Reverse country of origin effect: measuring the impact of local products on tourism destinations perception

The present research strives to identify a methodology to evaluate the Reverse Country of Origin effect (Lee, Lockshin, 2012; Elliot, Papadopoulos, Kim, 2011) of a local product (wine in the study) on a tourism destination image, therefore identifying the key elements that, from the tourist point of view, influence the touristic destination offer perception. We propose a practice, which can repeatedly be used by exporters, tourism policy makers, and tourism businesses, to check and positively exploit such a connection.

In order to determine the existence of the Reverse Country-of-Origin effect between tourism and a local product, we developed and tested a methodology focusing on the impact that local wines have on tourists’ reviews. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the different perceptions that consumers have concerning the different destinations connected to their specific local product (wine). That is to say, if a product or a wine in our case is produced in a particular area, will tourists, wine lovers and enotourists be more interested in traveling towards that destination to spend there their holidays? Will local wine be a feature that improves the vacation experience and, with word of mouth, lead other tourists to those areas as well?

In the analysis, we adopted a bottom-up coding procedure, inspired by the principles of Grounded Theory (Strauss, Corbin, 1998). The open coding of data has attempted to describe phenomena by giving voice to tourists involved in the research through their narratives. The analysis was conducted by processing the content of the destination and accommodations comments obtained from the site www.tripadvisor.com, using the software Leximancer.

To test the methodology, we decided to choose two locally famous Italian wines that are out of any doubt linked to particular Italian regions. Those wines are Amarone and Bardolino, which come from Valpolicella (area in Veneto, Italy), Bardolino (city on Garda Lake, Italy). The work then consisted of collecting tourists’ reviews about the touristic destination involved to analyze them to identify themes related to the wine. Data were collected using reviews related to the destinations in Italian and English on TripAdvisor and elaborated using the data mining software Lexiportal.

The analysis we performed resulted in concept maps out of the concept seeds generated by the redundancy of words or concepts inside the reviews. The concept maps are essentially composed by themes, which are groups of concepts, even different from each other, that are linked by common features. Graphically, spheres represent the themes, and the colours represent their importance. (ranging from blue to red, from the least important to the most).
The results show differences in perception of wine as a factor able to create an interest in a particular touristic destination in different areas and different languages. We examined in detail these differences, but the major focus of our research is the determination of an instrument that can identify key elements related to local products, that, from the tourist point of view, influence the touristic destination offer perception. In conclusion, our research offers DMOs, tourist private and public actors an instrument that can provide a base for recurrent analysis of the local products attitude to influence the attractiveness of a particular touristic destination.

**Main References**

