

Descriptive analysis of wine tourism in Querétaro and Baja California, Mexico

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To present the characteristics of wine tourism that takes place in the states of Querétaro and Baja California, Mexico.

Design/methodology/approach: Descriptive analysis through primary sources of information where 228 questionnaires were applied to those who carried out wine tourism in the states of Querétaro and Baja California, or who in the last three years have carried out this activity in Mexico.

Results: The survey respondents reflect interest in the knowledge, production and culture of wine. In addition, they state that the wine routes in the study areas give them satisfaction in the price-quality ratio, wine tastings and gastronomy and that these are key to the development of viticulture in Mexico.

Limitations on study/implications: People feel that they do not have enough knowledge about wine tourism, which limited their participation when answering the questionnaire. However, this work is a first approximation to carry out a study that relates wine tourism and the competitiveness of the wine industry in Mexico, for which the answers are timely.

Findings/conclusions: Mexican wine is considered to have the potential to compete with foreign wines in factors such as quality, flavor and price. In addition, there is a preference for the consumption of Mexican wines, especially red, rose and white. Therefore, the wine production from states such as Chihuahua, Sonora, Coahuila and Durango, which have a large territorial extension, should be taken advantage of, and more commercial wine routes should be created to help promote this industry at the national level to improve society through greater offer, job creation and reduction of imports.

Keywords: wine tourism, viticulture competitiveness, regional economic growth.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV), in the year 2019, wine production in the world was distributed around the five continents, where Europe resulted in a total of 163,287 hectoliters (hl), that is, more than 63.4%; America



with 55,411 hl equivalent to 21.6%; for its part, Oceania had a production of 14,944 hl, which is 5.6%; Asia with 12,854 hl corresponding to 5%; and finally, Africa with a total of 11,197 hl equivalent to 4.4%. The resulting wine production in the world was 257,693 hl (OIV, 2019).

For the same year, regarding the trade and use of wine, nearly 237,485 hl were consumed in the world; that is, more than 92% of the total wine production, from which 107,335 hl (41.7%) were destined to exports from the main producing countries in the world, with Italy being the one of greatest renown, with a production of 47,533 hl (18.5%) of the wine in the world, followed by France with a production of 42,197 hl (16.4%), Spain with 33,676 hl (13%), the United States (USA) with 25,562 hl (10%), Argentina with 13,019 hl (5%); and finally, Mexico with a total of 406 hl (close to 1%) in the global production and exports of around 1hl with the destination of: USA, Europe, England, Spain, Italy, Norse countries, Canada and Japan (OIV, 2019).

When it comes to global imports, a figure of 106,728 hl was found; that is, 41.5% of the total production in countries such as the United Kingdom, which for the year 2020 was positioned as the main importer of this fermented beverage, followed by Germany, USA, France, China, Canada, Netherlands, Russia, Belgium and Portugal, which hold their positions thanks to the value market of offer and demand for wine (OIV, 2019).

Centering the information in Latin America, there are countries with broad recognition in wine culture, where Argentina stands out as the largest producer of global quality wine. These wines are produced mostly in Mendoza; in the second position, there is Valle de Guadalupe in Baja California, Mexico, better known as the empire of Mexican wine. Then follows Valle de Maipo in Chile, which stands out as the largest wine exporter; Canelones, Uruguay, which has perfect cellars for wine tourism; and finally, Rio Grande Do Sul in Brazil, which stands out for its sparkling wine (OIV, 2019).

Presently, wine production in the Mexican territory is considered one of the jobs with greatest demand [Secretaria de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural (SADER, 2021)]. Wine production and vine cultivation in Mexico is carried out in large extensions of land; it is conducted primarily in 11 of the 32 states of the Mexican Republic, which are: Aguascalientes, Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Guanajuato, Nuevo León, Puebla, Querétaro, Sonora and Zacatecas. However, it is not enough to satisfy the current consumption in the country, so it is essential to import foreign wine in order to satisfy the demand. Because of this, more than 65% of the wine consumed in Mexico is imported from foreign countries like Spain, Chile, France, Italy and Argentina (Margall von Hegyeshalmy, 2000), thanks to which a total annual consumption of 1,166 hl was reached in 2019, equivalent to 1.2 liters *per capita* (OIV, 2019).

At the beginning of the 21st century, there was an increase in the quality and the ambition among the best wine producers in Mexico, and they increased their levels of production and improved the quality of their products; after this, foreign investment increased, causing for foreign wineries of great renown to invest in national wineries and to position their vineyards in the Mexican territory in order to generate sources of employment and implement wine tourism (Moss, 2017).

The tourism activity has been central for the development of wine routes in the states of Querétaro and Baja California, and with them, the locals have been forced to value their territory and think of wine tourism as the main vocation of the zone to make more dynamic the economy of the regions and to reassess their human capital when integrating natural and cultural resources. With this, the transformation of the wine industry took place, and it was achieved for it to become a great source of jobs and sustenance for Mexican families (Quiñonez *et al.*, 2011).

Currently, although grape cultivation and wine production in Mexico have social, economic and religious importance for the country, the existing studies are related primarily with some type of productive comparison in two different locations, as well as its approach in research derived from the composition, market strategies, and profitability in terms of gastronomy and commercialization of wine.

This study is a first approach to determine the relationship between wine tourism and the competitiveness of the viticulture industry in Mexico. This first phase consists in presenting the characteristics of the wine tourism that is present in the states of Querétaro and Baja California, Mexico. It is expected to find that wine tourism in these regions has grown and the characteristics of tourists that are considered most relevant at the time of carrying out wine tourism have been identified. These regions have been selected, since they are where the viticulture industry is developed to a greater extent and have a similar tendency in terms of socioeconomic and economic-productive characteristics.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study has the objective of characterizing wine tourism in the regions of Valle de Guadalupe, Valle de Santo Tomás, and Ensenada in Baja California; and Peña de Bernal, Valle de Tequisquiapan, and Ezequiel Montes in the state of Queretaro.

To achieve this, primary sources of information were used which were obtained through field work. A questionnaire was elaborated made up of 15 questions with the objective of understanding the opinion of locals regarding wine tourism in the study zones and their wine consumption. The questions were applied exclusively to tourists and experts in wine tourism. The questionnaire was established by 35 questions divided into three sections: 1) survey respondent profile, 2) wine tourism, and 3) wine consumption.

The questionnaires were applied via Google Drive, where responses were obtained from 228 people who were carrying out wine tourism in the regions mentioned before, or else those who in the last three years have carried out the activity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the 228 tourists surveyed, 54.5% were located in the following age ranges: from 25 to 30 years, 20.6%; followed by 35 to 40 years, 17.5%; and 40 to 45, 16.7%. The people who carry out wine tourism are 59.6% women and 37.3% men (the remaining 3.1% preferred not to reveal this information). In the case of marital status, 56.1% of the survey respondents are single, while 43.9% are married.

Regarding their place of residence, a differentiation was made between national or foreign, where 89.9% are national, from 17 of the 32 states in the Mexican Republic, as shown in Figure 1.

When it comes to foreigners, 90.0% are from the United States, primarily from California and Texas. The level of studies and current labor situation of the survey respondents indicate that 50.9% of them have undergraduate studies, followed by 17.1% with high school, and 14.9% with master's degree; they are followed by 7.5% with PhD studies and 3.9% with levels of primary and secondary education, while 1.8% equivalent to 4 survey respondents do not specify this information. The labor situation with highest percentage of responses was full time with 44.7% followed by independent workers, with 23.7%, and halftime employment with 9.2%; however, some survey respondents indicated they are students (4.8%), retired (3.1%), do not work (7.0%), are unemployed, halftime students and workers, or they are fulltime and independent workers (1.8%), while five survey respondents equivalent to 2.2% did not specify their labor situation.

When it comes to the second section of the survey on wine tourism, the survey respondents manifested that in a scale of 1 to 10 (1 is little and 10 is a lot), 13.6% are located in level five of knowledge about wine tourism, followed by 12.7% for level one, and 12.3% for level three. Regarding the willingness to pay for wine tourism, 19.3% are located in a range of 200 to 400 pesos per person, and this is followed by 17.5% with a range of 400 to 600 pesos, and then 17.1% from 800 to 1000 pesos. Within this willingness to pay, the most important activities to be conducted are: historical visits to the wineries and wine tastings. From the products and services offered during their trip and visit, the survey respondents manifest as very important the following: gastronomy, wine culture and tradition in the regions, and regarding their level of satisfaction from the services provided in the region, the ones that satisfy their needs most are: wine routes, wine tastings and gastronomy; and the ones that satisfy their needs the least are: transport (to reach the zone and inside the area), communication with people in the locality, and tours and tourism activities in the region. In a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is no satisfaction and 10 high satisfaction), in relation

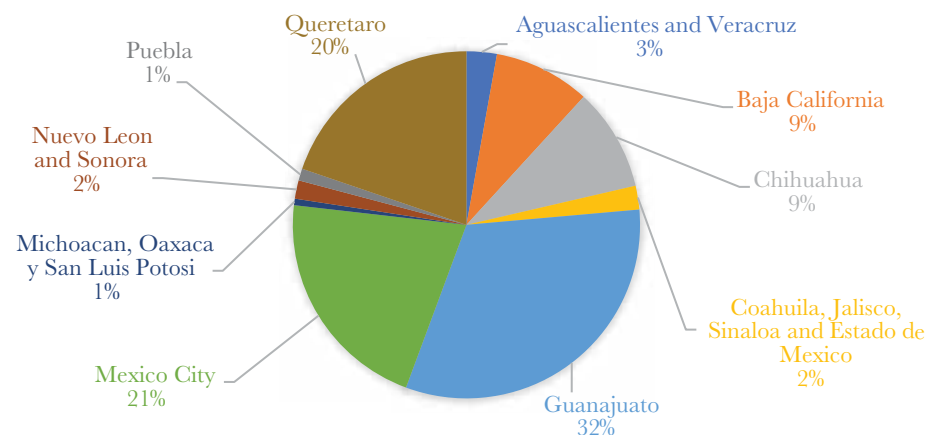


Figure 1. States where wine tourism has been carried out. Source: Prepared by the authors based on the surveys applied from January to June 2022.

to price and quality, 16.7% score this relationship with eight, followed by scores of nine and seven, with 12.7% and 11.8%, respectively. The rest are distributed in different scores, while 32.5% did not answer.

Of the people surveyed, 58.8% indicate that they have carried out wine tourism and they have done it primarily in the months of June, July and September (15.8% and 14%, respectively). The main wineries recognized by survey respondents, both in Queretaro and in Baja California, are presented in Figure 2.

In addition to these wineries, the survey respondents recognize other wineries such as La Cetto (3.5%), El Cielo (2.2%) and Decantos (1.8%), located in Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California. They also indicate that the means by which they learned about these wineries were 32.5% through social networks; 14% through an acquaintance; 12.7% did not specify; 2.2% by locals from the zone; and the remaining 7.9% researched on their own, found out from TV or radio advertising, or through travel agencies; 30.7% did not respond. They were asked in terms of viticulture competitiveness of the regions if they considered that the development of wine tourism activities in the wineries was important in a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is not important and 10 very important), 20.2% indicate that the scale is 10 in level of importance, followed by 8 with 18% and 9 for 14% of the survey respondents.

Regarding the third section on wine consumption, 71.1% indicated that they consume wine while the remaining 28.9% indicate that they do not mainly because they prefer to drink other types of beverages, do not consume alcohol, or because they think that the price is high. Of those who consume wine, 44.7% prefer national wine and 12.7% foreign wine, and the rest are indifferent to the origin. Among the most consumed wines by the survey respondents, there are those from the wineries: La Cetto, Casa Madero, La redonda, Finca las Moras, Feixenet and Castilla, and the preferred classifications are: reserve wine for 32.9% of the survey respondents; mature wine for 28.5%; grand reserve wine for 26.8%;



Figure 2. Main wineries visited by survey respondents. RLC * Rancho Llano Colorado (Ensenada, Baja California) VD** Valle de Guadalupe; Source: Prepared by the authors based on the surveys applied from January to June 2022.

and young wine for 25.9%. Within these responses, the survey respondents had the option of selecting vines from one classification. The preferred varieties are red wine, followed by rose wine, white wine and sparkling wine.

In terms of the potential that survey respondents consider for Mexican wine regarding six characteristics, the responses are presented in Figure 3.

These results show that currently there is a growing trend in national wine consumption, and they reflect the interest that people, especially single women between 25 and 30 years old, have to carry out activities related to wine tourism.

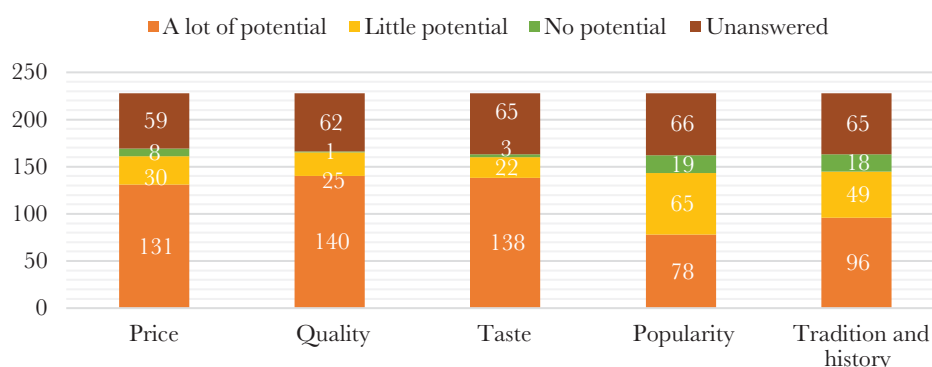


Figure 3. Potential factors that consumers identify in Mexican wine.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the surveys applied from January to June, 2022.

CONCLUSIONS

The growth in wine consumption, in addition to the foreign investment in national wineries, can decrease wine imports in Mexico. However, the production of states such as Chihuahua, Sonora, Coahuila and Durango must be used, which have the advantage of their great territorial extension that is a factor of great relevance in viticulture industry. Something else that should not be ignored is that states such as Aguascalientes, Zacatecas, Nuevo Leon, Guanajuato and Puebla are key for the industry's growth, so it is important to develop wine tourism since this tourism activity has been key for the development of wine routes both in Querétaro and Baja California. In addition to this, actions must be taken that allow for more people from different states of the republic to visit the wineries, since generally wine tourism in the regions is carried out by people who live in nearby places.

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