Journal of Tourism Quarterly Research Article
ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Positioning an emerging wine route in the Island of Crete: Interpreting the wine tourism market and its implications for marketing

George Triantafyllou[1], Strataki Eirini[1], and George Apladas[1]

[1] Hellenic Mediterranean University, Iraklion Crete Greece

E-mail: triantafyllou@hmu.gr

Received: November 2, 2020
Accepted for publication: December 7, 2020

Abstract

Crete in Greece is home to an emerging wine route with more than 50 wineries. This paper is intending to identify the wine cluster. The wine routes in Crete have one distinct cluster, and there is another one in North Greece. The wineries welcome many international visitors along with the uprising numbers of domestic types of tourists. Through the results of a visitor survey at 46 wineries, the paper will illustrate the different markets visiting the wine routes in Crete and suggests possible implications for marketing strategies for this emerging wine route. The paper has identified some ways and means for the future researchers and industry planners for achieving the required success.

Keywords: Wine routes, wine tourism market, Crete, Greece

1. Introduction

Crete in Greece has got good potential for being developed as wine and food tourism. The research paper will investigate the changing impression of the Crete region in light of the survey of 152 visitors at 46 of wineries. More than 40 wineries located in one main route in the Crete region. All of them are working together to promote the region and to get better economic survival. This paper will look at how Crete needs to compete with other destinations and regions, which are already very popular as a wine tourism destination. This paper is a first attempt to understand how managers and planners of wineries need to understand their customer base in order to be competitive. It is fascinating to note that it is continuously organizing many different types of events.

In light of wine tourism, there is a need for a deeper understanding of wine tourist and their behavior (Mitchell & Hall, 2001). Wine tourism, in Greece, is referred to rural areas, where small activities are taking place and which are supported by local communities. The locals are involved in wine growing independently. Sometimes their primary income sources lie within the viticulture. According to the General Secretariat of Research and Technology and the Eurostat, Greek economy, still, has not fully profited form an organized business cluster.

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

The reports suggest that there is a rising tendency for networking businesses both formally and informally (Papathanasiou et al. 2006, Papathanasiou et al. 2007).

If the wine tourism in Greece explored then, it could be said that there have been only a few networks, such as the Network of Wine Growers of the Prefecture of Heraklion in Crete, which compiles all necessary features to be called as a cluster. This network participate wine producers from all over the Prefecture, who entered the co-operation by stipulating the creation of an alternative tourism product as well. They share a vision for the Prefecture's future, investing not only in locally produced goods and services and also in the uses of the historical and cultural heritage environments. Expected benefits, through wine tourism, are the regeneration of local businesses and local economies, aiming at the economic and cultural regeneration of rural spaces.

Towards the end of the paper, it is discussed how different markets visiting the Crete wine routes and propose the possible implications for marketing strategies. The results of the paper are connected with the image of the Crete region as the focus to diversify to attract a high number of wine tourists.

1.1 Why researching wine tourism?

A bibliometric analysis was done using Web of Science (WOS) and found that since 2001 there are a total of 760 scholarly documents. Seven hundred sixty documents were cited for 8.28 times average, and total citation is more than six thousand.

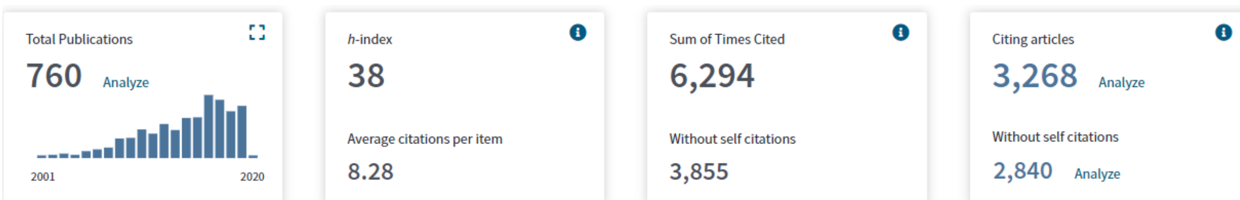


Figure 1: increasing citations and research patterns in wine tourism

In the country-wise analysis, it was found that the USA has contributed the maximum number of papers, which is followed by Australia. In-depth analysis reports that Greece has got 24th rank and has produced 33 documents on the platform of WOS, which is only 1.082% contribution in entire manuscripts, throughout the world. This piece of information shows the need for research, and further scope needs to be discussed.

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

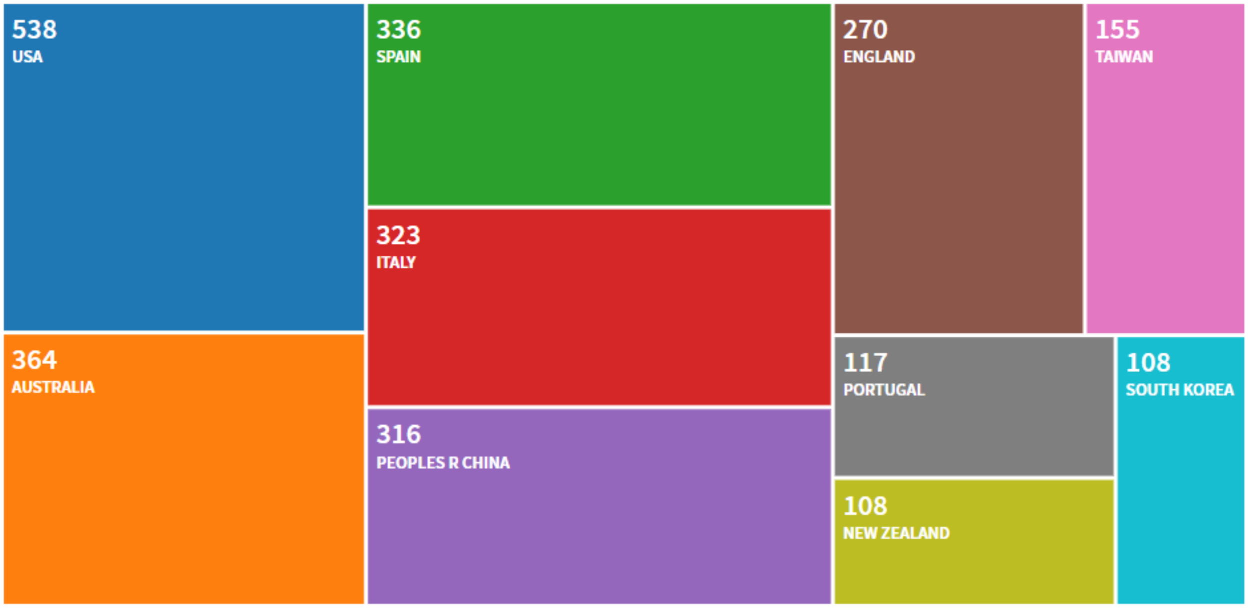


Figure 2: Country wise research patterns in wine tourism

2. Relationship in wine tourism and its marketing

It is a very recent development that wine tourism has got importance in the academic discussion. Otherwise, this was not given much importance. To be with the facts that there has been "relatively little systematic studies of the development of wine tourism, how it is managed and marketed and the people who visit wine regions and experience the wine tourism product" Cambourne, Macionis & Hall, (2000). A very recent paper written by Hall et al. (2000), list out the advantages of wine tourism for wineries as:

- increased consumer exposure to products,
- marketing intelligence on products and consumers,
- brand awareness and loyalty,
- additional sales outlet,
- increased margins, and
- educational opportunities.

The increased recognition of the role of wine tourism is reflected in the need to increase cellar door sales for many wineries. Wine tourism has been defined as the "visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors" (Hall, 1996; Macionis, 1996). The importance of geographic location will become significant in the case of this study, as there is only one identifiable cluster of wineries in the Iceland Crete.

While it is recognized that the region plays a crucial point in marketing, recently has there been a shift towards understanding the consumer behavior of wine tourists (Mitchell, Hall & McIntosh, 2000; Mitchell and Hall 2001). As pointed out by Mitchell, Hall and McIntosh (2000), "profiles of wine tourists

In one region should not automatically be assumed to be the same as in another, or even from one winery to another." Understanding the differences between winery visitors becomes very important for marketers and

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

winery operators in targeting potential visitors (Mitchell, Hall & McIntosh, 2000). Before examining the results of this study, the paper turns to a brief overview of the changes in the wine industry that have led to the development of wine tourism in Crete.

3. Marketing Strategies for food and wine

In recent years, wine tourism is getting importance and noticeable recognition in academia and industry too. The countries are planning for overall vision to establish themselves as a quality wine and culinary tourism destination for both the domestic and foreign tourists.

These plans offer specific strategies for the countries, which are seen as the leading wine and culinary destinations. These attempts are being made to create an international market branding of countries as a premier wine and culinary tourism destinations. The other local marketing partnership of note is that the wineries in countries have joined forces to form a Marketing Committee, which meets monthly. They have published joint marketing materials in hopes of establishing an identity as a cluster of wineries (Wine of Crete, 2020).

4. Research methodology (survey plan)

One hundred fifty-two visitors of 46 numbers of wineries were interviewed during every weekend of January and February 2020. The population of the study was every visitor of the winery in Crete region during a specified time period. Out of the 50 listed wineries, they were randomly selected for the interview. The size and economic performance of the winery was not a restriction, whereas, this was considered that every winery must have a tasting room for the visitors. The team of field investigator was used to collect the data. The convenient sampling method out of non-probability sampling methods was applied to collect the data from respondents. The field investigators were randomly approaching to the visitors; those who have consent were interviewed. The field investigators were fluent in the English language; they have read the questions to the respondent and recorded their responses on the paper. A target of 10 respondents from each winery was set, and therefore, 152 complete surveys were obtained. The field investigators were not able to manage the corresponding data from each winery, as their consent was required before proceeding for data collection. Some of the respondents were in the package tour and was travelling in small tour groups also.

5. Data analysis

The data were analyzed first for demographic variables.

5.1 Demographics

Looking at the gender data, 65% (98) respondents were male, whereas 35% of respondents were females. It could be inferred that more males are visiting wineries. The rest demographics are apparent by looking at table 1. Most of the participants are university graduates, which is followed by MSc-PhD students. Those who are not married yet, means single are visiting wineries most. Most of the respondents are with no kids. Majority of the participants have income less than 12,000 e. Employees in the private sector are visiting the wineries in more frequency.

Table 1: Demographics of the respondents

	frequencies	percentage

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Education level		
University graduate	57	38%
College graduate	40	26%
MSc - PhD	45	30%
elementary/ students/ Erasmus student	9	6%
Marital status		
Single	67	44%
Married	57	38%
Divorced	27	18%
Children		
No kids	96	64%
with Kids	55	36%
Annual income		
bellow 12.000 e	40	26%
12.001-24.000 e	38	25%
24.001-36.000 e	28	19%
36.001-45.000 e	29	19%
over 46.000 e	16	11%
Professional status		
Student	14	9%
Employee in the private sector	65	43%
Businessman	37	25%
Self-employed	7	5%
Retired	10	7%
House wife	11	7%
Unemployed	7	5%

5.2 Deeper analysis

One sample t-test was applied to understand, what are the key significant areas to report (Table 2). According to the table reported, almost every item has got significantly different from their categories. This needs further analysis of how different are the item to each other. In which ways and means they have got differences. This is reported in some next tables and figures. The objective will be how different each category of item from one to another.

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Table 2: One-Sample Test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
From which place do you buy most of your wine?	37.869	150	0.00
Do you have any particular favorite variety of wine?	36.357	150	0.00
Have you ever purchased any souvenirs of non-wine products while visiting a winery?	49.342	150	0.00
Have you visited wineries in other part of Crete?	35.2	150	0.00
Factors to visit the winery today–tour	51.738	150	0.00
Factors to visit the winery today–eating	34.121	150	0.00
Winery services–tour guide	46.152	150	0.00
Are you from the Crete?	44.243	150	0.00
How many people (including yourself) are you visiting the winery with today?	26.834	151	0.00
Are you visiting other tourist attractions in the Crete region today?	36.546	150	0.00
What type of accommodation are you staying in?	19.938	150	0.00
How frequently you Eat out?	36.613	150	0.00
Are you from Crete?	44.243	150	0.00

The question wise analysis was done and only significant items were reported here. Non-significant items were reported separately. The first question investigates their places of purchasing wine. Based on chi-square and spearman correlation results of significance were reported here.

Table 3: Differences based on chi-square and correlation		Are you from Crete?	
		Crete	Outsider
From which place do you buy most of your wine?	On the site of the winery	23.8%	76.2%
	Supermarket	22.4%	77.6%

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

	Specialty wine shop	39.7%	60.3%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
Chi-Square Tests: Asymp. Sig. (2-sided), .001			
Spearman Correlation: Value .240, Approx. Sig., .003			
		Crete	Outsider
Do you have any particular favorite variety of wine?	yes	43.6%	56.4%
	no	19.2%	80.8%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
Chi-Square Tests: Asymp. Sig. (2-sided), .002			
Spearman Correlation: Value .262, Approx. Sig., .001			
		Crete	Outsider
How frequently you Eat out?	Rarely	13.3%	86.7%
	Sometimes	46.4%	53.6%
	often	28.1%	71.9%
	Frequently	17.4%	82.6%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
Chi-Square Tests: Asymp. Sig. (2-sided), .015			
Spearman Correlation: Value .118, Approx. Sig., .001			

It can be quickly reported that most of the outsiders are purchasing from supermarkets, followed by specialty wine shops. Whereas, Crete based visitors are purchasing from specialty wine shops. It can also be seen that more outsiders are purchasing wines, maybe for making their journey more memorable. The local residents are, maybe, of the opinion that they can purchase it any time and possibly available to the local market (refer figure 3).

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

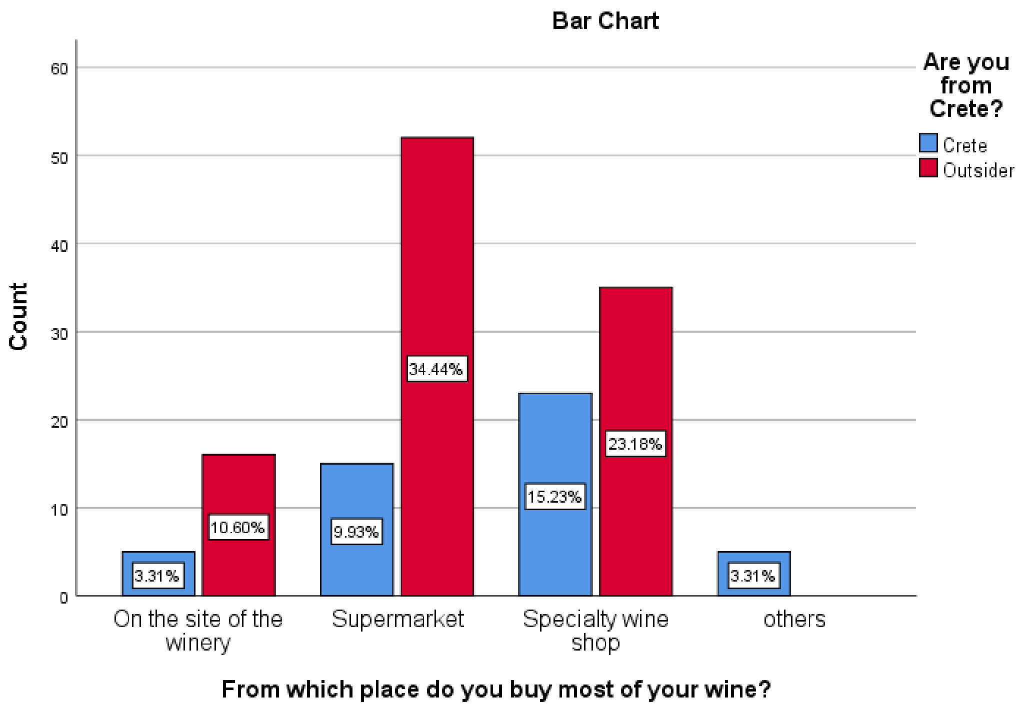


Figure 3: The place of their purchasing of wine.

Most of the outsiders have reported that they do not have a favorite variety of wine. Whereas, almost equally respondents (Crete based and outsider) are saying that they have a favorite variety of wine. (refer figure 4). This was quite surprising for the researchers that are another pie chart was drawn, the other figure suggests that preferences are almost equal, ~52% is for yes and ~48% for no (refer figure 7d for support).

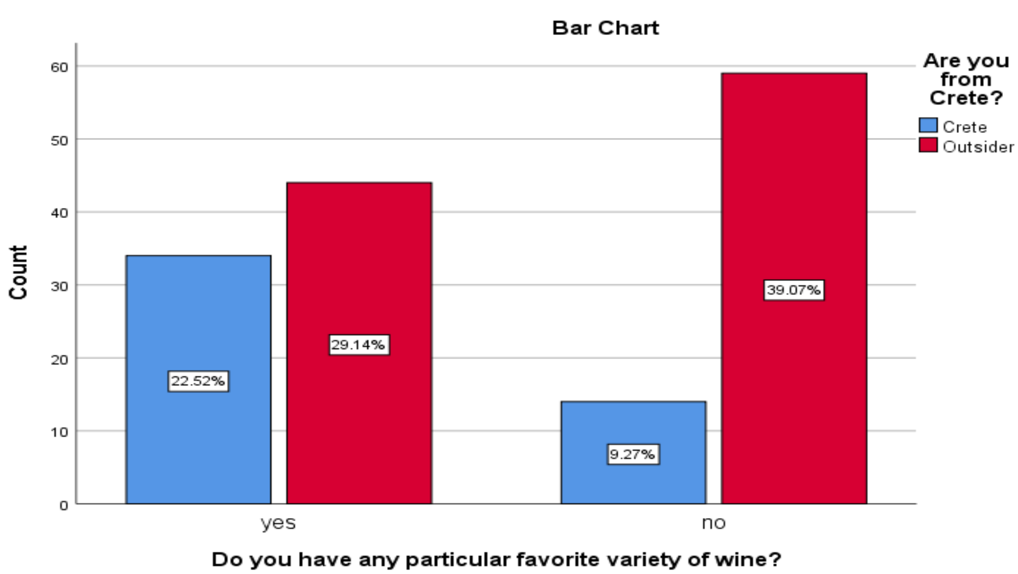


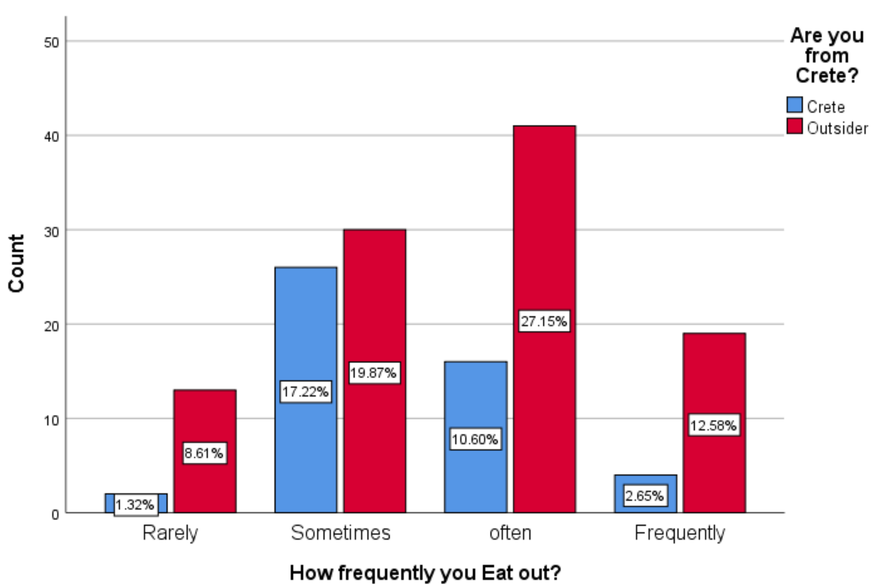
Figure 4: On the favorite variety of wine.

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

The respondents, who have said that they have one or more favorite wine, their wines were, i.e., White, Red, Rose, Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Vidiano, Malvasia, and few others.

Figure 5: Favorites Wine of Tourist.

How frequently they dine out? Most of the outsiders have reported that they dine out often (27%), which is followed by sometimes (19%). Majority of the Crete residents are saying that they eat our sometimes (17%). Almost equally are saying that they eat out sometimes in the month. In the categories of often and frequently again, outsiders are more (refer figure 6).



ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Figure 6: On the frequency of dining out.

Table 4 helps in figuring out that most of the outsiders, in-fact, foreign tourists have non-wine souvenirs while visiting a winery. Most of the foreign tourists have found to purchase the souvenirs. The most popular souvenirs are books, wines, glass, bottles, openers, corkscrew and some other material (refer figure 7 for details). The foreign tourists have also visited the other wineries in Crete; however, residents of Crete have found less interested in other wineries in Crete. This may happen that they found a nearby winery and loved their taste. Later, they did not think to visit the other wineries.

Table 4: Not significant measures on chi-square but significant on t-test

		Crete	Outsider
Have you ever purchased any souvenirs of non-wine products while visiting a winery?	yes	34.2%	65.8%
	no	31.0%	69.0%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
		Crete	Outsider
Have you visited wineries in other part of Crete?	yes	37.5%	62.5%
	no	23.8%	76.2%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
		Crete	Outsider
How many people (including yourself) are you visiting the winery with today?	1-2	40.0%	60.0%
	3-7	27.0%	73.0%
	8-15	47.6%	52.4%
	Over 25	18.2%	81.8%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
		Crete	Outsider
Are you visiting other tourist attractions in the Crete region today?	yes	33.3%	66.7%
	no	25.8%	74.2%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
		Crete	Outsider
What type of accommodation are you staying in?	With family and friends	18.8%	81.3%
	Hotel or similar settings	22.4%	77.6%
	Bed and breakfast	30.8%	69.2%
	Camping		100.0%
	Air BNB	5.9%	94.1%
	I live in Crete - Native	86.7%	13.3%
	other		100.0%
Total		31.8%	68.2%

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Looking at the group size of the tourists, the majority were in the group of 3-7. This is followed by 1-2 and then 8-15 members per group. The group sizes of over 25 were very less (refer to figure 7a). This leads to the theory that tourists do, nowadays, not prefer bigger size of groups. This could be an insight for industry people.

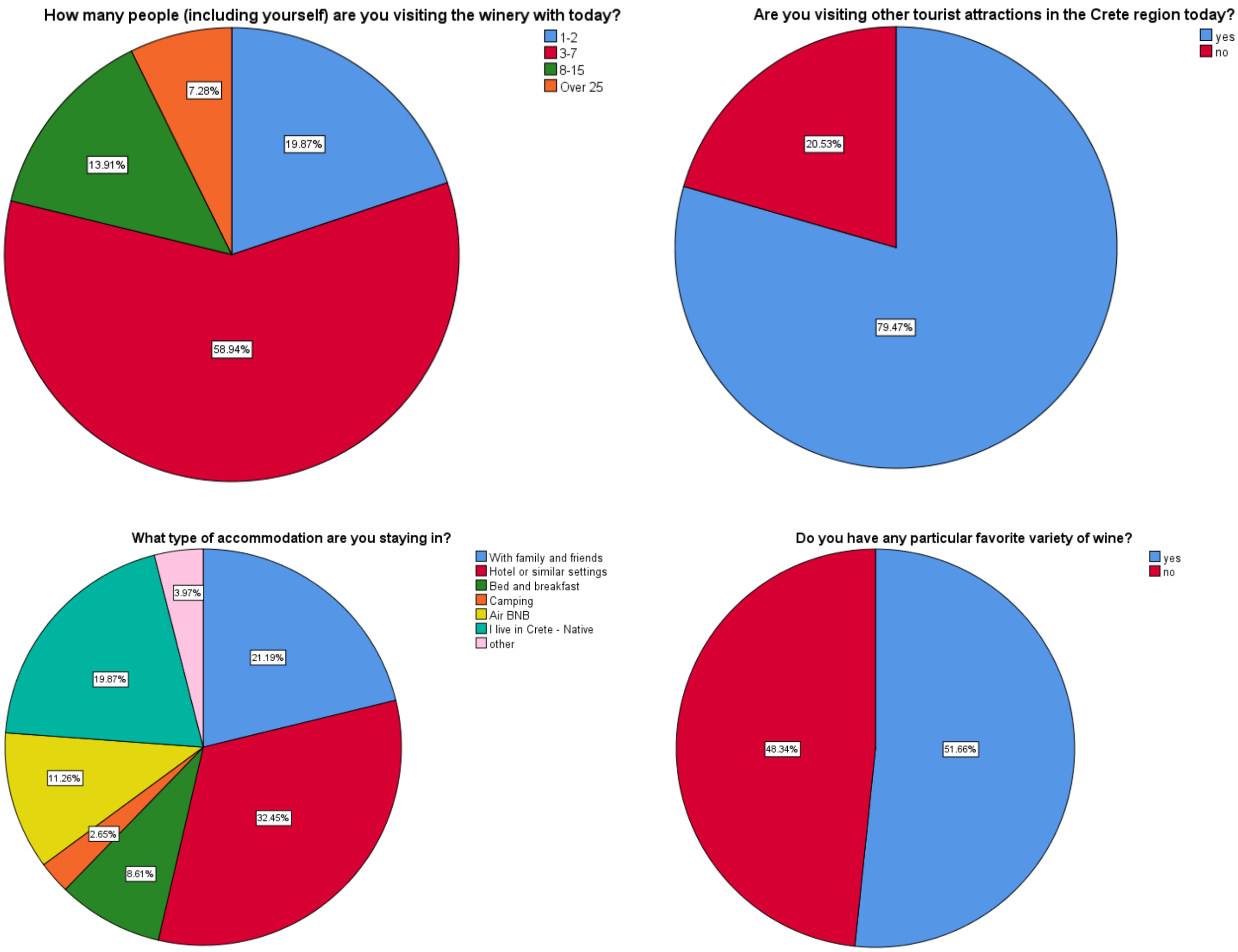


Figure 7a, 7b, 7c and 7d: group sizes and other regions of interests.

Majority of the respondents are visiting other places too in Crete (figure 7b), which indicates that there is scope to develop a strategy to connect wine tourism and other attractions to it. A tour plan, where the tourists are taken to heritage along with wineries or may other ideas will work here.

On the accommodation part, hotel and similar settings environments are preferred by most of the respondents. Surprisingly, approximately 21% are VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourists. The critical thing to note here is that Air-BNB and bed and breakfast sets are getting more popular among foreign tourists. The hoteliers and other similar businesses need to think about it.

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Figure 8: Souvenir they have purchased for their loved ones.

The comparison was made for the three critical categories of items, i.e., not at all important to very important (table 5).

Table 5: Comparison among important parameters on tour, easting, and tour guiding

		Crete	Outsider
Factors to visit the winery today–tour	Not at all important		100.0%
	Not so important	33.3%	66.7%
	Somewhat important	32.3%	67.7%
	important	30.8%	69.2%
	Very important	33.3%	66.7%
Total		31.8%	68.2%
		Crete	Outsider
Factors to visit the winery today–eating	Not at all important	16.7%	83.3%
	Not so important	28.6%	71.4%
	Somewhat important	40.0%	60.0%
	important	30.3%	69.7%
	Very important	25.0%	75.0%

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Total		31.8%	68.2%
		Crete	Outsider
Winery services–tour guide	Not at all important	50.0%	50.0%
	Not so important	37.5%	62.5%
	Somewhat important	15.8%	84.2%
	important	41.1%	58.9%
	Very important	30.8%	69.2%
Total		31.8%	68.2%

Figure 9a and 9b clearly indicates on five categories of three items. It can be clearly seen that the residents of Crete do have a high perception of tours where low expectations on eating and tour guiding. On the contrary foreign tourists have increasing likes and preferences on tour related expectations. Figure 9b supports this. Interestingly foreign tourists have lesser expectations and preferences on eating activities. This is maybe because of that each tourist has different food habits. For a change, you may taste anything, but to eat full stomach, one needs the food of their origin and related taste.

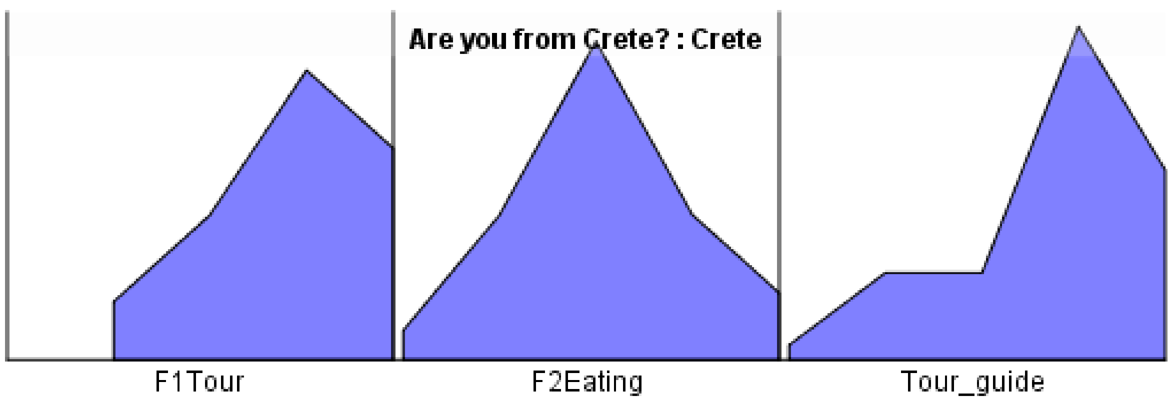


Figure 9a: Perception on different services by Residence of Crete

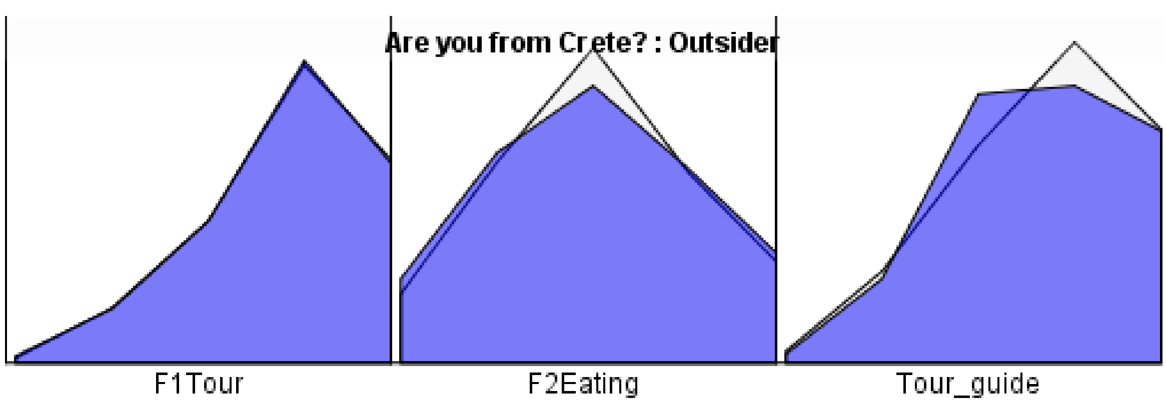


Figure 9b: Perception on different services by foreign tourist

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Figure 9b also indicates that foreign tourists are even doing not expect much on tour guiding related expectations. Maybe the reason is that the tourist wants to remain in their group. They want to roam leisurely and do not want to bind themselves in the restrictions of a tour guide.

7. Discussion, implications, limitations and conclusions

The authors of this want to submit that the different markets emerging in the Crete region, wineries need to be aware of who their main market segments are. What are the liking and preferences of their customers and consumers both? In terms of the international market, efforts have been already made. Wineries need to utilize those opportunities and make them ready for the market.

In addition to getting a better understanding of who their market is, wineries also need to be aware of some of the positive and negative implications for marketing at different geographic levels. The paper has already taken up with some of the potential advantages and disadvantages of different market opportunities.

The Crete Wine Route has been transformed in the last **two decades** and is rapidly establishing itself as a New World Wine Route, up and coming on the global scene. The image of the Crete Region is changing from being solely focused. Marketing efforts have been taken with the development of, and there is a need felt for developing the Wine and Culinary Tourism Action Plan jointly by the Provincial government and the wine, culinary and tourism industry stakeholders.

Local residents have found less interested in the other winery of Crete. This could be the scope of further researches. Industries should also consider it a significant implication, as this could be a scope to investigate that – how to attract local residents for their products. This could also lead some future researchers to investigate the ways and means.

REFERENCES

Atsuko Hashimoto & David J. Telfer (2003) Positioning an Emerging Wine Route in the Niagara Region*, Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 14:3-4, 61-76

Cambourne, B., Macionis, N, Hall, C.M. & Sharples, L. (2000). The future of wine tourism. In C. M. Hall, L. Sharples, B. Cambourne & N. Macionis (Eds.). *Wine and Tourism from Around the World*. London: Butterworth Heinemann, 297-320.

Hall, C.M. (1996). Wine tourism in New Zealand. In G. Kearsley (Ed.). *Tourism down under II, towards a more sustainable tourism, conference proceedings.* (pp. 109-119). Dunedin, NZ: Centre for Tourism, University of Otago, Dunedin.

Hall, C.M., Johnson, G., Cambourne, B. Macionis, N., Mitchell, R. & Sharples, L. (2000). Wine tourism: An introduction. In C.M. Hall, L. Sharples, B. Cambourne & N. Macionis (Eds.). *Wine and Tourism from Around the World*. London: Butterworth Heinemann, 1-23.

Lagos, D., Papathanasiou-Zuhrt, D., & Triantafyllou, G. (2008). Wine tourism networks and business clusters in the Greek tourism industry. In 28th EuroCHRIE conference Dubai (pp. 11-14).

ISSN 2689-2294 (Online) 2020, 2(3-4), 79-93

Macionis, N. (1996). Wine tourism in Australia. In G. Kearsley (Ed.). *Tourism down under II, towards a more sustainable tourism, conference proceedings.* (pp. 264-286). Dunedin, NZ: Centre for Tourism, University of Otago, Dunedin.

Mitchell, R. & Hall, C.M. (2001). The influence of gender and region on the New Zealand winery visit. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 26(2), 63-75.

Mitchell, R. & Hall, C.M. (2001). The influence of gender and region on the New Zealand winery visit. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 26(2), 63-75.

Mitchell, R., Hall, C.M.&McIntosh, A. (2000). Wine tourism and consumer behavior. In C. M. Hall, L. Sharples, B. Cambourne & N. Macionis (Eds.). *Wine and Tourism from Around the World*. London: Butterworth Heinemann, 115-135.

Papathanassiou-Zuhrt, D., (2006), "*Creating Quality Visitor Experiences: A best practice management case at the Palazzo Giustiniani, Chios Greece*;", ICOMOS, DEMIHST: Valetta, Malta.

Papathanassiou-Zuhrt, et al., (2007), "*Promoting a non-exchangeable destination image: the tourism cluster formation in the prefecture of Drama"*; The University of the Aegean, Greece and the University of Glasgow, Scotland: Chios, Greece.

Wines of Crete (2020). General News. [online] Winesofcrete.gr. Available at: http://www.winesofcrete.gr/cretewines/en/News/NewsMedia/NewsEvents_443.html?fbclid=IwAR1O_eam0S4NHEWNyq3kHJek2avZd1I_IBUwUC_RO-6I-K3ZpDedCbvacpo [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].