

Brand Equity Tourism Destinations: An Application in Wine Regions Comparing Visitors' and Managers' Perspectives

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Abstract : The concept of brand equity in the wine tourism area is an interesting topic to explore the factors that determine it. The aim of this study is to address this gap by investigating wine tourism destinations brand equity, and understanding the impact that the denomination of origin (DO) brand image and the destination image have on brand equity. Managing and monitoring the branding of wine tourism destinations is crucial to attract tourist arrivals. The multiplicity of stakeholders involved in the branding process calls for research that, unlike previous studies, adopts a broader perspective and incorporates an internal and an external perspective. Therefore, this gap by comparing managers' and visitors' approaches to wine tourism destination brand equity has been addressed. A survey questionnaire for data collection purposes was used. The hypotheses were tested using winery managers and winery visitors, each leading a different position relative to the wine tourism destination brand equity. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face. The survey instrument included several scales related to DO brand image, destination image, and wine tourism destination brand equity. All items were measured on seven-point Likert scales. Partial least squares was used to analyze the accuracy of scales, the structural model, and multi-group analysis to identify the differences in the path coefficients and to test the hypotheses. The results show that the positive influence of DO brand image on wine tourism destination brand equity is stronger for wineries than for visitors, but there are no significant differences between the two groups. However, there are significant differences in the positive effect of destination brand image on both wine tourism destination brand equity and DO brand image. The results of this study are important for consultants, practitioners, and policy makers. The gap between managers and visitors calls for the development of a number of campaigns to enhance the image that visitors hold and, thus, increase tourist arrivals. Events such as wine gatherings and gastronomic symposiums held at universities and culinary schools and participation in business meetings can enhance the perceptions and in turn, the added value, brand equity of the wine tourism destinations. The images of destinations and DOs can help strengthen the brand equity of the wine tourism destinations, especially for visitors. Thus, the development and reinforcement of favorable, strong, and unique destination associations and DO associations are important to increase that value. Joint campaigns are advisable to enhance the images of destinations and DOs and, as a consequence, the value of the wine tourism destination brand.

Keywords : brand equity, managers, visitors, wine tourism

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