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SEGMENTING WINE TOURISTS ON THE BASIS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH WINE

Athina Nella
Evangelos Christou

ABSTRACT. As involvement with wine may vary significantly among wine consumers and wine tourists, segmentation based on product involvement seems to be a reasonable choice. A multinational sample of 517 winery visitors is divided into three groups of low, medium, and high involvement levels; similarities and differences are examined. Results confirm that it is meaningful to segment winery visitors on the basis of their involvement with wine, as important differences can be identified in terms of visitation motives and patterns, demographic characteristics, relationship with wine, pre-visit attitudes towards the winery, evaluation of the winery experience, post-visit attitudes, and future behavioral intentions. Management and marketing implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS. Winery visitors, product involvement, segmentation, wine tourism

INTRODUCTION

Many authors note that wine tourism has been growing significantly during the last two decades (e.g., Alonso & Liu, 2010; Carlsen, 2004; Carmichael, 2005; Dawson, Holmes, Jacobs, & Wade, 2011; Getz & Brown, 2006) while academic interest in wine tourism has also grown considerably (Christou & Nella, 2010a; Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2009). As O'Neill and Palmer (2004) note, *Wine tourism has emerged as a strong and growing area of special-interest tourism throughout the world and is now seen as an increasingly important component of the tourism product of most wine-producing countries.*

Obviously, in order to support further growth for the global and regional wine tourism markets, deep market knowledge is essential (Barber, Donovan, & Dodd, 2008; Bitsani &

Kavoura, 2012; Cohen & Ben-Nun, 2009). Given that the profiles of wine tourists may vary not only from region to region but also from winery to winery (Mitchell, Hall, & McIntosh, 2000) the identification of market trends, characteristics, and differences among wine tourists constitutes a marketing challenge. Market segmentation provides a valuable tool for market growth. Additionally, many authors acknowledge that the wine tourism market consists of diverse groups by suggesting various typologies for wine tourists (e.g., Ali-Knight & Charters, 2001; Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Bruwer, Li, & Reid, 2001; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Corigliano, 1996; Galloway, Mitchell, Getz, Crouch, & Ong, 2008; Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2012).

In parallel, it is interesting to identify the relative situation in Greece, as empirical evidence for wine tourism in the country is extremely scarce

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while empirical studies are limited in number even at the European level (Charters & Menival, 2011). Therefore, the main objective of the study is to profile visitors of Greek wineries on the basis of involvement with wine, thus offering a useful typology that encapsulates sociodemographic characteristics, motives, and relationship with wine. Segmentation can subsequently become a valuable knowledge tool for wine tourism stakeholders in order to design their targeting and positioning strategies. Market knowledge can assist wineries and local wine tourism organizations/clusters succeed in their marketing objectives, thus supporting further growth for the wine tourism market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Segmentation in Wine Tourism

As most authors agree that there is no stereotypical tourist and that wine tourists should not be treated as a homogeneous group (e.g., Alonso, Fraser, & Cohen, 2007; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Galloway et al., 2008; Yuan, Morrison, Cai, Dodd, & Linton, 2008), various criteria have been used in the wine tourism literature in order to segment the respective market. A relevant theoretical contribution is that of Alebaki and Iakovidou (2011), who provided an extensive record of segmentation studies for the wine tourism market.

Some of the early segmentation attempts used sociodemographic variables such as age, income, education, and gender in order to profile wine tourists (e.g., Dodd & Bigotte, 1997; Heaney, 2003; King & Morris, 1997; Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu, & Haydam, 2004; Taylor, 2004). One of the initial segmentation proposals with great impact is that of Hall (1996), who used the perceptions of winery owners as a segmentation basis and this resulted in the identification of three basic segments, i.e. the “wine lovers”, the “wine interested”, and the “curious” wine tourists. Similarly, Ali-Knight and Charters (1999) also used the perceptions of winery owners in order to profile winery visitors, while Williams and Young (1999) segmented wine tourists according to their functions as wine consumers.

However, in spite of sociodemographic similarities – whether occasional or not – wine tourists may also differ substantially in aspects like attitudes to wine, lifestyle, and consumption patterns (Bruwer et al., 2001). Psychographics can provide an alternative and perhaps more reliable segmentation basis. Thus, variables such as motives, lifestyles, interests, values, and personality traits have started to be related to wine consumption and wine tourism.

Corigliano (1996) made an early contribution to this subfield by segmenting Italian wine tourists according to their lifestyles. The four segments she identified were the “Professional”, the “Impassioned Neophyte”, the “Hanger-On”, and the “Drinker”. In the same vein, Mitchell et al. (2000) advocated a phenomenological perspective and segmented wine tourists on the basis of psychographic characteristics. Other authors tried to identify the groups proposed by Hall (1996) among wine festival visitors and winery visitors (e.g., Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Christou, 2003; Hall & Sharples, 2008; Houghton, 2008; Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Igglecias, 2010). In their widely cited study, Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) used interest in wine and wine knowledge in order to classify wine tourists. Their findings build on Hall’s (1996) classic wine tourism typology by adding two more wine tourist types: the “connoisseur” and the “hanger-on”. The former has a high interest and deep wine knowledge while the latter visits a winery with no apparent interest in wine but as part of a group. The authors also renamed the “curious” group, that is those with limited interest in wine, into “wine novices”. In a study of wine festival attendees in Eastern Australia, Houghton (2008) proposes that they are classifiable into relatively homogeneous groups but these categories are not as decisively different as those attributed by Hall to wine tourists. Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Igglecias (2010) also used the level of knowledge and interest in wine as criteria for segmenting the Spanish wine tourism market. The authors identified two groups that shared similarities with the “curious” and “wine interested” segments proposed by Hall (1996).

Other authors used tourism motives for segmentation purposes. Williams and Dossa (2003)

identified “generalists” and “immersionists” as two important segments of the non-resident wine tourists of British Columbia. The former sought opportunities to interact with hospitable people in a safe and relaxing context while the latter placed more importance on pursuing daring and adventurous activities. Yuan, Cai, Morrison, and Linton (2005) grouped motives of wine festival attendees into four major categories: festival and escape, wine, family togetherness, and socialization. The authors proposed that motivation provides a useful segmentation basis as respondents with different demographic characteristics were found to place higher importance on specific motives.

A number of researchers tried to develop alternative profiles of wine tourists based on various elements of the experience sought by wine tourists during their winery visits while Mitchell and Hall (2006) claim that a visit to a winery includes a complex of experiences. Cambourne, Macionis, Hall, and Sharples (2000) suggested that all the elements of the wine tourism experience appeal to different types of tourists and at the same time contribute to the development of winescapes that may include the following: aesthetics related both to the natural environment as well as to the winery itself (Charters, Fountain, & Fish, 2009; Williams, 2001); diverse educational experiences (Ali-Knight & Charters, 1999; Christou, 2011); a feeling of association with the winery (Fountain, Fish, & Charters, 2008); a sense of authenticity (Charters et al., 2009); significant cultural heritage of the wine region (Frochot, 2000); particular wine production methods and approaches (Charters, 2006); and a strong connection with the rural landscape and rurality (Carlsen & Dowling, 1998; Carmichael, 2005; Getz & Brown, 2006; Howland, 2007; Mitchell, 2004).

Another psychographic segmentation approach is that of Galloway et al. (2008), who used the personality trait of sensation-seeking in order to segment wine tourists. The authors, based on respondents' sensation-seeking scores, segmented wine tourists into two groups (i.e. higher and lower sensation seekers) and found that the two groups differed in terms of wine consumption, purchases, frequency of winery visits, monthly

expenditure, and motives for visiting a wine region.

An additional segmentation approach is related not to the behavior of wine tourists but to wineries' strategies. For example, many smaller wineries heavily depend on direct sales to winery visitors (Barber et al., 2008; Bruwer, 2003; Wade & Pun, 2009). Other wineries, often larger ones, appear to be rather uninterested in wine tourism (Getz & Brown, 2006); for example, some wineries consider winery visitors as a significant disturbance of their core business, which is producing and selling high-quality wine (Alonso, Sheridan, & Scherrer, 2008; Beverland, 1998; Fraser & Alonso, 2006). Hojman and Hunter-Jones (2012, p. 15) argue that “as wine tourist profiles and winery strategies vary significantly, managers and researchers may achieve greater understanding by adopting an in-depth destination focus” which may assist market segmentation.

Nowadays, the 25-year evolution of the wine tourism literature guides us to reject any broad generalization concerning wine tourists, as this special form of tourism constantly appeals to an increasing number of tourists with various motives and characteristics. As far as Greece is concerned, a lack of officially recorded data characterizes the field (Alebaiki & Iakovidou, 2011); Stavrinoudis, Tsartas, and Chatzidakis (2011) focus on the supply-side of wine tourism in Greece while a limited number of studies shed light on the profiles of wine tourists.

The first demand-side study is based on the perceptions of winery owners and suggests that the majority of winery visitors are men who are mainly characterized by a strong interest in wine (Triantafyllou-Pitsaki, 2005). The second study is that of Alebaiki and Iakovidou (2010) and is based on a sample of 133 winery visitors in northern Greece and on a combination of demographics and motives. The study identified the following four segments: “wine lovers”, “neophytes”, “occasional wine tourists”, and “hangers-on”. The “wine lovers” were found to be highly educated and wealthy while their primary motives for being in the area were to visit the specific winery, to meet the winemaker, and to learn more about wine and wine making.

The “neophytes” were mainly low-income students with a special interest in wine. The “occasional wine tourists” were not particularly interested in learning about wine but were mostly attracted by local gastronomy while the “Hangers-on” were not at all interested in wine or wine making; respondents of this group did not consume wine and considered the vineyard or a winery as an alternative tourist attraction.

The third demand-side study is from Alebaki (2012), who, based on a sample of 381 winery visitors in northern Greece, showed that wine tourism motivation revolves around three core components, namely “landscape, relaxation and escape”, “core wine product”, and “gaining experience”. The author used a three-statement scale for the measurement of involvement and found that 82% of respondents were highly involved with wine (i.e. a total score higher than 10 for the three statements which were measured with 5-item Likert scales). Moreover, the level of product involvement along with the degree of wine tourism identity salience form primary tourism motivations were factors that positively affected both motivational factors related to destination attractiveness and wine purchase behavior.

Despite the valuable contribution of the above mentioned studies, it is obvious that a large-scale study representing more wine producing regions in the country would help wine tourism stakeholders enhance their market knowledge and provide researchers with additional evidence. Researchers have recently started to relate psychographic variables to wine tourism (Galloway et al., 2008). Moreover, the use of a psychographic segmentation criterion, as for example product involvement, is in accordance with theoretical directions in research towards using more complex segmentation criteria.

Involvement, Wine, and Wine Tourism

The involvement construct was introduced by Krugman (1962, 1965) as a term from consumer psychology and has been acknowledged as an important factor in understanding and explaining consumer behavior (Celuch &

Taylor, 1999). Based on existing definitions (Krugman 1966; Mittal, 1995; Zaichkowsky, 1985) involvement refers to the perceived importance or relevance of a person to an object/stimulus, which is based on the person’s personal needs, values, and interests. The object can be a product, an advertisement or a purchase situation. Zaichkowsky (1986) distinguished between the following three types of involvement: with (1) product category, (2) advertising, and (3) purchase decision. Product category involvement, which is the focus of this study, refers to the feelings of interest and enthusiasm consumers hold toward product categories (Goldsmith & Emmert, 1991).

In behavioural terms, Engel and Blackwell (1982) suggest that involvement can be measured according to the time spent in product search, the energy spent, the number of alternatives examined, and the type of the decision-making process, i.e. limited, extensive, or routine decision making. On the issue of involvement measurement, various scales have been proposed. Some of the most widely used measurement scales are the following: (1) Personal Involvement Inventory, proposed and revised by Zaichkowsky (1985, 1994); (2) Consumer Involvement Profile Inventory, proposed by Laurent and Kapferer (1985); and (3) Mittal Involvement Scale, proposed by Mittal (1988). It is worth noting that “red wine” was one of the 133 product categories used in the study for Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) while champagne was one of the seven categories of gastronomic products in the respective study for Consumer Involvement Profile Inventory.

From a marketing point of view, it can reasonably be assumed that the knowledge of product involvement can create valuable benefits in terms of a winery’s marketing strategy. First of all, wine can be considered as a product for which involvement is of high importance, as great variations can be noted among consumers (Brown, Havitz, & Getz, 2007; Famularo, Bruwer, & Li, 2010). It also indicates consumers’ generic feelings of interest, relevance, and excitement for the product category (Hollebeek, Jaeger, Brodie, & Balemi, 2007; Yuan et al., 2008).

In this context it is reasonable that various studies for the wine market have used involvement

for segmentation purposes. Broadly speaking, wine consumers can be divided into two basic categories: those with high involvement, who perceive wine as a specific part of a given lifestyle they adopt, and those with low involvement (Lockshin, Spawton, & Macintosh, 1997). High levels of involvement have been related to higher spending per bottle (Charters & Pettigrew, 2006) and more complex decision-making criteria in the purchase decision (Rasmussen & Lockshin, 1999; Lockshin & Spawton, 2001).

In the wine tourism context, the use of involvement with wine has also been acknowledged as a critical variable for wine tourism behaviour (Yuan et al., 2008), as highly involved wine tourists most possibly have developed deeper knowledge and appreciation of wine, and are willing to spend more money on it (Beverland, 2006). Involvement and wine knowledge have also been linked to differences in post-visit purchase behavior (Dodd & Gustafson, 1997; Mitchell & Hall, 2001a). Mitchell and Hall (2001b) support that the level of wine knowledge provides a significant basis for market segmentation in wine tourism, as it is linked with participation in wine club activities and cellar size while Mitchell and Hall (2004) found a higher propensity for brand loyalty amongst winery visitors with intermediate or advanced wine knowledge.

Lockshin and Spawton (2001) were among the first to make a distinction between wine tourists according to their involvement level with wine. Moreover, Brown et al. (2007) used ego involvement with wine as a segmentation basis for the wine tourism market in Canada. The authors used a three-dimensional, fifteen-item wine involvement scale and identified four segments: “hedonic aficionados”, “cautious enthusiasts”, “fastidious epicureans”, and “functional differentiators”. The three dimensions of the scale were enjoyment, expertise, and symbolic centrality. Similarly, Yuan et al. (2008) used a version of the PII as a criterion to segment wine festival visitors into three groups, namely the low, medium, and high involvement groups.

Finally, an interesting approach to involvement was adopted by Mitchell, Charters, and

Albrecht (2012) who examined involvement with cultural systems at wine tourism destinations, highlighting the significance of establishing wine tourism in the greater context of rural land tenure, local mythologies of rurality, and the regional wine cultural complex. High involvement wine tourists often buy luxury wines, which, according to Beverland (2006), are those priced at USD 100 or more for a bottle; buyers of luxury wines often behave like this due to hedonic motivations related to enhanced personal pleasure and richer experiences (Terrien & Steichen, 2008; Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). Bruwer and Alant (2009) have linked such hedonic motivations not only to wine consumption, but also to wine tourism experiences.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

With the use of a structured questionnaire as the basic research tool, a large-scale quantitative study was designed and executed. Approximately 1300 questionnaires, available both in Greek and English versions, were sent to 18 participating wineries in order to be distributed to their visitors at the end of the winery visit. The participating wineries were located in some of the main wine producing regions of Greece (i.e. Crete, Macedonia, Peloponnese, Epirus, Central Greece, and Santorini) and were selected so as to differ in terms of size and visitation traffic. The study took place in the period between May and July 2010; this season was chosen so as to exploit the increased visitation due to “Open Doors”, an important annual wine event which takes place in most Greek wineries at the end of the spring season.

The method of self-completion was chosen, so the questionnaires were designed to have clear guidelines, a reader-friendly format, and a simple structure. 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 visit. Finally, a sample of 517 usable questionnaires was gathered.

Measurement Scales

As one of the main research aims was to cover the basic phases of the tourism experience (pre-visit, visit, post-visit), the questionnaire was divided into the following sections: (1) relationship with wine prior to the winery visit, (2) evaluation of current winery experience, (3) post-visit perceptions and intentions, and (4) sociodemographic data.

In order to ensure content validity, existing measures were used for the majority of the constructs of the questionnaire. Multi-item measurement was applied for the constructs that were considered critical, namely product category involvement, service quality, satisfaction, brand attachment, customer-based brand equity (CBBE), brand extensibility, and price flexibility. Involvement with wine was measured in the first part of the questionnaire with four 7-point Likert statements referring to consumption frequency, involvement, interest, and expertise in wine. The four-item scale was adapted to the study context from Yoo and Donthu (2001).

A comprehensive 14-item scale proposed by Christou and Nella (2010b) was used to measure service quality in the winery setting. Satisfaction was measured with four Likert statements, adapted from the scale proposed by Fisher and Price (1991). Moreover, the multi-dimensional 10-item scale proposed by Yoo and Donthu (2001) was used to measure post-visit CBBE while brand attachment was measured according to the 10-item scale proposed by Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005). Finally, post-visit attitudes towards price flexibility and brand extensibility practices were adapted from Wang, Wei, and Yu (2008). Future behavioral intentions included revisit

intention, word of mouth creation, and enhancement of preference for the product category.

Moreover, respondents were also asked to state their main motives selected from a pool of eight popular motives of visiting a winery, as indicated by the work of Alant and Bruwer (2004). Apart from respondent information measured by a categorical scale (e.g., demographics, motives, number of previous wine tourism experiences), all other items were either measured with 7-point Likert scales (with 1 anchoring “strongly disagree” and 7 indicating “strongly agree”) or 7-point semantic differential scales.

Data Analysis

SPSS[®]19.0 was used for the statistical analysis. The exploratory factor analysis for the four-item involvement scale identified a single factor that explained 66.2% of total variance. Reliability of the scale was also confirmed, as Cronbach’s alpha was above acceptable levels ($\alpha = 0.829 > 0.70$). After the reliability and exploratory factor analysis, a new “average involvement” construct was computed as the average of the four measurement items. For the rest of the multi-item constructs, Cronbach’s alpha results offered strong support for the reliability of scales, as all values exceeded the critical value of 0.7 (Table 1). Thus, the computation of average scores for the rest of the multi-item measured constructs was made respectively.

Concerning the number of segments in the wine tourism market, Bruwer, Li, and Reid (2002) propose that there is no theoretical justification for predetermining them. Certain researchers based on involvement scores have used statistical distribution in order to divide

TABLE 1. Description, Source, and Reliability of Multi-Item Scales

Construct	Scale description	Source	Cronbach’s α
Involvement	Four 7-point Likert-type statements	Yoo and Donthu (2001)	0.829
Service quality	Fourteen 7-point semantic differentials	Christou and Nella (2010b)	0.966
Satisfaction	Four 7-point Likert-type statements	Fisher and Price (1991)	0.904
Customer-Based Brand Equity	Ten 7-point semantic differentials	Yoo and Donthu (2001)	0.922
Brand attachment	Ten 7-point semantic differentials	Thomson et al. (2005)	0.943
Brand extensibility	Four 7-point Likert-type statements	Wang et al. (2008)	0.918
Price flexibility	Two 7-point Likert-type statements	Wang et al. (2008)	0.829

their samples into three sub-clusters (Yuan et al., 2008; Zaichkowsky, 1985). In the present study a similar approach was followed; the low involvement segment (first/lower quartile) had an average involvement score lower or equal to 3, the medium/average involvement segment had an average involvement score higher than 3 and less or equal to 5, and the high involvement segment (third/upper quartile) had an average involvement score higher than 5. Cross tabulations were used to describe the basic characteristics of the three segments and analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to identify further differences.

FINDINGS

Description of the Sample

The convenience sample of 517 winery visitors had an almost equal representation of men and women (49.4% and 50.6% respectively). The majority of respondents were Greeks (69%); though the sample could be regarded as multinational as 168 of the respondents were from 17 foreign countries, mainly USA, Italy, France, Spain, and the UK. Approximately one-third (35%) of the respondents were over 45 years old, half of them (52%) had a monthly income of over €1300 and 39% stated that their average monthly wine expenditure exceeded €50. The educational level of the sample was high, as the majority held a university degree (61%) while an additional 18% held post-graduate qualifications.

Concerning the respondents' relationship with wine tourism some interesting findings appeared: one third of the sample had never visited a winery before while 41% visited within a group. On the whole, main motives for visiting a winery involved acquiring information about specific wines, wine tasting, and experiencing the atmosphere of the winery.

Description of Groups and Identification of Differences

As mentioned above, statistical distribution was used in order to divide the sample into three sub-clusters of low, medium, and high

involvement. The three segments differed substantially not only in terms of involvement but also in terms of pre-visit attitudes and expectations, evaluations of the winery experience, post-visit behavioral intentions, brand perceptions, and attitudes. Additionally, the groups differed in terms of visitation patterns, previous experiences with wine tourism, and on-site behavior, namely wine tasting and direct wine purchases (Table 2). After a detailed examination of post hoc test results, it became apparent that the differences were – not surprisingly – more intense among the groups of high and low involvement levels.

As for visitation patterns, cross tabulations showed that the low involvement segment had the highest percentage of tourists visiting within a group. Indeed, a statistically significant relationship was confirmed. Moreover, major differences were identified regarding the existence of previous wine tourism experiences; the vast majority of the highly involved visitors had previous wine tourism experiences (93%) while the respective percentage was 63% for the medium segment and even lower for the low involvement group (52%). As for previous visits at the specific winery, the percentage for the high involvement segment (34%) was almost double than the percentages of the other two segments.

Concerning the on-site behavior of winery visitors, cross tabulations showed that the low involvement segment had the highest percentage of visitors that did not taste any wine during the winery visit (i.e. approximately 11%). The percentages of visitors who made on-site purchases differed clearly among highly involved visitors (80%) and the other two groups. In both cases a statistically significant relationship was confirmed at the 0.01 level.

Chi-square tests performed to identify potential relationships between groups and (1) gender representation, (2) domestic or international visitors, and (3) the occupational status of visitors did not yield statistically significant results.

The main motives of the three groups are also presented in Table 2. By examining their responses, we can make some interesting observations. First of all, the high involvement segment had the highest percentages of people

TABLE 2. Comparison of Segments with Respect to Visitation Patterns, Pre-Visit Behavior, Motives, On-Site Behavior, and Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Comparison basis	Involvement Level			Chi-square test	Sign.
	Low	Medium	High		
Visitation within group (%)	51.7	38.7	34.3	9,369, $P = 0.009$	✓
Existence of previous wine tourism experiences (%)	51.7	62.8	92.6	48,176, $P = 0.000$	✓
Previous visits at the specific winery (%)	17.5	17.3	34.3	14,768, $P = 0.001$	✓
On-site wine tasting (% of not tasting)	11.2	4.5	1.9	11,485, $P = 0.003$	✓
On-site purchases (%)	62.2	65.3	79.6	9,632, $P = 0.008$	✓
Gender (% of male)	48.8	47.6	54.2	1,330, $P = 0.514$	X
Origin (% of Greeks)	73.4	63.5	69.4	4,383, $P = 0.112$	X
Motive 1: buy wines (%)	42.3	44.9	54.6	4,156, $P = 0.125$	X
Motive 2: taste new wines (%)	64.8	74.3	78.7	6,785, $P = 0.034$	✓
Motive 3: information (%)	66.9	75.5	79.6	5,793, $P = 0.055$	X
Motive 4: meet producer (%)	36.6	38.5	43.5	1,293, $P = 0.524$	X
Motive 5: experience the atmosphere of a winery (%)	71.1	66.4	60.2	3,292, $P = 0.193$	X
Motive 6: group visit (%)	44.4	27.5	17.6	22,58, $P = 0.000$	✓
Motive 7: excursion (%)	39.4	42.6	28.7	6,305, $P = 0.043$	✓
Motive 8: other motives (%)	8.5	17.7	14.2	6,717, $P = 0.035$	✓
Age groups (%)				32,492, $P = 0.000$	✓
18–25	21.7	11.9	7.5		
26–34	26.8	21.5	23.6		
35–44	21.0	33.8	20.8		
45–54	21.1	18.1	32.1		
55–64	4.3	11.2	13.2		
65+	5.1	3.5	2.8		
Income groups (%)				36,316, $P = 0.000$	✓
< 800 €	30.5	16.0	13.3		
801–1.300 €	31.3	29.0	25.5		
1.301–1.800 €	19.5	26.8	20.4		
1.801–2.500 €	11.9	18.5	14.3		
> 2.500 €	6.8	9.7	26.5		
Monthly spending on wine (%)				95,015, $P = 0.000$	✓
< 20 €	48.8	16.1	12.6		
21–50 €	32.2	43.8	29.1		
51–80 €	13.2	26.9	24.3		
81–120 €	3.3	9.6	14.6		
> 120 €	2.5	3.6	19.4		

visiting for wine tasting, buying, information, and meeting the producer. In contrast, the low involvement segment had the highest percentages of respondents visiting in order to experience the atmosphere of a winery and to participate in a group visit. As for the medium involvement segment, the primary visiting motivations were to learn about wines, taste new wines, and enjoy a winery tour. Among the three segments, this segment had the highest percentages of respondents visiting in order to make an excursion or for other reasons. However, as shown in the last column of

Table 2, the results of χ^2 tests revealed statistically significant differences among groups only for four of the motives, namely wine tasting, group visitation, making an excursion, and “other motives”.

Some other interesting results refer to the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the three segments and (1) age groups, (2) income levels, and (3) average monthly spending for wine. As shown in Table 2, the low involvement segment had a higher percentage of visitors aged between 18 and 25 years old (22% versus 12% and 8%) while the high involvement

segment had a higher percentage of visitors over 45 years old (48% versus 33% and 30%).

Additionally, data concerning the income of winery visitors showed that the high involvement segment had a much higher percentage of visitors with an income over €2500 (27%), while in the other segments the respective percentage hardly exceeded 10%. The low involvement segment, on the other hand, had the highest percentage of visitors with an income lower than €800 (31%); the percentage did not exceed 16% for the other two groups. Furthermore, the average monthly wine spending was below €20 for 49% of the low involvement visitors while it was 16% and 13% for the medium and high segments respectively. Similarly, 34% of the high involvement segment stated spending more than €80 while the respective percentages were 13% and 6% for the medium and low segments.

Differences in pre-visit perceptions and attitudes were examined using ANOVA tests (Table 3); from this analysis it became obvious that the three segments differed in terms of initial (1) expectations, (2) attitudes towards the winery and its brands, (3) awareness, and (4) loyalty to the wineries' brands. All differences were significant at the 0.01 level. Post-hoc tests (Tukey) showed significant differences among the low and high

involvement segments in terms of pre-visit expectations (average 5.3 versus 5.8 respectively), attitudes towards the winery (average scores 4.4 versus 5.1), and attitudes towards the winery's brands (average 4.4 versus 5.2). Moreover, post-hoc tests revealed differences among all of the three segments in terms of pre-visit awareness and loyalty to the winery's brands.

Furthermore, we considered it interesting to compare groups in terms of respondents' evaluations of the winery experience (i.e. perceived service quality and levels of satisfaction) and evaluations of their post-visit relationship with the winery's brands (i.e. CBBE, brand attachment, attitudes towards brand extensibility, and price flexibility practices). ANOVA tests revealed statistical differences in terms of perceived service quality, satisfaction, CBBE, brand attachment, and attitudes towards brand extensibility. All differences were significant at the 0.05 level. However, post-hoc tests revealed statistically significant differences only among the low and high involvement segments for service quality (average scores 5.6 versus 6.0), satisfaction (average scores 5.5 versus 5.9), brand attachment (average scores 4.8 versus 5.3), CBBE (average scores 4.6 versus 5.1), and brand extensibility attitudes (average scores 4.8 versus 5.2).

TABLE 3. Comparison of Segments with Respect to Attitudes, Perceptions and Intentions

Comparison basis	Involvement Level			ANOVA test	Sign.
	Low	Medium	High		
Pre-visit expectations (average)	5.31	5.56	5.80	$F = 5.847, p = 0.003$	✓
Pre-visit attitudes towards the winery (average)	4.36	4.71	5.07	$F = 7.168, p = 0.001$	✓
Pre-visit attitudes towards the winery's brand(s) (average)	4.38	4.76	5.17	$F = 9.063, p = 0.000$	✓
Pre-visit awareness (average)	3.18	3.73	4.40	$F = 18.570, p = 0.000$	✓
Pre-visit loyalty (average)	3.31	3.92	4.40	$F = 14.393, p = 0.000$	✓
Service quality (average)	5.56	5.85	5.98	$F = 6.024, p = 0.003$	✓
Satisfaction from the winery experience (average)	5.45	5.61	5.88	$F = 4.417, p = 0.013$	✓
Customer Based Brand Equity (average)	4.61	4.75	5.11	$F = 6.586, p = 0.001$	✓
Brand attachment (average)	4.75	5.12	5.25	$F = 6.194, p = 0.002$	✓
Brand Extensibility (average)	4.79	4.86	5.22	$F = 4.454, p = 0.012$	✓
Price flexibility (average)	4.53	4.61	4.85	$F = 2.135, p = 0.119$	X
Intention to revisit (average)	4.95	5.12	5.51	$F = 4.597, p = 0.011$	✓
Intention to create word of mouth (average)	5.46	5.52	5.83	$F = 2.376, p = 0.094$	X
Intention to enhance category preferences (average)	5.15	5.25	5.62	$F = 3.491, p = 0.031$	✓

While examining differences in terms of post-visit behavioral intentions, three variables were examined: revisit intention, creation of word of mouth, and enhancement of category preferences. ANOVA tests revealed statistical differences only for revisit intention and enhancement of category preferences (significant at the 0.05 level). Again, post-hoc tests showed differences only between the low and the high involvement segments, that is the average for revisit intention was 5.0 and 5.5 respectively while the scores for category preferences were 5.2 and 5.6.

CONCLUSIONS

The present paper aims to present alternative wine tourist profiles based on their levels of involvement with the product category. The underlying premise is that differences of involvement levels appear simultaneously with further differences among groups. From another point of view, winery visitors of the same involvement levels may share more common characteristics. Three groups of low, medium, and high involvement are described and compared.

First of all, some interesting conclusions can be drawn concerning the differences between the three groups. Although they did not differ in aspects like gender, origin, and educational levels, significant differences were identified in terms of age groups, income, and spending on wine, with the highly involved segment appearing wealthier, more mature, and more willing to spend more on wine. Additionally, the level of involvement seemed to be linked to the existence of previous wine tourism experiences, different motives of visiting, group visitation, and on-site purchases. These findings are consistent with previous findings from the global wine tourism literature.

Participation in a group activity was the most popular motive of the low-involved segment while the motive of excursion was very popular with the medium involvement segment. Wine tasting and information about new wines were the two main motives for the high involvement segment. ANOVA and post-hoc tests revealed further differences among the high and the low involvement segments in terms of pre-visit attitudes, evaluation, and satisfaction with the

winery experience and post-visit behavioral intentions.

The low involvement visitor of the study is the most likely to be experiencing his/her first winery visit and to visit as part of a group; moreover, he/she is also the least likely to make on-site purchases and take part in wine tasting during the visit. Their main motive is to experience the atmosphere of a winery while participation at a group activity constitutes an additional visiting reason for them. Wine information, tasting and buying are minor motives for respondents of this group, at least when compared with the other two groups. Respondents of this group may as well belong in any of the age-groups between 18 and 54 years old. Compared to the other two groups, lowly-involved visitors are more likely to belong to lower income levels, as one out of three respondents has a monthly income lower than 800 euros. It is worth noting that this percentage is almost the double compared to the other two groups. In the same line, this group has the lowest monthly wine spending, since almost half of the respondents do not spend more than 20 euros. The differences with the other two groups are very intense in this dimension as well.

After this short description, it does not come as a surprise to report that lowly-involved visitors had the least positive initial expectations and attitudes and the lowest pre-visit awareness and loyalty levels. Accordingly, they were stricter in their evaluation of the current winery visit both in terms of perceived service quality and satisfaction. Finally, they had the least positive post-visit behavioral intentions.

As for the average involvement visitors, who represented the majority of respondents, a general remark is that they had medium scores in all of the examined parameters. Their main motives for taking part in a winery visit were to be informed about new wines and perform wine tasting. Moreover, this group has the highest percentages of respondents who stated excursion as a main motive (43%) and other motives (18%). More than half of the respondents (55%) are aged between 26 and 44 years old while 45% has a monthly income ranging from 1.300 to 2.500 euros. Approximately 44% of this group spends 20–50 euros per month for wine purchases.

The highly involved visitor has in almost all cases previous wine tourism experiences while he/she is the most likely to be carrying a repeat visit at the specific winery (34%). Almost 8 out of 10 made on-site purchases during the winery visit, as this was one of their main motives in the first place. Compared to the other two groups, they were the most motivated visitors to meet the producer or the oenologist and the least motivated to take part in a group visit or an excursion. In other words, it can be supported that their motivations were more wine-oriented than experience-oriented. Approximately 48% were older than 45 years old while 41% had an income higher than €1800 per month. Almost 6 out of 10 respondents have a monthly wine expenditure higher than €50. Finally, this group had the most positive pre- and post-visit disposition towards the winery and its brands.

Based on the analysis that was carried out it is confirmed that wine tourists can be very diverse; thus, the issue of targeting becomes even more crucial (Alant & Bruwer, 2004; Yuan et al., 2008; Christou & Nella, 2010c). The existence of major differences in terms of interest and involvement with wine among wine tourists has been confirmed by previous segmentation efforts (e.g., Brown et al., 2007; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Corigliano, 1996; Hall, 1996). However, the co-existence of wine tourists with totally different motives could destroy the overall wine tourism experience, as these non-compatible visitors interact with each other. As Carlsen (2004) notes: "...bus-loads of wine drinkers or mobile drunks can not be compatible with car-loads of wine tasters in a crowded cellar door setting." The interaction between customers can influence service and satisfaction levels (Langeard, Bateson, Lovelock, & Eiglier, 1981). Thus, many authors propose that the attraction of compatible visitors is a main challenge for wine tourism stakeholders (Carlsen, 2004; Christou & Nella, 2010c; Dodd, 1999; Houghton, 2008).

An important issue that should be addressed in the present study concerns the transferability of findings into different contexts. The convenience sample used in the study is limited to tourists visiting wineries and wine regions of a single country over a period of three months;

thus, it cannot reflect seasonality and represent the total population of wine tourists in Greece. A replication of the study in other regions, with substantial and structural differences in wine tourism (e.g., USA, France, Australia or Canada) might produce interesting comparisons and additional support for the present findings.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The first critical aspect of a successful marketing strategy for a winery is to recognize its target market (Barber et al., 2008). On the whole, the empirical findings of this study confirm that it is rational to distinguish among three segments of different 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, Taylor, & Deale, 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. Based on the above, a proper positioning strategy can be formed.

In terms of strategic action, wineries with a high proportion of tourists visiting within groups, such as those located in the islands of Crete and Santorini, should take into account this visitation pattern. A previous study has also provided support that in wineries located in the Greek islands winery visitation takes the form of an organized tourism activity (Triantafyllou-Pitsaki, 2005). In these cases, wine tourism is often characterized by an extremely seasonal character. 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). According to this view, wineries may target markets with high levels of wine knowledge and commitment in order to minimize the impact of seasonality.

If a winery aims to use wine tourism as an opportunity to build and strengthen relationships with the high-end market and the highly involved wine consumers and tourists, it is necessary to design an appropriate marketing mix and act selectively in terms of visitation handling. The provision of premium, tailor-made wine tourism packages and special events would be appropriate tools in order to appeal to the “wine experts/lovers”, who are more likely to visit a winery off-season. For example, a winery could choose to offer extended winery tours, a great variety of special wines available for on-site tasting, wine tasting events, and educational seminars. These can be offered either privately or for groups with a limited number of visitors. In this case, relationship marketing becomes essential in order to build a strong relationship with the highly involved visitors; the use of special membership cards, prioritization in customer service, access to special wine tasting events and other privileges can be considered as additional tools in this direction. The availability of many supplementary services is necessary in order to enrich the core wine tourism product, while pricing policies may include higher charges for customised services. The use of selective media and personal communication messages should be more appropriate for this market segment.

Moreover, wineries targeting mainly to the high end segment may attempt to target other segments with great caution; this can be achieved by being accessible for groups only at specific periods or times of the day and by offering different services. By defining special admission hours/days for groups, wineries could avoid bringing in contact audiences with different wine interests. The design of a different wine tourism product is essential towards this direction.

Alternatively, in the case that a winery chooses to target mass tourists and lowly-involved visitors, it should encourage group visitation and actively pursue synergies with travel and tourism planning agencies. Emphasis should be put to the design of the winery experience as an excursion or experience of escapism into a hospitable setting. The designed experience for may be restricted to a “core winery tour and

tasting” product (e.g. limited variety of available wines for tasting). The pricing strategy should also be in accordance, i.e. lower prices would attract more visitors with limited interest in wine. Supplementary services could still be available with extra charges. The communication strategy may include the use of mass media and less personal messages. In other words, the whole tourism product and marketing mix should be redesigned according to the needs of the target market. Though, winery managers should always keep in mind that when attempting to target a wider or even mass audience, the winery may stop being appealing for the high-involvement segment (Dodd, 1999). Ultimately, it becomes an issue of strategic planning and positioning.

Mitchell and Hall (2004) stress the importance of the cellar door experience, as the latter may influence purchase behavior and lead to brand loyalty and other positive effects, such as word of mouth creation. Based on this view, another targeting strategy for wineries could entail the use of the winery experience as a tool to increase interest among visitors of low and average involvement levels and transform them to more involved wine consumers and wine tourists. Towards this direction, Mitchell and Hall (2001b) suggest that greater attention should be paid to the educational function of winery visits to enhance consumers’ wine knowledge. Special introductory wine tasting and educational events could be designed for homogeneous groups of wine tourists. Newsletters and invitations to wine related events can be used as tools to retain contact with visitors. 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.

To conclude, we support that involvement with wine can provide a useful segmentation basis for the wine tourism market. This type of segmentation produces useful market information for wineries and wine tourism destinations and can be used as the basic input for designing their targeting, positioning and marketing mix strategies.

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