



Wine Tourism and Winescape Experiences in Croatia: Understanding Motivations of Generation Z Wine Tourists

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Abstract: *This paper explores the importance of understanding the nature of wine tourist motivations. It examines perceptions, experiences, and expectations of winery visitors in Croatia, particularly focusing on the perspective of Generation Z as a generation cohort. Understanding Generation Z and their expectations of winery visits are very important in developing and adapting winery products that correspond with their needs and expectations, and thus positively influencing the increase of loyalty and returning visitations to the winery. The two separate focus groups were conducted, with altogether 17 participants who are all members of the Generation Z cohort groups from Croatia. The key findings of the paper show that in search for winery experiences members of the Generation Z cohort are not only in search for the inside winery experiences but are rather attracted by hedonic experiences evolving around something much wider - the winescape. Finally, research offers a scientific contribution to Generation Z's motivations for winery visits, and a practical contribution to wineries' management, owners and entrepreneurs that can use findings in their further strategic management and marketing decisions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Wine tourism research has been significantly developing since the mid-1990s by examining both supply and demand side of it. More so, wine tourism embodies the connection of relationships between wine regions, wine tourists and wineries (Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019). Understanding wine tourist needs, therefore, denotes an important component for appropriate tourist product development (Bruwer & Alant, 2009). When researching the demand side of wine tourism, wine experiences represent one of the primary reasons for visits to wineries and vineyards (Hall et al., 2000). As these experiences are directly connected to winescape³, the experiential dimension of wine tourism has been highlighted (Brochado et al., 2021; Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019; Hojman & Hunter-Jones, 2012; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012). While tourism research on wine tourism experiences does exist, it is still evolving field where additional research in experience design, wine tourist motivations and an understanding of the hedonic view of the tourism experience is still needed (Brochado et al., 2021; Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019). Very little is known about the motivation factors that drive wine tourists to consume winescape, especially in Croatia, which is what this research aims to further explore.

Despite the importance of winery experience inside the winery for wine tourists, existing research has pointed out the importance of understanding winescape in a broader sense than just emphasizing the wine cellar experiences (Brochado et al., 2021; Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019; Hojman & Hunter-Jones, 2012; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012). Furthermore, this can be an equally important element in the overall wine tourism business context (Bruwer & Rueger-Muck,

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³ Winescape term is used to describe the combination of physical and emotional bond with wine region, vineyards, winery, and terroir.

2019). Understanding the importance of the physical environment in the context of the marketing mix is argued to be beneficial for winery owners and wine regions in further developing their products and marketing strategies by adjusting them to wine tourist needs, thus using them as a point of competitive advantage. This research furthermore answers the call for the need to better understand the motives and characteristics of wine tourists (Getz & Brown, 2006). Hence, the main premise of this research is the nature of wine tourists being in search of experiences and pleasure while visiting wineries that are not necessarily linked only to visiting wineries but to the broader context of leisure experiences. In terms of contribution, this research develops additional knowledge in wine tourism in Croatia, linking wine tourist experiences and wine tourism products through an in-depth understanding of the winescape motivations of the Generation Z cohort group. This chapter starts with a literature review on wine tourists, wine tourism, motivations of wine tourists and age generational cohorts. After that, it in details describes the research methodology and chosen method, and finally, it offers research findings and discussion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Wine Tourists and Wine Tourism

To be able to define wine tourism, it is important to understand who wine tourists are. In general terms, wine tourists can be defined as day tourists from closer points of origin, or overnight tourists from the immediate area characterized by different demographic characteristics (Byrd et al., 2016). Despite these different demographic characteristics, they represent a combination of domestic and international tourists with, in most cases, high education, income and professions, i.e. belonging to high socioeconomic level (Getz & Brown, 2006). If looking from the perspective of psychological motivation wine tourists can be defined as “someone who has a desire to experience the geographical space where the wine was produced” (Cohen & Ben-Nun, 2009). Many scholars criticized the idea of wine tourists’ motivations being purely focused on wine but have rather argued their search for broader experiences connected to wine (Byrd et al., 2016; Dodd, 1995; Hall et al., 2000), which is also the focus of this research. Following the definitions of wine tourist, wine tourism destinations started to think in a more holistic approach towards the wine regions and tourism destinations that go beyond taking care of the grapes to produce good quality wine (Peters, 1997). Hall’s (2000) concept of winescape that consists of vineyards, winemaking activity and wine tasting offered another dimension to thinking about winery product offer. If thinking of the tourism destination image as a multi-dimensional construct, it consequently consists of an affective and cognitive component (Tasci et al., 2007). In such an environment, winescape refers to a “spatial realm that integrates winemaking and wine tourism in a viticultural setting”, i.e. “a whole region and its attributes” (Patriquin, 2005).

Wine tourists, therefore, do not visit wineries purely to taste wine, but rather to see grapes grow, being harvested, wine being made, consume vineyard landscape, and taste and buy wine. As seen, it is a combination of experiences that cover many motivations for winery visitation. Even more, these are often combined with the culture and heritage of the region as well as local dining (Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Getz & Brown, 2006). Finally, 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 region are the prime motivating factors for visitation” (Hall et al., 2000). Authors further argue that wine tourism is at the same time a form of consumer behaviour, a strategy through which destinations develop and market wine-related attractions

and content, as well as selling wine products to customers (Getz & Brown, 2006). This form of consumer behaviour can be manifested in the wine tourist motivations that go beyond winery visits and wine purchases, but include other expected experiences and motives for their visit.

2.2. Wine Tourism in Croatia

Since this paper aims to examine wine tourism characteristics and scope in Croatia, it is of value added to note that the country is divided into several wine regions: (1) Dalmatia; (2) Istria and Kvarner; (3) Slavonia and Croatian Danube; and (4) Croatian Uplands. Dalmatia presents the region of the origin of the wine civilization of modern Croatia (and, in some segments, of even broader geographical reach) with protected wine sorts Pošip, Dingač, Postup, Plavac Mali and Babić. It is today one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Croatia for wine tourists (domestic and international). Istria and Kvarner can be described as the most developed wine tourism regions in Croatia with sorts such as Malvazia Istarska, Teran and Žlahtina. While considering wine tourism development, Istria can also be described as a destination that has better tourism offers than other Croatian regions. Slavonia and Danube represent regions developed for the large quantity of wine production with the main sort being Graševina; this region has yet not seen proper development as it was mostly impacted by the Croatian War of Independence (1991-1995). Finally, Croatian Uplands as a region is closely connected to Zagreb (Croatian capital), with a variety of sorts such as Portugizac, Reising, Sauvignon Blanc, Škrlet and others, with huge potential in further development of wine tourism closely connected to the capital city. All of the regions mentioned above started with the revival of their wine production at the end of the 20th century with many examples showing existent potential for further wine tourism offer development, with still a long way to being recognized in the EU or global tourism map (Hanžek & Sušić, 2019). One of the ways how to further develop wine tourism products is an in-depth knowledge of wine tourist motivations to be able to appropriately approach different wine tourism product development.

2.3. Motivations of Wine Tourists

Motivations of wine tourists vary between those rational and emotional depending on the situation and type of wine tourist. Schiffman et al. (2011) defined motives as hypothetical constructs which can be properly accessed only through undertaking strong methodological qualitative research. While most wine tourists are wine drinkers and have wine-related motivations to visit wineries, many wine tourists are not wine drinkers and have different winescape motives that satisfy their needs (Hall & Mitchell, 2001). Current research points out the difference between the primary motivations (to taste and to buy wine) and secondary motivations (socializing, learning about wine, being entertained, day out, setting and scenery) (Hall et al., 2000; Famularo et al., 2010). The interest in the pure product (wine) creates a desire of wine tourists to visit the place where vineyards are located and where the wine is produced – which includes motivations to participate in wine harvesting, interact with the culture and gastronomy of the place, and pursue the hedonistic realm of experience through winescape consumption (Goossens, 2000; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Factors underpinning wine tourist motivations are complex and the demand for wine tourism is based on the previous motivations, perceptions, and experiences, as well as expectations of wine tourists (Hall et al., 2000). There is an evident gap in knowledge focusing on a variety of motivational forces that influence wine tourist desire to visit certain wineries, especially in the context of discovering motivations that are not merely connected to “taste and buy” but are rather more complex.

Finally, the nature of wine tourism involves indulging the senses not only through wine products but through an entire winescape concept (Hall et al., 2000). As sensory experiences stimulate emotions, wine consumption can be considered an aesthetic experience as well (Charters & Pettigrew, 2006). Consuming winery design can be argued to be equally important for certain visitors as a “taste and buy” moment. That is because through such experience sensory simulation for wine tourists is created. Nevertheless, only a few research studies have looked at the sensory dimensions of wine tourist experiences (Brochado et al., 2021; Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019). Through the widely accepted recognition that an understanding of wine tourist motivations is vital for the marketing of wineries and wine destinations (Nicolau & Más, 2006), this research aims to further understand the needs and motivations of Generation Z as an age generational cohort of wine tourists.

2.4. Age Generational Cohorts

As the paper focuses on Generation Z as an age generational cohort, this part of the literature review outlines the importance of looking at age cohorts as an important segmentation variable. Generational age cohorts can be defined as groups of individuals characterized by their age of birth (Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019). Such age generation descriptors (generation Y, generation Z, Millennials, Baby Boomers, and so on) are commonly used, and, despite their relative ease of measurement, they are still one of the least understood marketing dynamics (MacDonald et al., 2013). These groups are significant as each of them offers an understanding of their shared values, and common history based on factors such as social norms, prominent events and expectations (Jackson et al., 2011). In the context of understanding customers, each group can represent a segment with unique values and behaviours creating similarities between them (Noble et al., 2004). In the context of wine tourism and wine tourists, for the wine tourism market to grow, more young wine tourists have to be introduced to wine tourism in their early to mid-twenties (generation Z) since this is considered the critical period when they form many of their consumption habits (Lissitsa & Kol, 2021). Research has shown that three separate effects can be identified that produce differences between the age cohorts and these are (1) age effect (lifecycle of member); (2) period effect (circumstances and shock events such as wars and other broader social forces); and (3) cohort effect (unique historical circumstances experienced by members) (Dinas & Stoker, 2014). The research literature also often defines the following generational cohorts: (1) Baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1965); (2) Generation X (born between 1966 and 1980); (3) Generation Y (born between 1981 and 1994); and (4) Generation Z, born in 1995 and after (Lissitsa & Kol, 2021). As already mentioned, the paper focuses on Generation Z, and to be even more precise its sub-segment, those in Generation Z that are 20-25 years old (in the rest of the paper Generation Z). What we propose is that such defined generation Z, up-and-coming wine tourists, at the start of their wine tourist lifecycle have different motivations for winery visits than typical taste and buy motivation and that they also differ from characteristics of other cohort groups mentioned. This research, therefore, through qualitative analysis aims at gaining further understanding of the motivations of Generation Z.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Methodology within this research uses qualitative research that is grounded in social constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This methodology is suitable for the research aims and objectives as the field of wine tourism is emergent due to a noticeable lack of prior studies on the role of wine tourist motivations of Generation Z for offering better product experiences in wineries. Figure 1 shows the methodological approach that researchers followed while conducting this study.

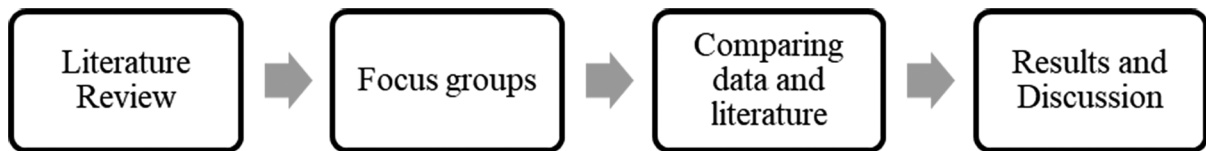


Figure 1. Qualitative method approach for data collection

Source: Authors

The two separate focus groups were conducted with 8 and 9 participants, all members of the Generation Z cohort groups from Croatia (born from 1997-2012; in the research age 20-25 years old) that probed participants to present in-depth views and opinions on motivations to winery visits - focusing on above-explained theory in the previous section. Focus groups all together had 17 participants (9 female and 8 male) participants. All 17 participants are fond of wine and have at least one time been wine tourists to continue being one. Focus groups took place at the Zagreb School of Economics and Management between 19th and 23rd September 2022, and ranged between 60 and 80 minutes, with an average of 70 minutes.

Each focus group was audio-recorded, after which the data was transcribed. Focus group surveys were conducted in the Croatian language. Each focus group was looked at independently and then compared and analysed to create a meaningful and properly organized data research base (Liamputtong, 2009). Finally, comprehensive and meaningful conclusions were made, presented in the discussion part of the research that follows. Ethical issues concerning research were fully considered and were not violated. Firstly, the interviewed participants were 18+ years old all belonging to non-vulnerable groups. Secondly, addressing the question of quality, integrity and ethics, no sensitive questions were discussed. Each participant was previously informed of the process of audio-recording and agreed to take part in the research. Finally, should the participant wish to stay anonymous, this decision was included in the approval form and was fully respected.

Focus group questions were divided into four sections, each focusing on a certain topic relevant to the research. These topics were as follows: introduction questions; winery visit motivations; wine purchase behaviour; expected experiences characteristics; followed by concluding questions. Focus group questions are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire sections and the rationale for their inclusion in the research

Questions Sections	Focus Group - Questions
Introduction Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell us more about you (age, place of origin, education level). • How often do you visit wineries?
Winery Visit Motivations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main purpose of your visit? (wine tourism, holiday, visiting friends and family, attending events, business/conferences, recreation/hobby, just passing by a winery, special occasion (wedding/birthday/celebration)) • Tell us about your motivations to visit a winery (taste wine, buy wine, experience the atmosphere, learn about the wine, have a day out in nature, entertainment, rural setting, dining experiences, wine purchase, socialization, meet winemaker, go on a winery tour, be a part of the event at the winery)
Wine Purchase Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you, apart from the wine tour make any other consumption? • Did the visit to the winery make you purchase wine in the restaurant or retail store after the visit or vice versa? • The price paid per wine tasting? • The price paid per bottle?

Expected Experience Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the most important parts of your experiences visiting a winery? • Do they all have equal importance or you can rank them on the scale? • Explain (scenery, landscape, winescape, wine quality, positive references, facilities, the winery itself, ambience of the region, restaurant quality, heritage, local hospitality, small family business, vineyards, wine tastings, tourism destination brand, nice towns close to the winery, wine brand name, knowledgeable staff, accessibility, variety of secondary activities around, cottage industries-bakeries, butcheries, small town feeling...)
Concluding Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you like to additionally see or experience while visiting the winery? • Where do you see winery visit development in future? • Did your winery experience motivations change since the first visit to the winery or have they remained the same? • Did the experience change you? • Is there something additional you would like to add that we did not ask?

Source: Authors

The analysis of focus groups revealed coding categories associated with the above-mentioned categories. This data was then used to compare the results of focus groups considering previously conducted literature review. Finally, comprehensive conclusions were made, presented in the research results and discussion that follows.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Focus group responses revealed several common themes that often mirrored the literature review secondary data collection about different motivations influencing winery visits. The main themes revealed are (1) motivations to visit; (2) expected characteristics; (3) expected experiences, and (4) visit outcomes.

The findings of the research confirmed a strong relationship between the existence of the same motivations shared by Generation Z and their wish to visit wineries. To create an exceptional winery visit experience, wineries need to understand the motivations behind Generation Z winery tourists and include these in their product offers. Their motivations to visit are the combination of entertainment, aesthetics, education, and escapism (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) and this is evident from the discussion below.

4.1. Motivations to Visit

Research revealed that one of the core motivations to visit wineries are: (1) to be entertained; (2) to be aesthetically drawn; and (3) to be spontaneous. Generation Z cohort attaches entertainment to socializing together by looking at wine, tasting it and matching it to different kinds of food while being in good company. As one of the participants said:

“I like the entertainment part of it. To gather my friends and to have this new experience of tasting wine, eating, and having fun all together, ... something to talk about when I get home”.

An entertainment part of the realms of experiences argued by Pine and Gilmore (1998) means that each of the wineries should try to make an experience that encompasses elements of hedonism, identity, experientialism, and symbolism making altogether a unique eno/gastro product offer to meet the expectations of generation Z cohort group (Batat, 2010). Here, entertainment is strongly connected to spending time with friends and family, an important part of the entertainment moment. Results have suggested that although participants have argued that despite

not being “wine experts” they cherish time socializing with their friends and families in an environment that is relaxing and different. As one of the participants argued:

“I like to see my family and friends happy when visiting wineries and go to this kind of experience where we happen to enjoy company, being entertained all together as we have something we came to see, so we share our thoughts on it and at the same time we enjoy the environment we are in”.

Furthermore, these socializing moments come in different shapes – small friends’ groups, large friends’ groups, family, events, and special occasions such as weddings or birthdays. In addition to focusing just on wineries, they also like wineries to be in the context of broader events than solely connecting to tasting and buying wine (e.g. watching movies in the vineyard, painting in the vineyard, enjoying the winery spa). Another important motivation to visit has been directly connected to the winery aesthetic – the architecture and design of the place. What Generation Z wine tourists are searching for is an aesthetic appeal that wineries need to leave on individual’s perceptions. As one of the participants mentioned:

“I like visiting wineries to see how wine cellars and tasting rooms look like. I think that wineries are places where through the design of the place you can feel if there is, or there is no quality of the product. Also, the connection of the cellar to nature is something I like to see”.

Other participants added:

“I also like to see if the visit is solely on vineyards or if there are some tourist attractions nearby that I can see, or, that I know I can go and visit”.

What they are in search of and what motivates them to visit is the creation of emotions and pleasure while at the same consuming the cultural heritage of the destination, as well as the architecture and design of the winery, i.e. the winescape.

Finally, the motivation that was largely evident through analysing data was the importance of being spontaneous. Generation Z clearly outlined showing the spontaneous character as one of the motives for their visitation. Their decision-making process is very short where half of the participants argued to decide to visit the winery within 24 hours, and another half within one month before their visit. As one of the participants mentioned:

“I wake up and decide to visit the winery. Then I text my friends in our chat group and hope that they would join me. We don’t make long-term plans, it is spontaneous, that way is the best”.

Such a spontaneous decision-making process can be directly linked to the hedonic character of the wine tourism experience (Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019).

4.2. Expected Characteristics

Research further revealed certain (expected) characteristics connected to winery visits: (1) to have scenery; (2) to have wine(ry) quality; and (3) to have region as a brand. For Generation Z

to visit wineries, having a view has shown to have great importance. One of the participants thus emphasized:

“I might not be a total wine lover or someone who greatly understands its production, however, I have a big appreciation of nature, and I love seeing views of vineyards as well as another agricultural land, it is so peaceful to me”.

More so, the quality of wine and winery as a brand tend to be expected should they decide to visit. It is one of the core motives that seem to be a prerequisite for visiting the winery. One of them said:

“If we are to spend money, we want to spend it on high quality, we are not even considering mass production wineries as something we want to see, we are in search of boutique products that despite not spending a lot, we are willing to afford for ourselves”.

Another important element to them was the brand of the wine region. They argued to be more confident to decide to visit wineries in destinations that are branded wine regions rather than ones that have no brand identity. This is important for local tourism boards (or in some countries destination marketing organizations) who need to further focus on building wine region brands and promoting wineries as wineries in the region rather than independently of the region.

4.3. Expected Experiences

Research also revealed that there are several expected experiences that Generation Z is eager to find while visiting wineries. These are: (1) to escape; (2) to “show that I know”; and (3) to have a day out. For Generation Z wine tourists, escapism is one of the main ingredients when thinking about visiting wineries. As could be seen from the research, all participants showed interest in experiential pleasure as something they are expecting to get from the visit. For them, spending a day in the winery and consuming winescape represents an escape from everyday life and doing something different that is not a part of their everyday routine nor something they can afford all the time.

As one of the participants put forward:

“I like to go to the winery as the place where I change my everyday “landscape”, it doesn’t have to be far away, it is just this idea to be somewhere different. Sometimes it takes just 30 minutes (drive) to feel like you have escaped the rush of the city centre, all the cars and tasks that are waiting to be finished”.

Therefore, to create a unique experience that allows Generation Z wine tourists to escape, wineries need to have in mind creating products that will not solely focus on “taste and buy” but include an option for this generation to co-create the experience through combining all four realms of experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Despite “taste and buy” not being the main motive for Generation Z visitors to winery, it still comes as an important ingredient to experiencing wineries. This supports the view of taste and buys to remain at the top of the motives in the winery experience (Bruwer et al., 2013).

Another interesting motive that was discovered through the research is the need to “show that I know”. One of the surveyed participants said:

“I think wineries are one of those places where you say to your friends or family: let me take you somewhere nice, and then you are proud because you have discovered that place to them”.

Another participant added:

“Yes, same is for me, I like when they all ask me how do you know of this place?”.

Generation Z wine tourists use visits wineries to show their friends and family that they know good locations to visit (not necessarily knowing wines, but rather a good and trendy place to visit). Finally, something that all participants agree, an expected experience from a winery visit is having a day out.

One of the participants said:

“I see it as a day in nature, a day out”.

Another has added:

“When we plan what to do for a weekend and say let’s have a day out, the winery is always on someone’s list”.

Generation Z sees wineries as a location where they can spend a day or afternoons together, as day-out locations, where again, the wine did not seem to be at the core of their needs but an entire winescape around it.

4.4. Visit Outcome

Research additionally revealed that there are three main outcomes of winery visits that Generation Z expects from their visit: (1) to learn; (2) to meet the winemaker; and (3) to make modest purchases.

As many sociocultural factors are directly connected to wine and gastronomy, this research has shown that visit to winery plays an important role in promoting local oenology and heritage of the wine region and at the same time educating wine tourists about it. Wine tourists of Generation Z emphasize the wish to learn something new about wines and wine production to feel more educated and more recognized in their friends’ group after the visit to the winery. They do not come prepared but are open to learning as much as they can while at the same time having fun.

One of the participants mentioned:

“I don’t know a lot when I come, but when I go home, I would love to know much more about wine than I knew when arrived. Whether about grapes, wine production or wine tasting and matching it with food. Anything that I bring back to be able to talk more about is welcome”.

Another participant said:

“I also don’t know a lot about wine, but I like the idea of knowing a lot. I think that the more I visit I will get more knowledgeable because I do pay attention when I am there and try to memorize all the provided information”.

One of the ways that participants mentioned that they would like to get knowledge is the winemaker. They have all argued that meeting the winemaker presents added value to their visit to the winery as it becomes very personal.

One of the participants argued:

“If the winemaker himself is there and he talks about her/his wines, I feel I am more connected to that winery and that I know much more – because I know her/him. Although actually, I might not know a lot”.

Other participants added:

“Exactly, it becomes personal level. Then if I think of going somewhere again to the winery, I will go to the place I know the winemaker as I feel I am more welcome there and I like the idea of knowing her/him”.

Knowing the winemaker has shown to be important for Generation Z as well. Despite their knowledge and esteem in being able to know a lot is still low, the idea behind meeting the winemaker presents an important experience for them as well as a motive to visit and to come back to the winery. Finally, in contrast to other generational cohorts, generation Z can be argued to have the lowest disposable income as it represents groups of mostly still students who are entering the wine world for the first time. This makes them the smallest spenders at the given time.

As one of the participants said:

“I try to purchase a bottle or two to take home and have it as a story to tell once I will celebrate something at home, so when I open the bottle, I will have something to say about it. I still can’t afford to buy the case of wine but am sure I will one day”.

Despite Generation Z not presenting the biggest spending segment of wine tourists, in this phase, they are becoming loyal visitors who will then in turn, as their careers grow together with their disposable income, become bigger spenders should wineries use proper product strategies from them. Research has shown that members of Generation Z tend to buy a maximum of two bottles of wine after a visit to the winery, whereas many of them do not purchase at all. Once they have experienced the atmosphere in the winery, they argue to more likely order the same brand of wine in the restaurant if they see it on the restaurant wine list, as well as purchase bottles of wine in shops for birthday or special occasions, as one of the participants emphasized:

“If I was in a winery that I really like, and I see a restaurant has their wines on the wine list, I will for sure order it as I will have something to say when the bottle comes to the table, as I have experienced it and have seen where these grapes grow”.

Another participant added:

“Not only that, but I also like to buy it as a present for special occasions”.

Experiences that they have obtained while visiting seem to be again at the core of the purchase behaviour of Generation Z wine tourists.

5. CONCLUSION

This research has explored the importance of understanding the nature of wine tourist motivations. Research is linking destination image attributes to visit motivations and the age generation Z cohort group of wine tourists through using an experiential research methodology and method. Also, this research has contributed to further closing the gap between the motivational drivers for wine tourists and actual consumption of the core wine tourism product (Brewer & Rueger-Muck, 2019). The importance of understanding Generation Z and their expectations of winery visits gives an in-depth insight into the motivations for visiting wineries. This research aimed to further understand the motivations of Generation Z by uncovering the existence of certain similarities that this cohort group shares. The main findings are presented in Table 2, which summarizes different motivations influencing winery visits through categories of motivations to visit, expected characteristics, expected experiences, and visit outcomes.

Table 2. Main Findings – Motivations of Generation Z wine visitors

Motivation to visit	Expected Characteristics	Expected Experiences	Visit outcome
To be entertained	To have scenery	To escape	To learn
To be aesthetically drawn	To have wine(ry) quality	To “show that I know”	To meet the winemaker
To be spontaneous	To have region as a brand	To have a day out	To make a purchase

Source: Authors

Research results aim to further inform wineries about their product and offer development that should correspond to the needs of Generation Z, which could positively influence an increase in loyalty and returning visitations to wineries (Charters & O'Neill, 2001; Dodd & Bigotte, 1997; Nixon, 1999; O'Neill & Charters, 2000). Table 2 clearly shows the need of expanding selling proposals to not only selling wine but selling pleasure and winescapes.

Despite having a great potential for developing better-targeted products, many wineries still neglect segmentation in their marketing strategies and are mostly focusing on “taste and buy” as a selling point. Finally, the findings show that in search for winery experiences members of the generation Z cohort are not only in search for the inside winery experiences but are rather attracted by hedonic experiences evolving around winescape. Should this be included in new branding strategies, it would have a positive effect on the overall winery image (and consequently regional image), could positively influence expanding tourist season, increase the number of segments visiting the winery, enrich tourist offer, and consequently develop a strong winery brand. Finally, examining the motives of Generation Z's visit to wineries brings an important contribution in giving insight as to how more adequately approach winery branding, through implementing research findings into more effective marketing strategies in the future.

6. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

It would be beneficial to address the limitations of this research by repeating it with other cohort groups qualitatively or quantitatively so that differences between them can be better understood. There is also an entire segment of non-wine drinkers who are also visiting wineries and

are worth researching. More so, future research projects could attempt to highlight differences between Croatian and similar wine tourism destinations in other parts of Europe (and broader). As this research focused purely on Croatian wine drinkers belonging to Generation Z, and as Croatia is an important tourism destination, further research should be developed to compare domestic and international tourists belonging to this cohort group.

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