourism related business? Accounting? Managerial experience?