**Title**

Can Wine tourism accelerate the luxury image for a wine region?  
Application to the French Wines to the Chinese market

**I want to submit an abstract for:**

Conference Presentation  

**Corresponding Author**

David Menival  

**E-Mail**

dmenival@free.fr

**Affiliation**

Affiliate Professor Burgundy School of Business

**Co-Author/s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>E-Mail</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Fountain</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Joanna.Fountain@lincoln.ac.nz">Joanna.Fountain@lincoln.ac.nz</a></td>
<td>Lincoln University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Keywords**

Wine tourism, Luxury image, Future sales

**Research Question**

How wine tourism could be a tool to reduce the time needed to develop a luxury image in new consumer markets?

**Methods**

An online survey was conducted with residents of Mainland China who were regular wine consumers. This paper is particularly interested in the sample of 140 respondents who had visited France.

**Results**

Our results highlight the importance of wine tourism to diffuse the luxury image in new market like China but only when we consider wine tourism in its global definition.

**Abstract**

Whilst the Luxury is a relative and ambivalent subject which is evident in extant literature on the topic, it is largely developed in the wine industry where it is a while that Scholars consider the wine industry as good example for the study of luxury brands. This Association of wine with luxury is more a cultural issue than an income issue and can be noticed long time ago in the European markets. However, as explained by Beverland, the existence of luxury wine brands is quite complex to understand due to some paradoxes between the traditional marketing perspectives and the wine industry. One limitation of luxury image for wine is it takes time to build a luxury brand. This situation can prevent the European countries to diffuse their luxury image to the new market. Due to the youth of some markets, wine producers have to heavily invest to marketing. However,
wine tourism could help them a lot in this strategy. To measure this potential role of wine tourism, we decided to focus on the French wines and the Chinese Market. This choice is explained by two observations. Firstly, we know foreign wines are considered as an image of both luxury and elegance in China and French Wines are leader in this way. Secondly, as with less knowledgeable wine consumers elsewhere, amongst Chinese wine consumers extrinsic cues, including country of origin, are important in consumer purchase decisions.

Because of these Chinese wine market characteristics, we decided to focus to the French wines as a whole. These were considered under a collective brand – “French wines”. A collective brand is a brand share by several firms and which fit the same purposes of individual brands. Whilst scholars have critically discussed the different forms and mechanisms of collective brands in relation to wine in this context the focus is brand perception, and the different elements which define a consumer’s conception of a luxury brand. So we do a parallelism between the luxury brand consumers’ perception and the different elements which define a consumer’s conception of a brand, including functional needs, symbolic needs and experiential needs. Indeed, in a context of luxury brand perception, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) proposed to distinguish the non-personal perceptions to the personal perceptions. On one side, the non-personal perceptions index the equivalency of the Expensiveness through the term of Conspicuousness, the perceived uniqueness and the perceived quality. On the other side, the personal perceptions are the Hedonic image and the perceived utility. Therefore, to define a brand as luxury, the three needs have to be strongly marked in the consumers’ perceptions.

To consider the perception of these different needs, an online survey was conducted with residents of Mainland China who were regular wine consumers. The survey link was advertised on databases of Chinese alumni at educational institutions in the two countries and through social media contacts with wine, and/or tourism connections in China. The survey resulted in 297 valid respondents, however this paper was particularly interested in the sample of 140 respondents who had visited France. The survey asked about perceptions, attitudes and consumption behaviour towards wine in general, and in particular, wines from France and New Zealand. We used several seven point scales (1 for not important and 7 for extremely important) to measure the different components of these three dimensions adapted to the collective brand “French Wines”. We measured awareness from six statements (Cronbach alpha: 0.76), perceived quality from five statements (Cronbach alpha: 0.91), uniqueness from three statements (Cronbach alpha: 0.90), social image from three statements (Cronbach alpha: 0.92) and hedonic image from three statements (Cronbach alpha: 0.91).

Then, to consider the impact of wine tourism on this perception, a further focus on the influence of travel to these countries on respondents’ perceptions of the wines produced there meant a purposive sampling method was used.

Globally, visitors claimed that the visit of a French winery improved their knowledge about French wine, their good impression of French wine, their French wines purchasing and their French wines consumption. When we focused on the different dimensions which define the French wine image as a collective brand, we can notice that all the needs increased after the visit of a winery but this impact is significant only for the functional needs. Results differ when we consider all the other tourism activities. In measuring wine tourism activities we acknowledge that wine tasting constitutes only one part of the overall experience. Visitation to France had an impact on functional and experiential needs. This confirms the important role of these activities in developing good memories of hedonic experiences of enjoyment and relaxation.

There is also significant difference in results regarding symbolic needs which confirm the role of French wines to define the face value of the price. Most clearly, the visit of France increased the importance of all the needs which define the image of the French wines.

Finally, we can confirm that tourism services have an impact on the consumer’s perception of products. Indeed, we observed a clearly identifiable improvement in perception resulting from visits by Chinese consumers to France. They know the cultural context better and appreciate the taste of French Wines more than consumers who have not yet visited France. When we only consider the French winery visit which is the simplest activity we can consider for the wine tourism, we can notice an improvement of the functional images which is one dimension of a Brand Image. This dimension is essential to develop differentiation from the competitors thanks to a better perceived quality, an acceptance of higher price and more to develop the ideas of occasions to drink.
However, that doesn’t mean that the wines concerned will benefit from a luxury image due to the non-significant impact on the experiential and symbolic needs. These two dimensions are essential to build the main characteristics which constitute a luxury brands. The visitor is rarely interested simply in wine tasting, rather the total experience is most important. For this reason it is necessary to consider a set of other activities as part of the overall offer. That explains why the three dimensions of the “French wines” brand are all impacted when we take the wine tourism activities in a whole. Chinese visitors who had visited France experienced several kinds of tourist activities with the visit of a winery among them. After their visit, it appears they have a new perception of the French wines image as brand with higher agreement about the functional, the experiential and the symbolic needs. According to these results, wine tourism can help French wines to diffuse an image of luxury to Chinese and eventually their consumption as well, the improvement of these inherent perceived characteristics being positively related to luxury goods consumption.