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The role of motivations and involvement in wine tourists' intention to return: SEM and fsQCA findings[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is increasingly important for wine regions and local economies. The purpose of this research is to use both symmetric (SEM) and asymmetric (fsQCA) methods to explore the role of motivation and involvement in tourists' intention to return to a wine region. To test these relations the study uses an online survey to obtain a convenience sample of 292 responses from Rioja and Bordeaux wine tourists. The SEM model shows that participation in wine events and product involvement positively relate to the intention to return. Two sufficient configurations in the fsQCA consistently lead to the intention: high core wine and education, high product involvement, and high participation in wine events combined with escape and socialization or with the destination's attractiveness. These results can help wine managers and operators design differentiated strategies to address the specific needs of wine tourists.

1. Introduction

Wine tourism combines both the wine and tourism industries (Getz & Brown, 2006; Lavandoski, Pinto, Silva, & Vargas-Sánchez, 2016). This tourism is of utmost importance in fostering regional development because it sustains and creates local employment and wealth in rural areas. Further, this tourism encourages the development of related facilities and services (López-Guzmán, Rodríguez-García, Sánchez-Cañizares, & Luján-García, 2011).

The number of international wine tourists is significant and increasing: in 2014, Napa Valley (California) and Australia welcomed a total of 3.3 million and 5.4 million visitors respectively (Tourism Australia, 2014; Tourism Napa Valley, 2014). In Europe, wine tourism in Rioja has increased 13.8% in the past four years (PCT, 2011); and in France, the total number of wine tourists in 2015 was 2.5 million. The industry expects the number to grow to 4 million by 2020 (Atout France, 2015).

There are three different perspectives on wine tourism: those of wine producers, suppliers, and consumers (Getz, 2000). Most research in wine tourism is from the suppliers' and wine producers' perspectives (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2016). A deep understanding of the motivations of consumers needs further exploration as a precondition for the

successful marketing of wine tourism (Molina, Gómez, González-Díaz, & Esteban, 2015).

The research also demonstrates that wine tourists seek an overall experience in which they can not only taste, purchase, and learn more about wine but also enjoy gastronomic experiences, cultural and recreational programs, and find escape and socialization (Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Getz & Brown, 2006; Getz & Carlsen, 2008; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2016). This demand derives from wine tourists' diverse motivations. The motivations have several conceptualizations and terminologies that vary in different regions and cultures (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, & Macionis, 2000). These motivations demand more research.

Some researchers have also highlighted the importance of the involvement concept in wine tourism (Lockshin, Quester, & Spawton, 2001). In fact, intrinsic motivations positively influence involvement that in turn is an important predictor of consumer behavior (Prebensen, Woo, Chen, & Uysal, 2013). Therefore, understanding how wine tourists' motivations and involvement affect behavior, namely making return visits, is vital (Getz & Brown, 2006; Mitchell & Hall, 2006) because repeated visits can lead to positive financial performance and customer loyalty (Žabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010). There are differences in the dynamics of visits to wine regions (first and repeat visitors), and the

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literature is sparse regarding the understanding of the motivations that lead to repeat visits (Bruwer & Alant, 2009).

Hence, this study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it contributes to a better understanding of the consumers' side by exploring perspective of repeat visitors. Second, it provides suitable conclusions on how motivations and involvement explain the intention to return, and how to improve the involvement of wine tourists. Third, much of the literature on wine tourists' motivations concentrates on Australia, New Zealand, and the United States rather than on Europe (Hall & Macionis, 1998). Thus, this study contributes by providing insights from the Rioja and Bordeaux wine regions. Further, the study contributes to the wine tourism literature at the methodological level. Besides the SEM (structural equation modeling), the study uses the fsQCA (fuzzy-set comparative qualitative analysis) to investigate which configurations of wine tourists' motivations lead to a return visit to a wine region and which ones lead to involvement. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to use this type of analysis to explore the intention to return in wine tourism. The study also demonstrates that the fsQCA offers much in terms of understanding how involvement and motivations explain the return visits of wine tourists, more so than the SEM.

The organization of the study is as follows: after the introduction is the literature review. Then, the study presents the method, the results, a discussion on the findings, and conclusions. The conclusion provides the contributions, limitations of this study, and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Motivations as antecedents of return visit intention to a wine region

As the theory of consumer behavior postulates, wine tourists' motivations are important in explaining their intention to return to a wine region (e.g., Howard, 1994) and in understanding their needs and expectations (Alant & Bruwer, 2004; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall et al., 2000). The research on consumer behavior sees motivation as the outcome of the dynamic tension among the needs of consumers that require gratification. The fulfilment of those needs releases tension (Schiffman et al., 2001). Understanding which motivations drive wine tourists to a repeat visit is a key element in developing successful strategies for the destination marketing of wine regions (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

The research uses several approaches, classifications, and terminologies for the motivation behind wine tourism. One of the approaches identifies motivations as “primary and “secondary.” The primary motivations are wine-centered and related to tasting and purchasing wine (Alant & Bruwer, 2004; Alebaki, Menexes, & Koutsouris, 2015; Bruwer, 2003; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall et al., 2000) and the secondary or peripheral motivations are escape, socialization, participation in wine events (e.g., wine festivals, harvestings), educational experience, and the destination's attractiveness (e.g., dining at wine restaurants and staying at wine hotels) among others (Alebaki et al., 2015; Carmichael, 2005; Getz & Brown, 2006; Hall et al., 2000).

However, the terminology regarding the dimensions of motivations is not consensual. For instance, some studies argue that “core wine product” encompasses a desire to learn more about wine and to expand knowledge beyond tasting and purchasing (Getz & Brown, 2006; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2016). Some authors also combine the motivations of “escape” and “socialization” into one. This concept encompasses the desire for relaxation in a rural scenario, enrichment through a unique esthetic experience, and an escapist retreat from daily routines while enjoying the companionship of a group, such as family or friends (Lee & Crompton, 1992; Mc Kercher & Wong, 2004).

Another approach distinguishes between motivations that push or pull. The push–pull theory (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981) of wine

tourism combines the benefits associated with the consumers' intrinsic needs (Getz & Carlsen, 2008) with socio-psychological motives as push factors (Goossens, 2000) and particular attributes as pull factors that draw the visitor to the wine region (Mitchell, Hall, & McIntosh, 2000) and shape its attractiveness. Although much research has focused on the pull factors of tourist behavior, Goossens (2000) argues that full understanding of the destination choice requires both, as tourists are pushed by their needs (e.g., escape, relaxation, or prestige) and pulled by the benefits of leisure services and destinations (e.g., nice weather, impressive landscape, wineries offering on-site sommeliers, high quality wineries, and wine festivals).

The experience of wine tourism can also be conceptualized in three dimensions: “core wine product,” “core destination appeal,” and “cultural product” (Getz & Brown, 2006). Sparks (2007) supports these findings and proposes three dimensions: the “destination experience,” the “core wine experience” (both pull factors), and “personal development” (push factor). The results of several studies confirm the multi-faceted nature of the motivations behind wine tourism (Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008) by demonstrating that the desire to visit a wine region or a winery arises from both push and pull factors (Yuan, Cai, Morrison, & Linton, 2005).

Another approach analyzes the wine tourists' perception of the benefits from the core wine product, from the augmented services that the winery provides, and from the ancillary services in a wine region, such as entertainment and events, relaxation and recreation, and other tourism and hospitality services (Byrd, Canziani, Hsieh, Debbage, & Sonmez, 2016).

The present study adopts the classification of “primary” and “secondary” motivations and tests two different conceptualizations of motivations: (1) the single dimensions of core wine, education, escape, socialization, destination's attractiveness, and participation in wine events; and (2) the combined dimensions of core wine & education, escape & socialization, the destination's attractiveness, and participation in wine events. This classification acknowledges the product needs but also recognizes a more tourist-oriented approach that goes beyond wine tasting and purchasing (Alant & Bruwer, 2004).

Some authors also point out that different motivations exist for first-time and repeat visitors (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall et al., 2000). Our study focuses on exploring the motivations of the wine tourists that have already visited the wine regions to better understand the antecedents of their intention to return.

2.2. Product involvement as an antecedent of the intention to return to a wine region

The research on consumer behavior frequently uses the concept of product involvement because it affects the consumer's behavior and decision-making (Broderick & Mueller, 1999; Josiam, Smeaton, & Clements, 1999), and several studies (e.g., Lockshin et al., 2001) report its importance in wine tourism research.

Involvement refers to the extent to which individuals associate themselves with an activity or product (Zaichkowsky, 1985). This definition focuses on the personal relevance of a product such as needs, interests, or values. Involvement with wine reflects the interest, enthusiasm, and excitement that consumers show toward wine (Bloch, 1986; Goldsmith, D'Hauteville, & Flynn, 1998). Bruwer and Huang (2012, p. 463) conceptualize wine involvement as “a motivational state of mind of a person with wine or wine related activity...which reflects the extent of personal relevance of the wine related decision to the individual in terms of one's basic values, goals, and self-concept.” Several authors find that the level of wine involvement influences consumers' behavior (e.g., Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012) and decisions on wine tourism (e.g., Brown, Havitz, & Getz, 2007; Getz & Carlsen, 2008).

Many studies explore the relation between motivation and involvement (Josiam et al., 1999; Josiam, Kinley, & Kim, 2004; Kyle,

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