
WINE TOURIST

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ABSTRACT

Rapidly changing business circumstances demand that wine industry should develop itself with marketing orientation. Researches, at global level have indicated that wineries can be supportive in promotion of tourism destinations. Literature survey revealed that papers related to concept of wine tourism and wine tourists are very few. This paper tries to elaborate these concepts and provides recommendations for business promotion of wineries.

Keywords: Wine Tourism, Wine Tourist, Segmentation, Marketing, Branding

1 Introduction

“As anybody who loves wines knows, the regions where the finest wine is made are special places- even magical.” (Wine Spectator, August, 31, 1997) The result is high level of growth in wine and tourism industry. Economic importance of wine tourism attracted researchers’ attention on the concepts related to wine tourism and their motivations. It has been defined in numerous studies (like Hall, (1996), cited in Johnson, (1997); South Australian Tourism Commission, (1997); Getz, (1998)) by both academicians and professionals from wine and tourism industry. Getz (2000) stated that three perspectives could explain wine tourism: wine producers, tourism facilitators including destinations and tourists. Hall et al.(2000) defined it as “visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors”.

2 Wine Tourism

Western Australian Wine Tourism Strategy (2000) defined wine tourism by indicating that “travel for the purpose of experiencing wineries and wine regions and their links to [Australian] lifestyle. Wine tourism encompasses both service provision and destination marketing.” Literature survey revealed wine tourism studies with reference to Australia (Macionis, 1997; Dowling & Carlsen, 1999), Canada (Hackett, 1998; Telfer, 2001; Williams & Kelly, 2001; Williams & Dossa, 2003; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2003), Chile (Sharples, 2002), France (Thevenin, 1996; Frochot, 2000) Hungary (Szivas, 1999), Italy(Pavan, 1994) New Zealand (Beverland, 1998; Johnson, 1998; Mitchell & Hall, 2003), Spain (Gilbert, 1992), South Africa (Preston-Whyte, 2000; Bruwer, 2003; Demhardt, 2003), the USA (Dodd, 1995; Peters, 1997; Skinner, 2000), and the United Kingdom (Howley & van Westering, 2000). Innovative marketing

strategies in order to grab sizable market share in high yield wine tourism. Tourism firms are focused on strategic issues related to it (Williams, 2001). Australia formulated its wine tourism strategy (King, 1998)) while Western Australia and Tasmania have developed marketing plans to promote this sector (Tourism Tasmania, 2002 and Carlsen & Dowling, 2001). Most of these strategies and planning consider motivations and satisfaction as most important variables. In fact, a number of other studies also stressed only on this single dimension, but this is not the full understanding of concept 'wine tourism'. Getz & Brown (2006) defined it as “simultaneously a form of consumer behavior, a strategy by which destinations develop and market wine-related attractions and imagery, and a marketing opportunity for wineries to educate, and to sell their products, directly to consumers.”

3 Wine Tourist

Except one study (i.e. Mitchell, Hall, and McIntosh, 2000) all others have examined motivation, preference and behavior of wine tourists. Williams (2001) stated that measurement of consumers' preference can support destination planning and positioning while Williams and Dossa (2003, p. 31) stressed on identification of various characteristics found among different subgroups of wine tourists. The author also examined experiential attributes of wine tourists. Williams and Dossa, (2003) tried to investigate about potential wine tourist by considering all wine consumers including general visitors. Mitchell and Hall (2001a, p. 69) stated that “most authors suggest that winery visitors are typically middle aged, highly educated, professional or managerial, with above average income”. The researchers also focused on segmentation of wine tourists and Dodd, (1995) concluded that the visitors of wineries in Texas were highly educated and were from high-income group while Dodd & Bigotte,(1997) clearly indicated that wine

tourists can be expected not to be in cheap package deal. Three categories of wine tourists-the “wine lovers”, the “wine interested” and the “curious tourists” was given by Hall (1996) cited in Hall & Macionis, (1998). Some of the European researchers seem to favor the consideration of suppliers instead of wine tourists. They stated wine tourists as “the tourist with an acknowledged interest in wine”. Dodd and Bigotte (1997) conducted survey on consumers’ perception and used age and income for segmentation and results revealed that the group with higher mean income and age group was found “frequent visiting habit to wineries”. Williams and Young (1999) also investigated segmentation issue related to wine tourists. The study tried to take input from behavior of wine tourists. Based on this input, study tried to compare between drinking habits of Australians and Europeans. The preference of tourists was found a significant factor in development of wine tourism. Some other researchers tried to ask tourists to “self-categorize”. Maddern and Golledge (1996) developed a research tool, which asked the respondent whether his/her level of knowledge about wine was ‘advanced’, ‘intermediate’ or ‘basic’. The results of this study seem to be suggestive for visitors’ motivation, which is very difficult to quantify. Second problem with output of study was the relationship between knowledge and interest to participate in an activity.

Extensive literature survey suggests that segmentation of wine tourists is most important aspect to be investigated from industry perspective. In practical terms, segmentation based on motivations of wine tourists can solve the problems of market shares for wineries. The concept of ‘integration’ given by Holt (1995), Rosenberg (1979) and Belk (1988) also important in this context because there studies indicates consumers’ involvement with the product. Most of the research on this concept is with its research setting in Anglophone world. However, European countries are also wine tourism destinations but with different characteristics. Mitchell et al.

(2000) conducted research in Italy and categorized wine tourists in four groups: the professionals, the impassioned neophyte, the hanger-on and the drinkers. Based on demographic profiles, segmentation was very specific and useful to know about the behavioral aspects of wine tourists residing in different regions of world. Until date, a little work has been done on cross-cultural characteristics of wine tourism. Behaviors of tourists are found different in “traditionally” wine producing nations and “newer” wine producing nations.

4 Conclusions

Wine tourism has emerged as one of important type of tourism with inherent capability to promote wineries and building brand equity. Conceptualization and detailed understanding can help to develop MIS database and to segment the product and market of wineries. Wineries can make association with other service providers to develop their businesses. This paper with aim to discuss the concept of wine tourism, wine tourists and segmentations has made justification with objectives by providing a detailed insight about wine tourism. Future research can investigate for specific products and services required by wine tourists, innovative marketing strategies and promotions of wine tourism by social media.

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