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## IDENTIFYING THE DEVELOPMENT FACTORS OF WINE TOURISM: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

*Wine tourism allows for a unique tourist experience enabling visitors to rejoice in the tourist destination through all their senses. This type of tourism represents an increasingly important element of regional and rural tourism product across Europe, including Serbia, and creates a link between wine industry and tourism. It has been recognized as a form of rural tourism, agrotourism, cultural tourism, industrial tourism and special interest tourism. The aim of this paper is to determine the profile of tourists visiting wineries in Serbia, to identify characteristics of a wine region influencing choice of one particular wine destination over another, and to establish the significance of the influence of the identified factors on the popularity of a wine region. The paper examines differences in evaluation of importance of wine region characteristics depending on gender and professional involvement in the wine industry. The research was conducted in the wineries of the Oplenac region, Central Serbia. The results suggest guidelines for future development of wine tourism, as well as the areas for further research and their application in wider contexts and broader areas.*

*Keywords: factors of development, tourism, wine tourism, wine route, Serbia.*

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## ВИЗНАЧЕННЯ ЧИННИКІВ РОЗВИТКУ ВИННОГО ТУРИЗМУ: ЕМПІРИЧНЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

*В статті показано, що винний туризм — унікальний туристичний досвід. Цей різновид туризму є все більш важливим елементом регіонального і сільського туризму по всій Європі, у тому числі Сербії, і створює зв'язок між промисловістю і туризмом. Його визнано формою сільського туризму, агротуризму, культурного туризму, промислового туризму і одним із спеціальних видів туризму. Описано туристів, які відвідують сербські винні заводи, і характеристики винного регіону, що впливають на переваги, вплив різних чинників на популярність винного регіону. Розглянуто відмінності в оцінюванні важливості характеристик винного регіону залежно від статі і міри професійної залученості у виноробницькій промисловості. Дослідження проведено у виноробнях регіону Опленец (Центральна Сербія). Результати визначили керівні принципи майбутнього розвитку винного туризму, а також напрями подальших досліджень та їх вживання в широкому контексті і ширших областях.*

*Ключові слова: чинники розвитку, туризм, винний туризм, винний маршрут, Сербія.*

*Таб. 6. Рис. 1. Літ. 35.*

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## ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЕ ФАКТОРОВ РАЗВИТИЯ ВИННОГО ТУРИЗМА: ЭМПИРИЧЕСКОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ

*В статье показано, что винный туризм — уникальный туристический опыт. Этот вид туризма представляет собой все более важный элемент регионального и сельского туризма по всей Европе, в том числе Сербии, и создает связь между винодельческой промышленностью и туризмом. Он признан формой сельского туризма, агротуризма,*

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*культурного туризму, промислового туризму і одним із спеціальних видів туризму. Определены туристы, посещающие сербские винные заводы, характеристики винного региона, влияющие на предпочтения, влияние различных факторов на популярность винного региона. Рассмотрены различия в оценке важности характеристик винного региона в зависимости от пола и участия специалистов в винодельческой промышленности. Исследование проведено в винодельнях региона Опленец (Центральная Сербия). Результаты определили руководящие принципы для будущего развития винного туризма, а также направления дальнейших исследований и их применение в широком контексте и более широких областях.*

*Ключевые слова:* факторы развития, туризм, винный туризм, винный маршрут, Сербия.

**Introduction.** Wine tourism is an increasingly popular type of holiday that combines degustation of wines of certain area with tours to natural beauty spots, as well as cultural and historical monuments, accompanied by the study of customs and cultural and historical monuments of the region. Wine tourism owes its existence to the development of special interest tourism and represents an increasingly important element of tourism product. Yet, in spite of the growing global interest to the development of wine tourism, the studies of numerous wine destinations have not been complex enough to encompass all the characteristics of wine tourism (Beames, 2003). Although research into wine tourism has predominantly focused on a small number of countries, the researchers are intensifying their studies in some of newly developed wine regions in the world, analyzing their unique physical, spatial, demographic, ecological and industrial factors.

Wine and tourism rely on regional branding (Fuller, 1997). A wine region is identified at the market through popularity of a brand which reveals the geographical identity and regional origin of a wine. The region of South East Europe has positioned itself long ago as a wine tourism destination thanks to its fertile soil and mild climate. In spite of its interesting and attractive offer of food and wine, Serbia has not been very successful in this industry. Local cuisine and wines can be a corner stone in the process of profiling Serbia as a popular tourist destination for gourmands, wine lovers and connoisseurs. These elements not only facilitate economic development, but immensely contribute to regional development, especially when rural areas are concerned (Green and Dougherty, 2008; Hall et al., 2003). Some studies clearly demonstrate the importance of cooperation among wineries, wine cellars and local hotel industry (Wargenau and Che, 2006).

Nevertheless, the development of wine tourism in Serbia depends on adopting and adhering to high standards that wine producer has to meet in order to be put on the map of "Serbian wine tour" published and promoted by the National Tourism Organization of Serbia. Once approved, the producer obtains benefits, which in turn motivates wine producers to grow superior sorts and offer only top-quality wines. The more exclusive the wines are, the more market opportunities there are, therefore making wine quality the key factor for competitiveness of a touristic destination. The volume of wine tourism has increased to such a degree that competitive positioning of a wine region has become a strategic question (Williams, 2001). Therefore, quality wine strengthens the image of a destination contributing to local economic development and promoting touristic offer.

**Literature review.** Wine tourism is a form of special interest tourism, which is an example of well-organized touristic product aimed at a specialized group of tourists (Weiler and Hall, 1992), and its offer must meet their sophisticated demands. Consequently, wine regions position themselves depending on the quality and recognizability of the wines they offer. Hall and Macionis (1998; p. 197) defined wine tourism 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."

When developing wine tourism, it is important to consider different perceptions of winery visitors. Hall and Mitchell (2008) identify 2 primary motives for visits to wineries: to taste and purchase wine, but add other motives as well, such as the need for a holiday, educational character of the visit and search for new experiences. Wine tourism is an attractive type of a tour which comprises a visit to a winery and other complementary activities. It is for this reason that wineries, together with their natural surroundings, are regarded as attractive destinations of great potential. Wine tourism contributes to touristic industry, attracts new visitors interested in wine, and improves the image of a touristic destination. Furthermore, it can serve as a means of distribution of tourists from well-known touristic destinations to other areas (Szivas, 1999).

It is rather difficult to determine a universal demographic and social profile of a wine tourist, as the very differences among wine regions determine the profiles of tourists visiting them. Sparks (2007) claimed that a wine tourist comes from a variety of age groups, professions, educational and economic backgrounds. Mitchell (2002) concluded that demographic variables exert significant influence on the behavior of wine tourist, while Bruwer et al. (2002) suggested that visitors with similar demographic characteristics can show substantial differences in terms of attitudes, life style and behavior, which are important when selecting wine destination. Apart from the standard assumption that choice of the wine region is primarily defined by the demographic characteristics of a tourist, the current research also probes into the psychological dimension (motivation, attitudes, personality type and life style) of a visit to a certain wine region (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002; Mitchell and Hall, 2006). Research methodology of a factors motivating visits to wineries is not fully developed (Carlsen, 2004). Motivation of wine tourists is seen as an important aspect which determines future touristic offer catering for the needs of the wine region and wineries, as well as visitors' expectations (Hall et al., 2000; Bruwer, 2002; Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002).

Authenticity of wine offer is the key feature of wine tourism (Hall et al., 2000), and consumers describe it as an original relationship between a wine and certain locality, region and state. In order to distinguish itself from competitors, a wine region emphasizes its unique and recognizable identity by means of soil and climate, as well as cultural heritage. The connection between wine tourism and heritage is particularly prominent in the consciousness of its residents, but is also present in the consciousness of tourists because wine is identified with its geographic origin and attributed characteristics depending on the region where it is produced. However, countries often disregard the fact that service is the critical feature in the development of tourism as it directly affects tourist satisfaction which, in turn, contributes to the

number of returning visitors and "word-of-mouth" advertising (Nield et al., 2000). It is worth noting that at modern wine market successful creation of the image and identity of a winery, wine region and country of origin represents the sole crucial factor determining future success in the wine industry. Promotion of a wine route and maintenance of constant quality of autochthonal wines directly affect tourist perception of a wine region. Wine is one of the few products that are branded on account of their geographic origin (Merret and Whitwell, 1994).

A number of studies explored the relationship between preferences for certain type of wine and choice of wine tourism destination (Brown and Getz, 2005). On the other hand, authors like Alant and Bruwer (2010) believed that basic motives of wine tourists visiting particular wine region are determined by the natural surroundings, culture or other factors. These factors produce the concept of "total experience" as a unique combination of atmosphere, environment, regional culture and wine (Gomez and Molina, 2012). In addition, the correlation between tourism, recreation and amusement was already recognized in the research (Carr, 2002). Houghton (2001) emphasized the importance of wine festivals, as a means of attracting new market segments into the wine region and wineries.

Certain authors emphasize the importance of stakeholders when it comes to wine tourism development and success (Williams and Kelly, 2001; Cambourne and Macionis, 2000; Morpeth, 2000; Cambourne et al., 2000). Local stakeholders of a wine region must build a successful system of relationships between wineries, organizations and wine associations, as they are the key factor in promotion of the image of a wine, the winery and the region providing and maintaining quality of wine tourism experience. Organizations of wine routes (networks of wine roads) are frequently established in such regions, representing a framework for cooperation between the government, private capital, touristic industry, wineries and local authorities. Major advantage of establishment of such organizations is job creation and comprehensive economic and cultural development (Europäische weinstrassen, 1999).

**Research methodology.** The study was conducted in the region of Central Serbia, where Oplenac wine route is of particular importance and attractiveness. The study was conducted in 3 wineries belonging to the route, which have been involved in wine tourism for some time.

The aims of the study were to determine the profile of the wine tourist visiting the observed wine region (by listing basic socio-demographic characteristics), to determine the importance of certain characteristics claimed by tourists to be crucial in selection of certain wine destination, which was examined by means of 5-grade Likert scale (1 — no importance; 5 — very important) and to determine statistically significant differences depending on gender and involvement in wine industry by applying independent samples t-test. Selection of statements comprising the questionnaire was based on the research of the literature on wine tourism and previous research in the field (Getz and Brown, 2006) from whom the majority of the statements were taken and adapted to suit the region and purpose of our study.

Firstly, we implemented the descriptive statistical analysis of the entire sample, that is for each statement arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated. In this way we measured the importance of each statement in regard to final choice of wine destination. Through the obtained and processed answers we observed the fac-

torial structure of the selected model. By means of the exploratory factor analysis we determined the number of factors around which the selected attributes pertaining to the choice of certain wine destination were grouped. As 6 factors were established by means of factor analysis, and each factor selected different tourist attractions of a wine destination, we also tested the reliability of the factors and the model via Cronbach's alpha coefficient value. In order to determine the significance of correlations between the obtained factors, we applied structural equation modeling (SEM).

The data was collected during the period from October 1st 2011 to March 1st 2012. The sample included 83 respondents. The study initially recruited approximately 100 respondents, but 17 were excluded from the sample, as their questionnaires were not adequately answered. All the respondents in the field study were tourists visiting the following wine cellars on the Oplenac wine route in Central Serbia: Wine Cellar Aleksandrovic, King's Cellar and Serbian Tradition Winery. Before the questionnaires were distributed, they were pre-tested on a small sample of 10 respondents, in order to identify and eliminate any unclear questions, and modify the questionnaire before conducting the main field study.

As far as the structure of the sample is concerned, women and men were represented in almost equal numbers (Table 1). In terms of age, the sample predominantly comprised of the respondents between 30 and 60 years of age (56.6%). When it comes to education, majority of our respondents had secondary education (37.3%), 26.5% held a university, while 28.9% had a college degree. We observed that majority of the respondents were married people, either employed or self-employed, and had never been involved in wine industry, although certain percentage of visitors had prior expertise in the field.

**Table 1. Profile of wine tourist visiting wineries of Central Serbia (sample structure)**

Profile of respondents	(n) %
<i>Gender (n=83)</i>	
Male	(43) 51.8
Female	(40) 48.2
<i>Age</i>	
<30	(24) 28.9
30-60	(47) 56.6
>60	(12) 14.5
<i>Education</i>	
PhD / MSc	(1) 1.2
BSc	(22) 26.5
Associate Degree	(24) 28.9
Secondary School	(31) 37.3
Elementary School	(5) 6.0
<i>Marital status</i>	
Married	(56) 67.5
Single	(27) 32.5
<i>Employment status</i>	
Employed	(33) 39.8
Self-employed	(18) 21.7
Retired	(15) 18.1
Unemployed	(17) 20.5
<i>Ever involved professionally in wine industry?</i>	
Yes	(21) 25.3
No	(62) 74.7

**Results.** Arithmetic means indicate that the most significant characteristics are hospitable attitude of winery staff towards visitors (4.14) and availability of information regarding the wine region (4.00), while the lowest values (below 3.00) were obtained for geographical distance of a wine region (2.89) and excellent sports infrastructure (2.90). The statement regarding excellent sports infrastructure shows the highest degree of disagreement between the respondents, manifested by the higher value of its standard deviation (1.32) in comparison to all other statements. The respondents' marks for other statements range between 3.20 and 3.80 (Table 2).

*Table 2. Descriptive analysis*

Importance of wine region features to wine tourists (n = 83)	M	SD
1. Excellent sports facilities	2.9036	1.32163
2. The region is popular with wine tourists like me	3.6386	1.13243
3. The region's wines are famous	3.8675	1.11280
4. There are a large number of wineries to visit	3.2651	.98877
5. Group tours of the wineries are offered	3.8072	.99337
6. I am familiar with one or more of the wineries	3.5060	1.30078
7. A wide range of activities for children	3.2410	1.28396
8. Information about the region is easy to obtain	4.0000	1.00000
9. Friends have visited the region	3.8193	1.15974
10. Specialty shops or markets selling local farm produce	3.7952	1.05644
11. Wine trails in the region are well signposted	3.6024	.98699
12. Moderately priced accommodation	3.3133	.93610
13. Attractive scenery	3.9398	1.15134
14. A pleasant, all-year climate	3.8434	1.00586
15. A wide range of opportunities for outdoor recreation	2.9880	1.12069
16. Traditional wine villages	3.2289	1.12970
17. Unique accommodation with regional character	3.2048	1.07928
18. Fine dining and gourmet restaurants	3.5422	.95383
19. Local art and craft for sale	3.2169	1.13748
20. I can get an introduction to meet a winemaker	2.9398	1.24302
21. The wine region is close to home	2.8916	1.20984
22. Wine festivals	3.3735	1.27558
23. Packaged holidays are offered to the region	3.3133	1.14687
24. There is a lot to see and do in the region	3.5542	1.10711
25. Winery staff are knowledgeable about wine	3.8554	.95167
26. The wineries are visitor friendly	4.1446	.98936

*M* – mean value ; *SD* – standard deviation.

The foregoing results suggest that, in order to further develop wine tourism, one should improve the winery atmosphere, primarily in terms of employee attitude to visitors, and availability of information about the wine and its popularity. The lowest values obtained suggest that sports and recreational opportunities are not of great importance for wine tourists.

In order to reduce the 26 statements to a smaller number of variables (factors), we conducted the exploratory factor analysis, by means of which we wished to determine the factorial structure of the proposed characteristics of the wine region. Before the implementation, we used the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) statistics to determine whether factorial analysis was applicable in our case. The value of KMO may vary within the 0 to 1 interval, and application of factorial analysis is considered justified for the values above 0.5. As we have obtained a high KMO value (KMO = 0.745) we can conclude that the factor analysis can be deployed. In addition, the Bartlett's test



of sphericity confirms the justifiability of application of factor analysis ( $p = 0.000$ ). It is on the grounds of this test that the null hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between the variables is rejected.

After the factor analysis was conducted, 6 factors were identified: 1) general characteristics of the wine region; 2) accommodation and food; 3) entertainment; 4) professionalism of staff; 5) sports infrastructure; and 6) popularity of a wine region. To identify the factors, the major components method was applied (Table 3).

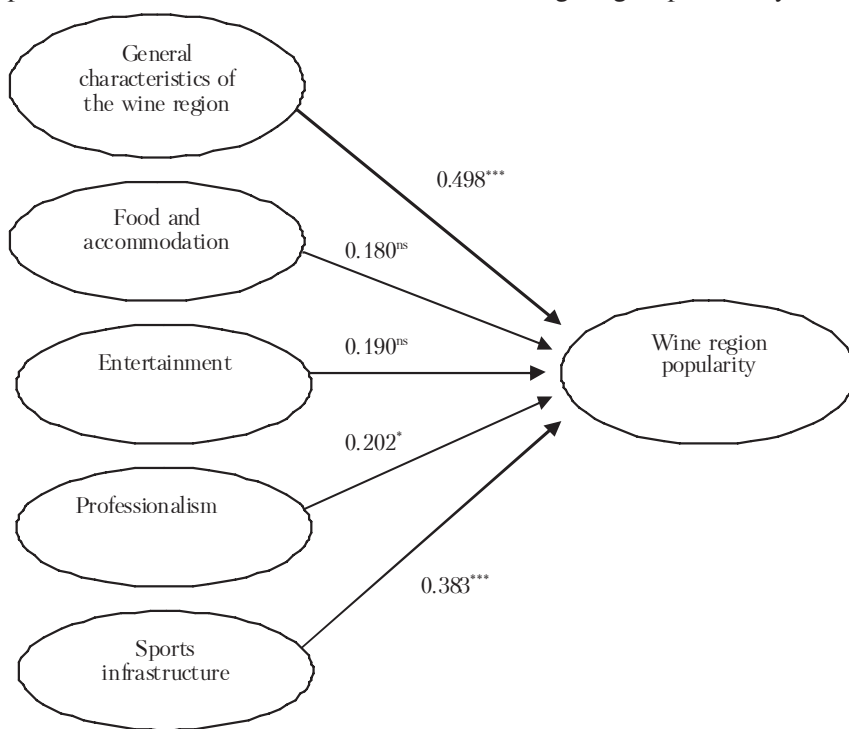
Table 3. Factor analysis

Factors	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained	Alpha
<b>Factor 1: General characteristics of the wine region</b>		6.567	25.256	0.805
Attractive scenery	0.783			
Information about the region is easy to obtain	0.715			
Friends have visited the region	0.707			
Specialty shops or markets selling local farm produce	0.622			
A pleasant, all-year climate	0.526			
Wine trails in the region are well signposted	0.522			
<b>Factor 2: Food and Accommodation</b>		4.811	18.502	0.827
Local art and craft for sale	0.751			
Traditional wine villages	0.708			
Fine dining and gourmet restaurants	0.693			
Unique accommodation with regional character	0.692			
Moderately priced accommodation	0.672			
I can get an introduction to meet a winemaker	0.510			
<b>Factor 3: Entertainment</b>		1.990	7.654	0.821
Wine festivals	0.802			
There is a lot to see and do in the region	0.794			
Packaged holidays are offered to the region	0.717			
<b>Factor 4: Professionalism</b>		1.618	6.222	0.803
Winery staff are knowledgeable about wine	0.867			
The wineries are visitor friendly	0.716			
Group tours of the wineries are offered	0.667			
<b>Factor 5: Sports infrastructure</b>		1.331	5.119	0.687
A wide range of activities for children	0.806			
Excellent sports facilities	0.701			
A wide range of opportunities for outdoor recreation	0.554			
<b>Factor 6: Wine region popularity</b>		1.106	4.254	0.627
There are a large number of wineries to visit	0.698			
The region's wines are famous	0.587			
The region is popular with wine tourists like me	0.505			

These six factors approximately account for 67 % of the variance. The reliability of identified factors was measured by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient value. In our study all the six factors have a degree of reliability above the required minimal threshold of 0.6 according to Robinson (1991) and Shaver and Wrightsman (1991).

Based on the results of the explorative factor analysis, we formed a new model for measuring popularity of a wine region (Figure 1). Through implementation of confirmative factor analysis, we assessed the fit of the conceptualized model. Upon excluding from the analysis the statements that had lower levels of item-to-total cor-

relation, we obtained the final model that shows the acceptable fit indices ( $\chi^2/df = 1.65$ ; CFI = 0.91; IFI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.08). By means of structural equation modelling we examined the influence of the identified factors on the popularity of a wine region as a dependent variable. Out of the 5 identified factors, 3 variables of wine tourism offer showed significant influence on the popularity of wine region (general characteristic of a wine region:  $\beta = 0,498$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; professionalism of staff:  $\beta = 0.202$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ; sports infrastructure:  $\beta = 0.383$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), as shown in Table 4. It is noteworthy that neither food and accommodation, nor entertainment activities did have significant influence on the popularity of a wine region. The primary motivation lied in the general characteristics of the wine region and staff professionalism, as the sophisticated demands of wine tourists were to a large degree profiled by these two.



$p < 0.01$ (\*\*\*),  $p < 0.05$ (\*\*),  $p < 0.1$ (\*), ns-not significant

Figure 1. Research model

Table 4. Results of SEM analysis on wine region popularity

Variables	B
General characteristics of the wine region	0.498***
Food and accommodation	0.180 <sup>ns</sup>
Entertainment	0.190 <sup>ns</sup>
Professionalism	0.202*
Sports infrastructure	0.383***

Notes: Significant at  $p < 0.01$  (\*\*\*),  $p < 0.05$  (\*\*);  $p < 0.1$  (\*)



To establish the presence of statistically significant differences related to gender and involvement in wine industry, we applied the t-test. Before the study was conducted we expected that some differences will appear. Taking gender as an independent variable, our sample of 83 comprised approximately equal numbers of male (43) and female (40) respondents. The analysis has shown statistically significant differences between men and women pertaining to 4 statements which demonstrated sufficient degree of significance in answers between men and women (Table 5). The analysis of statements shows that men perceive pleasant climate as more important, while for women, although they emphasize the importance of affordable price of accommodation and gastronomic offer, it is most important to be acquainted with the wine region they are visiting.

**Table 5. Statements showing different statistical significance of male and female**

Variables	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	t-statistics
I am familiar with one or more of the wineries	3.25 (1.32)	3.77 (1.22)	- 1.843*
Moderately priced accommodation	3.11 (0.98)	3.52 (0.84)	- 2.025*
A pleasant, all-year climate	4.09 (0.92)	3.57 (1.03)	2.142*
Fine dining and gourmet restaurants	3.34 (0.94)	3.75 (0.92)	- 1.947*

\* Significant at 0.05

In terms of professional involvement in wine industry we singled out 6 claims demonstrating sufficient level of significance between answers of those who have been involved and those who have not (Table 6). The analysis has shown that in all the claims we singled out the mean value of certain attributes related to the choice of wine destination was significantly higher for those who have at some point been involved in the wine industry. Among the singled out statistically significant claims, the most important were features such as wine festivals and recommendation from a friend.

**Table 6. Statements showing a statistical difference between visitors**

Variables	Involved Mean (SD)	Uninvolved Mean (SD)	t-statistics
Friends have visited the region	4.23 (1.09)	3.67 (1.15)	1.947*
Moderately priced accommodation	3.66 (0.85)	3.19 (0.93)	2.040*
Traditional wine villages	3.66 (1.19)	3.08 (1.07)	2.097*
Wine festivals	3.90 (1.09)	3.19 (1.29)	2.263*
A wide range of activities for children	3.76 (1.48)	3.06 (1.17)	2.201*
There is a lot to see and do in the region	3.95 (1.07)	3.41 (1.09)	1.939*

\* Significant at 0.05

**Conclusion.** Wine tourism offers the chance to feel the magic of manufacturing wine at its very source. The authentic experience of rejoicing in tasting wine where it was produced is good enough reason for a person to become a wine pilgrim. The study we conducted shows which characteristics are important when selecting a wine destination, which should suggest the direction of future development of wine tourism in Serbia. Basic demographic and social characteristics of our respondents indicate that wine tourists, both males and females, are between 30 and 60 years old, and have secondary education. The tourists in this wine region are predominantly married, employed and have not been professionally involved in wine industry.

The respondents generally gave high marks to the statements in the questionnaire. The characteristics we singled out as most important were pleasant atmosphere, or friendly attitude of winery staff towards visitors, followed by availability of information about the wine region and popularity of wines from certain regions, together with some general characteristics such as attractive scenery and pleasant climate. Sports and recreational facilities were the least important factors for a wine tourist.

By means of factor analysis of the data we were able to identify 6 key factors determining the choice of a wine destination. They are as follows: general characteristics of a wine region, food and accommodation, staff professionalism, sports facilities, entertainment and popularity of a wine region. Structural equation modelling showed a significant influence of general characteristics of a wine region, its sports infrastructure and staff professionalism on popularity of a wine region, while factors such as accommodation and food, and entertainment did not affect its popularity.

The study showed statistically significant differences in the answers related to gender and professional involvement in wine industry. Men considered pleasant climate as more important, while women insisted on affordable accommodation, gastronomic offer and the fact that they were acquainted with the wine region they were visiting. When it comes to professional involvement in wine industry, the analysis showed that for all singled-out claims arithmetic means were significantly higher for those who had been professionally involved in wine industry. Among the singled-out claims with statistically significant difference most important were wine-related events, such as wine festival, and a recommendation from a friend.

Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) warn that it is very difficult to predict tourists' expectations which vary from one region to another. No one has managed to define a set of universally applicable critical success factors. Certainly, the study itself has some limitations related to the small sample, which is a consequence of the small number of wineries and unsatisfactory development of wine tourism because the observed region is still at the stage of infancy.

The results of the differences we determined in our study contributes not only scientifically and practically to future research efforts, but also to the identification of potential visitors and adjustment of wine offer to their specific needs. Future research is recommended as a part of long-term strategy with the aim to improve the quality of tourism and touristic offer in Serbia, as a competitive and attractive wine tourism destination in the region and the world.

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