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ATTITUDES OF TOURISTS IMPACTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF WINE TOURISM - A CASE STUDY OF TARPOŠ WINERY

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Abstract

Wine tourism represents one of the special forms of tourism that shows a significant increase in the international tourism market. In recent years, wine tourism has undergone significant changes and is increasingly gaining a place in global tourism trends. Tourists participating in wine route tours significantly contribute to the development of wine regions, not only through tastings and wine purchases, but also by participating in local gastronomy, hospitality, traditional crafts, and more. The study utilized a survey method, with a questionnaire instrument in the form of a case study of Tarpoš Winery from Arandjelovac, examining the attitudes of tourists impacting the development of wine tourism, as a prospective branch of tourism in the Republic of Serbia.

Key Words: *tourists, attitudes, wine tourism, Tarpoš Winery*

JEL classification: *L83, Z32*

Introduction

Wine tourism is a complex phenomenon that requires systematic and comprehensive research, especially from the aspect of its interconnectedness with other branches of the economy and the undeniable significant impact it has on the area in which it develops.

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Research on wine tourism, on the one hand, treats wine as a product, as well as the location where wine is produced as a wine tourism destination, reflecting the local community and characterized by certain features that contribute to creating a unique, special, and specific wine tourism experience. For wineries developing wine tourism, understanding the characteristics of the tourism market is of particular importance, among which the demand characteristics in wine tourism are singled out as special features. Given the presence of new trends in the wine tourism market (organic production, new varieties, certified planting material, quality equipment and technology, etc.), as well as the increasing demands of tourists for a unique tourist experience during travel, new and unusual wine tours are increasingly being introduced.

Brief wine history of Serbia

Fossil remains of grape seeds and wine vessels at archaeological sites on the Danube coast near Grocka, in Vinča, and other places, indicate that grapevine has been present in the territory of present-day Serbia for thousands of years. By the first century AD, viticulture had progressed to such an extent that Emperor Domitian introduced a ban on wine production in all Roman provinces outside the Apennine Peninsula because the Roman Empire faced significant wine surpluses on the market. The ban on grapevine cultivation lasted until the third century AD when it was abolished by Emperor Marcus Aurelius Probus, who was born near present-day Sremska Mitrovica (Sirmium). After the Slavs arrived at the Balkan Peninsula, they quickly became acquainted with the method of grapevine cultivation, and during the Nemanjić dynasty, viticulture in Serbia experienced great development, especially on monastery estates (metochia). The oldest known record of medieval vineyards is found in the Charter of Hilandar issued by Stefan Nemanja (1198). With the invasion of the Turks into these areas, Serbian viticulture gradually declined. After the restoration of the Serbian state, there was a more intensive development of viticulture. The golden age of this sector in the second half of the 19th century was interrupted by phylloxera, which devastated a large number of vineyards. The first vineyard cooperative in Serbia was founded by 12 poorly educated peasants (except for a priest and perhaps two more members), but respectable landowners from the village of Banja near Arandelovac as early as 1903. Between the two World Wars, viticulture again developed intensively, and from the second half of the 20th century, with the development of large state-owned wineries. The re-establishment of private wineries began in the 1990s, and their development is still ongoing. (Serbian Sommelier Association, 2024).

Concept, definition, and basic characteristics of wine tourism

Wine tourism is a relatively new form of tourism, as it began to develop more intensively in the past decade and is represented, as in other world and European countries, through wine routes, which already represent a recognizable tourist product with enormous potential. The importance of this form of tourism has been recognized by the Tourist Organization of Serbia, which, by forming wine routes, has connected Serbia with countries that offer tourists the opportunity for organized visits to wineries (Jević, 2019).

Wine tourism has been defined as 'visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors' (Hall, 2000).

Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) have pointed out that wine tourism represents „travel for the purpose of experiencing wineries, wine regions, and their connections with lifestyle.“ In addition to these authors who connect wine tourism with lifestyle, there are also those who prioritize experience, so in that context, the following definitions emerge: wine tourism represents independent and organized visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, wine demonstrations, with the motive of wine tasting and gaining experiences provided by visiting a wine region.

Grimstad (2011) states that wine tourism is a combination of aesthetically appealing landscapes and wine consumption. He also mentions the most important elements of wine tourism: winery staff knowledge about wine, hospitality, affordable accommodation prices, attractive landscapes, availability of information, gastronomic specialties, wine festivals, traditional wine villages. Another group of authors emphasizes the significant impact wine tourism has on the economic development of regions, and even the overall economic development. López-Guzmán et al. (2014) emphasize that wine tourism plays a significant role in the development of a particular region, primarily economically, but also socially. On the social and economic aspects of wine tourism, which are reflected in building regional identity and image, motivating young people not to leave their homeland, providing income to the local community, tourism development, and infrastructure. Some authors relate wine tourism to rural tourism, while some in their theories highlight a strong connection between wine and gastronomic tourism. Some authors

believe that wine tourism can be a strong economic and social driver for rural areas. In addition to all the indicated connections and impacts of wine tourism, another one stands out, which is its complementarity with cultural tourism. Wine tourists interconnect wine and cultural tourism, as besides the experience that visiting a winery brings, they also pay great attention to the culture of the local population, the cultural heritage of the region, historical sites, and local festivals. Therefore, from all the above, we see that there is no universal definition of wine tourism, primarily due to its complexity and connection with many other forms of tourism. Since it is closely related to rural and gastronomic tourism, sometimes it is even difficult to draw a clear line between them. Wine tourism emerges as a factor influencing the economic and social development of a particular community, encompassing a large number of visitor experiences from wine tasting, food, enjoying the environment, to participating in many cultural events in the wine region, contributing to preserving the authenticity of a particular environment and cultural heritage.

Typical products, mainly local food and wine, are considered suitable features to characterise the tourist supply of a destination and in many cases they are a major attraction of a territory. These products contain a strong reference to the territory in which they are produced. They simultaneously represent on the market a geographic area, its traditions, and its cultural heritage, they identify a local community and its identity as well. Therefore typical products can be defined as ‘territorial intensive products’ (TIPs). Wine tourism represents the most innovative phenomenon of the more general tourism supply created around a TIP and certainly the most evident (Asero & Patti, 2009). Wine tourism is not a new phenomenon, but research into the many factors that motivate wine tourists and indeed, wineries and wine regions is yet to be fully developed (Carlsen, 2004).

Tarpoš Winery

Over a hundred years ago, the slopes of Venčac and hills of Vrbica above Arandjelovac were covered with vineyards. In that region, the famous „Venčac Vineyard Cooperative“ was founded, unique in the Balkans, which produced 300,000 liters of wine between the two world wars, even sparkling wines using the champagne method. Eleanor Roosevelt once visited that cellar. It was a glorious time for vine growers and winemakers from Venčac. Then came the time of decline, and in the second half of the 20th century, vineyards around Arandjelovac were more cleared than

cultivated. Good wine from Vencac, Bukulja, and the vineyards of Vrbica and Orašac fell into oblivion. Until 2003 when Mr. Tihomir „Tika“ Timotijevic, originally from Arandelovac, a successful civil engineer, decided to build a different „wine-city“ above his hometown, right on the border between the villages, Vrbica and Orašac. In the village of Vrbica, on a southern slope that slopes towards Arandelovac, Tihomir laid the foundations of his vineyard. Wines born with a view of Venčac and Oplenac are nurtured in the cellar, which, like the wine „château,“ slowly rises above the vineyard. Thus, the foundations of future viticulture and winemaking for this entire region were laid. and so Tarpoš was born. The entire estate, covering 27 hectares, is located in a place locals have called „Vinogradi“ (Vineyards) since ancient times, although a few remember those old vineyards anymore. Only one ancient oak tree in the midst of new vineyards, under whose canopy some ancient harvesters once rested, more than two hundred years ago, still remembers them. Tarpoš Winery, with ten hectares of vineyards, produces seven wines. From varieties such as Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot, Menuet (Chardonnay), Lipar (Sauvignon Blanc), Tarpoš Cuvee (Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay), Tarpoš Rose (Cabernet Sauvignon), 1804 (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot), Tarpoš Merlot, and Tarpoš Merlot Reserve are created. The vineyard's soil is very rich in red clay, making the Merlot variety the main star of Tarpoš Winery. But other grape varieties also absorb this specific „terroir“ located at 350 meters above sea level.

Picture 1: *Tarpoš Winery*



Source: Tarpoš Winery, 2024.

Tarpoš Winery was founded in 2003, and the first bottles of wine from the 2007 harvest were bottled and labeled in 2008. Tarpoš wines are of exceptional quality, contributed by the terrain where the vineyards lie, as the minerals present in the soil give Tarpoš wines an interesting finish.

The winery offers many interesting activities because besides vineyards and a wine cellar, it has accommodation capacities and a restaurant with traditional cuisine. Additional amenities that enhance the visitor experience include conversations with the winery's host or curator. Guests have the opportunity to purchase wine at the wine shop, adequate parking, and restroom facilities. Tarpoš Winery takes care of visitor education by organizing various activities, such as sommelier courses, guided tours of the winery and vineyards, and other activities carried out on harvest days (participation in wine production, grape stomping, and nature orienteering). Additionally, Tarpoš Winery frequently hosts various events such as exhibitions, celebrations, seminars, team-building activities, and more (Dagović, 2023).

Case study of Tarpoš Winery

Survey research was conducted during April and May 2023 in the central region of Serbia through social media channels. Out of a total of 70 respondents, in terms of gender distribution, 54% were men and 46% were women. The slight difference in percentage clearly indicates the insignificant role of gender in the structure of demand for wine tourism products, with slightly higher interest in the case of men.

Regarding the age structure of the respondents, the largest portion (33%) comprised individuals between 31-40 years old, followed by those aged 18-30 years (25%). Respondents aged between 41-50 years accounted for 23%, while those aged 51-60 years made up 16%, and the smallest percentage consisted of respondents older than 61 years (3%). This suggests that the winery is predominantly visited by individuals between 18 and 40 years old, for whom reasons for visiting may include socializing, social integration, the need for self-affirmation, as well as escapism from everyday life.

Regarding the educational background of the respondents, the majority (56%) had secondary education, while a high percentage also had tertiary education (41%), and 3% represented respondents with less or more education. This implies that educational attainment does not pose a barrier to participation in wine tourism.

The survey on the monthly income of the respondents revealed that exactly half of the respondents (50%) had incomes up to 50,000.00 dinars per month, while slightly less (29%) earned up to 100,000.00 dinars per

month, and even fewer (21%) earned over 100,000.00 dinars per month. This research suggests that there is significant interest among visitors in wine tourism from the middle-income bracket, highlighting the need for differentiation of wine tourism products based on price and additional amenities to satisfy diverse demands.

Regarding the main reason for visiting Tarpoš Winery, for the majority of respondents (35.7%), it was wine tasting, while other reasons included: socializing with family and friends (11.4%), entertainment (10%), relaxation (7.1%), wine purchase (7.1%), attractive landscape (5.7%), escapism from everyday life (5.7%), gastronomic offerings (4.3%), conversation with the winemaker (4.3%), meeting people with similar interests (1.4%), random visit (1.4%), and business visit (4.3%). Interestingly, respondents of this survey did not visit Tarpoš Winery for education or due to the good reputation of Sumadija wines.

Table 1: *Reasons for visiting the Tarpoš Winery*

Reason for visit	Amount (%)
Wine tasting	35.7
Socializing with family, friends	11.4
Fun, entertainment	10.0
Rest and relaxation	7.1
Buying wine	7.1
Attractive landscape	5.7
Escape from everyday life	5.7
Gastronomic offer	4.3
A conversation with a wine producer	4.3
Business visit	4.3
A unique experience	1.4
Meeting people with similar interests	1.4
Random visit	1.4
Educational experience	0.0
Good reputation of wines of Sumadija	0.0

Source: *Authors, 2023.*

In the research on the role of certain segments of Tarpoš Winery's offerings in wine tourism for the overall experience and visitor satisfaction, the largest percentage of respondents (20%) cited the taste of wine as the most important factor, followed by professional and courteous staff (13%), and the presence of a restaurant within the winery (13%). Additionally, important reasons for visiting Tarpoš Winery included the

opportunity to purchase exclusive wine (11%) and the availability of locally produced food for sale (11%), as well as the organization of special events at Tarpoš Winery. Other segments of Tarpoš Winery's offerings were rated lower, such as: accommodation rooms within the winery (0.7%), the attractiveness of the wine tasting room and cellar (0.4%), convenient operating hours without prior appointment (0.3%), guided tours of the winery (0.4%), and visitor education by a sommelier (0.3%). Interestingly, factors such as reasonable wine prices, appropriate music in the restaurant, adequate parking, the aroma of wine, diverse wine selection, appealing wine labels, wine names, modern packaging, accessibility for people with disabilities, wine workshops, souvenir sales, and children's playground within the winery were not of interest to the surveyed respondents.

Table 2: *Segments of Tarpoš Winery's offer in the overall experience and satisfaction of visitors*

Visit segment	Amount (%)
Wine taste	20.0
Professional and friendly staff	13.0
Restaurant within the winery	13.0
Sale of wine in the Wine shop	11.0
Sale of homemade food	11.0
Organizing a special event at the winery	10.0
Rooms for overnight stays within the winery	0.7
Arrangement of the wine tasting room and wine cellar	0.4
Tour of the winery accompanied by an expert	0.4
Practical working hours without prior notice	0.3
Education of visitors by sommeliers	0.3
Fair price of vine	0.0
Occasional music in the restaurant	0.0
Adequate parking	0.0
The smell of wine	0.0
A diverse assortment	0.0
Appealing label	0.0
The name of the wine	0.0
Modern packaging	0.0
Access to people with disabilities	0.0
Wine workshops	0.0
Selling souvenirs	0.0
Children's playground within the winery	0.0

Source: *Authors, 2023.*

Conclusion

The motivation of wine tourists is extremely important for the future development of wine tourism destinations in Serbia. As a driving force influencing their intention to participate in wine tourism, it is often associated with gastronomic experiences as well as comprehensive hospitality experiences and additional attractive amenities that enhance the stay within the winery. Although taste and wine tasting are the most important segments, as well as reasons for offering wine tourism, research on tourists' attitudes influencing the development of wine tourism unequivocally indicates that skilled and educated staff in the winery, cleanliness, ambiance, attractive landscape, as well as the availability of accommodation, organization of special events, and organized visitor education by sommeliers are of utmost importance.

Following contemporary trends in the wine tourism market, besides the segment of offerings in wine tourism related to continuous investment in viticulture (organic production, new varieties, certified planting material, quality equipment and technology, and more) and equipping wineries as starting points for wine tourism destinations (restaurant, accommodation facilities, parking, sports fields, children's playgrounds, and more), innovations in daily offerings of tastings and winery tours are necessary. Since socializing with family and friends, entertainment, leisure, and relaxation, as well as business visits and the organization of special events in the winery, are of great importance in the attitudes of tourists in wine tourism, it is necessary to link rural, or countryside, gastronomic, business, and wine tourism. The development of wine tourism destinations needs to be based on interesting wine events and festivals rooted in a long tradition and offering attractive programs, including old crafts as part of intangible cultural heritage, folklore, wine museums, and other unusual segments of wine tourism offerings.

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