



Profiling and Segmenting Visitors to Hungarian Wine Festivals

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Employing a similar survey-method to the one used at the Winter Wine Fest (WWFest) 2003 in Australia by Weiler et al. (2004), the authors examine the profile and motivations of visitors attending wine festivals of the Eger wine region, Hungary. Using a cross-sectional approach, a 14-item self-completing questionnaire was administered to a random sample of visitors on site, at two major summer wine festivals held in downtown Eger in 2007. Both the *Egri Bikavér Festival* (N=169), and the *Wine Show of Northern Hungary* (N=113) occur annually to promote wine culture, the wine region, and the wines and gastronomy of Eger. Based on 282 respondents in total, the authors explore attendants' socio-demographic profile, wine purchasing habits, festival visitation characteristics, and their motivations for visiting. The method used to interpret the data was descriptive, with several univariate statistics (distributions, frequencies, central tendencies, etc.), and some multivariate analysis of differences in motivations (dependent variable) based on "social group membership" and wine consuming habits (independent variables).

The "average" visitor to the festivals was found to be female (51%), aged between 25 and 44 (43%), having tertiary qualifications (59%) and coming from Eger or its surroundings (70%). She is a regular festival goer with her partner (42%), but decides on participating only within one week prior to the event (55%), encouraged by word-of-mouth recommendations (49%). These characteristics (probably) reflect the profile of the average Hungarian wine enthusiast too, who (as also found by this survey) consumes wine once or twice a week (42%), or even more infrequently (42%), purchases wine at the cellar-door (70%), and primarily considers the grape variety (mean score = 3.18) when picking a bottle of wine, followed by the winery (3.07) and the place-of-origin (3.06). Slightly surprisingly, tasting special wines and foods (32%) was not the most quoted reason for attending the festivals, which are mostly regarded as opportunities for getting out of the everyday routine (40%), at a pleasant environment provided by the historical downtown of Eger (38%).

Visitors can be segmented on the basis of the social group in which they attend the festival (Weiler et al., 2004). In Eger, the majority visited the festivals with their partner (42%), followed by friends (37%) and families (22%), and only 6% attended them solo. As for the motivations of the various social groups, couples primarily came for relaxation (to "recover equilibrium" as termed by Weiler et al., 2004) (40%), while people arriving with friends were principally looking for "known-group socialization" (60%). Interestingly, family groups were most likely to be attracted by the atmosphere of the venue (47%), whereas kinship-related motives were not even among their five most often quoted driving forces. There were only seventeen visitors attending the festival alone, thus we cannot draw any reliable conclusions about this group's motivations. If we look at the relationship between motivation and wine consuming habits, we can notice that visitors consuming wine daily or weekly (55%), are relatively overrepresented among those attracted by the special wines of the festivals. On the other hand, visitors who consume wine once in a while (45%), typically regard the festival as an occasion to go out and relax in an atmospheric environment.