

Examining the Factors Influencing Visitor's Satisfaction with Missouri Wines: A Case of Destination Marketing

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Abstract : Most of the pioneering studies related to wineries were conducted in famous wine regions, the results of which were not especially applicable to the small and emerging wineries in the United States. These wineries rely heavily on visitors' on-site purchases; this highlights the importance of understanding winery visitors' behaviors. This study aims to determine the factors that contribute to the decision-making process related to wine satisfaction in a competitive marketplace through utilizing destination branding and cellar door visitation in the "Show Me" state of Missouri. A quantitative research process was conducted by applying a structured survey. Information was obtained from a convenient sample of 338 respondents from 16 wineries representing all size groups. The data was analyzed using SPSS with descriptive statistics, ANOVA and multiple regression. This study's main findings include, wine drinkers differed in terms of considering health benefits when consuming wine, heavy drinkers were more inclined to know and enjoy wine quality than other groups of drinkers, two main antecedents of satisfaction with Missouri wines are perception of Missouri wines and perceptions of prices of Missouri wines. Winery owners stand to benefit from this research by being able to design winery experiences that are highly valued.

Keywords: Wine tourism, marketing, destination, branding, satisfaction, consumer behavior.

Introduction

Modern tourism represents an important source of internal income for many countries (UNWTO, 2018), contributing to the creation of jobs, improvements in infrastructure, and quality of life (Ouyang, Gursoy, & Chen, 2019; Gursoy, Ouyang, Nunkoo, & Wei, 2019; Movono & Becken, 2018). Tourism is also

linked to the development of destinations, through the improvement of the quality and infrastructure of places. Given its character, tourism is synonymous with growth for other interrelated industries, such as the service industry, wine industry, events, as it caters to various classes of people. Tourism is also a field which is greatly influenced by the context of local, national, and international tourism demand and supply, the tourism industry structure, and consumer characteristics. Conceptualizing tourism as a global process of commoditization and consumption involving flows of people, capital, images, and cultures (Appadurai, 1990; Clifford, 1997; Meethan, 2001), tourism may induce changes to places, people, and patterns of social and economic relationships, among others, through considerable and unequal redistribution of spending power.

Wine tourism is one of the most crucial pillars of rural tourism (Arora, 2020). As expected, wineries have gained popularity because their locations are in suburbs or the countryside. Compared with other outdoor activities, wineries are also enriched with natural, gastronomic, historical and cultural resources (Vaishar & Šťastná, 2020). Wineries are growing in popularity and deemed as spots where grapevines are grown and wine is traditionally fermented. Wine tourism is defined as a sort of consumer behavior based on people's attraction to wine, wine-producing regions and wine-related experiences (Getz, 1999). While the cultural consumption of wine began to flourish after World War II in Europe, wine did not catch on in America until the 1960s.

Winery tourism, according to Dowling (1998), is “experiential tourism occurring in wine regions, providing a unique experience which includes wine, gastronomy, hospitality, culture, the arts, education, and travel” (p. 78). One thing that differentiates winery tourism from other types is its offering of tourism products that are both tangible (wines, souvenirs, Hors d' Oeuvres) and intangible (atmosphere, staff's service, enjoyment happiness, memories). The US is considered to be the largest wine market in the world in terms of both volume and value (Wine Institute, 2014a, 2014b). In 2014, it is estimated that wine revenues approached \$40billion, with 69% of wine sales coming from domestic products and 31% from imported wine (Frederickson, 2015). The number of wineries in the United States continues to rise, in 2009 there were 6357 compared to 10742 in 2019 with a rapid increase of very small and limited production wineries. The leading winery region by production in the United States is still California. It accounts for 87% of annual wine production (Wine Vines Analytics, 2016, 2017). However, small and emerging wineries in other states have increased their revenue by taking advantage of winery tourism, a field that not only produces wines, but offers diverse leisure and tourism opportunities. Missouri, over the last decade, has developed a new and rapidly growing wine tourism industry with 92 wineries in 2009 compared to 134 in 2019 (Missouri Grape & Wine, 2020).

When a tourism market is not well-established, it is critical for tourism promoters to develop an effective strategy to attract new visitors. This includes understanding winery visitors' needs and attitudes toward wineries. One

approach to understanding winery tourists is profiling them based on their characteristics, such as their participation in winery activities, wine consumption behavior, and socio-demographic variables. In addition, psychological factors such as wine involvement and satisfaction will give more accurate implications about the internal characteristics of tourists. Profiling usually aims to identify different groups of tourists (Bruwer & Li, 2007). This approach is particularly effective for target marketing. A targeted market would be any group that contributes to a winery's revenue and reputation. The experience economy in a tourism setting is focused on experiences that are designed and/or enhanced by the tourism supplier (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). The experience economy can be differentiated from the individual experience as the latter is serendipitous and specific to individuals, while the experience economy is shaped by a tourism supplier that provides a more desirable experience tailored to a target market (Andrades, Dimanche, Prebensen, Chen, & Uysal, 2014).

Literature Review

The number of wineries across the United States has increased significantly in recent years. As of 2019, there are 10,185 wineries in the US, an almost 300% increase since 2000 (McCole et al., 2018; Reme nova et al., 2019). The majority of these new wineries are located in regions not previously known for wine production, tend to produce small amounts of wine, and sell most of their wine directly to consumers from the tasting room (McCole et al., 2018). Although wineries in emerging areas are mostly small producers, they have become vital to the health of rural communities that have seen a decrease in economic activity from family farming, manufacturing, and/or extraction (Alebacki & Koutsouris, 2019; Eustice et al., 2019; Reme nova et al., 2019). Although winery visits are often the primary attraction, visitors combine wine tours with restaurant meals, shop purchases, gallery and museum visits, event attendance, and overnight stays (Dowling, 1998; Popp & McCole, 2014). Recent wine studies found that 32% of the US population of 332 million drink wine. The U.S. wine market size was valued at USD 63.69 billion in 2021 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.8% from 2022 to 2030 (Grand View Research, 2022).

Wine consumption has become a sign of social status, especially among the millennials and young generation, which is driving the market. Wine sales have surged across the U.S. owing to innovation in flavor, color, and packaging of the product. Winery tourism provides diverse tourism services, such as the tasting of wines, learning about wines and wine making, and enjoying the view of vineyards (Gill, Byslma, & Ouschan, 2007). It is therefore important to understand how winery visitors interact with each of these attributes as visitors' perceived value of these attributes will directly and indirectly impact their spending at wineries and their destination loyalty (Carlsen & Boksberger, 2015; Reisinger, 2009; Shapiro & Gómez, 2014). The purpose of the current study is to evaluate winery visitors' behavior toward emerging wineries in Missouri. This study's primary objectives are 1) to profile Missouri winery visitors based on

wine involvement, winery satisfaction, wine consumption behavior, winery activities, and socio-demographic variables, 2) Missouri wine perceptions, 3) to contribute to a broader understanding of both the identity-based and the destination branding approaches by focusing on an important aspect of the destination branding effort, namely the role and significance of Missouri wineries brand elements.

Wine Affinity

The American wine industry has established itself as one of the most competitive and the USA is a very challenging market. The US is the first per capita wine consumer in the world and the fourth wine producer (Li et al., 2019). To cope with this phenomenon, wine specialists have highlighted the importance of finding new consumer segments (Chester et al., 2010). Broadly speaking, the US wine industry is traditionally oriented to the 80 million Baby-Boomer generation mainly due to their higher purchasing power and brand loyalty. This generation is recognized as one of the most important consumer segments (Garibaldi et al., 2017). However, the focus is moving into the Millennials generation due to their growing interest in wine (Iyer et al., 2016). With 83 million members, it has the potential to fit with the upcoming industry's needs and challenges (Villanueva, 2015). They represent the biggest market segment in US history (Metha & Bhanja, 2017). In light of the aforementioned rationale, we posit the ensuing statement:

H₁: Visitors' affinity with wine has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.

Missouri wine quality perception

Researchers in consumer behavior observed the effects of past knowledge or sensations on present perceptions and evaluation (Riskier, 1996; Mulvey, 1994). Applied to wine tourism (Hall & Mitchell, 2005; Bruwer & Alant, 2009) and related to the experience of drinking Missouri wine, we can expect a positive impact of visitors' perception on the final evaluation of the travelling to the wineries. Indeed, positive perceptions of quality lead to satisfaction. (Hasegawa, 2010; Kotler et al, 2010). The central hypothesis is related to the idea that perceptions of Missouri wine quality will have a significant impact on the levels of satisfaction with Missouri wines.

H₂: Visitors' perception about quality of Missouri wines has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.

Wine consumption

The US wine industry is at the tail end of its largest growth period in history. Since 1994, the wine industry has experienced long-term trends of increasing volumes and higher prices, with only minor flattening periods during recessions (McMillan, 2018). In the USA, 34% of Baby-Boomers are occasional wine drinkers versus 36% of Millennials. Despite that, Baby-Boomers drink more

frequently than Millennials, although the gap is narrowing (Wine Market Council, 2016). Consumer demand for a wide variety of wines — both American and imported—has exploded in recent years in the United States (Gallego 2014). As a result, new specialty wine varieties (such as “Moscato”) have been introduced, and retailers now offer many wine-related products, such as sparkling wine and wine coolers. As a result of the upsurge in consumer demand, many food retail outlets, including conventional supermarkets and mass merchandisers, have added wine to their shelves, increasing consumer access to the product (Constellation Wines, 2005).

H₃: Visitors’ level of wine consumption has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.

Price perception

Wine is a highly differentiated product sold at a wide range of different prices. The assumption of a positive association between the price and intrinsic qualities of a product is central to consumer behavior and should also be true for wine. Wine is one of the most researched and mentioned beverages in the literature (Parr et al. 2011; Brochet & Dubourdieu, 2001). This might be because of the complexity of wine characteristics (Yang & Lee, 2020) of unwontedness by varying brand, style, type, or even price (Williamson, Robichaud & Francis, 2012; Lattey, Bramley & Francis, 2010). The price and quality relationship is applicable here, higher prices would reflect higher quality of wine and in turn result in higher subjective experience ratings (Mastrobuoni, Peracchi, & Tetenov, 2014). The influence of price on consumer’s experience ratings is important for both consumer behavior, i.e., on what to base one’s own buying decision, as much as for the wine pricing. Customer satisfaction is determined by the quality and price of the products desired by the customer (Bei & Chiao, 2001). Moreover, Ehsani & Ehsani (2015) concluded that "price can be used as a resource to increase both profit and customer satisfaction"

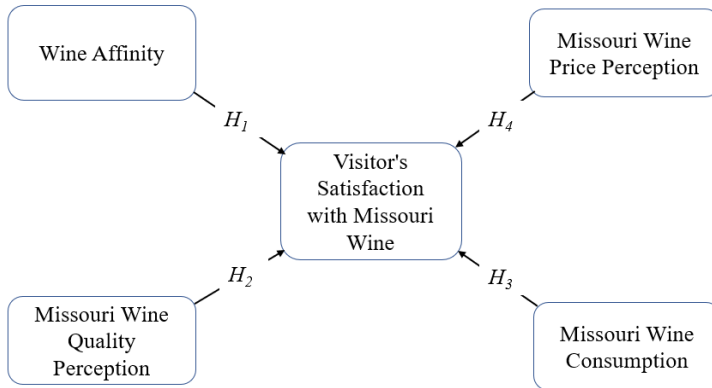
H₄: Visitors’ perception about the price of wine has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.

Methodology

Missouri has developed a new and rapidly growing industry of small vineyards and wine enterprises. There are approximately 132 small to medium size wineries in Missouri. Many Missouri wineries have small vineyards while others don’t have vineyards and rely on grapes from vineyards within and outside the state. This study explores wineries visitors profile and satisfaction with Missouri wines. For participants, the study sought out wineries in Missouri and access to their visitors. Seven wineries cooperated with the current research. The method of self-completion was chosen, so the questionnaires were designed to have clear guidelines, a reader-friendly format, and a simple structure. The questionnaire was completed by 385 customers who visited the wineries and experienced the winery’s services and products (Lee et al., 2017). A total of 338

of surveys were fully completed and are the ones included in our analysis. Before being distributed to winery visitors the questionnaire was pilot tested and finalized after minor revisions. A convenience sampling process took place and respondents were asked to complete the three-page questionnaire immediately after the end of their winery visit. The winery surveyed customers in the winery's tasting room. The questionnaire for this study was comprised of three sections. The first section included screening questions on participants' socio-demographic profile including gender, education, marital status, working industry, household size, monthly household income. The second section was titled "Satisfaction and Recommendation" and included nine questions about wine purchase, health perceptions and satisfaction with Missouri wines using a Likert-type scale. The third section was titled "Overall Perceptions" and included twenty items to measure visitors' perceptions of wines in general and Missouri wine in particular. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements for each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale which was previously used by Lee et al. (2018) in their wine study; (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) on each item. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA and multi regression.

Figure 1. Proposed Model for Missouri Wine Satisfaction



Findings and Discussion

Profile of respondents

About 80% of the respondents were from Missouri and 10% were from Kansas. Nearly sixty percent of the sample was below 34 years. Gender distribution was nearly evenly split between males and females. Respondents were predominantly Caucasian (87%). About half the respondents reported household income to be under \$50,000 per year. About 20% reported household incomes above \$100,000 per year. About 48% of the respondents were college graduates. Sample demographics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Demographic Factors	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	166	49%
Female	172	51%
Age		
21 – 24	140	39%
25 – 34	79	22%
35 – 44	47	13%
45 – 54	48	13%
55 – 64	26	7%
65+	19	5%
Race		
Caucasian	310	87%
African-American	25	7%
Hispanic	5	1%
Others	18	5%
Annual Household Income		
Less than \$ 50,000	173	49%
\$ 50,000 – \$ 99,000	108	31%
\$ 100,000 - \$ 125,000	44	13%
More than \$ 125,000	28	7%
Education		
High School	38	11%
Some college	146	41%
College degree	174	48%
Other	1	-

About 43% of the sample indicated they were occasional drinkers or light drinkers (Table 2). However, when asked how many glasses of wine they consumed in a week, most indicated to be either drinking occasionally (27%) or between 1 to 4 glasses per week (41%). Preference for red or white wine was evenly divided (Table 2). Nearly 86% of the respondents had tasted wines from outside Missouri. 28% preferred Missouri wines, while the majority was neutral (56%). Nearly 90% would recommend Missouri wines to someone.

Most of the respondents purchased wine from wine or liquor stores (46%) or from supermarkets (38%). Convenient location was the most commonly cited reason for location for purchasing wine. The second most frequent reason was variety of brands (23%), and the third most frequent reason was price (19%).

Table 2: Drinker Types and Preferences

Drinker's Attributes	Frequency	Percent
Type of drinker		
Occasional drinker	72	20%
Light drinker	83	23%
Moderate drinker	148	41%
Heavy drinker	55	15%
Wine consumption		
Occasionally drink wine	93	27%
1-4 glasses per week	141	41%
5-9 glasses per week	77	21%
10-14 glasses per week	22	6%
15-20 glasses per week	9	3%
Type of wines preferred		
Red	161	45%
White	164	46%
Rose	32	9%
Preference for Missouri wines		
Prefer Missouri wines	100	28%
Neutral preference	200	56%
Not prefer Missouri wines	57	16%
Recommend Missouri wines		
Yes	307	90%
Wine purchase location		
Wine or liquor store	156	46%
Supermarket	130	38%
Missouri winery	43	13%
others	13	4%

*Differences between types of drinkers**Taste and enjoyment of wine*

Heavy drinkers liked the taste of wine (mean = 4.53) more than moderate and light (or occasional) drinkers (means of 4.39 and 4.24 respectively). One way ANOVA was done to test these differences. The ANOVA was significant ($F(2,357) = 3.03$; $p = 0.049$). These differences were more pronounced for desire to know and enjoy wine quality. Heavy drinkers were more inclined to know and enjoy wine quality than other two groups of drinkers ($F(2,357) = 3.966$; $p = 0.02$).

Wine as part of their lifestyle

Heavy drinkers view wine as being crucial to their lifestyle (Mean (heavy)= 3.40; mean (moderate) = 3.11; mean (light or occasional) = 2.83). One way ANOVA revealed significant differences ($F(2,357) = 4.703$; $p = 0.01$). However, there were no significant differences in how respondents saw wine consumption

contributing to their social status. There were also no significant differences among the three groups of wine drinkers about consuming wine with meals. However, the three types of drinkers had significant differences in how they viewed wine and its effect on relaxation. Heavy drinkers agreed more than the other two groups about how wine consumption helped them relax (mean (Heavy) = 4.28; mean (moderate) = 4.10; mean (light/occasional) = 3.77; $p = 0.0001$).

Health benefits

There were significant differences among types of drinkers in how they viewed health benefits of moderate consumption of wines. Moderate drinkers viewed the most health benefits from moderate consumption of wine (mean = 4.19). Not surprisingly, mean for heavy drinkers was lower (mean = 3.89). The ANOVA was significant ($F(2,355) = 4.413$; $p = .013$).

Wine drinkers differed in terms of not considering health benefits when consuming wine. As expected, heavy drinkers tended to not take into consideration health benefits of wine compared to moderate and light/occasional drinkers ($F(2,356) = 3.687$; $p = .026$). In contrast, light/occasional drinkers tended to follow a healthy diet compared to moderate and heavy drinkers ($F(2,356) = 2.690$; $p = .069$). Eating healthy is a critical value of young consumers, and as consumers age, there is ample evidence that boomers are taking their cues from young people, adopting their own health-conscious diets and consumption patterns (Lodi Wine, 2024). In years past, of all alcoholic beverages, wine had scientific evidence to show that it was part of a healthy diet and lifestyle. Health touchpoints for the current consumer come from different indicators. Even most of us in the wine industry don't know how many calories are in a 5-ounce glass of wine. Wine makers lack the transparency that consumers are demanding when they don't put calories on the label, and that is a huge marketing mistake. If the wine industry really wants to reach the millennial, then it must make the effort to look at how other beverages are marketed successfully, including soda, energy drinks, hard seltzers and spirits. Then the wine industry will need to repurpose those ideas for its own benefit.

Missouri wines

There were no significant differences in how different wine drinkers perceived Missouri wines. They also perceived Missouri wines as having good value for money. Overall, Missouri wines were seen to be excellent (overall mean = 4.01) with no significant differences among different wine drinkers. There were no significant differences in how different wine drinkers consumed Missouri wines in restaurants (overall mean = 3.22) or using these wines for gifts (overall mean = 3.22). The low mean scores suggest that although Missouri wines are seen as excellent wines with good value for money there are marketing opportunities to have them used on other occasions.

We examined four antecedents of satisfaction with Missouri wines. The first factor we examined was *affinity for wines*. Affinity for wines is the extent to

which a consumer likes wines and views it as part of their lifestyle. The second antecedent was *Missouri wine perceptions*. This is an indicator of how consumers viewed Missouri wines compared to wines from other parts of the world. The third antecedent was *price perceptions of Missouri wines*. This is an indicator of how consumers perceived the pricing of Missouri wines. The fourth indicator was *consumption of Missouri wines*. This variable is a reflection of their purchase and consumption of Missouri wines when consumers eat out or give gifts.

As seen in Table 3., *Affinity for wines* was measured with five items (Cronbach alpha = 0.801). *Missouri wine perception* was measured with three items (Cronbach alpha = 0.869). Price perception of Missouri wines was measured with two items (Cronbach alpha = 0.67). Consumption of Missouri wines was measured with two items (Cronbach alpha = 0.766).

Table 3. Scale items

Scale items	Cronbach alpha
Wine affinity	0.801
Q1- I like the taste of wine.	
Q2 I like to know and enjoy the wine quality.	
Q3 – Wine is crucial for my lifestyle.	
Q4 – Enjoying wine is a factor of social status.	
Q5 – Wine goes well with meals.	
Missouri Wine quality perceptions	.869
Q6 – Missouri wines are packaged just as good as wines from the rest of the world.	
Q7- Missouri wine characteristics are as good as other quality wines.	
Q8 – Missouri wine quality is just as good as other wines of the world.	
Price perceptions of Missouri wines	0.670
Q9 – Missouri wines are reasonably priced.	
Q10 – Missouri wines have good value for money.	
Consumption of Missouri wines	0.766
Q11 – When eating out at restaurants in Missouri I order Missouri wines.	
Q12 – I often use Missouri wines as gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, holidays etc.	

Antecedents of satisfaction with Missouri wines

A linear regression as run with satisfaction with Missouri wines as the dependent variable. The independent variables were affinity for wines, Missouri wine perceptions, price perceptions of Missouri wines, and consumption of Missouri wines. The model was significant with a r-squared value of 0.234. The results of the regression are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of regression

Independent variables	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)		4.214	.000
Affinity for wines	.075	1.448	.149
Missouri wine price perceptions	.148	2.552	.011
Consumption of Missouri wines	.089	1.613	.108
Missouri wine perceptions	.302	5.005	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with Missouri wines

The results of the regression indicate that perception of Missouri wines (Beta= .302, p = .000) and perceptions of prices of Missouri wines (Beta = .148, p= .011) had significant positive effects on satisfaction with Missouri wines. The impact of consumption of Missouri wines had a weak effect on satisfaction (Beta= .089, p = .108). Affinity for wines had no significant effect on satisfaction.

Effect of satisfaction on willingness to recommend

Satisfaction levels are significantly greater for those willing to recommend Missouri wines to someone. Those willing to recommend Missouri wines had significantly higher satisfaction (mean = 3.85) than those not willing to recommend (mean = 2.97; p = .000).

Table 5: Result of hypothesis testing

No.	Hypothesis	Result
1	Visitors' perception about wine has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.	Not supported
2	Visitors' affinity with wine has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.	Supported
3	Visitors' level of wine consumption has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.	Not supported
4	Visitors' perception about the price of wine has a significant impact on their satisfaction level.	Supported

Marketing the Missouri Brand

The results of this study indicated that about 80% of the respondents were from Missouri and 10% were from Kansas the neighboring state. Therefore, it can be inferred that the state of Missouri and its wineries has a real marketing opportunity here to attract visitors from the other states especially those in the Midwest. Missouri as a wine tourism destination brand must be a highlight of the state's official website. The wine tourism destination value proposition is characterized by complexity elements such as functional, holistic, psychological (Scorrano et al., 2013; Fait et al., 2016) and it can be perceived as

“extraordinary” (Vrontis et al., 2011; Vrontis & Thrassou, 2014) if it is identified and communicated adequately. This possibility is offered by an intensive use of information and Web communication technologies (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Hvass & Munar, 2012; Ayeh et al., 2013). An increasing number of tourists deem websites to be important sources of information when deciding where to travel (Choi et al., 2007; Jeong et al., 2012). Web tools provide the first virtual experience of the destination. They transfer values, impressions, elements and feelings that build up the tourist image. Therefore, the extraction of information by digital sources produces knowledge about destination branding and image as well as tourist experiences and behavior (Költringer & Dickinger, 2015).

Brand identity and brand image are related, and in today's communications environment a strong brand can only be created and maintained by strengthening the linkage between identity and image (Nandan, 2005). The brand identity framework incorporates part of the brand image (i.e. self-image), which is therefore both the result and the interpretation of brand identity (Kapferer, 2008). Crucially, the convergence between the message communicated (identity) and its perception by consumers (image) serves to a) prevent crises of reputation and signal potential problems (Davies & Chun, 2002); b) avoid complacency on the part of companies regarding their brand values and their ability to differentiate themselves by using market positioning and unique selling propositions (Janonis et al., 2007); and c) harmonize the dimensions defining both concepts so that the company follows a good communications strategy (Roy & Banerjee, 2014). If the sender and the receiver do not share the meaning of the message, there will be no dialogue and companies will not succeed in influencing consumers' attitudes, knowledge and/or behavior (Fill, 1999).

Wineries' experience marketing gives rise to brand experience, because it allows consumers to interact directly (e.g., wine tasting) and indirectly (e.g., visits to wine cellars and vineyards, storytelling) with the brand (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Brakus et al., 2009). Positive memories of the experience, in particular, increase future revisit intentions, satisfaction, and destination loyalty (Pizam, 2010; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013). Importantly, brand experience influences brand-related consumer responses, including brand image (Andreini et al., 2018) and brand attachment (Andreini et al., 2018; Brakus et al., 2009), brand trust, word-of-mouth, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty (Nysveen et al., 2013; Santini et al., 2018). Brand image consists of brand associations consumers hold in their minds (Keller, 1993, 2020). Favorable, unique, and strong brand associations are an important tool for brand positioning and differentiation (Keller, 1993, 2020). Unique, positive, and memorable brand experiences give rise to a positive brand image associations (Andreini et al., 2018), including brand personality perceptions (Nysveen et al., 2013), which in turn encourage brand loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014).

The results of this study indicated that 48% of the respondents were college graduates, about 51% had annual household income more than \$50,000 while 61% of the respondents were 21-34 years old and 26% between the ages of 35-

54, all these are market segments that the state of Missouri and its wineries should target for their wines. The US Census Bureau shows that in 2020 the state of Missouri population was about 6,200,000 while the US population was 331,500,000. Millennials made up 22%, Boomers 21% and Generation X 20%. Missouri has a similar breakdown as the whole USA population. The Millennials are the demographic cohort between Generation X and Generation Z. They are people of a generation with ages between 21–34 years. This is the largest generation in history, reaching about 2.5 billion people, being that 90% use the internet are the “digital natives”. Characterized by being confident people, well informed and wanting to make a difference in the world through their work. This generation consumes wine but introduces a new standard of consumption compared to the previous generation. They prefer information/ recommendations obtained through friends and familiars; give less attention to geography as a quality factor and brands are important as well as prizes and competitions medals. With strong aesthetic sense, they value the image/ design of labels. Aware of the new legislation and the health, they value the percentage of alcohol contained in the drink, verifying a preference for wines with lower alcohol content and organic wines also are highlighted (for health and environmental reasons). Missouri wineries have to deconstruct the formal stereotype of wine consumers, making the new generation identify with the drink, maintain proximity to this new generation. In addition, millennials consume and learn differently about wine, whereby social networks will be increasingly important to impact these younger consumers (Viana, 2016).

Wine tourism as a marketing tool

Many wine producers rely on wine tourism for sales and as a means to build brand loyalty (Dodd 2000; Fountain et al., 2008; Hall et al., 2008; O’Neill & Charters 2006). This is particularly important for small wineries, whose cellar door may be the dominant outlet for sales and therefore an important part of a wine producer’s value chain (Gill et al., 2007; Wilson & Goddard, 2004). Missouri has small to medium size wineries. Ultimately, wine producers want to improve brand awareness, and wine tourism and cellar door wine sales can play an important role in achieving this goal (Alant & Bruwer, 2004; Brown & Getz, 2005). The cellar door is the “public face” of a winery, providing the opportunity for consumers to sample the winery’s product, interact with staff and form an opinion about the winery’s operation (O’Neill et al., 2002). Wine tourism is an important opportunity for wineries to develop long-term relationships with its customers and sell their products directly to consumers (Alant & Bruwer, 2004). It also serves as a promotional tool, a showcase for the regions’ wines, allows wineries to engage with potential consumers, and provide them with an experience. The quality of the winery experience will play a central role in the emotional attachments a tourist develops for a brand, and by implication, the future purchase intentions of that tourist (Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Fountain et al, 2008; Mitchell & Hall, 2006; Nowak & Newton, 2006; Pikkemaat et al, 2009). For this study a linear regression was run with satisfaction with Missouri wines

as the dependent variable. The independent variables were affinity for wines, Missouri wine perceptions, price perceptions of Missouri wines, and consumption of Missouri wines. The model as seen in Figure 1. was significant, the results of this study indicated that perception of Missouri wines (Beta = .302, $p = .000$) and perceptions of prices of Missouri wines (Beta = .148, $p = .011$) had significant positive effects on satisfaction with Missouri wines. All these factors are key for Missouri's wine destination branding campaign.

Fountain et al., (2008) found that a personal and "real" interaction between consumers and staff members was particularly important in making the experience memorable for visitors. Smaller wineries were especially successful in making visitors feel special, rather than as if they were on a "production line" or "conveyor belt". The wineries that are successful in creating a connection between the visitor and winery go beyond providing good service; they also convey passion about the winery and provide stories that allow the visitor to engage with the place (Fountain et al, 2008; Thach et al., 2007). In sum, wine tourism is of particular economic importance for small wineries, serving as a sales outlet and as a key marketing and branding tool for the individual winery and the region at large. Through visitation, consumers associate the wines with a set of desirable regional attributes (e.g., physical attributes, heritage, stories) and their own personal experience at the winery.

Wine tourism is more popular in recent times, because the tourism market has emerged a new kind of tourists, who circumvent of the wine regions became their primary reason for visit and retention certain tourism area (Wolf et al., 2007). There has been a long relationship between wine and tourism. This relationship is recognized by the government, researchers and their industry. For the tourism industry, wine is an important component of the attractiveness of the destination and can be a major motivational factor for visitors. Wine tourism may include a wide range of experiences for the visitor, the winery and the wine country. Some of these activities include tasting wine; food; enjoying the environment; extended lounge or recreation; many complementary cultural, natural and other activities that are available in the wine region; increased satisfaction of the visitors due to increased hospitality of the tourists; increased demand for sales of wine "from the cellar," (Presenza et al., 2010).

Conclusions

Initial findings from the research reveal some interesting characteristics of the sample, the age group distribution of the sample confirms earlier work in by Bruwer et al. (2002), in which he found that the Millennial and Generation-X age groups are highly active and prominent as tasting room visitors. Table 1. shows that 61% of our study respondents were between 21-35 years old, which represents the Millennial while 20% the Generation-X group. The educational status of the total sample was high, with 89% in possession of a postsecondary qualification. The household income levels were weighted heavily to the middle and upper levels and are in all likelihood functions of the relatively high

education level and small household membership size of the respondents. Our findings are valuable for winery managers like those situated in the state of Missouri. This region relies on their tasting rooms as a primary source of wine sales. For these wineries, the tasting room is often the first point of contact between the customer and the winery and plays a key role in the overall marketing strategy (Charters et al., 2009).

Our study supports and complements earlier research suggesting that focusing on excellent service, paying particular attention to ambience attributes of the tasting room, and excelling in retail operations can positively influence visitor perceptions and thereby improve sales performance (O'Neill & Charters, 2000; O'Neill et al., 2002; Dodd & Bigotte, 1997). The protocol established for wine tastings also influences sales, but only indirectly through its influence on overall customer service. Our results also highlight the relevance of demographic information to tasting room managers. In particular, consistent with the findings of earlier research (Charters & O'Neill, 2001; Dodd & Gustafson, 1997), tasting room managers should realize that older visitors tend to spend more than younger consumers do in a given visit. Thus, higher spending among older visitors should not be attributed only to the outstanding performance of the tasting room in delivering good customer service. There were no significant differences in how different wine drinkers perceived Missouri wines. They also perceived Missouri wines as having good value for money.

Overall, Missouri wines were seen to be excellent with no significant differences among different wine drinkers. Furthermore, evaluating the on-site experiences of visitors as well as the relationship among antecedents and consequence behaviors contributes to experience-economy research in a winery tourism context. Winery owners stand to benefit from this research by now being able to target key visitor groups that contribute the most to winery revenue, as well as being able to design winery experiences that are most valued and contribute to positive post-visit evaluations. There is the need for Missouri wineries to better educate and connect with consumers by developing compatible positioning strategies and marketing programs that are as informative as they are appealing. Emphasis is suggested for a social media marketing campaign. Overall, our research confirms that Missouri has had some success with their wines and levels of visitors' satisfaction. The potential impact of further development as a wine destination is huge, especially with the growing Millennials and Gen Xers segments of the US population. Thus, we believe that the material presented here provides adequate proof of the need to move destination branding to social media related promotional campaigns.

Academic Implications

Wine tourism activities have emerged as an alternative and sustainable tourism that enhances the interaction of tourists with the environment and with cultural traditions such as wine production. Wine tourism experiences can help to improve the Missouri brand value, direct experience with the wine improves

the perception of the brand. The results provide valuable information that can be reinforced in the curriculum. There are the intangible service aspects of winery operations that are delivered by winery staff. Universities hospitality and tourism curriculum should ensure that services related to wineries should be included as well as reinforcing the branding concept especially as it relates to wineries. Our students must be taught the importance of developing competitive marketing strategies needed for winery operators to draw winery visitors. Creating diverse events such as a harvest event and vineyard hike might be helpful in luring winery visitors from both the USA and abroad.

Practical Implications

The first critical aspect of a successful marketing strategy for a winery is to recognize its target market (Barber, Taylor, & Deale, 2010). On the whole, the empirical findings of this study confirm that it is rational to distinguish among four different types of drinkers' involvement levels. One can easily assume that it is probably more profitable as well. Indeed, one of the main potential benefits of segmenting and profiling wine tourists is the identification of visitor groups that may offer higher commercial value for wineries (Alonso et al., 2007). Moreover, careful targeting and deep market knowledge can assist wineries increase the effectiveness of their advertising and promotional efforts (Barber et al., 2010). Hence it is advisable for winery owners to study carefully the profiles of their visitors and decide which of them match better their strategic marketing objectives. Wine interest and involvement is closely linked with the issue of seasonality, since winery visitors with a higher degree of commitment are more likely to visit wineries year-round (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). The winery experience becomes an opportunity to create a relationship between the winery and the visitor. As Charters et al. (2009) note, the establishment of "connection" with consumers is a key issue in wine tourism even if different wineries need to make their mark in different ways.

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