MEASURING SUCCESS OF A WINE FESTIVAL:
IS IT REALLY THAT SIMPLE?

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ABSTRACT

One of the country’s largest wine festivals, the Wacky Wine Festival, is held annually in Robertson, South Africa. Forty-eight wine farms participate actively in the Robertson Valley that forms part of the wine route and festival, which makes this wine festival unique. This paper presents the results of a survey that was conducted during the festival in June 2009, where visitors completed 424 questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, namely (A) socio-demographic information, (B) travel behaviour and (C) statements pertaining to the management aspects of the event. The aim was to conduct a management appraisal based on the premise that different markets have different requirements. To achieve this aim, a factor analysis and an ANOVA were used to determine the significance of each visitor group (market) in relation to the key success factors of the event. Cross-tabulation identified the visitors’ factor scores for each key success factor, where the Anderson-Rubin method was used to generate a score with a zero mean. A contrast test was used where the significance did not assume equal variances. The findings indicated that different visitor groups or markets had different perceptions of the key success factors contributing to the success of the wine festival. The implication is that a general evaluation by visitors gives a distorted view of the success of the event, since different markets have different requirements.

Key words: Wacky Wine Festival; Management; Key success factors; Factor analysis; Wine tourism

INTRODUCTION

Wine tourism has emerged as a strong and growing area of special interest tourism and can be seen as an increasingly important component of the tourism product of most wine-producing countries and regions (Hoeksema, 2009). Tourism trends are changing and are fuelled by changes in the needs of tourists. Although some wineries have had meaningful results, the South African wine industry, in general, has not been too successful in fully optimising tourism opportunities (Loubser, 2004). The problem with wine tourism in South Africa, according to Loubser (2004), is that wine makers are interested in cellar door sales, whereas visitors are looking for a total experience, also referred to as a new experience. The total or new experience consists of a combination of interactions at the attractions, in restaurants, and with local people. It furthermore also includes an event programme that offers visitors a variety of entertainment and activities.