
Profiling Wine Tourist Involvement Segments: A Case Study of Central Burgenland/Analyse von Weintouristensegmenten nach deren Involvementgrad am Beispiel Mittelburgenland

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Abstract

Characteristics of wine tourists, in particular motivations and intentions, are of high interest for marketers, wineries and wine regions. Hence, tourists cannot be treated as a homogenous group, but are clustered upon motivational and wine-interest factors (Cohen and Ben-Nun 2009). Research uncovered several internal and external motivational aspects for wine tourists to visit wine regions. Socio-demographic and psychographic variables are used to categorize wine tourists and relate them to their actual behavior. Despite these approaches, there is still lack of research on how to effectively segment wine tourists as well as on how to develop appropriate segment-based marketing strategies. Consumer involvement and affinity with wine have shown to be reliable predictors of tourists' wine behavior. Therefore this study illustrates how wine tourists can be segmented according to their involvement level. By making use of an online survey among wine tourists in Central Burgenland in Austria, wine

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involvement items and linked motivational factors were observed. A distinction between low and high involvement among wine tourists is demonstrated. Additional explanatory variables (socio-demographics, psychographics and behavioral intentions) support the literature-driven involvement segmentation approach and will be used as a starting point for further profiling attempts. Overall this study provides ideas on how marketers can develop tailor-made wine tourism experiences for different target markets.

Zusammenfassung

Weintouristen werden nicht als homogenes Touristensegment betrachtet, sondern als heterogene Gruppe. Typischerweise finden sich Segmentierungsansätze nach soziodemografischen und psychografischen Merkmalen, dem Weinkaufverhalten, den Lebensgewohnheiten in Bezug auf Wein, und auch der Besuchshäufigkeit. All diesen Herangehensweisen liegt ein gemeinsames Ziel zugrunde, nämlich die Aufdeckung von möglichen Weintouristensegmenten. Es wird jedoch in der Literatur angemerkt, dass derartige Segmentierungsversuche im Weintourismus sehr regionalspezifisch sind, weshalb sich die hier gewonnenen Erkenntnisse auch auf das Mittelburgenland, Österreich beziehen. Aufgrund der divergierenden Gruppencharakteristika ist es für die Verantwortlichen der Weinbranche von äußerster Wichtigkeit, sowohl Push-Faktoren (externe Kriterien wie reisen, entspannen) als auch Pull-Faktoren (interne Kriterien wie Wein verkosten und kaufen) zu untersuchen. So wurde in vergleichbaren Studien festgestellt, dass das Involvement und die Produktabhängigkeit das tatsächliche Verhalten beeinflussen, welches sich beispielsweise im Sinne von veränderter Konsum- und Besuchshäufigkeit niederschlägt. Das Ziel der vorliegenden Studie liegt somit in der anfänglichen Segmentierung hinsichtlich des Involvements und in der darauffolgenden Analyse der vorgefundenen Weintouristengruppen des Mittelburgenlandes. Die Datenerhebung wurde zwischen November 2014 und Mitte Jänner 2015 mithilfe eines Onlinefragebogens durchgeführt. Weinkäufer und -interessenten von Weingütern im Mittelburgenland wurden als potenzielle und aktuelle Weintouristen betrachtet. Drei Weingüter und zwei Weinhändler lieferten Kontaktdaten in Form von 10.398 E-Mail-Adressen. Die Empfänger wurden über Newsletter eingeladen, an der Onlinestudie teilzunehmen. Des Weiteren wurde der Link zum Fragebogen über Social-Media-Plattformen wie Facebook und Weingut-Webseiten umworben und erzielte letztendlich 317 vollständig ausgefüllte Fragebögen. Bereits die soziodemografischen Charakteristiken der Befragten stimmten weitgehend mit den in der Literatur vorgefundenen Merkmalen des klassischen Weintouristen überein. Zur Involvementmessung wurde eine gekürzte Version der „Wine Involvement Scale“

(Getz and Carlsen 2008) herangezogen. Die Befragten wurden mithilfe einer Clusterzentrenanalyse gruppiert. Die datengetriebene Differenzierung zwischen hohem und niedrigem Involvement zeigt eine höhere Zustimmung der Involvement-Items vonseiten der Gruppe mit dem höheren Involvement. Die anschließende tiefer gehende Analyse der aufgefundenen Segmente basierte auf unterschiedlichen aus der Theorie abgeleiteten Variablen (Bruwer et al. 2013; Mitchell et al. 2011; Bruwer and Alant 2009; Getz and Carlsen 2008; Hashimoto and Telfer 2003). Hier zeigt sich, dass Personen mit einem höheren Wein-Involvement auch das höhere Einkommen haben, vor allem männlich sind, in den letzten zwölf Monaten mehr Besuche von Weingütern oder Vinotheken unternommen haben, öfter Wein trinken und generell mehr Geld für Wein und auf weinbezogenen Ausflügen ausgeben. Die Gruppe mit hohem Involvement legt im Vergleich zur Gruppe mit niedrigem Involvement auch mehr Wert auf Authentizität, Weinqualität, Besuchbarkeit von Weingütern und Know-how der Weinproduzenten bzw. des Weinbauern. Demgegenüber steht die Gruppe mit einem niedrigeren Wein-Involvement mit dominierenden Wichtigkeiten in den Bereichen andere Aktivitäten, schöne Landschaft oder natürliche Umgebung. Für Praktiker leiten sich daraus beispielsweise Handlungsempfehlungen hinsichtlich maßgeschneiderter Packages für unterschiedliche Involvementsegmente ab.

Keywords

Segmentation · Wine Tourist · Involvement

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5.1 Introduction

Marketers need to understand how wine tourism is characterized by its tourists, their motivations and intentions (Charters and Ali-Knight 2002). Tourists are not seen as a homogenous group but are clustered upon motivational and wine-interest factors (Cohen and Ben-Nun 2009). Typically, segmentation methods are based upon demographics, psychographics, wine buying behavior, wine lifestyle, wine region image and number of visits (Mitchell and Hall 2006; Roberts and Sparks 2006; Charters and Ali-Knight 2002). As a result, different categorization of wine tourists have emerged ranging from the ‘special wine tourist’ and ‘generalist wine tourist’ to ‘wine lovers’ (Marzo-Navarr and Pedraja-Iglesias 2010). However, marketers need to be careful when developing classification strategies as they are region specific (Mitchell and Hall 2006). A deeper understanding of the visitors of wine regions and/or wineries in particular is needed. A dominating distinction is made between push (external) and pull (internal) motivations. Internal motivations relate to tasting and buying wine, whereas external motivations relate to activities such as travelling, socializing, relaxation and having a great day (Getz and Brown 2006). Researchers agree upon the fact that wine tourists seek for pleasurable and holiday-alike experiences too, not necessarily related to wine. The physical, social and cultural dimensions of the winescape and its components influence wine tourists’ motivation to visit a specific wine region (i.e. Bruwer and Alant 2009; Charters and Ali-Knight 2002). Consumer involvement and affinity with the product are perceived predictors of wine behavior (Bruwer and Alant 2009; Quester and Smart 1996). Involvement is described as the degree of personal relevance an individual perceives in the product or product-related behavior (Quester and Smart 1996). The level of involvement has positive spill-over effects on better acquaintance with the product, risk aversion of buying, visiting behavior and novelty seeking. Often, highly involved consumers use wine tourism activities for self-actualization, enhancement and gratification (Brown et al. 2007). Moreover, perceived importance of wine tourism (i.e. wine making, winery tour) and wine drinking frequency are used as indicators (Cohen et al. 2013; Cohen and Ben-Nun 2009). Nevertheless, region specific research remains rather limited on this topic. Therefore, this study aims at indicating how involvement profiles help to differentiate wine tourist segments in the case of Central Burgenland in Austria.

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 Sample description

The study was conducted between November 2014 and mid January 2015 distributing an online questionnaire. Wine consumers from wineries in Central Burgenland in Austria are perceived as potential or actual wine tourists given their regular contact to the wine-

ries. Three wineries and two wine merchants provided contact data resulting in 10,398 email addresses. Visitors of this wine region were invited to the online survey via newsletters of the cooperating partners. In addition, links to the online survey were shared via social media platforms such as Facebook and the wineries' websites.

This resulted in 317 completed surveys. 222 were male, 95 female. The average age was 49.53 years (std.: 12.56). The place of residence of 52 respondents was Central Burgenland in Austria—the region where the study was conducted. People coming from somewhere else are listed in descending order by their number of respondents in brackets: Vienna (62), Lower Austria (45), Upper Austria (38), North Burgenland (22), Vorarlberg (19), Salzburg (17), Styria (16), Tyrol (7), South Burgenland (4) and Carinthia (4). 31 respondents came from abroad, whereby 22 of them were German residents. The level of education looked as follows: compulsory school (3), apprenticeship (39), secondary school (25), vocational school/college (130) and university/university of applied sciences (110). 44 were single, 203 married, 18 divorced, 2 widowed and 50 lived in cohabitation. 101 respondents had no children and 216 had up to 6. The average income was 1745.85 (std.: 1548.53). 68 were self-employed, 181 employed, 50 retired, 3 housewives/housemen and 7 school children/students.

5.2.2 Measurement constructs

The study includes two different measurement constructs, one focusing on motivations and the other one on involvement. The former makes use of an item battery of 13 items to reduce them to a continuous motivational latent space. Items are derived from various different sources capturing person and place centered variables (Bruwer et al. 2013; Mitchell et al. 2011; Bruwer and Alant 2009; Getz and Carlsen 2008; Hashimoto and Telfer 2003). They were evaluated on their importance of reasons why wineries are visited on a 5-point Likert-scale ('1—extremely unimportant', '2—unimportant', '3—not that important', '4—important' and '5—extremely important'). The latter enables the differentiation of tourists based upon the shortened Wine Involvement Scale (Getz and Carlsen 2008). Indicators were rated upon agreement on a 5-point Likert-scale ('1—fully disagree', '2—rather disagree', '3—moderately agree', '4—rather agree' and '5—fully agree').

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Motivation and involvement

The motivational items are used in a principal component factor analysis (PCA). Items of the two motivational dimensions ranked by their factor loading sizes reveal a clear distinction between hedonic related aspects ('recreation', 'have a nice time', 'socialize with

others', 'conversation pleasure', 'rural setting and vineyards', 'eat at winery's restaurant') and wine related aspects ('knowledge about the winery', 'find a new/unique wine', 'meet the winemaker', 'learn more about wine', 'wine tasting', 'looking for new experiences', 'buy wine').

With the objective of differentiating heterogeneous involvement levels, the 317 respondents are grouped into two latent clusters using k-means algorithm. Cluster sizes are listed in the column headings of Tab. 5.1. Mean importance values of the shortened Wine Involvement Scale items enable the identification of two separate groups, namely a high and a low involvement group. The high involvement cluster has constantly higher mean values compared with the low involvement cluster. The 13 items are ranked by their differences between the two involvement levels. All items exceeding a difference threshold of more than one highly represent wine involvement aspects. Items with differences below before-mentioned threshold are additionally related with other aspects, like the interest in wine of other people, or they depict just a moderate self-evaluation of one's own knowledge about wine.

The resulting categorical involvement groups are projected into the continuous motivational space (see Fig. 5.1). In comparison with the low involvement group, the high involvement group is located close to wine related aspects. The low involvement group is located somewhat closer to hedonic related aspects.

Tab. 5.1 Wine involvement clusters

Involvement level	High	Low	Difference
# Cluster sizes	#183	#134	
I have invested a great deal in my interest in wine	3.87	1.76	2.11
People come to me for advice about wine	3.97	2.13	1.84
Much of my leisure time is devoted to wine-related activities	3.40	1.72	1.68
Wine represents a central life interest for me	4.03	2.46	1.57
My interest in wine says a lot about the type of person I am	3.32	1.82	1.5
I am knowledgeable about wine	4.01	2.60	1.41
My interest in wine makes me want to visit wine regions	4.69	3.54	1.15
I find conversations about wine very enjoyable	4.27	3.14	1.13
I have a strong interest in wine	4.91	3.80	1.11
I wish to learn more about wine	4.58	3.67	0.91
My spouse/partner is also interested in wine	4.17	3.33	0.84
Deciding which wine to buy is an important decision	4.72	4.21	0.51
Many of my friends share my interest in wine	4.12	3.63	0.49
For me, drinking wine is a particularly pleasurable experience	4.97	4.63	0.34
I like to purchase wine to match the occasion	3.86	3.68	0.18

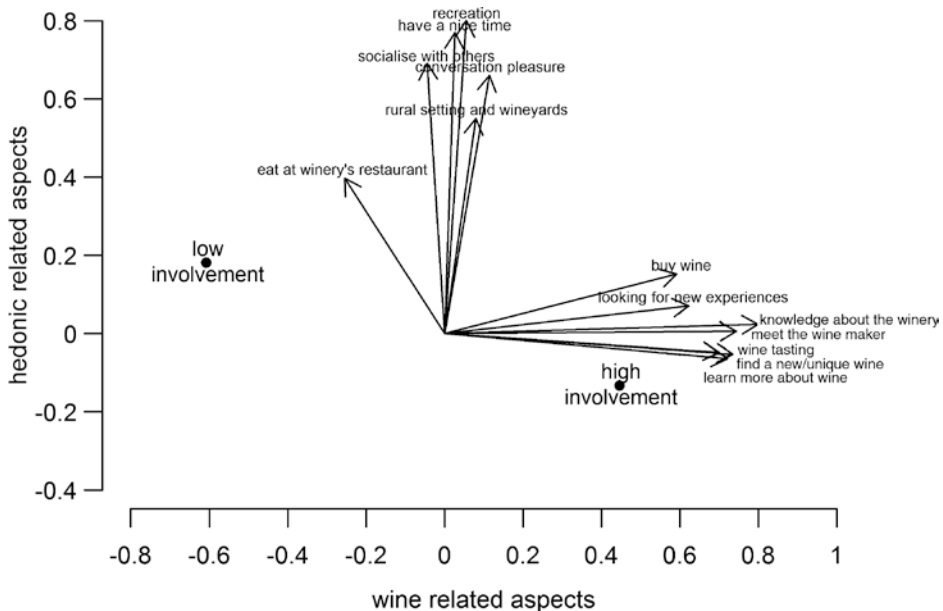


Fig. 5.1 Wine involvement clusters on a motivational latent space. (Author's own)

5.3.2 Profiling

Additional profiling of the two involvement clusters derived from psychographic characteristics reveal further differences. Mann-Whitney U-test detected significant differences for income. The average income of the low involvement group is € 1436 and the average income of the high involvement group is € 1973 and exceeds the average income of Austrian employees in 2013 of € 1808. This result goes hand in hand with Alebaki and Iakovidou (2010) defining the typical wine tourist as a young person, with higher income and higher education. Albeit, no differences are detected between the two involvement groups in terms of education, the sample percentage value of respondents whose highest education is at university level is 34.7 %, being much higher than the Austrian average of 12.5 % in 2012. The same is true for age. However, the average sample age of 49.53 years is in conformance with the wine and culinary tourist segment defined by Österreich Werbung (2012). With regards to children, Getz and Brown (2006) detected a lower number of children for wine tourists, if at all, older children, or even no children living at home. A significant relationship between the high versus low involvement differentiation and the question whether people work professionally with wine is detected applying χ^2 -test. The high involvement group shows a significant overrepresentation of people working professionally with wine. Another socio-demographic characteristic analyzed is gender. Overall there are 222 men and 95 women in the sample. This asymmetry fosters literature driven results (Mitchell 2011; Alebaki and Iakovidou 2010). Furthermore, there is a significant overrepresentation of men in the high involvement group (men: 80.9 %

vs. women: 19.1 %). The unbalanced ratio between men and women in the low involvement group is much lower (men: 55.2 % vs. women: 44.8 %).

With reference to behavioral intentions, percentage values of people who travel with partners, friends, relatives, colleagues or alone are slightly higher for the high involvement group. On the contrary, three different variables categorizing own children as travel partners by age intervals (≤ 7 , 8–15, ≥ 16) show higher percentage values for the low involvement group which is in accordance with findings by Tassiopoulos and Haydam (2006). High involvement wine tourists visited 12.44 wineries and 4.87 wine events during the past twelve months, low involvement tourists 7.02 and 2.32 respectively. A Mann-Whitney U-test revealed a significantly higher value for the high involvement group concerning the question on how often people drink wine. This is in accordance with characteristics of the typical wine tourist (Getz and Brown 2006). The high involvement group spends € 125 per month for wine and on average the price for a single bottle of wine for this group is € 25. On the other hand, the amount of money spent by the low involvement group per week is € 67 and € 16 respectively. This is in accordance with Dodd (2011). Mann-Whitney U-tests show that the high involvement group buys significantly more wine when visiting a winery and additionally they visit more wineries and wine houses per stay.

Involvement group comparisons of factors playing an important role during the wine experience are conducted as well. The high involvement group shows significantly higher importance with characteristics like authenticity, the number of visitable wineries, expertise of people working at the winery and the quality of wine. The latter two of these items match with findings by Tassiopoulos and Haydam (2006). The low involvement group puts significantly more importance on other activities, the natural surrounding and beautiful landscape.

5.4 Conclusions

This study illustrated how segmentation criteria such as involvement will help wineries to effectively understand their visitor's on site behavior. Typical wine tourists' characteristics that showed heterogeneity in segmentation approaches in the past by other researchers are more extreme for the high involvement group compared with the low involvement group. These findings will help wineries and travel-related companies to selectively target actual and attract potential customers. Thus, wine merchants and wineries need to consider their segmentation criteria and strategies carefully to be able to respond to visitors' needs in a proper way. Further research is required to address the region specific nature of wine tourists based on their involvement level.

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