

BIE 2009-11, Phase 2 Progress Report
Project Director: Mahmood Hussain, PhD
Task: Wine Tourist In-Depth Interviews

INRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to understand the pattern of consumer behavior as seen in the tourists visiting Northern California wineries. In the recent years, wine tourism has become a topic of increasing interest, especially with the emergence of new wine regions. Not only do wineries benefit from the immediate sales generated in the visitor centers, but visitor centers can also be used to enhance the image of the brand, forge deep and personal relationships with consumers and educate visitors on the complexity of wine.

Visitors to California wineries have increased from 14.8 million in 2002 to 19.7 million in 2005 with a \$51.8 billion economic impact on the state (Wine Institute, 2007). Since 1990, the number of bonded tasting rooms in the US has increased by 102 per cent (Insel, 2007). For wineries that produce fewer than 5,000 cases a year, a recent survey indicated that 70 per cent of their sales come through the tasting room ([2] Barclay, 2006). The average winery had 15,100 visitors in 2006 and averaged \$97 per visitor vs \$50-\$60 per visitor in 2004 (Insel, 2007; [5] Cartiere, 2005). Even though wine tourism as a whole is growing, it is also becoming an increasingly competitive field. This study attempts to gather, analyze and present information on effective strategies to attract tourists to these regions and develop brand ambassadors that help spread the word to others who may not have the opportunity to visit.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology consisted primary research in the form of personal interviews. The interviewees were recruited from a convenience sample of the international tourists at small wineries in the Bay Area. The potential subjects were either men or women, 21 years of age and older. The participants were screened in person at multiple wineries in any of the wine countries in Northern California. The interviewers visited these locations personally and requested participation of interviewees. The participants were given the choice to participate or not to participate in the study. In the case that a person was not eligible to participate in this research study, we explained to him/her that the research was attempting to focus on international wine tourists and including a person who was not an international wine tourist might bias the results of this study. The informed consent was given to the person at the time of the interview. The participants were encouraged to read and understand the contents of the informed consent.

The **recruiting script/email text** was as follows:

Hello,

I, along with our supervisor Dr. Mahmood Hussain, Associate Professor (Marketing), am conducting a study to understand consumer behavior patterns among wine tourists. Participating in this research would be via a personal interview and would entail a discussion on what motivates you to travel to wine destinations and visit wineries. The discussion would be about an hour long. The interview will be audio taped to help us analyze our findings more effectively. You have the choice to participate or

not to participate in the study. In case you are interested in being a part of this study, I am going to ask you a few classification questions which will help me evaluate your eligibility for the proposed interview.

1. Are you between 21-40 years of age?
2. Do you frequently travel to wineries/wine destinations?

Thank you for your replies. You are eligible to be a part of the proposed interview. Please fill out the consent form to confirm that I have your permission to interview.

PROCEDURES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

We conducted personal interviews ranging from 10 to 20 minutes. The interviews will be audio taped and subsequently formal transcripts will be made. In addition, the researcher took notes. All data gathered during the interviews will be aggregated in order to protect the identity of the participants. Information contained in the transcripts will be color coded via a content analysis to identify common themes in the participant's responses.

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

- Researcher restated the purpose of the interview to the participant, which was to understand the pattern of consumer behavior as seen in the tourists visiting Northern California wineries.
- Researcher administered the informed consent form to the participant.
- The interview was audio-taped and took place at a mutually convenient location and time, in or near San Francisco.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Section 1: Entertainment: We'll start with your choice of leisure and entertainment activities in general.

1. Please mention a few your favorite entertainment activities.
2. Please name your most and least favorite entertainment activity .
3. How often do you engage in these entertainment activities?
4. Does any of your entertainment activity involve traveling?

Section 2: Decision Making Stage and Tourism, in general: Now I would like you to think about your vacation habit and your current trip to the United States and Northern California.

1. How often do you go on vacation?
2. What do you look for when choosing a travel destination? That is, why do you love to travel? What do you gain from it?
3. I would like you go back to the time when you were planning for this trip to Northern California. At that time – I mean, before you had left home – which places in California or in the United States did you plan to visit?
4. What were the reasons behind your selection of Northern California as a travel destination? List as many reasons as you can think of. Was the trip to a winery a primary or secondary reason for the travel?
5. After you started your trip, how much did your plan change?

6. Who influenced your decision to visit Northern California? (*friends, families, peer, professional organizations, etc.*)
7. If you had to rank the number of places you planned to visit, what was on top of your list? Why? Then what? Why?
8. Was your trip to the winery part of an “overall bundle of attractions?”
9. Where are you staying? If multiple places, please mention name and approximate duration.

Section 3: Wine Tourism Decision and Experience, in general: Now we will focus only on your trip to a winery.

1. Is this the first time you have been to a winery? If not, how frequently do you visit wineries?
2. How far did you have to travel to visit the winery today?
3. Are you traveling in a group? How many people are in your group? Who organized the trip? Yourself?
4. Is your trip self-organized or a paid professional company did it for you?
5. How would you describe your level of knowledge of wine? Does a trip to winery help you increase your knowledge of wine? How does this additional knowledge benefit you?

Section 4: Why California Wineries: Now we would like you to consider your expected and actual pleasure/satisfaction that you received from your trip to this winery.

1. How long do you plan to stay in this wine region? More than a day? Why or why not?
2. What did you know about wineries in Northern California before you made the trip to this winery?
3. If you’ve been to other wineries, how does this winery compare to wineries you visited in the past?
4. Did you purchase wine – why or why not? Did you feel any difference between purchasing wine at the winery and at a store? Please elaborate.
5. Do you plan on visiting more wineries in Northern California? Why or why not?
6. Do you plan to return to wineries in Northern California? Why or why not?
7. List some of the benefits of visiting a winery in Northern California? Why not any other winery within or outside the United States? List as many reasons/benefits as possible.
8. How would you rate your experience at this winery? What did you like **most/least**? *Tips: If the response is brief, probe: ask/her/him to discuss accommodation, unique regional character, wine education, outdoor recreations (like, balloon festival, wedding) dining experience, gourmet restaurants, weather, customer service, wine village, price, shopping experience, etc.*
9. What can Northern California wineries do to make your overall experience better so you would decide to make this trip again? Please feel free to offer recommendations that will encourage you to return to wineries in this region.

Demographic questions: Please reiterate that any information given will be treated strictly confidential and will only be used in academic research and anonymously.

Question	Codes
Gender	1= Male 2= Female
Age	1 = <24 2 = 25-34 3 = 35-44

Question	Codes
	4 = 45-54 5 = 55+
Marital Status	1 = Married 2 = Never married 3 = Widowed/divorced/Separated
Education	1 = BA 2 = MA 3 = MS 4 = MBA 5 = PHD 6 = Others
Citizenship	
Permanent residency	
Employment	1 = Employed 2 = Not currently employed 3 = Student
Current/previous work experience	0 = No experience 1 = Software 2 = Hardware 3 = IT service 4 = Electrical Engineering 5 = Web/Network 6 = Finance/Accounting 7 = Banking 8 = Marketing 9 = Logistics 10 = Marketing Research 11 = Forecasting 12 = Management/Project Management 13 = Spreadsheet 14 = Non-profit 15 = Not sure

PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

A total of 9 research participants were selected for this study from a convenience sample of tourists visiting the Bay Area. The potential subjects are both men and women, 21 years of age and older. The participants were screened in person both at the wineries in Northern California as well as at popular tourist locations in San Francisco. The researcher traveled to these locations and requested participation of interviewees personally. The information was obtained through in-depth one on interviews with each of the participants. The interviews lasted 20 minutes or less and were arranged at a mutually convenient place and time for the researcher and the study participants. The interviews were audio-taped and

subsequently formal transcripts were made. All data gathered during the interviews would be aggregated in order to protect the identity of the participants. Information contained in the transcripts would be color-coded via a content analysis to identify common themes in the participant's responses. The research participants were asked questions related to the entertainments activities they engaged in, travel-related activities, their reasons for visiting the winery, their level of knowledge of wine, their experience at the winery and their intent to return to the wineries in the region.

Table: List of Wine Tourists Interviewed

Name	Age	Gender	Country or Origin	Duration (mins)	Location
Xiao Jing Chen	35-44	F	China	15	Beringer, Napa
Sukuntheary	35-44	F	Cambodia	11	Beringer, Napa
Javaneh	25-34	F	Iran	9	San Francisco
Ahuja	25-34	M	India	23	Beringer, Napa
Ravi	25-34	M	India	26	San Francisco
Mikako	<24	F	Japan	8	San Francisco
Garima	25-34	F	India	23	Beringer, Napa
WB	<24	F	Germany	7	Napa
N/A	25-34	M	France	10	Napa
Payankan	>55	M	India	15	San Francisco

1. Interview: Completed
2. Transcription: Completed
3. Content Analysis: In progress

REFERENCES (abridged)

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