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CONSTRUCTING A PROFILE OF DOMESTIC WINE TOURISTS: THE CASE OF SIRINCE

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Abstract

There are many wine destinations that foreign and domestic tourists visit. One of them is Sirince Village in Selcuk town of İzmir. Situated near a lot of popular destinations such as Kusadasi, Selcuk and İzmir, Sirince is also a famous wine destination. The objective of this study is to reveal the profile of domestic tourists who have visited Sirince through their attitudes towards wine, their travel motivations and their demographics. With survey method, data are collected from domestic tourists visiting Sirince and then analyzed with SPSS 22.0. According to the findings, domestic wine tourists visiting Sirince are mostly young people working in public services with high education and middle income level. Their attitudes towards wine are positive in general which have parallels with the facts that this destination is famous for its wine and has high participation levels. This findings show that domestic tourists are wine consumers, can travel for participating in festivals and events related to wine and therefore can be qualified as wine tourists. The most significant travel motivations of these tourists are determined as pull factors related to the destinations such as its cultural and historical attractions.

Keywords: Wine Tourism, Wine Tourist, Şirince, Tourist Profile.

INTRODUCTION

Various demographic profiles all over the world hinder making a wine tourist definition and description as well as show that independent variables are needed to use for classification of wine tourists (Thompson and Prideaux, 2009). For this reason, more studies should be done in order to understand wine tourists better (Getz et al., 2008).

Most of the studies related to wine tourists are the studies done with the viewpoint of wine manufactureres, in other words, supply side (Alebaki and Iakovidou, 2011; Tassiopoulos et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2000; Bekar and Kılınç, 2017). Other studies on wine tourists are from demand side which is comprised mostly of general tourists visiting wine-producing destinations or wineries (Williams and Kelly, 2001).

According to the common belief, all the studies on the profile of wine tourists, their motivations, their intentions and how they can be classified effectively are very important for travel literature. The studies on this topic which were, have been or will be done are regarded as significant for tourist destinations, travel agencies and specifically wine producers to create loyal customers (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002) and for the economic and social effects of wine tourism to be more positive on a destination and its local people.

The research on wine tourism made in Turkey is mostly placed within the studies of gastronomy tourism and alternative tourism. There is not any study related to the determination of Turkish wine tourists' profile. In light of aforementioned reasons, the purpose of this study is to construct a sociodemographic and psychographic profile of wine tourists visiting Sirince which is famous for a wine destination with the viewpoint of demand side. For this aim, a wine tourist profile is developed through the motivations, attitudes and demographical characteristics of domestic tourists visiting Sirince located in Selcuk town of İzmir.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Wine Tourism and Wine Tourists

The definition of wine tourism has been made by a lot of researchers, wine manufacturers and tourism experts (Johnson, 1997; South Australian Tourism Commission, 1997; Getz, 1998; Dowling, 1998). Hall and Macionis (1998) define wine tourism as visiting vineyards, wineries, wine events and performances in order to experience the characteristics of a place with vineyards or offering wine tasting. O'Neill and Palmer (2004) claim that wine tourism has been emerged as a developing strong part of special interest tourism and today has become an important tourism product for a country or a region where wine is produced.

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Wine tourism is regarded as a tourism type offering a customized product for consumers' special interest and new information or experience for wine lovers and requiring effective participation. This type of tourism also provides new opportunities, brings new responsibilities for wine manufacturers and presents sustainable development chances for a wine destination. Also, it has a significant role as an alternative to mass tourism (Yıldız, 2009). Getz and Brown (2006) describe wine tourism firstly as a consumer behaviour type, secondly as a promotional strategy for destinations' attractions related to wine and lastly as a marketing opportunity for wine producers to inform consumers and sell their products. According to Alebaki and Iakovidou (2010) tourists participating in wine tourism are not only interested in wine tasting (Roberts and Sparks, 2006), but also seeks an overall travel experience which provides many benefits regionally (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002; Getz et al., 2008). As it is wrong to mention about only one kind of wine tourists (Alebaki and Iakovidou, 2011), the current study presents some wine tourists profiles highlighted by some studies conducted around the world.

1.2. Wine Tourist Profiles

Dodd (1995) found out that a wine tourist had a higher level of education and income than an average tourist. Folwell and Grassel (1995) conducted a research in Washington State and deduced that wine tourists were middle-aged tourists with a higher income level than average while Williams and Dossa (2003) claimed that a typical wine tourist was younger, had a higher level of education but a lower level of income as a result of their study conducted in British Columbia. South Australian Tourism Commission (1997) classified wine tourists as couples without children who had professional occupational incomes and higher level of education. In their study conducted in New Zealand, Treloar, Hall and Mitchell (2004) asserted that wine tourists were mostly female, at the ages of 30-50, professional, mostly domestic tourists, had a higher education and income level and were mostly residents of nearby towns or cities. Lopez-Guzman and colleagues (2008) stated that the wine tourists visiting Southern Spain were at the ages of 50-59, had middle or high income level and they mostly visited the destination with their families. According to O'Neill and Palmer (2004), wine tourists were mostly female, young, Australian and had a good education level and a professional job.

According to Alebaki and Iakovidou (2010), researchers (Alant and Bruwer, 2004; Charters and Ali-Knight 2002; Hall et al., 2000) claimed that the primary motivations of wine tourists were wine tasting and wine purchase; the secondary motivations were socializing, obtaining new information about wine and wine-making, having fun, rural landscape and relaxation (Bruwer and Alant, 2009; Carmichael, 2005; Hall et al., 2000). Mitchell and Hall (2006) revealed that one of the primary motivations of visiting wineries was escape (Baird, 2012) which can be called one of the push motivations (Cook, Hsu and Marqua, 2014). Ravenscroft and van Westering (2001) emphasized educational dimension of wine experience and claimed that wine making, wine tasting and obtaining information about wine types were significant motivations for wine tourists. Hall and Macionis (1998) found out in their study carried out in Canberra, Australia that basic motivations of wine tourists were wine tasting, rural landscape, meeting wine producers and learning more about wine types.

1.3. Sirince

Twelve kilometers away from Ephesus and 8 kilometers away from Selcuk, Sirince is an old Greek village with a population of 700. Living off with production of olive oil and winery as well as farming of peach, fig, apple and walnut, Sirince village was declared as conservation area because of its cultural and natural beauties. Due to the population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1923, Turks moved to Sirince which had been a Greek village. Greeks named the village Cirkince (meaning "ugly" in Turkish), but in 1930 Kazım Dirik, the governor of İzmir changed its name as Sirince (meaning "cute" in Turkish). The village has succeeded to keeping its unique architecture safe. The locals of Sirince display handmade products such as jam, wine or other handicrafts and offer them to visitors. In the village center, soaps and clothings made by local women are sold in little shops. There are many wine shops in which visitors can taste many kinds of fruit wine. There is also an ancient church in Sirince dated back to 15th century. This church sparks foreign tourists' interest because before Jesus was crucified, he entrusted his mother to St. John, one of his apostles, and they came from Jerusalem to Ephesus and settled there (www.rotasenin.com). In this village where the biggest problems are immigration and unemployment, there are 160 households and 33 bed and breakfast facilities (www.yerelnet.org.tr).

Due to the Mayan Apocalypse that 5125 years old Mayan calendar would end in December 21th 2012 and Sirince village was the safest zone, the village gained a grand fame and increased the number of its visitors. As well as being a popular, authentic and a peaceful village, it is also famous for its wine. Visitors can taste various kinds of wine without paying any money. Among fruit wine types with low alcohol rate, melon wine is the one in great demand(www.rotasenin.com).

The fact that wine producing has stood out in Sirince in recent years and Anatolia saved its own wine culture from being lost and rediscovered this beauty was supported by Helmut Krauss who came to the village in 1999 and opened a wine factory for cultivating quality grape vines of the village. With modern technology and its popular and desirable wine produced in Artemis wine factory, Sirince became the most well-known viniculture village in Turkey (Coşkun, 2004). Sirince has become a wine destination because of both being situated close to a lot of tourism destinations and being famous for its wine-making.

2. METHODOLOGY

This exploratory research whose aims were to construct a profile of domestic wine tourists and to provide an empirical basis for the development of a Turkish wine tourist profile was conducted with a quantitative approach. The population of the research consisted of domestic tourists visiting Sirince which is one of the most popular wine destinations in Turkey. The sample of this study was determined via convenience sampling and was comprised of domestic tourists visiting Sirince who were willing to participate in this research. The data were gathered through survey in November and December, 2016 at the weekends because the number of tourists were much more than on weekdays. The total number of distributed questionnaires were 185; however 25 of them were excluded due to missing data within demographic questions. Therefore 160 questionnaires in total were included in data analyses.

The scale of the survey which was used as a data collection tool was adapted from the scales applied in the studies of Hall (1996) and Corigliano (1996). In the first section of the questionnaire, there were 12 items related to tourists' attitudes towards wine. In the second part, there were 26 items about their travel motivations. All the items in these two sections were measured using five-point Likert scales ranging from "1= Strongly Disagree", "3=Moderately Agree" and "5=Strongly Agree". In the third part of the questionnaire, there were close-ended questions about demographics of the tourists. Before the questionnaire took its final form, the opinions and expert ideas of academicians who had studied similar subjects were applied. The designed questionnaire was pilot-tested to 30 colleagues. Under the light of criticisms, required revisions were made. Then, we distributed the questionnaires to domestic tourists visiting Sirince. The obtained data were analysed with SPSS 22.0 software.

Before analyses, reliability analyses were conducted for the first and second sections of the survey. Cronbach's Alpha value of 12 items related to the attitudes towards wine was found as ,923 and Cronbach's Alpha value of 26 items related to the motivations was found as ,897. According to these results, we can say that the scales were reliable for analyses.

Factor analysis was conducted in order to gather items related to tourists' travel motivations and under certain factors and to measure construct validity. As a result of this analysis, items with factor loadings lower than 0,5 were omitted and factor analysis was repeated. According to this second analysis, 20 items with factor loadings higher than 0,5 were gathered under 4 dimensions. These dimensions were named push motivations, wine-related motivations, pull motivations and gastronomic motivations respectively. Keiser-Meyer- Olkin (KMO) value of the scale was 0,833 and $p < 0,01$ and this showed that the scale ensured construct validity. The results of factor analysis conducted on travel motivations of tourists were shown at Table 1.

Table 1: Factor Analysis of Visitors' Travel Motivations

ITEMS		FACTORS			
		1	2	3	4
Push	To have fun	,810			
	To relax	,803			
	To spoil oneself	,802			
	To escape from routine life	,788			
	To seek adventure and excitement	,786			
	To live romantic moments	,728			
	To try new and different things	,666			
Wine-related	To buy wine		,835		
	To meet wine producers		,818		
	To learn wine-making		,806		
	To visit wineries		,771		
	To taste wine		,736		
	To taste and experience new types of wine		,659		
	To participate in vintage		,519		
Pull	Cultural attractions of the destination			,800	

Gastro.	Historical attractions of the destination				,767
	To see natural beauties of the destination				,601
	To increase my knowledge about culture and history				,584
	To experience local gastronomic attributes				,924
	To taste local food				,913
<i>Initial Eigenvalues</i>		6,640	3,377	1,906	1,303
<i>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (% of Variance)</i>		23,555	20,253	12,114	10,208
<i>Total Variance Explained</i>		66,130			
<i>Croncach's Alpha Values of Dimensions</i>		,901	,869	,757	,928

Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation Method. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure: 0,833; $p < 0,01$; X^2 : 2037,047; df: 190

Data on demographics of tourists participated in the research were analysed with absolute and percentage values (See Table 2). The tourists' attitudes towards wine were analysed with percentage values, arithmetic means and standard deviations and shown at Table 3. The arithmetic means and standard deviations of the dimensions revealed by factor analysis on travel motivations were shown with a figure (See Figure 1).

3. FINDINGS

In parallel to the purpose of this study, Table 2 presents the first step towards constructing a profile of domestic wine tourists: the demographics of the tourists such as gender, age, marital status, monthly income, occupations and level of education.

Table 2: The Demographics of the Tourists

Gender	n	%	Having Children	n	%
Female	74	46,3	Yes	77	48,1
Male	86	53,8	No	83	51,9
Age	n	%	Occupation	n	%
18-24	23	14,4	Private Sector Employee	39	24,4
25-34	45	28,1	Public Sector Employee	62	38,8
35-44	38	23,8	Unemployed	2	1,3
45-54	27	16,9	Student	23	14,4
55-64	14	8,8	Self-employed	8	5,0
65 and above	13	8,1	Retired	26	16,3
Marital Status	n	%	Education Level	n	%
Married	77	48,0	Secondary	40	25,0
Single	83	52,0	Undergraduate	82	51,2
Monthly Personal Income	n	%	Graduate	n	%
1300 TL and under	24	15,0	Travel Companion	n	%
1301-2300	41	25,6	Alone	17	10,6
2301-3400	48	30,0	My wife/husband	28	17,5
3401-4500	33	20,6	Family (with children)	58	36,3
4501 and above	14	8,8	Friends	57	35,6
TOTAL	160	100	TOTAL	160	100

As one can see at the table above, more than half of the participant tourists of this research was male (53,8%) and the other half was female. Almost half of the participants were at the ages of 25-44 (51,9%). As for their marital status, more than half of the participants were not married. More than half of the participants (55,6%) had a monthly personal income of 1301-3400 TL. As it can be seen from the table, all the married couples had children. Almost 40% of the participants had a job in public sector and almost 25% had been working in private sector. In terms of the participants' educational level, almost half of them had a bachelor's degree. Lastly, most of the participants (71,9%) visited Sirince with their families or friends.

Table 3 presents arithmetic means and standard deviations of the items related to the tourists' attitudes towards wine.

Table 3: Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviation Values of the Attitudes towards Wine

ITEMS	%	%	%	%	%	x ±SS
	1	2	3	4	5	
Drinking wine is beneficial for health unless the limit is exceeded.	0,6	2,5	8,8	46,3	41,9	4,26±,77
I like drinking wine.	1,3	3,1	25,6	41,3	28,7	3,93±,88
I like tasting types of wine.	4,4	6,9	16,3	51,2	21,3	3,78±1,00
I participate in wine or vintage events or festivals.	6,9	13,8	47,5	26,9	5,0	3,09±,93
I buy wine from wineries.	6,3	23,8	36,3	25,6	8,1	3,05±1,03
I am interested in everything related to wine.	5,6	21,3	46,9	20,0	6,3	3,00±,94
I know many kinds of wine.	6,3	31,3	33,1	19,4	10,0	2,95±1,07
I visit wineries.	7,5	23,8	40,0	23,1	5,6	2,95±,99
I follow TV programs about wine.	7,5	21,9	51,9	14,4	4,4	2,86±,90

I am familiar with wine-making process.	8,1	31,9	33,8	20,0	6,3	2,84±1,03
I read wine or winery magazines.	6,9	29,4	41,3	17,5	5,0	2,84±,96
I meet a lot of people thanks to wine.	8,1	31,3	38,8	18,8	3,1	2,77±,95

As one can understand from the table above, the item with the highest arithmetic mean was "Drinking wine is beneficial for health unless the limit is exceeded" (m=4,26). This was followed by the items, "I like drinking wine" (m=3,93); "I like tasting types of wine" (m=3,78); "I participate in wine or vintage events or festivals" (m=3,09); "I buy wine from wineries" (m=3,05); "I am interested in everything related to wine" (m=3,00). Considering means and percentages of these items, it could be seen that the agreement rate of the participants with the first three items was rather high. The agreement rate of the items, "I participate in wine or vintage events or festivals", "I buy wine from wineries", "I am interested in everything related to wine" was at moderate level. It was revealed that the overall agreement rate of the participants was higher than the rate of disagreement.

The analysis results of motivational dimensions can be seen at Figure 1.

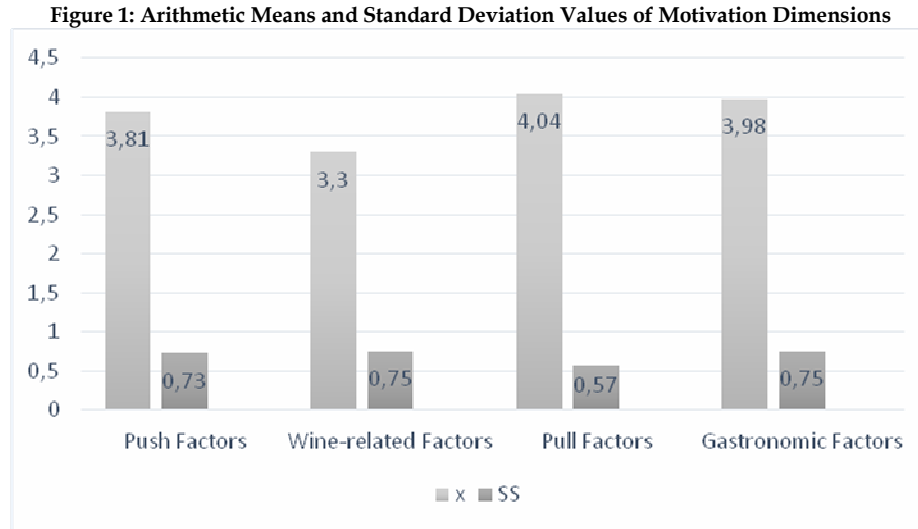


Figure 1 shows that the most important travel motivations of domestic tourists who participated in this study were pull factors which were related to the destination, in other words Sirince. This dimension was followed by gastronomic factors and push factors. Although the arithmetic mean of the wine-related dimension which consisted of the items "to buy wine", "to meet wine producers", "to learn wine-making", "to visit wineries", "to taste wine", "to taste and experience new types of wine" and "to participate in vintage" was lower than other dimensions, it was above (3,3±0,75) the average value.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, our aim was to develop a profile of domestic wine tourists visiting Sirince, their attitudes, travel motivations and demographics were examined. The sample of this study consisted of domestic tourists who visited Sirince in November and December, 2016. In this quantitative study, survey method was applied as data collection tool. According to data analyses, a little more than half of the participants were male, single, between the ages of 25-44, had an income level of 1301-3500 TL, had a job at public sector and had a bachelor's degree. The rate of married participants was parallel with the rate of participants with children. The most of the participants visited Sirince with their wives/husbands and their children or their friends. To sum up, domestic wine tourists visiting Sirince were young, civil servants and had a higher education and middle income level. This result supports the findings of the study conducted by Williams and Dossa (2003) in British Columbia. They also found that a wine tourist was young, had a good education and an income level below the average. However our results are not similar to those of Dodd (1995) who admitted that wine tourists had higher income levels and of Folwell and Grassel (1995) who claimed that wine tourists were older and had an income level above the average. Our findings towards travel companions suggested that the domestic tourists visited Sirince with their families or friends and this result shows parallels with the results of Lopez-Guzman and colleagues (2008). They also revealed that wine tourists visiting Southern Spain travelled there with their families.

Considering the tourists' attitudes towards wine, it can be seen that their overall attitudes towards wine were positive. It can be deduced from the results that the participant tourists regarded drinking wine healthy unless limit was exceeded; they liked drinking wine and tasting wine types; they participated in wine or vintage related events; they bought wine from wineries and they were interested in everything related to wine. All these suggested that the domestic tourists were wine consumers and could travel for participating in wine-related events or festivals, so they could be qualified as wine tourists.

Lastly, travel motivations of domestic tourists visiting Sirince were analyzed. As a result of factor analysis applied for motivation scale, the items gathered under 4 dimensions which were push motivations, wine-related motivations, pull motivations and gastronomic motivations. According to arithmetic means, the most significant travel motivations of the participant tourists were factors related to Sirince. Motivational items under this dimension were pull factors related to the destination itself such as “cultural, natural and historical attractions of the destination”. This result did not support the claims of Alebaki and Iakovidou (2010) that they presented with the meta-analysis of other wine-related studies. They claimed that the primary motivations of wine tourists were wine-tasting and buying wine. This difference can be explained as such that tourists are aware of Sirince’s reputation as a wine destination (Cook et al., 2014) but they are most likely also the visitors of close destinations like Kusadasi and Selcuk. It is well understood that their primary motivations are pull factors which are described as factors related to a destination because they visit Sirince for not only its reputation but also its rural landscape. Besides these pull motivations, wine-related motivations, push motivations and gastronomic motivations were also important to the domestic tourists for travelling Sirince.

As the purpose of this study was to develop a profile of domestic wine tourists in Turkey and introduce their psychographic characteristics, we included only demographics, attitudes towards wine and travel motivations of the tourists in this study. Therefore any difference or relationship were not measured or examined. This could be regarded as a limitation of this study. Another limitation was the size of the sample because this study was a preliminary study of an in-depth project related to the market segmentation of domestic and foreign wine tourists visiting all the wine destinations in Turkey. Accordingly, in a study whose scope is broader the results and tourist profile may show differences from the results of the current study.

We make some suggestions for future research and suggest some practical implications in parallel to study results and limitations:

- In future research, by including foreign tourists in the sample, researchers may make a comparison between motivations, attitudes and demographics of domestic and foreign tourists.
- In future research, researchers may reveal if there is any difference between demographics of tourists and their travel motivations and attitudes towards wine.
- The managers of wineries or wine shops in Sirince may carry out promotional activities in parallel to the tourist profile constructed in this study.
- In Sirince, in which one of the biggest problems is unemployment, wine may be promoted as a tourism product in a more effective way so that investments to the village may increase and unemployment rate may decrease.

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