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Use of a Winery's Website for Wine Tourism Development: Rioja

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Purpose: Define and analyse not only the main categories of online marketing strategies used by Rioja wine producers but also the way in which wineries use their websites to provide information about wine tourism.

Design/methodology/approach: The content of websites corresponding to the Rioja Designation of Origin (Spain) is analysed, and the types of websites are determined according to significant differences in their content.

Findings: The websites used by Rioja wineries can be improved. The elements developed the best are those related to contact information and interactive communication, although interactive communication can also be enhanced through properly managed social networks. The study concludes that the websites can be further improved by including more information about the wines of the wineries, by improving their e-commerce platforms and interactivity and by including more information about other companies at the wine tourism destination. Two distinct types of websites were observed, differentiated by greater or lesser orientation towards development of the region as a wine tourism destination.

Research limitations/implications: This study should be conducted for other designations of origin, both national and international, thereby allowing a comparison of not only the elements that are present on websites but also their orientation.

Practical implications: An outline is provided regarding the information that a winery's website must have in order to generate interest in a region as a wine tourism destination. The indicators that must be developed for a region to be tourism-oriented are shown.

Social implications: The study highlights the importance of including wine tourism information on websites to improve social cohesion among wine tourism players and to contribute to both a stronger wine tourism identity and improved economic outcomes.

Originality/value: The proposed scheme is a diagnostic tool that allows determining the areas of improvement of one of the main sources of information used by tourists when selecting a destination. This tool can be applied by any winery regardless of its location.

Keywords: Wineries, Marketing Strategy, Wine Tourism, Websites, Website Orientation, Information Sources, Content Analysis

Introduction

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The wine industry is characterized by highly intense competition, in both national and international markets. This industry has moved from being a cottage industry dominated by a few countries to a global industry competing for market share and brand recognition (Cervera and Compés, 2017; Ferrer-Lorenzo et al., 2017; Simeon and Sayeed, 2011). Within this context, wineries must develop innovative strategies to be competitive. One area of the wine industry that is becoming central to building long-term competitive advantages is wine tourism (Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2009a, 2009b and 2010; Nowak and Newton, 2008; Sigala and Robinson, 2019). Wine tourism is a vital revenue stream of the business model of a winery (Newton et al., 2015; Remeňová et al., 2019). Globally, on average wineries receive 19.5% of their revenue directly from wine tourism (Remeñova et al., 2019). Wine tourism includes '*visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape and wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors*' (Hall and Macionis, 1998, p. 197). Thus, wine tourism is often conceptualized as part of a package that could include other recreational activities linked to historical, cultural and leisure activities in a wine region (Neilson and Madill, 2014). For the wine industry, wine tourism is a marketing opportunity for local wine companies to build brand loyalty, improve consumer awareness and knowledge, create a positive image of the wine product, develop strong consumer relationships through planned on-site experiences and sell their wines directly at the cellar door (Byrd et al., 2016; Getz and Brown, 2006). Wine tourism consequently generates financial, promotional and educational benefits (Alonso and Liu, 2012; Lavandoski et al., 2016), which are especially important for small- and medium-sized wineries (Pedraja-Iglesias and Marzo-Navarro, 2014).

Decisions regarding the mode of travel, the type of accommodation and the places to visit are relatively complex (Sweeney et al., 2012), given that such decisions are made infrequently and involve a degree of financial risk. One of the key factors related to marketing wine tourism is identifying what is important in a wine tourist's decision-making process (Barber, 2009). Wineries must be able to provide product information in order to attract visitors and must manage their communication strategies such that they address the information needs of potential visitors (Barber, 2009). This requires knowledge of their visitors' profiles and of how visitors obtain information about a winery prior to making a visit (Charters et al., 2009).

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Recent research that focuses on analysing the role of online information in tourist decision-making shows that digital information sources are increasingly important, both for consumers and for businesses seeking to attract travellers (Byrd et al., 2017; Sotiriadis, 2017). A majority of travellers use some form of information from the Internet (Kim et al., 2013), and tourists are increasingly using this tool as the preferred source for destination information, for trip planning and for making travel and accommodation reservations. Travellers are no longer asking for information, instead they are searching the Internet for guidance on what to see, where to eat and sleep and what to do. In other words, all the useful information for turning a trip into something unique is available online (Cinelli, 2013). And within the context of wine tourism, winery websites can play a leading role (Byrd et al., 2017; Choi et al., 2007). The increasing competition between wine regions has witnessed a proliferation of wine tourism websites that provide wine tours and experiences (Casar et al., 2018a; Casar et al., 2018b). As such, wineries should analyse how to leverage their websites in order to attract visitors, consequently including content that facilitates a wine tourist's decision to travel. For example, Neilson and Madill (2014) observed that wineries with wine tourism-oriented websites that provide information on opening times and map directions tend to attract more tourists. However, it is debatable whether or not websites that target tourists seeking a wine experience pay sufficient attention to achieving the desired positioning, possibly leading to poor differentiation and ineffective competition.

The main objective of this paper is to evaluate the websites of wineries that are present in the Rioja quality wine region of Spain. The Rioja Designation of Origin is one of the most prestigious in the world (Tecnovino, 2018). Wineries from this region were analysed to determine if they use websites within their business strategy and, more specifically, if their websites are oriented towards wine tourism. Furthermore, the content of these wineries' websites was analysed.

The Internet as a source of information on wine tourism

The Internet is highly present in the daily lives of individuals, which means that it is vital to the success of a business. Current consumers have become less attentive to traditional advertising. They live in the electronic age, and information overload from an ever-increasing number of media and sources has become part and parcel of everyday life (Bruwer and Thach, 2013). As an effective marketing tool, the Internet facilitates the communication of information between customers and suppliers (Buhalis

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and Law, 2008), and websites have become platforms for information searches, given that many consumers search for websites to learn about a company and its products (Sun et al., 2017). As a result, websites have to provide information that meets a customer's needs at different stages of the consumer buying cycle (Flavian-Blanco et al., 2010), they have to allow transactions to take place and they have to develop interactive relationships between companies and customers (Ferreira and Ferreira, 2013; Law et al., 2010; Notta and Vlachvei, 2013).

The Internet has had a significant impact on tourism to the extent that consumers use it to search for information before planning trips (Choi et al., 2007). Digital information sources are becoming increasingly important not only for consumers but also for businesses seeking to attract travellers (Sotiriadis, 2017). An ever-growing number of tourists consider websites to be important sources of information when deciding where to travel (Jeong et al., 2012). Moreover, web tools provide the first virtual experiences of a destination and generate knowledge about not only destination branding and image but also about tourist experiences and behaviour (Koltringer and Dickinger, 2015). For consumers, websites facilitate access to travel-related information and assist them in making online purchasing decisions (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015); for supplier's, websites have become platforms for promoting their products and services and subsequently generating revenue (Leung et al., 2016). Consequently, websites have now become a common platform where consumers search for information.

For the tourism industry, wine is an important component of the appeal that a certain destination can have, and it can even become the main attraction for visitors. Wine tourism is recognized as an amalgamation of tourism and the wine industry, which in turn is based on the branding of a region (Hall and Macionis, 1998), more formally reflected in the Designation of Origin (Hall et al., 2000). The importance of wineries in the development of wine tourism is clear, and wineries should allow and facilitate access by tourists to their facilities, thereby providing them with the opportunity to taste and, if they wish, purchase the wines that are produced. And another key element is the general appeal of a destination, including the natural environment, the climate, the gastronomy and the possibility of participating in cultural tourism. These basic elements should be complemented by other factors and extra activities, which could include wine therapy and wine festivals, in addition to the existence of organized wine tourism trips (lodging, visits, tasting, etc.) (Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2012). Finally,

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Casar et al. (2018a) concluded that wine tourism is made up of three dimensions: (1) the business dimension, consisting of wine buffs or other buyers eager to explore the potential of a particular vintage; (2) the self-education dimension, in which visitors seek to better understand the complex processes involved with wine production or seek to improve their personal wine tasting skills; and (3) the explorer dimension, where visitors are more interested in exploring the spectacular scenery that is synonymous with many wine-producing regions. The popularity of wine regions as tourism destinations has created an opportunity for wine producers to interact directly with consumers through visits as wine tourists (Bruwer and Thach, 2013)

The wine tourism sector is no exception to using the Internet for information searches. Online wine tourism refers to the activity of visiting websites to search for information about wine-related products and services and about the culinary or leisure activities of wine regions or wineries (Simeon and Sayeed, 2011). This is especially important for wineries, which are a high-value tourism sector. And the small size of most wineries in the sector means that they are highly dependent on the Internet for increasing their visibility, reputation and sales (Canziani and Byrd, 2014).

Wine is an information-intensive product regarding its tangible aspects and the related symbols, traditions and culture (Stricker et al., 2007), and a considerable amount of information is required to describe wine (Bruwer and Johnson, 2010). These characteristics mean that using the Internet can increase the perceived value of this product (Giraud-Héraud et al., 2001). And considering that a website should be designed to promote a winery, a winery's products and the tourism experience, it has become much easier for potential tourists to explore their options on websites before committing the time and resources to visiting a winery (Simeon and Sayeed, 2011). A winery website should seek to generate a potential visitor's involvement with a winery and its wine, seek to convey a winery's brand and role as a tourist attraction, seek to sell the entire wine tourism destination and seek to increase a winery's regional and national presence (Jingxue et al., 2004; Socarro et al., 2018).

When wine tourists are searching for information about a destination, they look for specific information about the business in a region (Iaia, et al., 2017), including its history, the producers, the mission statements of companies, the production volume, etc. (Taylor et al., 2010); information about the wine (varietals produced by a region, awards, recognitions, etc.); and information about the physical characteristics of a wine

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region. They also seek information about aesthetic and hedonic aspects to get a sense of what the wine tourism experience will be like (Cho et al., 2002), as well as information that, while less directly related to winery visits, has an influence on their overall travel experience, such as information about cultural attractions, accommodations and restaurants in the area (Choi et al., 2007; Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2009b). They also look for information that will help them plan their stay, such as the opening times of wineries and the activities that are offered (wine tastings, walks through vineyards, participation in winemaking, etc.), in addition to prices, maps, calendars of events, etc. (Hall et al., 2000). This information should all be present in one of the main sources of information used by tourists: winery websites.

Wine Tourism Websites

Wine producers have recognized the potential for wine tourism and have accordingly launched websites that promote this activity (Neilson et al., 2010). To do so, the website of a winery must present all the necessary, detailed information so that potential tourists will choose a specific destination from among all the possibilities. As Neilson and Madill (2014) highlight, a winery website should play a leading role, therefore including elements such as profiles about the winery's wines and managers, stories about the winery, maps to tasting rooms, information about tourist attractions, calendars of events and information about wine that is available through mail-order (Hall et al., 2000). There is research showing that a lack of information about opening times, a lack of information about the facilities that are available and the failure to provide maps are factors that hinder a consumer's decision to travel to a wine destination (Roberts and Sparks, 2006; Tassiopoulos et al., 2004).

The presence of the aforementioned website elements is directly related to the role played by a website in a company's strategy. For wineries, owning a website represents the possibility of educating potential consumers, linking them to informational networks, providing a reliable transactional environment, motivating consumers to visit wineries directly and developing interactive relationships between wineries and consumers (Ferreira and Ferreira, 2013; Law et al., 2010; Notta and Vlachvei, 2013). These factors reflect the main kinds of orientation that a website could have: informational, interactive communication, transactional and integration (Sellito and Martin, 2003; Guräu and Dusquenois, 2011; Zhu, Basil, and Gordon, 2009).

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- *Informational*: A website only provides information about the winery; about its wines, awards and recognitions; about the distribution channels; and about the location of the company and about how to communicate with it (telephone number, postal address, e-mail address, etc.).

- *Interactive communication*: A website maintains its informative function but also offers tools for interactive communication, thereby allowing a customer to initiate direct dialogue with the winery and/or with other customers. However, even though such a website provides information as if it were presenting a catalogue of products and prices, it does not allow online orders or, logically, any payments. It might provide information about retailers or specialized websites where the winery's wines are sold so that consumers can make purchases there.

- *Transactional*: The possibility of buying and paying for products online is added to the two previous orientations. This transactional function means that personal and financial information could be transferred in confidence.

- *Integration*: In the case of wineries, integration can take place both internally and externally with other businesses. Internal integration occurs when a company expands its own offer to meet a greater variety of customer needs. In the case of wineries, this is reflected in the offer of peripheral products in addition to the sale of wine on their own websites. External integration occurs when wineries establish external links with companies to try to improve their business opportunities and customer service by accessing resources that go beyond a winery's own offers. For example, this would be the case of wineries that offer accommodations or catering to their customers in hotels or restaurants in the area. This integration is what allows the development of wine tourism (Getz et al., 2008). As it was previously stated, the Internet has become a basic tool for both managing and promoting this type of tourist activity, in addition to a powerful tool for disseminating information about the tourism product, destinations and wine tourism (Amaro et al., 2010).

Logically, in order to develop wine tourism, all of these orientations must be present. Thus, information should be provided about a winery and its wines, there must be contact information, there must be interactive communication between a winery and its customers and it must be possible to book and purchase all the available activities

(tastings, visits to wineries, explanations of production processes, visits to museums, etc.).

The information that is present on winery websites has to be analysed, subsequently determining the main orientation of wineries. One research approach is content analysis, which has been applied to 'new' wine countries (such as the U.S., New Zealand or Chile) and 'old' wine countries (such as France, Spain or Italy). The objectives of such studies can differ, although most of them evaluate the rate of use of websites as a marketing tool for wineries (Madill and Neilson, 2010; Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2010; Neilson et al., 2010; Nowak and Newton, 2008). Surprisingly, many wineries do not use this communication tool, especially in the Old World, and any websites that do exist are generally underdeveloped.

There are differences between Old and New World wine countries with respect to how websites are used. Those corresponding to the Old World are oriented towards the wine product, while those of the New World are oriented towards wine tourism. Thus, research conducted in Old World countries such as Germany (Kolb and Thach, 2016), France (Gurau and Duquesnois, 2011), Greece (Notta and Vlachvei, 2013), Italy (Begalli et al., 2009; Iaia et al., 2017) and Portugal (Amaro et al., 2010) shows a low rate of adoption of the Internet tool. Those websites that do exist are focused on providing basic information about wine, the winery and how to contact it, and there is little development of interactive communication, e-commerce or wine tourism. Research conducted in the New World, especially in the US and Australia, shows higher web adoption rates. The websites there are more mature, with more highly developed marketing objectives (Burges, Sellito and Wenn, 2005; Ferreira and Ferreira, 2013; Simenon and Sayed, 2011).

These results reflect the different ways in which the wine industry is conceived. All countries have their own, distinct winemaking styles and their particular cultural and business climates. These differences are more evident between the countries of the Old and New Worlds, resulting in different wine characteristics. Thus, differences in territory, varieties, winemakers, brand policies and designations of origin have been widely identified (Alexaindre et al., 2016). Old World producers were the first to define taste and quality standards and have traditionally been supported by a strong local consumer base. The New World has had to work hard to build its wine industry, both in infrastructure and reputation. In Old World countries, the wine industry can be

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characterized by slow and gradual technological change, and competitive advantages derive mainly from the capabilities that firms accumulate over time. Wine in the Old World is a typical cultural commodity, and its intangible characteristics are an exclusive combination of factors that result in a wine with a unique quality and character, which are key assets in driving the buying behaviour of consumers. These features, which are synonymous with prestige and high quality, are by definition linked to specific geographic areas in Old World countries. Conversely, countries of the New World have experimented with new pathways of technological modernization, product standardization and market innovation that have mostly diverged from the established business models characterizing Old World countries (Morrison and Rabelloti, 2017).

There are very few studies on Spanish winery websites, despite the importance of wine and tourism in the country's economy (Camprubí and Galí, 2015; Marzo-Navarro et al., 2010). The results of such studies, as in other countries of the Old World, show that most wineries do not understand the real potential of the Internet as a marketing tool (promoting and selling products and services, creating customer loyalty, building a customer database, etc.). The tourism products on their websites are generally underdeveloped and refer mostly to visits to wineries and vineyards and to wine tasting, but only with prior booking. An analysis of the websites of wineries in one of the most prestigious Designations of Origin in the world, Rioja, will provide an initial view of the current situation. This analysis is relevant for developing and promoting wine tourism and will make it possible, as a future line of research, to analyse whether or not the information on Rioja winery websites is in line with what tourists use in their decision-making process.

Methodology

This study utilizes content analysis to analyse the websites of Rioja's wineries in terms of marketing practices on the Internet. While some similar studies have been conducted in other countries of the Old and New Worlds, there is very limited research in Spain. Consequently, several research questions can be posed for the purpose of exploring the situation of winery websites in one of the world's most prestigious production areas.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method that is used extensively to conduct an objective, systematic and quantitative examination of a communication medium (Berelson, 1952).

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The medium can be print, audio, visual and even websites. The ultimate goal is to categorize and measure various aspects of the content (communication medium) in order to discern certain patterns. Qualitative content analysis is more descriptive and focuses on the process of categorization and on the interpretations linked to the usage of content characteristics. Quantitative content analysis is more focused on measurement and attempts to examine the frequency and intensity of usage of content features (Krippendorff, 2012; Simeon and Sayeed, 2011).

Content analysis has been used to identify and map various features and characteristics of websites. The main advantages of this method (Kim and Julis, 2010; Krippendorff, 2012) include the following: i) it is unobtrusive; ii) it is unstructured; iii) it is context-sensitive and able to cope with a large quantity of data; and iv) it examines the artefact of communication itself and not the individual directly. On the other hand, the main limitations are related to the fact that i) content analysis studies are sometimes considered to be devoid of a theoretical basis, given that the focus is on what is measurable rather than on what is theoretically significant or important; ii) content analysis alone cannot provide all the answers; and iii) when applied to web-based content, changing content can be problematic. Despite the constraints, various researchers have used content analysis to develop templates and frameworks for the effective analysis of websites (Baloglu and Pekkan, 2006; Beninger et al., 2014; Flavian et al., 2009; Luna et al., 2002).

The analysis procedure that is followed is based on the proposal by Neuendorf (2002): formulating research questions or hypotheses; identifying variables and defining categories and units of measurement; and creating a coding scheme, sampling, coding and results.

Research Questions

Considering the review of specialized literature that was previously conducted, this work seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide basic information about their wines, wineries, contact details, etc.?

RQ2: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide tools for communicating interactively with their customers?

RQ3: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide tools for the development of e-commerce?

RQ4: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide information about the wine tourism activities they offer and/or about such activities in the area where the wineries are located?

Identifying variables, defining categories and units of measurement

The reviews of specialized literature conducted by Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias (2010), Ferreira and Ferreira (2013), Neilson and Madil (2014) and Iaia et al. (2017) allow us to establish the framework proposed in Table 1. In addition, a website's browsing aspects, the possibility of viewing content in multiple languages and a clear understanding of a website's brand were considered to be additional fundamental aspects. The evaluation criteria are those shown in Table 1.

We chose the profile page as the unit of analysis because it covers the 'home page' and the opening screen of a website.

Coding scheme

To guarantee the objectiveness of the content analysis, a dichotomous ('Yes/No') approach was used to measure all the criteria shown in Table 1: 'Yes' indicates the presence of content and 'No' indicates absence. Moreover, information was evaluated by percentages to determine the overall level (number of times that a criterion was present / total number of evaluated websites).

Sample of Wineries

Rioja is located in the north of Spain. It is well connected with some of the most-visited cities in the country, such as Madrid, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Bilbao and Valencia. Three wine producing areas can be distinguished in Rioja (Figure 1), and all wineries that form a part of the Rioja Designation of Origin were established as the unit of analysis.

The traditional quest for excellence of Rioja wines has created an image of prestige among consumers and has made it the leading Spanish winemaking region. This is due not only to its classically-styled wines that are uniquely suited to ageing and admired by wine-lovers around the world, but also to its new generation of wines, with their outstandingly innovative style. Furthermore, Rioja wines are protected by the oldest Designation of Origin in Spain, dating back to the early 20th century. However, the

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modern Rioja wine dates back even further, originating in the late nineteenth century, when a clear link became established between the name of the product and the region where it was produced. This sparked growing concerns among grape growers and winemakers of Rioja about protecting its identity against 'usurpers and counterfeiters'. These concerns led to the official recognition of the Rioja Designation of Origin on 6 June 1925.

Today, the Rioja Designation of Origin is one that offers the most guarantees regarding the quality and authenticity of its wines, and it is one of only a few that requires that all wines be bottled at the source. The Rioja Control Board's effective enforcement of the strictest regulations of any wine region in the world offers the highest assurances regarding the quality and authenticity of its wines, thereby providing consumers with the certainty and confidence that have been decisive in Rioja reaching its leading position in the market (https://www.riojawine.com/es-en/denomination-rioja/rioja-designation-of-origin/).

Data from the *Asociación Española de Ciudades del Vino* [Spanish Association of Wine Cities] (ACEVIN, 2019) show that the majority of wine tourists in Spain (40%) are motivated by their interest in learning about a specific wine-growing region such as Rioja. A destination is chosen considering the quality of the wines (50.5%), the wineries that constitute the leading offer (40.7%), the prestige of the wine-growing region (40.4%) − for which the most prestigious designations of origin have a greater level of attraction − and the gastronomy of the area (37.8%). All of these elements are present in the analysed area, Rioja.

Rioja is the leading destination of wine tourism in Spain, followed by Jerez, Penedés and Ribera del Duero. Consequently, over 810,000 wine tourists visited Rioja in 2018, with growth exceeding 12% since 2015. In addition to being the national leader by number of visits (2.7 wineries visited per person, versus an average of 1.94), the figures referring to the length of stay and the expenditure level of tourists are also notable: 3.21 days of stay per trip and 176 euros of expenditure per person per day, higher than the average tourist (58.96 euros). The importance of wine tourism is clearly shown by its economic impact in the Rioja area, quantified at 166 million euros (a direct impact of 55.3 million on wineries and 110.6 million oin other sectors). Of the 55.3 million euros with a direct impact on wineries, 29 million came from revenue through visits and wine

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sales, and the remaining 26 million were through other activities and tourism services (Dinamiza, 2018).

Regarding data on the organization of trips, the choice of destination (ACEVIN, 2019) is based essentially on the recommendations of friends and relatives (40.6%), on the interest in wines from the area (24.8%) and on the attraction generated from web pages or social networks (21.8%) or the Internet in general (19.9%). Moreover, 50.9% of wine tourists make their reservations through the Internet. The importance of the online channel in the purchasing process of a destination is therefore more than evident.

To determine the sample, object of study, information provided through the website of the Supervisory Board was collected during the months of April and May 2018. This information corresponded to the 600 wineries that are comprised in the Designation of Origin. The information provided by the Regulatory Council for 2018 makes it possible to establish that the wine industry corresponds to an industry in which there are many companies with large differences in size. Thus, in 2018, of the total wine marketed with Rioja Denomination of Origin, nearly 20% corresponds to the production of 85% of the existing wineries, which highlights the differences in size. In this context smaller companies adapt to the decisions of larger companies.

Coding and Results

Coding of the sample was processed independently, based on the coding scheme To reduce bias in the evaluation process, two trained persons were used to code information from the websites. This procedure is one that has been followed in similar research (Ahrens and Coyle, 2011; Kim and Kuljis, 2010; Salleha et al., 2015).

Evaluation of the Websites: Content Analysis

To prepare the database, information was obtained on the total population object of study (600 wineries that make up the Designation of Origin Rioja). Consequently, a determination was made as to whether or not the wineries comprised in the Designation of Origin had a website, thereby allowing the penetration rate of this tool to be calculated.

The results showed that 62.81% of the wineries (358) had an operating website, 35.09% did not have a website and 2.11% had a website that was under construction, under reconstruction or out of service.

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The presence of each one of the proposed evaluation criteria on the analysed websites with respect to the information provided is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

In general, the high presence of the proposed evaluation criteria corresponding to "Information" shown in Table 1 seems to corroborate the role played by the majority of the analysed websites: they are a means to provide information to potential customers, whether a tourist or a wine buyer. Thus, regarding the proposed research questions (*RQ1: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide basic information about their wines, wineries, contact details, ...?)*, it can be observed how the majority of analysed websites provide "Basic Contact Information". The answer would therefore be "Yes". The criteria with the highest presence on the websites (around 95%) are the winery's telephone number and address, followed by the email address and the presence of a map. The opening days and hours are shown on only 50% of the websites, despite the fact that this information is highly important for tourism. With regard to the information provided on the website about wines, the indicator used the most is the one that refers to providing a list of wines (86.3%). There is scarce information about other indicators. Therefore, to increase interest in a winery's wines, more information about wine awards should be provided, as well as information about wine production processes, and in order to increase sales, more information about distributors and points of sale should be provided. The information that is offered can be improved through the use of visual website elements to attract and inform winery visitors. These visual elements are used by the majority of the analysed websites, especially downloadables (tasting notes, photos, catalogues, etc.), including Google maps, wine photos and winery photos. The use of downloadables makes the experience of a visit more tangible, which is completed by offering winery photos. Considering the scarce presence of virtual tours (5.6%), their use should be increased, given that in conjunction with the preceding elements, using them would notably improve brand identification. The high presence (88%) of Google maps favours the choice of destination by showing the route to take and the duration.

Regarding the winery tourism experience, the result of the content analysis that was conducted is surprising. Thus, even though there is information about the business on 94.7% of the websites (history of the winery, founders, staff, etc.), scarce information is offered about taking part in activities related to wine tourism for the purpose of attracting tourists. For example, Table 1 shows that 50% of the websites provide

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information about the opening days and times of the wineries. It is not specified whether the opening hours are for direct wine sales or for visits and/or tastings. Only 44.1% of the websites offer information about the possibility of visiting the wineries. This activity, carried out by the winery itself, seems to be the most developed, given that it is the one with the greatest presence on the analysed websites. Moreover, despite offering visits, only 16.2% of the websites offer information about the possibility of wine tasting. All other services that would allow setting up a tourism product at the winery itself seem to be scarcely developed. Only 15.4% of the websites offer information about the existence of a restaurant at the winery, and barely 2.5% provide information about the possibility of lodging there. Other activities, such as renting a meeting room or visiting the winery's own museum also have scarce presence on the websites.

This scant development of activities related to wine tourism by each winery does not seem to be remedied by the development of business networks in the area. Consequently, very few websites offer tourism information about the region where they are located, although about 6% have links to other wineries, tourism destinations, restaurants and accommodations. Therefore, despite the wine-growing tradition in the analysed area and despite the quality and fame of the region's wines, it seems that wine tourism is scarcely developed, and therefore the answer to RQ4 *(Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide information about the wine tourism activities they offer and/or those in the area where they are located?)* is "No".

Despite the scarce development of wine tourism that seems to be inferred from the content analysis of the winery websites, their transactional orientation was analysed. This refers to the degree of development of online commerce with respect to both the wine product and tourism activities, if they exist (See Table 1).

The results obtained show scarce development of online commerce, regarding both the purchase of wine and activities related to wine tourism, given that only approximately 35% of the analysed websites offer this possibility. It is notable that barely 26.3% offer the possibility of making payments online. Therefore, it seems that the response to RQ3 *(Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide tools for the development of e-commerce?)* appears to be "Yes", although only just over a third of wineries take advantage of the opportunities offered by e-commerce.

Despite the results previously shown, it seems that the answer to RQ2 *(Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide tools for communicating interactively with their customers?)*

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is "Yes". Thus, Table 1 shows the presence of the indicators of interactive communication on the analysed websites. This communication allows a winery to establish relationships with the users of its website, thereby offering the possibility of expanding their knowledge of wine, promoting wine tourism activities (both at the winery and in the area) and co-creating content for the website through social networks, consequently creating an online community. It can be observed how the majority of the websites (65.1%) offer the possibility of establishing communication with the winery and how there is a high presence of social networks (61.5%), mainly Facebook (93.2%) and Twitter (74.1%).

Finally, some indicators related to the design of the websites were analysed, even though no research question was posed in this regard. Notable among the results shown in Table 1 is the use of two languages (English and Spanish) on more than 50% of the analysed websites, which seems to clearly show the desire to target international tourists. This seems to be corroborated by the fact that the .com domain is used by 81.3% of the websites. However, only 41.3% defend their content through a copyright.

Evaluation of the Websites: Wine Tourism vs. Non-Tourism Websites

After conducting the content analysis of the websites, a determination was then made regarding any difference in content with respect to the degree of orientation towards wine tourism. Such orientation requires the existence of internal integration, given that a winery and its wines constitute the central core of wine tourism. Therefore, considering the results shown in Table 1, the websites of the wineries were split into two groups: those that indicate on their websites that they conduct 'Winery visits' (44.1%) and those that do not. It should be clarified that while Table 1 shows that 50% of the wineries indicate the days and times when a winery is open, this does not mean that they allow visits.

After separating the websites into the two groups, it was then determined whether or not there were statistically significant differences between them. To do so, the corresponding contingency tables analysis was conducted, thereby applying the Chi-square test. This statistical analysis allows us to know if the percentage of wineries with a specific characteristic differs statistically from the percentage of wineries that have that same characteristic in the other analysed group.

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The results show the existence of a high number of significant differences in relation to the characteristics that are present on the websites (Table 1). Consequently, a greater presence of characteristics can be observed on websites that are clearly oriented towards wine tourism. Thus, regarding Basic Contact Information, the large majority of websites show maps, opening days and times and the winery's address; regarding Wine Information, there are significant differences regarding three aspects of the evaluated content (wine awards, newsletters and distributors and points of sale); and finally, the websites that are oriented towards tourism use more visual elements (videos, wine photos, winery photos and virtual tours).

<center>Table 2.</center>

Logically, there is content referring to internal integration on the websites of wineries that indicate that they offer visits. As such, the indicators of a winery's own offer are present on websites that have tourism content, and if such information exists on non-wine tourism websites, the differences are significant. The content analysis referring to external integration does not show significant differences among the majority of the indicators that were used. And as it has already been seen in Table 1, external integration seems to be barely developed, and therefore the indicators thereof are not present on the websites. With respect to those indicators that are present on only a few websites, there are significant differences regarding information about the surrounding area of a winery (places to visit, festivals, etc.), regarding external links to wine moderation and regarding external links to tourism-related sites, which are all present to a greater extent on websites that are oriented towards tourism.

The results show that more highly developed e-commerce is observed on websites that are oriented towards wine tourism, whose content differs significantly from the content of non-wine tourism websites with respect to the following: online purchasing of products; the reservation of activities by phone, email, website, etc.; shopping carts; online payments; and privacy. As a result, by allowing payments online and guaranteeing privacy, not only do wine tourism websites facilitate participation in tourism activities, they also facilitate the purchase of products.

Regarding the establishment of interactive communication with customers, the content of tourism-oriented websites shows significant differences with respect to non-tourism oriented websites. Table 1 shows the results, where a greater presence of social networks can be observed on tourism-oriented websites as a means of communication

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(75.2% vs 50.5%). These networks, as opposed to any other tool, are also the greatest means of communication (including blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc., except for Flickr, which is used little in both cases). Moreover, the greater presence of wine clubs on websites oriented towards tourism should be highlighted, which favour the creation of customer loyalty.

Conclusions

Wine tourism is becoming an additional income stream for wine-producing companies. Up until relatively recently, it was not easy to visit a Spanish winery, but now many wineries offer visits. For example, with over 3.2 million visitors per year, ACEVIN now encompasses 30 destinations in over 600 municipalities and at 2,000 companies − 600 of which are wineries.

Rioja is the leading destination of wine tourism in Spain, and it constitutes a strategic objective, given its economic impact in the area (Dinamiza, 2018). This fact clearly shows the importance of studies such as the one presented here because the results can help organizations to develop wine tourism, in this case through the role played by winery websites. The role that the Internet plays in a tourist's information search process regarding destinations, accommodations, attractions, restaurants, etc. has been demonstrated extensively (Alonso et al., 2015; Gursoy et al., 2014; No and Kim, 2015). It is therefore necessary to gain an in-depth understanding of the state of the different sources of information that are available.

The research in this study clearly shows that the websites operated by wineries of the Rioja Designation of Origin can be improved. The website elements developed the most are those corresponding to contact information and interactive communication (*RQ1: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide basic information about their wines, wineries, contact details, etc.?* and *RQ2: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide tools for communicating interactively with their customers?)*. However, the management of social networks should be improved, given the significant percentage of websites that have yet to incorporate them. Considering the importance of personal communication as a source of information in the pre-trip stage (in this case e-wom), this element must be improved as well. Moreover, while Facebook and twitter are the social networks with the greatest presence on the websites, others that are used more by younger segments need to be incorporated. Wineries could also create their own blogs for publishing posts or articles with attractive information for customers, in addition to email marketing

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tools that allow them to create databases and send emails automatically. In short, wineries should seek to create a community. And while the use of visual elements can also be considered as adequate on the studied websites, virtual tours could be improved. Wineries could also produce videos that include customer experiences, or they could have live broadcasts through streaming, thereby allowing wineries to connect spontaneously with customers.

The high quality of Rioja wines and the wine-making process are aspects that wineries should present to customers and develop more in depth. Some of the most prestigious magazines and guides, such as *Wine Spectator*, *Wine Enthusiast* and *Wine Awards*, regularly place Rioja wines among the top positions in competitions and rankings. One Rioja wine earned the number one position in the ranking of the 100 best wines in the world in 2020 by the American magazine *Wine Spectator*, and nearly half of the list of the 100 best wines in Spain, according to the prestigious journalist and writer James Suckling, are wines of this Designation of Origin. Yet these awards and acknowledgements are rarely present on the analysed websites. Therefore, a specific section should be created to present information regarding this aspect. And in conjunction with this, more information should be provided about the production process and about what it takes to create an excellent wine: the type of grape, the land where it is grown, the climate, how the grapes are harvested, maceration, fermentation and so on. This would allow consumers to increase their knowledge about wines, thereby creating a tighter bond between a winery and consumers. The vineyards, landscapes, harvests, winemaking processes, tasting sessions, etc. all make a winery unique. It represents the essence of a brand, which is why the digital content that is generated should focus on attracting potential customers by making them aware of that brand, the winery and its wines.

The remaining elements included in the other research questions fall considerably short of being considered adequate. Therefore, the information provided about the wines of the wineries should be improved and increased; e-commerce possibilities should be developed (*RQ3: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide tools for the development of e-commerce?*); and finally, broader business networks with all other organizations that offer activities in the region should be fostered (*RQ4: Do the websites of Rioja wineries provide information about the wine tourism activities they offer and/or about such activities in the area where the wineries are located?*).

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As it was already highlighted, improved information related to the wine of a winery is essential, given that the wine itself is viewed as the core product, not only in the wine industry but also in wine tourism (Byrd et al., 2016). And given that the fundamental activities of a wine tourist are visiting wineries and wine tasting, that tourist's choice of a winery is contingent upon the quality of a winery's wines, its fame, its awards and the production systems. Consequently, the information that is provided about these aspects plays a vital role. The scarce development of wine tourism that is apparent on the studied websites could possibly be due to the generally small size of the wineries, with such tourism being developed only by large wineries and cooperatives. The most highly developed aspect is the possibility of visiting a winery, followed by information about tasting. The low number of websites that show information about tasting means that the possibility of attracting tourists who want to taste wine is lost, therefore losing the possibility of generating direct sales at the winery and future sales elsewhere.

In addition to the aforementioned deficiencies, the research shows that there is scarce development of e-commerce, which could provide a direct sales channel, something that is especially beneficial for small wineries. The studied websites could include the possibility of buying the product directly, or they could at least provide information about their points of sale. However, this sales channel, while it could represent an important source of income, is not exempt from considerable risks. For example, prices can be highly variable. If the prices of the wines offered on a winery's website differ significantly from the prices at other points of sale, this will generate buyer distrust. On the other hand, the investment that is needed to implement a fast, safe and easy-to-use website is high. And furthermore, a website that offers sales must take care of all aspects related to customer service, including complaints, breakage and logistics. Therefore, it could be that the low presence of online sales through the websites of the studied wineries is a strategic decision: the wineries prefer to sell their products through other channels.

The detected weak points are probably due to the size of the majority of the analysed wineries. The planning of wine tourism activities requires qualified personnel in both the wine and tourism sectors, and such a staff is responsible for developing the appropriate marketing strategy. This staff must design the activities to be carried out, establish the prices and market the activities. To undertake an online communication strategy and develop effective websites overall, more resources are required, both

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human and technical. Consequently, the appropriate technology and the necessary staff must be available for managing a website and keeping it updated.

The use of a website as an interactive communication tool requires personnel who can take care of the requirements of potential customers. Such personnel must be available to not only answer the questions and doubts posed by customers but also confirm reservations and handle other information needs. In short, they have to be able to solve customer problems and facilitate the choice of a winery as a tourist destination. If a winery also offers the possibility of online purchases, it must furthermore manage orders, handle payment methods, monitor the entire process and follow up on delivery times. All this requires human and technical resources in addition to those that are needed for wine production and marketing. Consequently, despite the potential of small wineries, they often may not have the resources to develop the appropriate online marketing strategies.

It is essential that winery managers who use online marketing strategies understand the potential of these strategies and devote the necessary resources to generating a profitable return. When they focus on developing their online commerce, they must offer complete information about their wines and winemaking processes, therefore highlighting the awards received and the opinions of their customers. In addition, this sales channel must be properly managed by facilitating the purchasing process, payment security, order tracking and minimised delivery times. Opinions offered by wine tourists contribute significantly to these sales.

The development of wine-related tourism requires a tourist product, focused on wine but accompanied by other services that allow tourists to have a complete experience. Visiting wineries, tasting wines, getting to know how wines are produced, being able to sleep at a winery or in the nearby area, walking through vineyards and taking part in the winemaking process all serve to generate a link between a tourist and a winery. And external integration between various organizations is essential to building a complete tourist product that guarantees a satisfactory experience. Several studies (Byrd et al, 2016; Dreyer, 2019; Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2009; Morpeth, 2002) have highlighted the importance of providing wine tourists with new experiences that go beyond merely tasting and buying wine. The surrounding natural environment and rural landscape of wine destinations provide the opportunity to relax, enjoy oneself and explore an area. Synergies with other tourism sectors, including the food and restaurant

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industry, cultural tourism, adventure tourism and astronomical tourism should be considered. Integration should ideally lead to a combination of activities, such as leisure and wine therapy activities, sports activities such as riding or cycling, specific gastronomic activities, etc. Combining various attractions from different tourism sectors would allow the wine tourism sector to offer tourism packages with a greater capacity to attract both foreign and domestic visitors. And such experiences must be properly communicated through the online tools that are available to wineries.

The existence of two fundamental types of websites is observed, differentiated by greater or lesser orientation towards the development of wine tourism. As a result and as it could be expected, the websites that are more oriented towards wine tourism have greater information content; they show a higher degree of internal integration (meaning activities that are developed and offered by the winery itself); and they allow the possibility of purchasing not only wines but also activities that are offered through the website, in addition to including greater interactive communication with tourists. It should be pointed out that, on the websites that are less oriented towards wine tourism, greater external integration is detected, meaning information that is provided about activities that are organized in the area by organizations other than the winery itself.

Therefore, despite the fact that Rioja is the leading wine tourism destination in Spain, it's potential has yet to be fully developed. This can be achieved by improving the information provided by wineries through their websites, which would consequently improve both a winery's individual business results and the economic impact in the region.

This study is subject to a series of limitations determined by its exploratory approach. The data have been collected from websites according to a proposed framework, and this framework may have left out elements of interest to wine consumers and potential tourists. Moreover, the selected wineries belong only to a certain area, with its particular characteristics, which means that the strategies observed in this specific region cannot necessarily be extended to the rest of the country or to other wine destinations in the world. This study should be conducted for other designations of origin, both national and international, thereby allowing a comparison of not only the elements that are present on websites but also a comparison of website orientations. It would also be of interest to initiate multinational comparative surveys of the online marketing strategies used by various wine producers in order to identify transnational best practices and

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applicable models. Such surveys should include an analysis of the various activities that, while not directly related to wine, destinations should nevertheless offer. Furthermore, the perspective of the potential tourist should be included, therefore analysing not only their perceptions about winery websites but also about elements related to website usability.

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Figure 1. Main Wine Producing Areas in La Rioja

Source: https://bodegasenlarioja.com/denominacion-de-origen-rioja/

Table 1. Results of the Proposed Framework, with Tourism vs Non-Tourism (%).

		Tot.	NT	T	$\chi^2_{(1)}$
INFORMATION					
Basic Contact Information	E-mail	89.9	88	92.4	1.894
	Winery address	94.1	92	96.8	3.738*
	Telephone number	95.5	94.5	96.8	1.128
	Fax	47.8	49.5	4.5	0.547
	Map	76.5	69.5	85.4	12.493***
	Opening days and times	50.0	4.5	13.3	8.885***
Wine information	List of wines	86.3	83.5	89.9	3.035*
	Wine Awards	29.3	22	38.6	11.746***
	Organic production	3.4	4	2.5	0.587
	Distributors and points of sale	10.1	7	13.9	4.679**
	Newsletter	15.4	9	23.4	14.111***
Visual Elements	Google map	88.0	93.3	79.9	19.857***
	Photos of the winery	73.5	68.5	79.7	5.727**
	Wine photos	87.7	82.5	93	7.449***
	Wine label photos	8.9	7.5	10.8	1.152
	Videos	19.6	13	27.8	12.371***
	Virtual tours	5.6	3.5	8.2	3.741*
	Downloadables	95.5	94.5	96.8	1.128
INTEGRATION					
Internal integration (offered by winery itself)	Business Description (history, winery founders, staff, etc.)	94.7	92.5	97.5	4.336**
	Winery visits	44.1	0	100	-
	Wine tastings	16.2	0	35.4	-
	Duration of the activity	16.5	0	37.3	-
	Museum	2.2	0	5.1	-
	Restaurant	15.4	3.5	30.4	49.047***
	Accommodations	2.5	0	5.7	-
	Meeting rooms	10.3	1	22.2	42.615***
	Other products offered	7.5	0	8.9	-
	Other activities offered	10.6	0	14.6	-
External integration (offered externally to the winery)	Information about restaurants in the region	1.1	1	1.3	0.056
	Information about accommodations in the region	1.7	0.5	3.2	3.803*
	Information about the area (places to visit, festivals, etc. ...)	4.2	2	7	5.414**
	External links to wineries belonging to the "Rioja" Designation of origin	6.7	6.5	7	0.030
	External links to wineries belonging to other designations of origin	7.3	5.5	9.5	2.090
	External link to the Regulatory Board of the Designation of Origin	4.5	6	2.5	2.487
	External links to wine moderation topics	9.8	6	14.6	7.327***
	External links to restaurants	1.1	1	1.3	0.056
	External link to accommodations	2.5	1.5	3.8	1.901
	External link to tourism-related sites	6.7	4.5	9.5	3.519*
TRANSACTIONAL					
	Online purchase of products	34.9	27	44.9	12.497***

		T	NT		
	Reservation of activities by telephone, mail, online, etc.	36.9	3	79.7	223.362***
	Shopping cart	24.6	19	31.6	7.614***
	Delivery time	7.3	5.5	9.5	2.090
	Online payment	26.3	20	34.2	9.163***
	Privacy	57	51	65.2	7.771***
INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION					
	Contact section for suggestions, queries, etc.	65.1	63	67.7	0.866
	Wine club	13.7	7.5	21.5	14.684***
	Personal profile/user registration	14.2	3	7.6	2.797*
	Specific area for members	5	11.5	17.7	3.903**
	Social Networks:	61.5	50.5	75.3	22.948***
	Blog	29.5	12	25.9	11.558***
	Facebook	93.2	47	70.3	19.502***
	Twitter	74.1	34.5	59.5	22.234***
	Instagram	21.4	9	18.4	6.772***
	Pinterest	10.5	3.5	10.1	6.447**
	G +	20.5	9	17.7	6.830***
	YouTube	30	12	26.2	12.482***
	Flickr	5.5	2	5.1	2.557
	Trip advisor	8.2	3	8.2	6.065**
	Possibility of sharing on Social Networks	22.6	22	24.1	0.328
BROWSING DESIGN					
Technical navigation	Site map	14.2	21.5	8.5	12.247***
	Search engine	19.3	18.4	20	0.154
	Homepage button	26.8	31.6	23	3.362*
Language	1 Language (Spanish)	21.5	19	23.5	1.065
	2 Languages (Spanish and English)	52.5	55.1	50.5	0.737
	2+ Languages	26	25.9	26	0.001
Logo	Copyright	41.3	46.8	37	3.251*
	.com/.net	81.3	81	81.5	0.014
	.es	15.9	17.1	15	0.228

T: Tourism
NT: Non-Tourism
- Not applicable
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.10$