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THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS IN THE EXPERIENTIAL BASED MODEL AMONG WINE TOURISTS AND WINE INDUSTRY EXPERTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

ABSTRACT

Wine tourism is facing new challenges where tourists are in search of extraordinary, unique and memorable experiences, which require from individual wine operators to develop a distinct, engaging and value-added offering. The latest research suggests the need for a more holistic approach to the experiential nature of wine tourism. The present study utilizes relevant constructs of the experience economy model to reveal the importance of each dimension among visitors of major wineries in the Republic of Macedonia. Wine industry experts have ranked the importance and performance of pertinent attributes as key success factors for visiting a winery. The purpose of the paper is to analyze whether the 4E construct is of equal importance to tourists' evaluations of the wine tourism experience. The survey results reveal that, according to the experts' opinions, human resources, information and signage, and landscaping are the essential success factors for visiting the winery. The esthetic dimension appeared to be the dominant dimension of the experiential outcomes among wine tourists. Findings from the wine tourism research, within the experience economy model, might be beneficial for all the involved parties in wine tourism to improve their wine tourism offer to experience-seeking visitors.

Keywords: Experience economy, wineries, wine tourism, tourist's experience

1. Introduction

Wine tourism is a growing industry which can have a major impact on the identity of the regions in which it takes place. It consists of cultural, economic and historical values and has become a key component and a pillar in the strategies of diversification of many destinations. Furthermore, wine tourism constitutes a major driver in diversification strategies helping destinations to enrich their offer and to attract different segments. Wine tourism is a growing segment in a continuous update that offers an extraordinary diversity to the consumer as well as business opportunities to producers.¹ The wine industry in the Republic of Macedonia is in its infancy and consequently, needs nurturing. In 2011 there were 80 registered Macedonian wineries, but in just five years, only two-thirds continue to trade. Macedonian wineries, comprised of the large, well-funded commercial players and the small, 'boutique' wineries, face the challenges of operating on a small market such as the Macedonian.² Wine tourism, although still in its early phase in Macedonia, is a growing tourist attraction. Besides the need to turn to foreign markets for selling Macedonian wines, there is an opportunity (with proper implementation of marketing strategies), to position the country as a desired wine tourism destination that provides a unique experience for visitors. The visitor's experience becomes a significant element of the marketing strategy for many wineries. Wine tourists want to immerse themselves in the culture of wine-making, vertical wine tasting, entertaining activities and consequently, wineries have been striving to provide authentic experiences. This new demand for unique and memorable experiences requires from wine operators to create value-added offers for achieving competitive advantage.

The experience economy has recently emerged as a relevant framework for understanding how to improve wine tourism. Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012) emphasize the need for examining different items of the holistic wine tourism experience regarding their contribution and importance in the process of evaluation of the experience. The empirical part of this paper examines the importance of different items of all four experience economy realms among wine visitors in major wineries in the Republic of

Macedonia. Wine experts and consultants ranked the importance and performance of key success factors of the experience of the major wineries.

2. Literature Review

Wine tourism as an emerging concept is becoming increasingly significant for wine regions and wineries (Hall et al., 2000). The literature provides a variety of definitions of wine tourism with a different focus. Thus, wine tourism can be defined as visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors (Hall, 1996; Macionis, 1996). Wine tourism is based on a special interest in wine motivated by the destination (wine region), the activity (wine tasting) or both (Cambourne et al., 2000). Arguing that the motivations and expectations of wine tourists can be quite diverse, Johnson (1998, as cited in Hall et al., 2000: 5) broadens the definition of wine tourism as "visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for the purpose of recreation." Geißler (2007, as cited in Pikkemaat, 2009) expanded the definition including a wide range of experiences, built around visitation to wineries, wine regions or wine-related events and shows. They include wine tasting, wine and food, the enjoyment of the regional environs, day trips or longer-term recreation, and the experience of a range of cultural and lifestyle activities. Consequently, wine tourism becomes a tourism activity influenced by the physical, social and cultural dimensions of the winescape and its components (Cambourne et al., 2000). The wine tourism product is complex, and it comprises of different activities, services and benefits that constitute experiences (Medlick, Middleton, 1973). Thus, wine tourism should provide a unique experience which includes wine, gastronomy, culture, arts, education, and travel or a combination of the ambiance, atmosphere, surrounding environment, regional culture and cuisine, local wine styles and varieties (Williams, 2001). The definition of wine tourism by Van Westering (1999) focuses mainly on the attractions of the wine region such as heritage, landscape and the wine made. Festivals, socializing, the Winemaker's Day and entertainment are suggested as the motivation of

wine tourists (Macionis, Cambourne, 1998). Dodd (1995: 5) comments that wine tourism is associated with “relaxation, communing with others, learning about new things and hospitality.” Besides the diversity in describing wine tourism, most of the stated definitions posit that wine tourism involves more than just visiting wineries and purchasing wine. Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003) suggest that stored knowledge from interaction with tourists integrated into intelligence could be a source of competitive advantage. “Wine tourism is a multi-faceted and complex phenomenon, and provision of a quality tourism experience depends on satisfying tourists’ needs at the regional and activity place scales, while maintaining environmental integrity” (Carmichael, 2005: 201). Wine tourism expands its activity by developing new offers. As part of the holistic offers wineries start to incorporate wine festivals, wine shows, wine tasting, food, the enjoyment of the regional environs, day trips or longer-term recreation, the experience of a range of cultural and lifestyle activities, the arts, an educational atmosphere, surrounding environment. In the future, wine tourists will increasingly become travelers seeking educative and experiential components (Cambourne et al., 2000; Carmichael, 2005). The experience, comprised of unique activities, is emphasized in many definitions which prove the emerged interest for the wine tourism experience. Wineries actively sought to understand and fulfill the needs, motivations and increasing requirements of wine tourists for experiencing creative activities.

The experience economy as an emerging concept is implemented across a wide range of industries, including wine tourism. Pine and Gilmore (2000) describe and explain the progression of economic value and define the experience as a distinct economic offer built on top of services, goods, and commodities. The present study utilizes pertinent constructs of the experience economy model to explore the importance of different items for visiting wineries. Pine and Gilmore (1998) identify four dimensions of consumer experiences divided by the degree of customer participation and connection within the performance. The four types of experiences are entertainment, educational, escapist and esthetic. The educational and escapist dimensions reflect active participation, whereas the entertainment and

esthetic dimensions are characterized by the passive participation of the customer, in this case, the wine tourist. Consequently, during the educational and escapist experience, the tourist will directly affect or influence the performance of the winery. On the other hand, winery visitors are immersed in the esthetic or escapist experiences; they absorb entertaining and educational offerings in wineries.

Each dimension in the experience economy framework engages individual customers in a way that creates a memorable and perception-changing experience. The esthetic dimension occurs when wine tourists are immersed passively in the experience, specifically when they are indulged in sensorial environments. The esthetic dimension refers to visitors’ interpretation of the physical environment around them. Many authors highlight that winescape is vital to the wine tourism experience (Alant, Bruwer, 2004; Carmichael, 2005; Williams, 2001). Educational experiences engage the mind of the consumers and play a vital role in co-determining their experience. Visitors enhance their knowledge during the winery visit. Previous research suggests that the educational opportunities at the winery are especially important to about one-third of the visitors (Charters, Ali-Knight, 2000) and wineries should focus on them in detail. Education has been pointed out as a motivation in the wine tourism research literature (Fountain, Charters, 2010; Getz, Carlsen, 2008). Visitors manifest the need to learn more about wine; they rank this motive among top three for visiting the winery (Bruwer, Alant, 2009). Macedonian wineries strongly support the education of their customers with respect to the grapes, processes, tastes, characteristics, and some interesting curiosities worth knowing. They also organize special seminars that cover the most relevant wine topics and issues (Simjanovska, Caputo, 2015). Escapism experiences occur when wine tourists are actively immersed in the experience, and it requires their participation. The participatory, immersive activities were part of different models as factors that help to predict tourist behavioral intentions (Fountain, Charters, 2010). The entertaining experience is located in the passive-absorption quadrant and consumers are engaged by a different type of performances. Special events organized in wine destinations entice tourists’ attention and enhance their entertainment experi-

ence (Carmichael, 2005; Williams, Kelly, 2001). Many wine-related events are organized in the Republic of Macedonia, such as the Tikvesh Grapevine Harvest and the wine festival VINO Skopje. The Tikvesh Grapevine Harvest is an event traditionally celebrated during the harvest season in the town of Kavadarci, located in the Tikves wine district. The wine festival VINO Skopje takes place in the city of Skopje, usually at the beginning of October with the presence of many Macedonian wineries (Simjanovska, Caputo, 2015).

Due to the rising interest for the tourist experience, a plethora of studies have used theories of hedonic and experiential consumer behavior to understand aspects of wine tourism (Bruwer, Alant, 2009; Getz, Carlsen, 2008; Williams, 2006). Jurowski (2009) proves that different dimensions of tourist participation in specified activities can be grouped in four realms of the experience economy model. However, studies that have used the experience economy framework to research wine tourism remain scarce (e.g., Ali-Knight, Carlsen, 2003; Pikkemaat et al., 2009; Quadri-Felitti, Fiore, 2012; Quadri-Felitti, Fiore, 2013).

Ali-Knight and Carlsen (2003) emphasize the necessity for creating a memorable and compelling experience in the wine industry. Therefore, the winery operator must provide a memorable and sensory experience, which will have enduring novelty, and the visitor will be engaged and entertained through different targeted events and will be offered unrivaled sampling opportunities. The article was criticized due to lack of aligning the suggested activities within the 4Es framework (Quadri-Felitti, Fiore, 2012). Pikkemaat et al. (2009) applied the experience setting model to measure the potential of experience-orientation of South Tyrolean wine routes. They emphasize the necessity to create multi-optional attractions and to stage experiences for wine tourists. The four dimensions of the experience realm of Pine and Gilmore were employed for analyzing the expectations and the degree of visitors' satisfaction. Results have indicated that the esthetic dimension, such as the landscape and information about wine, is the most significant regarding visitors' expectations and satisfaction. In terms of expectation, education was noted as the least important dimension, while escape was

ranked as the lowest concerning visitors' satisfaction. Each dimension of the 4Es was comprised of three items which did not fully capture the constructs. The authors excluded outdoor architecture in measuring the esthetic dimension and did not provide clear distinguishing features for all the items (Quadri-Felitti; Fiore, 2012).

Very few studies empirically tested the 4Es and expanded understanding of the experience economy by examining how tourists' memories operate together with the 4Es and whether satisfaction has influence on their destination loyalty in different tourism settings (Quadri-Felitti, Fiore, 2013; Hosany, Witham, 2010; Oh et al., 2007). The four realms of experience offer not only a conceptual but also a practical measurement framework for analyzing the tourist experience. Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2013) measured the experience economy's 4Es by adapting Oh et al.'s (2007) validated 16-item scale and structural equation modeling. The results demonstrate the supremacy of the esthetic experience in predicting positive memories and destination loyalty in the wine tourism context. Hosany and Witham (2010) have employed the four dimensions for understanding cruisers' onboard experiences. Esthetics has appeared to be a dominant determinant in predicting satisfaction and intention to recommend. Oh et al. (2007) constructed a measurement scale and they empirically tested the experience economy conceptual model using customers' lodging experiences with bed-and-breakfasts, and the results have proved that the esthetic dimension was the main determinant of the experiential outcomes.

Wine tourists look for diversity of activities during their visit at wineries. Exploring the main motives as the key success factor for visiting a winery is of high importance for all the wine operators. Demand for wine tourism comprises motivations, perceptions, previous experiences and expectations of the wine tourist. A small number of wine tourists desire to purchase wine as the only reason for visiting a winery. Visitors seek for a unique experience among top three reasons in their decision to visit the winery region, after the desire for rest and relaxation in an attractive landscape (Carmichael, 2005). Getz and Carlsen (2008) suggest that wine visitors preferred friendliness, diversity of activities, attractive

scenery, knowledgeable staff and group tours as the main reasons for visiting a winery.

3. Methodology

Two market research methods, expert evaluation, and winery visitors' survey were applied for data collection in this study, in the period from February to April 2017.

For the purpose of examining the key success factors for visitors' experience, seventeen wine industry experts were asked to rank the importance and performance of different attributes (after winery visit), on the seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = not important to 7 = very important). The main reason to use a seven-point scale was to increase the variance in measures since a seven-point scale enables to get more data, which is helpful in the situation with a low sample size (17 experts). The attributes that wine industry experts rated were: human resources, information and signage, landscaping, experiences for all senses, diversity and choice of activities, events, possibilities for unique accommodation, the theme and educational dimension.

The survey of wineries' visitors (based on previous researches of Quadri-Felitti, Fiore, 2012; Pikkemaat et al., 2009; Carmichael, 2005) was undertaken in order to examine the importance of different items of 4Es of the experience model and to gain a better understanding of wine tourism demand among winery visitors in the Republic of Macedonia. The items in the structured questionnaire were categorized according to Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012), while wine tourist activities were based on the four dimensions of the experience realm of Pine and Gilmore (1999), i.e., entertainment, education, escape, and esthetics. The conceptual and practical relevance of the experience based model for the tourism industry is evident, but there are still very few academic papers, mainly due to the absence of validated empirical measurement scales (Oh et al., 2007). Consequently, the applicability of the experience based model is limited. In previous research, e.g., for the evaluation of success factors of the wine routes authors employed a 6-point Likert scale; others posed the 4Es items on a 7-point Likert scale (Pikkemaat et al., 2009; Quadri-Felitti, Fiore, 2013;

Carmichael, 2005). In this research of wine tourists' experiences, the measurement scale for measuring 16-items was used. A five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = low importance to 5 = high importance) was applied, as a commonly used approach, because of its comprehensibility for respondents and easiness to express their views (Marton-Williams, 1984).

There are no official data about the number of visitors to Macedonian wineries. The wineries Kartal, Chateau Kamnik, Brzanov, Chateau Sopot, Tikves, Popova Kula, Stobi, Popov, Bovin and Pivka, which offer wine tourism activities (wine tasting room, accommodation, wine service, etc.) participated in the research. The research was conducted on a convenience sample of visitors. The official tourist guide selected the visitors after they visited the certain winery. The questionnaire was sent by email to each of the visitors from the sample, and they were asked to complete and return it. In two months, from February until April 2017, 33 usable questionnaires were collected.

3.1 Expert Evaluation

Half of the wine industry experts were from Macedonia; the others were from Serbia, Croatia, the USA, England, Australia, Bulgaria, Hong Kong and Germany. The sample included persons with different careers in the field. Among them, there were authors of contributions and/or editors of wine-related magazines, international wine judges, a writer of a wine-related book, owners and managers at wineries and tourist agencies, a consultant at the Agency for Promotion and Development of Tourism in Macedonia, coordinators and a director at wine operators (wine digital marketing agency, wine contests, and alike), associate professor from the faculty of tourism and hospitality.

Wine industry experts were asked to rank the level of importance and performance of winery features on a seven-point Likert Scale. First, experts evaluated factors they perceive as key success variables for visiting a winery. They ranked the importance of human resources (6.24), information and signage (5.94) and landscaping (5.59) as three main key success factors for a winery visit (see Table 1). Then, they rated the performance of the each of all respective attributes.

Table 1 Success factors for visiting wineries in the Republic of Macedonia among wine industry experts

Description of wineries' attributes	Mean rating of importance	Mean rating of performance for Macedonian wineries
Human resources - skilled, multi-lingual, friendly and knowledgeable about wine and local culture, uniform dress	6.24	4.53
Information and signage - clear communication, large letters, ease of access	5.94	3.18
Landscaping - rural landscape, local architecture, ecological development and landscape maintenance, reduction of traffic	5.59	4.18
Experiences for all senses - Wine cellars, food demonstration, tasting, cellar concert, wine weeks	5.53	4.00
Diversity and choice of activities - vineyard hiking, harvesting grape, guided tours, wine route, personal services, storytelling	5.12	3.29
Events - Wine festivals, special events	5.06	3.59
Possibilities for unique accommodation	5.00	3.18
The theme - Overall concept, corporate design and signage in all destinations, attractiveness of winery buildings, attractive scenery	4.88	3.82
Educational - wine tasting and seminars, winemaking seminars, cooking and craft making classes	4.88	3.18

Importance - on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is not very important, and 7 is very important.

Performance - on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is very poor, and 7 is excellent.

Source: Authors' calculations

The results support the previous findings that infrastructure and management are of the greatest importance for the success of wine regions (Pikkemaat et al., 2009). Also, they are in line with the findings of research of Getz and Carlsen (2008), where wine industry professionals highlighted wine route signposting as the most significant. Furthermore, landscape together with people and hospitality were rated as the most important regional characteristics for wine visitors (Bruwer, Alant, 2009). Contrary to Carmichael's (2005) findings, which showed the higher performance of attributes in comparison with their importance (for all variables except signage), in this study, performance was rated lower compared to importance for all the attributes. Table 1 shows that the greatest gap was found in the attribute "information and signage - clear communication, large letters, and ease of access." The gap which exists between mean values of importance (5.94) and performance (3.18) for this attribute indicates a need for change. Wine experts noted that the inconsistently designed and poor signage of wineries creates a poor user experience. Another interesting aspect is the evaluation of the performance of human resources (4.53), as an attribute that most wine experts are satisfied with. Hence, the wine industry

experts are pleased with the employee involvement, knowledge, hospitality and visual appearance.

3.2 Wine Visitor's Survey

In terms of demographics, the sample included a diversity of age groups, as follows: 8 of the respondents were between 25 and 34 years old, 15 between 35 and 44 years old, 5 were between 45 and 54 years old, 4 were between 55 and 64 years old and one respondent was 65 or older. Slightly more than half of all respondents were male (18), against 15 women. Most of the respondents were from Macedonia (7), followed by those from the US (5), Belgium and Italy (3), Slovakia, the Netherlands and Germany (2) and one respondent from Australia, Austria, Serbia, Estonia, Poland, Japan, Singapore, the UK, and Ukraine. The majority (11) of respondents spend between 201 – 400 EUR monthly on wine. 9 respondents spend between 101 – 200 EUR, 5 respondents between 50 – 100 EUR, 3 between 401 – 800 EUR, 3 less than 50 EUR, 2 respondents spend 801 EUR or above. Most of the respondents (17) stated that they are genuine wine lovers, 8 respondents declare good wine knowledge, 4 respondents have average knowledge and 4 identified themselves as wine experts. Regarding the level of education, 18 respond-

ents have a master's degree, 11 a bachelor's degree, 2 have a doctoral degree and 2 respondents finished high school. According to 29 respondents, a referral from friends and family, and wine and tourist guides were the most important information source about the Macedonian wineries. The other 4 respondents got information about Macedonian wineries from the Internet.

Wine visitors were asked to evaluate the importance of 4Es using the experience-based model developed by Pine and Gilmore (1999). Each item was defined according to the Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012) listing of wine tourism activities, categorized by the 4Es, and adapted according to the wineries' specifics in the Republic of Macedonia and information gained through interviews with wine industry experts. Therefore, the esthetic dimension was comprised of: the impact of the winescape on the overall experience, good accommodation at the winery or in the vicinity of a winery, driving rural roads lined with vineyards, well designed signage and information for making it easy for visitors to find a winery and appropriate stemware such as good wine glasses, decanters etc. An array of activities at the winery such as vineyard hiking or cycling tours and the option to participate during harvest season as a grape picker were part of the escapist dimension.

Education consisted of vertical wine tasting available at a winery, home winemaking seminars, cooking and craft making classes, wine seminars available at the winery/wineries, food, and wine pairing. The fourth realm, entertaining, incorporated: food demonstration available at a winery, a wide range of amusement activities for children, wine events such as harvest parties, wine celebration days, open wine days at a winery, wine museums and heritage site visits in the vicinity of the winery, and wine service available at a winery (sommelier, wine waiter, wine guide). Wine visitors rated the importance of different items when visiting a winery and the services provided there, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was low importance, and 5 was high importance.

Table 2 indicates that esthetics was the most important experience dimension for visiting a winery while escapism was stated to be the most unimportant dimension. Mean scores were highest for items: appropriate stemware such as good wine glasses, decanters etc. (4.30), wine service available at a winery (sommelier, wine waiter, wine guide) (4.03), signage and information on the wine route on how to reach the winery (4.00), the impact of the winescape on the overall experience (3.90) and vertical wine tasting available at a winery (3.87).

Table 2 Tourists' evaluation of wine experiences across major Macedonian wineries

Experiences	Items	Mean evaluation
Esthetic	Appropriate stemware such as good wine glasses, decanters, etc.	4.30
	Signage and information on the wine route on how to reach the winery	4.00
	The impact of the winescape on the overall experience	3.90
	Good accommodation at the winery or in the vicinity of a winery	3.67
	Driving rural roads lined with vineyards	3.23
Education	Vertical wine tasting available at a winery	3.87
	Food and wine pairing	3.43
	Wine seminars available at the winery/wineries	3.40
	Cooking and craft making classes	2.63
Escapist	The option to participate during harvest season as a grape picker	3.30
	An array of activities at the winery such as vineyard hiking or cycling tours	3.00
Entertaining	Wine service available at a winery (sommelier, wine waiter, wine guide)	4.03
	Wine events such as harvest parties, wine celebration days, open wine days at a winery	3.83
	Food demonstration available at a winery	3.13
	Wine museums and heritage site visits in the vicinity of the winery	2.77
	Wide range of amusement activities for children	2.27

Evaluation on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is low importance and 5 is high importance

Source: Authors' calculations

Having a closer look reveals that three of the top five stated items are part of the esthetic dimension in the experience economy model, which underlines the significance of the indoor and outdoor esthetic experience. These findings are consistent with the results of other studies (Tempesta et al., 2010; Pikkemmat, 2009; Carmichael, 2005; Ali-Knight, Charters, 2001). Wine visitors are immersed in esthetic stimuli which certainly has an important emotional value and “the effect on the perception of the wine’s sensory quality proved to be so significant that it leaves little doubt as to its importance for the development and promotion of wine products” (Tempesta et al., 2010: 835). Also, the results corroborate previous findings that an attractive landscape and the setting of the winery are powerful and influential attributes of the wine touring experience (Carmichael, 2005; Ali-Knight, Charters, 2001).

4. Conclusion

Wine tourism as a growing segment is facing intense competition and more demanding consumers; by employing educational, entertainment, esthetic and escapist experiences, improved and unique wine offerings can be created.

Wine tourists want more from the wineries than just to purchase wines. They desire a unique experience and memorable moments. Experience providers, i.e., wineries, must constantly refresh their experiences - change or add elements that keep the offering new, exciting and more relevant to the wants and needs of individual customers, and worth paying money to experience all over again (Pine, Gilmore, 2011). The nature of the winery visit is specific to each region. By understanding the findings from wine tourism research within an experience economy framework, tourist operators can better develop and communicate their wine tourism offering (Mitchell, Hall, 2006). Wine tourism experiences are created through a process of visiting, learning and enjoying activities in the winery. Hence, wineries evolve into a performance space for staging memorable experiences for tourist visitors (Ali-Knight, Carlsen, 2003).

Macedonian wineries should broaden their offerings by including a diversity of appealing esthetic, educational, entertaining and escapist experiences, and gain a lasting competitive advantage. Research findings reveal that according to the experts’ opinions, the human resources, information and signage and landscaping are the core asset factors for visiting the winery. Macedonians are well known for their hospitality, and wine industry experts are satisfied with the employees in the wineries - with

their skills, friendliness, knowledge and multilingual capability, ranking their performance with the highest scores (4.53). On the contrary, wine industry experts evaluated information and signage, educational dimension, possibilities for unique accommodation and diversity and choice of activities as items with poor performance. The observations of wine industry experts might contribute in designing future activities: offering visitors easy access to wineries, better designed outdoor signage and improved communication with close collaboration of all involved parties. The landscaping was rated highly in importance for visiting a winery and as one of the most significant attributes of the wine touring experience. This gives further credence to the conclusion that visitors and wine industry experts perceive esthetic experiences as the most significant within the context of a winery visit.

Understanding the importance of the different items of the experience economy model for visiting a winery is essential for developing and improving wine offerings tailored to the visitor’s need and motivations. The challenge for wine operators is to develop and manage diverse relevant activities in order to create extraordinary guest experiences. Consequently, Macedonian wineries ought to provide numerous different activities in which the visitors may be engaged and immersed during their visit, which will create the visitors’ positive and unique experiences. A new demand for memorable experiences requires Macedonian wineries to enhance and improve their current offers. Consequently, experiences are no longer an optional added value, but a required benefit of the wine tourism offer; therefore, wineries should augment the visitor’s experience with authenticity.

The research results can be considered an indicative assessment of the current state of wine tourism in the Republic of Macedonia. Major research limitations concern the structure and size of the samples. Both samples were made up of the respondents chosen by a deliberate rather than a random selection. The sample sizes (17 wine industry experts and 33 wine tourists) are also a limitation. Therefore, it is impossible to generalize research findings.

A more comprehensive structural measurement model should be implemented in future studies where potential consequences (i.e. arousal, memory, quality, customer satisfaction) of the experience economy will be included in the existing model. The emerging interest and relevance of the experience economy model urge the need for its employment and research in the different industries and in a multicultural context.

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(ENDNOTES)

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VAŽNOST RAZLIČITIH DIMENZIJ U ISKUSTVENOM MODELU VINSKOG TURIZMA MEĐU TURISTIMA I STRUČNJACIMA U VINSKOJ INDUSTRIJI U REPUBLICI MAKEDONIJI

SAŽETAK

Vinski turizam suočava se s novim izazovima gdje su turisti u potrazi za izvanrednim, jedinstvenim i nezaboravnim iskustvima, što od pojedinačnih nositelja ponude vinskog turizma zahtijeva razvijanje posebne i zanimljive ponude dodatne vrijednosti. Najnovija istraživanja ukazuju na potrebu cjelovitijega pristupa iskustvenoj prirodi vinskog turizma. Ova studija koristi relevantne konstrukte modela iskustvene ekonomije kako bi se otkrila važnost svake njegove dimenzije među posjetiteljima glavnih vinarija u Republici Makedoniji. Stručnjaci u vinskoj industriji rangirali su važnost i učinkovitost relevantnih atributa kao ključnih čimbenika uspjeha za posjetu vinariji. Cilj je rada analizirati je li konstrukt 4E jednako važan za turističke procjene iskustva vinskog turizma. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da su, prema mišljenjima stručnjaka, ljudski resursi, informacije i natpisi te uređenje okoliša ključni čimbenici uspjeha posjeta vinariji. Među posjetiteljima vinarija, dominantna dimenzija iskustvenih ishoda bila je estetska dimenzija. Nalazi istraživanja vinskog turizma, u sklopu modela iskustvene ekonomije, mogu biti korisni za sve uključene strane u vinski turizam, u svrhu unaprjeđenja njihove ponude posjetiteljima koji traže iskustvo.

Ključne riječi: iskustvena ekonomija, vinarije, vinski turizam, turističko iskustvo