CHAPTER 14

# Wine Tourism Experiences and Marketing: The Case of the Douro Valley in Portugal

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## Introduction

Wine-producing regions increasingly seek ways of providing value-added experiences to tourists in order to develop the destination and possibly gain a competitive advantage over its competitors. Wine tourism experiences are critical for wine tourism development (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, & Macionis, 2000), alongside the increasing importance and use of social media as information sources for travellers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). As wine tourism continues to develop, the need for a better understanding of consumer behaviours regarding wine regions

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visits is paramount (Sparks, 2007) as well as the factors that enhance their overall experiences (Roberts & Sparks, 2006).

As the evolvement of the experiential approach in the wine tourism field is still in its infancy stage (Bruwer & Alant, 2009), the objective of this exploratory study is threefold. First, to evaluate the overall wine tourism experience in the Douro Valley of Portugal, a wine-producing region where wine tourism has achieved an important status and role in regional development. Secondly, to evaluate the wine tourism experience to a renowned winery in the region (*Quinta da Avessada*). *Quintas* are wine-producing estates that characterise the cultural landscape of the Douro Valley, designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Thirdly, to identify initiatives by *Quinta da Avessada* for improving its wine tourism business. The findings can be useful for addressing strategies for attaining the interest of tourists and impact positively the development and management of the destination.

To achieve these objectives, data were collected through a survey questionnaire, an interview with the proprietor of the winery and a content analysis of visitors' comments about their wine tourism experiences in the region that were posted on social media.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section is an introduction to the main topic of this study, describing the theoretical background, the research aims and objectives and the steps of the research process. Section two presents a literature review on wine tourism with a particular emphasis on wine tourism experiences and marketing. The third section explains the methodology employed to collect and analyse the data for this study. Finally, the fourth part presents and discusses the research findings, while the chapter finishes by presenting the conclusions and the limitations of the study.

## Theoretical Background

Wine tourism has been gaining increasing attention as an important form of tourism since the mid-1990s (Getz & Brown, 2006), with a wide range of studies focusing on wine-producing regions of the 'Old World' (Costa & Kastenholz, 2010; Medina & Tresserras, 2008) and of the 'New World' (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2003; Wargenau & Che, 2006). The vast number of studies shows the interest in and the emergence of wine tourism practices (Croce & Perri, 2017), increasingly important for wine-producing regions (Hojman & Hunter-Jones, 2012).

Wine tourism is considered a crucial element for the tourism industry and for the sector of viniculture and wine industry (Koch, Martin, & Nash, 2013). Its potential benefits are diverse, particularly the opportunity for businesses to sell and market their products and to educate consumers (Getz, 2000), the contribution to destinations' image (Alonso, Bressan, O´Shea, & Krajsic, 2015), increased tourists flows and expenditure, income, employment in rural areas (Boatto, Galletto, Barisan, & Bianchin, 2013) and the development of rural areas (Costa & Kastenholz, 2012).

Four main topics of interest and research on wine tourism can be identified in the literature, namely: supply, demand, marketing and development. Wine tourism supply-related studies focus on wine tourism as a strategic product (Torre, Ferreira, & Guzmán, 2008) and on the development of wine tours and trails and routes (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2003). In turn, wine tourism demand-related studies focus on wine tourists' motivations, behaviours and resulting segments (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002) and on the nature of wine tourism experiences (Ali-Knight & Carlsen, 2003; Carmichael, 2005). Regarding wine tourism marketing-related studies, the focus is on regions' image and positioning (Wargenau & Che, 2006), along with the identification of marketing-related opportunities, strategies and the provision of wine tourism experiences and the creation of emotional connection between consumers, the wineries and regions (Faugère, Bouzdine-Chameeva, & Durrieu, 2013). Finally, there are also studies that approach wine tourism as tool for development (Sigala, 2014; Hall et al., 2000), with a specific emphasis on benefits of wine tourism for regional development (Boatto et al., 2013) and rural areas (Costa & Kastenholz, 2012; Getz & Brown, 2006).

Regardless of the focus of the different studies, wine is nowadays seen as one of the main reasons to visit a certain [wine producing] area and a critical element to visitors' experiences (Hall et al., 2000; Sánchez, Rama, & García, 2016). In fact, experiences are a critical element in the wine tourism definition itself, as the definition encompasses different activities, such as participation in tours to the vineyards and wineries, wine festivals and wine shows, wine tasting, and even meetings with the winemaker (Fraser & Alonso, 2006; Hall et al., 2000). This experiential perspective and its importance to wine tourism development have also been recognised in the literature (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997), with studies using the experiential view of consumption to better understand the nature of the motivations of wine tourists (Bruwer & Alant, 2009), and the creation of diverse wine tourism experiences (Brochado,

Silva, & Paulino, 2014; Pikkemaat, Peters, Boksberger, & Secco, 2009). Experiences in wine tourism can also be created through the involvement of the senses in the wine product itself and its immediate aesthetic surroundings (Bruwer & Alant, 2009) and by linking wine with food, the landscape and various other cultural activities (Carlsen & Charters, 2006).

Table 14.1 summarises major studies that identify different aspects that are relevant for wine tourism experiences from the consumers' point of view.

The provision of diverse experiences that go beyond tasting and buying wine is becoming increasingly important for wine tourism destinations (Brochado et al., 2014), since when travelling and visiting wine destinations (Ritchie, Tung, & Ritchie, 2011) visitors have become better informed and active (Neuhofer, Buhalis, & Ladkin, 2015), economically independent and more price sensitive (Pikkemaat et al., 2009),

**Table 14.1** Aspects related to/influencing wine tourism experiences

| *Aspects related to/influencing wine tourism experiences* | *Source* |
|---|---|
| Wine quality | Ali-Knight and Carlsen (2003), Asero and Patti (2009), and Brochado et al. (2014) |
| Regional gastronomy | |
| Service provided to tourists | |
| Variety of events and activities | |
| Accommodation with regional character | |
| Architecture and heritage | |
| Friendly staff and good service | |
| Marketing of the wine region | |
| Authenticity | Carlsen and Charters (2006), Roberts and Sparks (2006), and Inácio (2008) |
| Value for money | |
| Service interactions | |
| Setting/surroundings | |
| Product offerings | |
| Information dissemination | |
| Personal growth | |
| Indulgence/lifestyle | |
| Winery attributes | Griffin and Loersch (2006), Pikkemaat et al. (2009), and Saayman and Merwe (2015) |
| Exterior attributes | |
| Interior attributes | |
| Service attributes | |
| Staff attributes | |
| Wine attributes | |
| Convenience attributes | |

while striving for individuality and expecting to receive added value. Memorable wine tourism experiences are also becoming increasingly important (Ali-Knight & Carlsen, 2003), not only in terms of positioning (Getz & Brown, 2006), differentiation of wine-producing regions/wine tourism destinations at the current highly competitive environment (Croce & Perri, 2017), but also due to its economic importance for businesses and regions (Brochado et al., 2014), and because wine tourism experiences can contribute to the increasing number of visitors and expenditure (Saayman & Merwe, 2015).

## The Douro Valley

The Douro Valley is a rural and wine-producing region located in the North of Portugal, mainly known as the place of origin of the port wine and as the first demarcated and regulated wine-producing region in the world (1756) (Andresen, Aguiar, & José, 2004; Sousa & Pereira 1988), extending from the city of Peso da Régua to the boundary with Spain. The region's soil has been greatly affected by the action of man (Ribeiro, 2000) as it has been broken up to build the terraces prior to planting the vines, namely by digging down deeply and forcing the vertically layered rock to break up and wine farms are fragmented into plots of variable size, slope, shape, orientation and grape varieties (ADVID, 2017). The region presents a favourable climate for the development of viticulture and the soil in which the vines are planted is made up of schist with a few outcrops of granites (Barreto, 1993).

Wine is deeply rooted in the cultural, social, economic and environmental history of the Douro Valley and its residents. The vineyards occupy about 18.3% of the total area of a region that is characterised mainly by holdings of small parcels, small producers with a large weight in the production of port wine (IVDP, 2017). The Douro Valley is one the most important wine-producing regions in Portugal due to the production of port wine, accounting for about 1/3 of the total Portuguese wine exports (Fazenda, Silva, & Costa, 2010).

The natural and heritage resources of the Douro Valley give it a unique character with an enormous potential for tourism development (Fazenda et al., 2010). Its uniqueness was a deciding factor in its designation by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The tourism offer of the Douro Valley has been mainly associated with rural cultural landscapes (the inclined terraces on steep hillsides), gastronomy, vineyards and

wine-producing *Quintas*, villages based on traditional family ties, inheritance and dependence on natural resources, rich natural and archaeological heritage, and upriver and downriver cruises. In addition, the wine theme has also been used in the promotion and hosting of events and festivals which have contributed to the raising of market awareness about port wine as well as other regional wines (Hall & Mitchell, 2000) that are gaining award-winning international recognition such as, Decanter World Wine Awards (Wines of Portugal, 2012).

The designation of this region as a cultural landscape by UNESCO has increased its appeal amongst investors and local entrepreneurs, evidenced by the range of activities that have surged in the last few years, such as river cruises, the scenic historic train ride, diverse types of accommodation units, port wine route, wine-related events and tasting. However, although the number of tourists has increased, there is still difficulty in retaining the tourist in the region, with the average stay being 1.5 nights. New business opportunities are seen as the catalyst for improving the performance of tourism indicators leading to improved regional development.

## Methodology

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The research took place at *Quinta da Avessada*, a family-owned and operated business located in the heart of the Douro Valley (Alijó) because of its distinction by international awards, for example, the Great Wine Capitals with the Best of Wine Tourism award in 2011 in the category 'Innovative Wine Tourism Experiences'. But also because of its proven capacity to attract significant and increasing numbers of tourists along the years.

To carry out this study, data were collected through a survey questionnaire to visitors, an interview to a wine tourism business owner, and a content analysis of visitors' comments about their experiences during the visit to the region that were posted on social media.

The aim of the questionnaire was to understand respondents' opinions, perceptions, behaviours and attitudes (Neuman, 2006). The questionnaire encompassed open and closed-ended questions to measure the tourists´ behaviour and establish their profile. The questionnaire was administered in the Portuguese and English languages to tourists

ending their visit to *Quinta da Avessada*. The survey was carried out in September 2015 during the grape harvest. Respondents were selected based on a convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method by which respondents are selected because they are easy to access to and available to answer (Bryman, 2001). A total of 139 usable questionnaires were collected and data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23.

A short semi-structured interview was conducted to the owner of *Quinta da Avessada*, in June 2015, to clarify certain results of the survey. Additional information was obtained regarding customers, products, marketing and the offered tourist activities.

Finally, a content analysis was conducted of visitors' comments posted on social media for the purpose of examining and understanding the visitors' wine tourism experiences. Content analysis is an 'unobtrusive way to examine what is said (or communicated in some way) in some source and how it is said' (Smith, 2017: 197). This technique can be used to analyse content of texts or images (Bardin, 1979; Finn, Elliot-White, & Walton, 2000; Neuman, 2006) allowing to identify some information and analyse data (Smith, 2017). It is considered word-of-mouth communication, which might include recommendation, being of particular importance in the context of wine tourism as it is one the main sources of information for wine tourists (Bruwer & Alant, 2009). A content analysis can be conducted in a systematic, objective and quantitative approach and/or in a more interpretative and qualitative (Neuendorf, 2002).

Facebook and TripAdvisor were selected as they represent two of the most established online social networks and where travellers tend to share their reviews that help other travellers in their decision making and holiday planning. The importance and the influence of the posted comments and reviews to other travellers' decisions are clearly recognised, not only by academics, but also by practitioners.

An initial analysis was conducted to each of the 54 wine-producing businesses that integrate the Port Wine Route to determine whether they had a *Facebook* page and comments on *TripAdvisor*. Regarding *Facebook*, the purpose was to identify the overall rating and to count the number of reviews. For *TripAdvisor*, the first three comments were selected for each business, regardless of the language used. There were only 2 situations with less than three comments. Those comments in other languages other than Portuguese were translated by the authors. In order to ensure

accuracy, comments were reviewed by other academics with national and international research experience in those specific countries.

Specific objectives were defined, more specifically: to identify and count reviews with the overall rating in both social networks and to identify and count the main themes resulting from the thematic content analysis. The coding scheme was developed manually. An open coding style was used to identify themes resulting from the description and classification of visitors' experiences in the region: To enhance the internal validity of the content analysis, authors coded the same content independently before comparing and assessing the separate results. This method aims to achieve acceptable reliability between different coders (Çakmak & Isaac, 2012; Neuendorf, 2002). Situations in which there were comments coded differently, the respective coding was discussed by the authors in order to identify a common idea and coding theme (grouping). An agreement above 70% was achieved, which is considered reliable as a rule of thumb (Çakmak & Isaac, 2012).

## Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

Findings from the questionnaire survey classify respondents as independent travellers—individuals and small groups. Management of *Quinta da Avessada* were not open to having the survey carried out to tour groups, their principal customer base. Table 14.2 shows respondents were mainly Portuguese, female (60.3%), married (58.3%) with ages under 60 years and with a degree (67.7%) and come essentially from the North of Portugal (regional market).

Most respondents use *Facebook* ($N=78$) for communicating on social media and declare having average knowledge of wines ($N=60$). The respondents also tend to consume wine very frequently on special occasions, frequently with friends, and sometimes with meals (Table 14.3).

For a great majority of the respondents (60.7%) visiting a wine business was their first time, while only 23.2% of them had previously visited a cellar door at least once. Also, 49.4% of the respondents indicated that they are likely to visit another wine tourism business in the future and 22.5% are very likely to do so.

An overwhelming majority of respondents were first-time visitors to *Quinta da Avessada* (80.1%) and 45.6% were also first-time visitors to the Douro Valley. The major motivations for visiting *Quinta da Avessada* included (Table 14.4): visiting the region ($n=71$), being with friends

**Table 14.2** Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

| *Gender* | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 79 | 60.3 |
| Male | 53 | 39.7 |
| Total | 131 | 100.0 |
| *Age* | | |
| <= 30 | 26 | 22.8 |
| 31–45 | 29 | 25.4 |
| 46–60 | 24 | 21.1 |
| 61–75 | 20 | 17.5 |
| 76+ | 15 | 13.2 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| *Marital status* | | |
| Single | 27 | 28.1 |
| Married | 56 | 58.3 |
| Divorced | 4 | 4.2 |
| Widowed | 9 | 9.4 |
| Total | 96 | 100.0 |
| *Educational background* | | |
| Primary school | 4 | 3.2 |
| Technical course | 2 | 1.6 |
| Secondary school | 34 | 27.4 |
| Higher education | **84** | 67.7 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |
| *Country of origin* | | |
| Portugal | **101** | 78.2 |
| Brazil | **11** | 8.5 |
| Poland | 10 | 7.9 |
| Angola | 1 | 0.8 |
| Albania | 1 | 0.8 |
| Italy | 2 | 1.5 |
| Czech Republic | 2 | 1.5 |
| Romania | 1 | 0.8 |
| Total | 129 | 100.0 |
| *Region of residence* | | |
| Porto and North | **57** | 56.4 |
| Centre | 13 | 12.9 |
| Lisbon | 30 | 29.7 |
| Algarve | 1 | 1.0 |
| Total | 101 | 100.0 |

and family ($n=44$), wine tasting ($n=31$), participating in the harvest ($n=27$) and enjoying the rural environment ($n=25$).

When asked what visitors of *Quinta da Avessada* liked the most and the least, different aspects were identified, as presented in Table 14.5.

**Table 14.3** Wine consumption

| | *Very rarely* | | *Rarely* | | *Sometimes* | | *Frequently* | | *Very frequently* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| With meals | **26** | 21.1 | 16 | 13 | **33** | 26.8 | 24 | 19.5 | 24 | 19.5 |
| In special moments | 13 | 10.7 | 11 | 9.1 | 27 | 22.3 | 25 | 20.7 | **45** | 37.2 |
| With friends | 14 | 12.3 | 13 | 11.4 | 22 | 19.3 | **36** | 31.6 | 29 | 25.2 |

**Table 14.4** Motivations for visiting *Quinta da Avessada*

| *Main reason* | N |
|---|---|
| Visiting the region | 71 |
| Being with friends and family | 44 |
| Wine tasting | 31 |
| Participating in harvest | 27 |
| Enjoying a rural environment | 25 |
| Increasing knowledge about wines | 19 |
| Visiting wine landscapes | 17 |
| Part of the trip | 14 |
| Friend and family recommendation | 7 |
| Buying wine | 4 |
| Meeting wine producers | 1 |

The most favourable aspects were: landscape, welcoming and friendly service, harvest, and atmosphere.

Regarding the aspects that the visitors liked the least, 'nothing' was the most indicated ($n=23$). Nevertheless, others referred aspects such as the food ($n=7$), wine ($n=5$) and the time for the visit ($n=4$). Visitors were also asked to refer their level of satisfaction in relation to specific aspects (identified in the literature) based on a Likert scale-type question. Overall, respondents were satisfied and very satisfied with the visit (Table 14.6) with all the aspects related to the physical space, service and activities. Likewise, most of the respondents indicated that they were likely (30.7%) and very likely (55.5%) to return, as well as to recommend *Quinta da Avessada*.

The next phase of the research included the analysis of the comments posted on social media, and more specifically on *Facebook* and *TripAdvisor*.

**Table 14.5** Aspects that visitors enjoyed the most and the least at *Quinta da Avessada*

| *Aspects that enjoyed the most* | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Landscape | **17** | 15.9 |
| Welcoming and friendly service | **15** | 14.0 |
| Harvest | **15** | 14.0 |
| Atmosphere | 15 | 14 |
| Wine | 6 | 5.6 |
| Learning | 6 | 5.6 |
| Visit | 4 | 3.7 |
| Weather | 2 | 1.9 |
| Food | 2 | 1.9 |
| Entertainment | 2 | 1.9 |
| Business history | 1 | 0.9 |
| Wine tasting | 1 | 0.9 |
| *Aspects that enjoyed the least* | | |
| Nothing | **23** | 46.0 |
| Food | **7** | 14.0 |
| Wine | **5** | 10.0 |
| Time for the visit | **4** | 8.0 |
| Parking | 2 | 4.0 |
| Accessibilities | 1 | 2.0 |
| Dogs in the farm | 1 | 2.0 |
| Weather | 1 | 2.0 |
| Waiting time | 1 | 2.0 |
| Wine tasting | 1 | 2.0 |
| Insufficient information | 1 | 2.0 |

A total of 50 businesses were considered. An initial analysis revealed that 26 wine businesses did not have a Facebook page. Of those, 8 did not have any evaluation on their page. Consequently, the overall rating classification was examined for 16 wine tourism businesses based on the *Facebook* rating scale, which ranges from 1* to 5*. Users rated wine businesses very positively. In *Facebook*, 848 reviews resulted in an overall rating of 4.7 and in *TripAdvisor* 2497 reviews resulted in an overall rating of 4.25.

From all the reviews, 73 visitor comments were considered and analysed. First, all comments were divided into three groups, whether they were positive, neutral or negative. Secondly, all comments were analysed in order to identify specific aspects related to experiences that were identified in the literature review. Overall, 16 respondents recommended the visit and 8 indicated intention of returning. Regarding the service interaction, three comments are considered negative indicating low value for

**Table 14.6** Level of satisfaction of the visit to *Quinta da Avessada*

| | *Aspects* | *Very dissatisfied* | | *Dissatisfied* | | *Not dissatisfied or satisfied* | | *Satisfied* | | *Very satisfied* | | *Not applicable* | | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| Physical space | Location | 7 | 5.4 | 4 | 3.1 | 8 | 6.2 | **35** | 26.9 | **76** | 58.5 | 0 | 0 | 130 |
| | Landscape | **9** | 6.6 | 1 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.7 | **13** | 9.6 | **111** | 81.6 | 1 | 0.7 | 136 |
| | Decoration | 7 | 5.2 | 3 | 2.2 | 6 | 4.5 | **39** | 29.1 | **79** | 59 | 0 | 0 | 134 |
| | Cleanliness | 8 | 5.9 | 2 | 1.5 | 4 | 3 | **26** | 19.3 | **94** | 69.6 | 1 | 0.7 | 135 |
| Service | Reception | 6 | 4.5 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | **11** | 8.3 | **111** | 84.1 | 0 | 0 | 132 |
| | Friendliness | **8** | 6 | 1 | 0.7 | 2 | 1.5 | **18** | 13.4 | **105** | 78.4 | 0 | 0 | 134 |
| | language skills | 7 | 5.6 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 8.9 | **28** | 22.6 | **52** | 41.9 | **26** | 21 | 124 |
| | Knowledge of wines | 5 | 3.9 | 3 | 2.4 | 9 | 7.1 | **23** | 18.1 | **76** | 59.8 | 11 | 8.7 | 127 |
| Activities | Wine tasting | 3 | 2.4 | 2 | 1.6 | 13 | 10.6 | **33** | 26.8 | **63** | 51.2 | 9 | 7.3 | 123 |
| | Guided tour | 7 | 5.3 | 2 | 1.5 | 6 | 4.5 | **39** | 29.5 | **73** | 55.3 | 5 | 3.8 | 132 |
| | Entertainment | 7 | 5.3 | 3 | 2.3 | 7 | 5.3 | **29** | 21.8 | **86** | 64.7 | 1 | 0.8 | 133 |
| | Thematic meals | 6 | 4.8 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3.2 | **41** | 32.5 | **67** | 53.2 | 3 | 2.4 | 126 |
| | Harvest | **9** | 7 | 1 | 0.8 | 3 | 2.3 | **30** | 23.3 | **72** | 55.8 | 14 | 10.9 | 129 |
| | Grade treading | 5 | 4.1 | 3 | 2.5 | 5 | 4.1 | **32** | 26.2 | **59** | 48.4 | 18 | 14.8 | 122 |
| | Video viewing | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2.5 | 6 | 4.8 | **35** | 28.2 | **59** | 47.6 | 16 | 12.9 | 124 |
| | Exhibition | 5 | 4.1 | 2 | 1.6 | 5 | 4.1 | **40** | 32.8 | **62** | 50.8 | 8 | 6.6 | 122 |
| Other | Signaling | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Atmosphere | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Mr. Bean | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Meal explanation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Group | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **1** | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

money/high prices. Two main types of activities are mentioned—guided tours/visits to wineries and wine tasting.

Table 14.7 shows the most referred aspects related to the visit. The most referred words were listed and grouped, starting with the visitors' overall impression. Generally, the most popular words are directly related to the cultural landscape. The service interaction also received very positive reviews with the most referred words being 'friendly' and 'kind', followed by 'excellent', 'great' and 'professional'.

Respondents were more likely to mention aspects related to the accommodation, including the facilities (e.g. reference to manor house, rooms, pool), followed by the wine and winemaking, the 'Quintas'

**Table 14.7** Most referred aspects related to the visit

| | *Frequency in comments* |
|---|---|
| *Overall impression* | |
| Accommodation + Facilities | 85 |
| Wine + 'Quintas' + Wineries | 61 |
| Service interaction | 51 |
| Location + Douro Valley | 49 |
| Landscape | 47 |
| Food | 43 |
| Activities | 41 |
| Behavioural intention | 28 |
| Atmosphere | 18 |
| History + Heritage | 14 |
| Family owned business | 12 |
| Value for money | 11 |
| Accessibility | 9 |
| Cleanliness | 8 |
| *Most mentioned words about the location* | |
| Amazing + Great + Fantastic | 64 |
| Best + Excellent + Very good + Good | 62 |
| Lovely + Beautiful | 32 |
| Authentic + Unique + Real | 18 |
| peaceful + Calm | 18 |
| Friendly | 7 |
| *Most referred words of the service interaction* | |
| Friendly + Kind | 38 |
| Excellent + Great + Professional | 19 |
| Attentive | 8 |
| Helpful | 7 |

and the wineries. Finally, service interaction being mostly classified as 'friendly', location, landscape and food and activities participated in, particularly with reference to wine tasting and the harvest. The most frequently mentioned words describing the location included: amazing, great, fantastic and memorable. Generally, the experience is perceived positively.

Such insights into the visitors' behaviour and evaluation about their wine-related experiences are becoming increasingly important for wine tourism destinations to identify new ways to innovate and to enhance the visitors' experience. The provision and marketing of wine tourism experiences are needed to differentiate the businesses' product and to position them into the consumers' minds (Ali-Knight & Carlsen, 2003), as well as for enhancing the competitive advantage of the regions and their businesses (Brochado et al., 2014). This involves developing market opportunities by matching consumers' preferences and expectations with current or new products, which is also usually associated with attempts to attract high value-added and growing markets (Moital, Dias, & Machado, 2013). Understanding the visitors' expectation is a key determinant for keeping the positive evaluation over time (Brochado et al., 2014) and for providing the best experience according to their increasingly demanding expectations (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

As such, results of the interview with the owner of the *Quinta da Avessada* enabled a more in-depth understanding of the behaviour of its customers, particularly their adherence to light active-based experiences. Using local agro-resources and inheritance of local history and customs in creative ways to deliver cultural rich experiences to tourists. Food products paired with local wine represent the most popular activity, adding value and interest amongst tourists. Food products from local ingredients, grown locally and transformed according to traditional cultural practices passed down from generation to generation. Although food is not a primary tourism activity at regional level, the *Quinta da Avessada* showcases how food as an element of culture can provide highly pursued experiences by tourists when the former is linked to the rural landscape. In developing wine tourism, wine producers need to successfully combine synergies between viniculture, food and tourism, while destination managers need to stimulate wine producers/businesses to grasp this approach in order to develop and market the wine tourism product more convincingly to the ever-demanding tourist market.

## Limitations and Future Research

This study has limitations mainly related to its research sample. Being of an exploratory nature, the questionnaire represents a small sample that is satisfactory for a pilot study. The sample is not representative and so, the survey results and findings cannot be generalised. Furthermore, the survey was conducted in September, which represents the high season for wine tourism in the region. The timing could also influence the characteristics of the sample, as well as the respondents' experience perceptions and evaluations. Thus, it is recommended that the results be used to prepare further research to be applied throughout the year, particularly to obtain comparable data on consumption and behavioural patterns of tourists. The content analysis of the reviews posted on social networks is also limited by a small sample, as only the three first comments were considered and analysed for each wine business. Thus, a larger scale analysis is required to explore in greater detail the visitors' perceptions and evaluation of the destination as well as to better profile the visitors based on what they share online regarding their wine-related experiences.

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