

Comparing Purchase- and Experience-Motivated Winery Visitors

Bonnie Farber Canziani

University of North Carolina Greensboro, USA

bonnie_canziani@uncg.edu

Abstract:

Purpose - This exploratory paper integrates theories of tourist motivation, services marketing, and service dominant logic. We examine the influence of purchase and experience motives on winery visitors' perceptions of 'facilitating services' that support learning more about the wine and winery operations and 'enhancing experiences' such as festivals, events and other hospitality and recreation services. Not all visitors perceive themselves as tourists and thus, perhaps are not incentivized by the same product mix elements as tourists might be. The goal is to gain a fuller understanding the role of goods and experiences in the minds of winery visitors and to tease out any potential implications for winery planners and marketers.

Design/methodology/approach – Convenience sampling was used to gather data from winery visitors using an onsite intercept study and self-reported questionnaires at 23 North Carolina wineries. Wineries were stratified to balance factors such as age of the business, production levels, and location in the state. A majority of wineries were rurally situated, producing fewer than 5000 cases of wine annually. Questionnaire items were adapted/transformed from the extant wine tourism literature. Likert-type items were used to differentiate buy- and experience-motivated visitors using five-point scales. Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 24.

Findings - A majority of visitors were from North Carolina. General demographics were similar to previous studies, i.e., older, largely female, having comparatively higher education and income levels. Results indicate that purchase-minded visitors are focused on wine and 'core service,' i.e., wine tasting, and are slightly more discount-oriented than are experience-minded visitors. Buy-motivated visitors had stronger positive regional brand perceptions about NC wine and wineries, including beliefs about taste, value, quality, and loyalty. Also, wine club members seem to be more purchase-minded than experience-minded when visiting wineries. There were no differences between the groups with respect to facilitating services, i.e., learning about wine, touring the winery, talking to the winemaker. Experience-minded visitors viewed 'enhancing services' more positively and attributed higher value to supplementary hospitality and tourism elements.

Practical implications - At a minimum, wineries should strategically distinguish two important visitor motives, wine "buyers" and wine "tourists," in order to better comprehend distinctive interests and purchase behaviors. Tasting bar services should focus on wine buying rather than entertainment, and wineries should carefully scrutinize the impact of these two distinct visitor motives on revenue strategies both in terms of bottle sales and revenue gained from hospitality services, e.g., dining, festival, and other touristic elements of the winery. The value and payback of enhancing services for wine club members should be carefully assessed since they rated these as less important as a reason for visiting a winery. The role of 'buy-minded' visitors in promoting regional NC wine brands should also be explored, since the former viewed NC wine more positively than did 'experienced-minded' guests.

Key words: consumer, North Carolina, service-dominant logic