Winery Tourism Comparisons to Typical Travel Spending in Texas: Are Winery Consumers bigger Spenders?
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INTRODUCTION
Attracting consumers to visit Texas wineries is very important for the industry, since many wineries are small and not able to access larger scale distributors. Winery tourism is not only valuable to the winery, but also valuable to the local community in the form of economic impacts from spending in the areas of hotel accommodations, meals and entertainment and winery purchases. In many cases, state’s have aligned their marketing efforts to enhance winery tourism spending as a community or rural economic development tool.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rutgers University (Adelaja, Brumfield and Lininger, 1990) identified a growing interest among states to assist in marketing agricultural commodities. Holloran and Martin, (1989), policymakers typically seek to promote (a) products that have certain state characteristics, (b) promote unique products, and (c) attempt to gain economic returns.

Swinburne University (Langworthy, Howard, Fiona & Mawson, 2006), agri-tourism is a growing phenomenon in Australia, often most strongly associated with wine regions. Recommendations to improve include creation of tourism regions & cooperatives, cooperation between sectors (CVBs, restaurants), infrastructure development and model development to measurable factors.

M. O’Neill and S. Charters, 2000 identified that wine tourism is a very lucrative industry with the ability to generate substantial wealth and growth. They reported 390,400 international tourists visited wineries in Australia in 1996, a 68% increase in 3 years. They also found that winery issues in promoting tourism are the service quality of the winery and the importance of empathy and responsiveness to generate brand loyalty.

South African wineries Bruwer, 2003 identified factors that were helpful in developing a wine tourism market of South African wineries. Regarding South Africa wine tourism, areas of winery business that promote tourism include, both service provision and destination marketing, development of wine routes forms an integral part of the wine tourism industry, estates sell more wine through the cellar-door and tourism industry needs well-developed infrastructure.

E. Cohen and L. Ben-Nun (2009) found that a tourist’s decision to visit a specific winery is also shaped by the willingness to experience the region’s features and to participate in other activities or attractions during the visit. In reference to wineries, the most important attribute was the winery offers wine tasting.

MKF Research (2008) reported that the Texas wine industry created an economic value of $1.35 billion. The report also finds that tourism Expenditures related to wine tourism in Texas represent an economic value of $296.6 million and represent 958,000 in annual consumer visitations. Consider the wine industry in Texas, 9,000 jobs are supported by the industry and 38% of those jobs relate to the tourism industry. Considering the $1.35 billion in total value, the largest single line item area is tourism spending (28%).

State travel spending is annual tracked by Dean Runyan and associates (2010), which reports Texas travel spending at $55 billion. Travel in wine regions report higher values than non-wine regions along with per capita spending is higher in rural regions of the state.

METHODS
In June, a Texas consumer survey was developed following formats of several online surveys and research reports (HanniCo, LLC of Napa Valley/ Wines USA/ Wark Communications of California). The objective of this survey was to define wine visitor spending values and associated demographics to spending. This sample was a convenience sample sent to approximately 9,000 newsletter subscribers, which resulted in 610 consumer responses. This is a response rate of 7%, but the 610 sample size according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) is a representative sample to well over 1 million consumers. Comparison values are deducted from the Dean Runyan (2010) report, which represents a travel spending in Texas.

**FINDINGS**

Preliminary results identify that consumer spending is approximately $300 per day, which exceeds typical state tourism spending. Thirty-two percent travel spending is related to winery spending, but accommodations spending are closely valued at 25 percent, which also exceeds typical state spending. Other comparisons exist in the areas of miles traveled, length of stay and overall impact to local economies.

**REFERENCES**


Dean Runyan Associates. 2010. Texas Tourism, Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism. “The Economic Impact of Travel on Texas.” Website:


O’Neill, M., Charters, S., 2000. Service quality at the cellar door: Implications for Western Australia’s developing wine tourism industry. Managing Service Quality 10(2), 112-123.