

## REVIEW ARTICLE

**Wine marketing in Hungary – The Budapest International Wine Festival**Zoltán Szabó<sup>1</sup>, Anikó Gergely<sup>2</sup>, Zsuzsanna Széles<sup>3</sup>, Zoltán Zilai<sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup> *Szent István University, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Institute of Marketing, Páter K. u. 1. Gödöllő, Hungary (Szabo.Zoltan@gtk.szie.hu)*<sup>2</sup> *Szent István University, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Institute of Marketing, Páter K. u. 1. Gödöllő, Hungary*<sup>3</sup> *Szent István University, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Institute of Finance and Accountancy, Páter K. u. 1. Gödöllő, Hungary*<sup>4</sup> *Viniculture PBC, Somorjai utca 21. Budapest, Hungary***Abstract**

The aim of the research is to show the role of Hungary's largest and most important wine festival in the Hungarian wine culture. We describe the consumers coming to the Festival, the information channels and how satisfied the domestic and foreign visitors are. The paper shows the results of the Budapest Wine Festival from 2009. The Festival tends to be more like a country-wide event and serve people with higher education mostly and the target group is getting more visible then before. The visitors are from all over the world – 3 continents and 20 countries. We can also state that 45.6% is regular visitor of the Wine Festival. The Budapest Wine Festival has fulfilled its aim with performing as the flagship of the Hungarian wine promotion and marketing through its professional organisation, programs and performance.

Key words: wine festival, promotion, wine marketing, consumers' behaviour, satisfaction

**Introduction**

The wine festivals are created by the integration of wine events, gastronomy and cultural events. The wine tasting as a tool of promotion largely influences the consumers' preferences. The wine festivals and wine fairs are affecting the entire wine culture positively and influencing the next generation's wine consuming behaviour. Besides this a great increase can be observed in the quality level of the wine festivals.

Brief history of the Hungarian wine programs, exhibitions, fairs

In 1800 the popular wine regions were set up. The county balls and casinos helped a lot to increase the wine consumption (<http://www.badacsony.hu>).

At the beginning of 1800 the Hungarian wines won prizes at international fairs and competitions (Paris, Hamburg, Rome, Vienna) supporting the image of the domestic production (Siki et al., 1997).

Due to the efforts of Széchenyi István and other Hungarian noblemen the first Hungarian General Agricultural Fair was organised in 1857 where there was an outstanding wine competition with 2001 samples (Siki et al., 1997).

After World War II. only some professional exhibitions were allowed by the leading party ( [www.jgytf.u-szeged.hu](http://www.jgytf.u-szeged.hu)).

The transformation brought meaningful changes. Several associations started to work on developing the image of the Hungarian wine and wine sector.

The role of the wine festivals and wine fairs in the marketing

The basic concept for the consumer to buy a certain product is to get to know it to generate enough information about how it satisfies the needs and wants. For the supplier it is

crucially important to keep up a bilateral communication with the buyers. The final aim of this communication is to influence the process with the elements of the marketing-mix.

#### Types of the wine programs

The wine events are mixtures of wine production, gastronomy and tourism. We distinguish the following wine events based on their type and size:

Wine days, Wine fairs, Wine exhibitions, Wine festivals (Mercz and Kádár, 1998)

#### **Material and methods**

The paper is based on a continuous primary research work between 2004-2008 analysing 1938 questionnaires and secondary data between 1999 and 2003 from the Viniculture PBC and other secondary data from professional sources. The paper shows the results of the research project at the Wine Festival in 2009 by analysing 550 questionnaires. The primary research was done between 9-13. September in 2009 at the Budapest International Wine Festival in the Buda Castle, by random sampling at different parts of the festival. The data was processed by Excel and SPSS, using ratios, distribution, cross tables.

#### **Results and discussion**

##### Demographic characteristics of the sample

We can conclude that the ratio of male and female visitors is tending towards the 50-50 % equilibrium during the last years (2001-2008). In 2009 the ratio of men/women was 52-48%. This shows that the interest of the two genders towards the wine industry and the wines attracts the ladies just like the gentlemen. About the age of festival visitors can be seen that the people between 26-35 are the most stable group during the analysed time period with their approximately 30%, but the ratio of the other groups are changing and the smallest group is the one with the oldest visitors. Table 1 shows the ratios of the age-groups in 2009. It is to be seen that this year the number of visitors between 25-34 decreased and the group of 35-50 reached 37.45% which is quite meaningful. The reason for that can be concluded from the fact that 45.6% is regular visitor of the Wine Festival and this regular visitor group tends to get older. The other reason for change in the age-ratios is the communication strategy of the Festival. They used such means of marketing communication that exactly targeted this age-group.

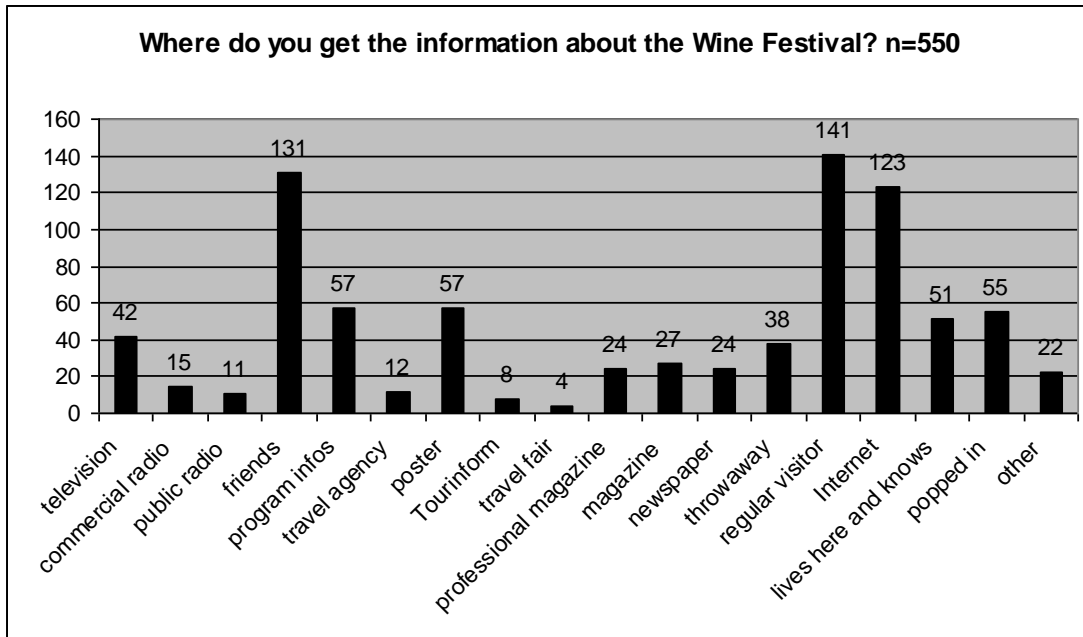
**Table 1. Ratio of age-groups**

Age-groups	Frequency	Ratio in %
14-24 year	50	9,09
25-34 year	143	26,00
35-50 year	206	37,45
51-65 year	126	22,91
over 66	25	4,55

Source: Own research, 2009

##### Importance of information and sources

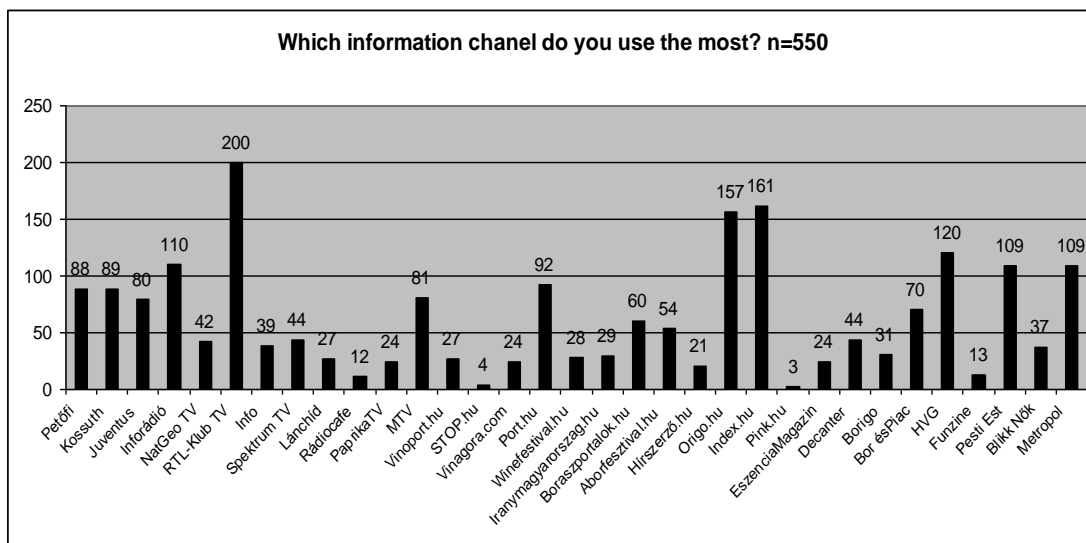
Based on Graph 1 we can conclude that the most important information source for the Budapest International Wine Festival is the one coming from regular visitors (16.75%) as reliable source. Also meaningful the information generated from family, friends and acquaintance (15.56%) and the internet (14.61%).



**Graph 1. Information sources about the Wine Festival (Source: own research, 2009)**

To the next group of information sources according to the importance of them belong the program informations, posters and different journal news and reports, television and radio reports and news. The research has shown that for the Hungarians the information from journals are more important that the average and for the foreign visitors internet seems to be the most important source of information with its 18.56%. In the field of marketing communication it is always a challenge which information chanel to use.

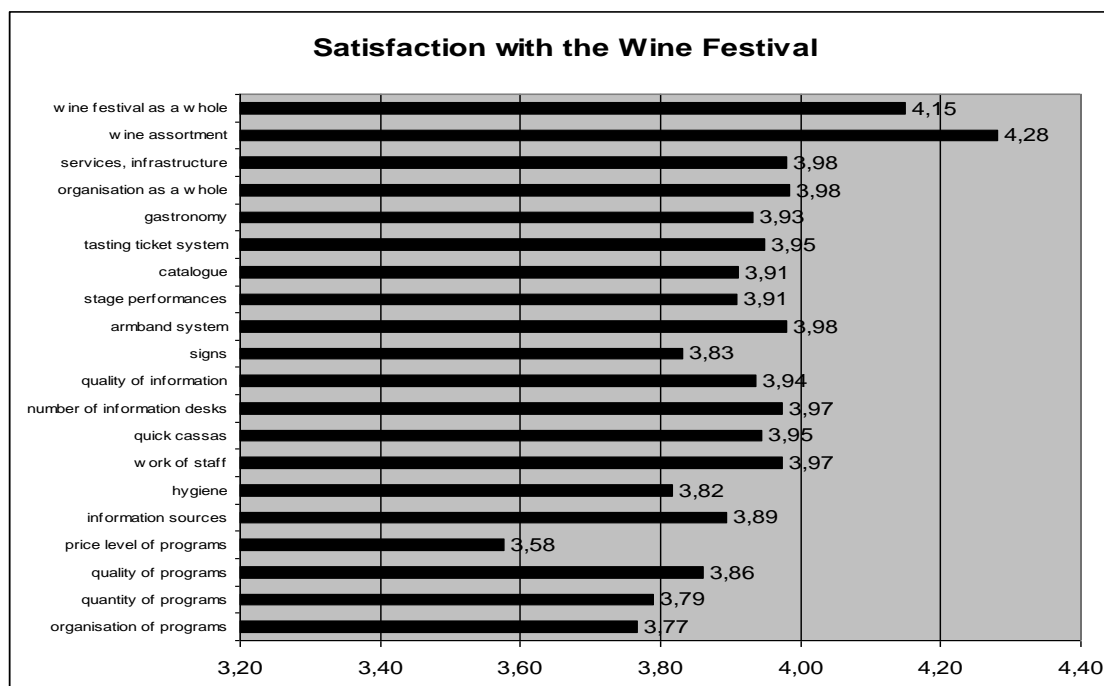
Based on our research date and Graph 2 we can conclude that the most used chanel is RTL-Klub TV followed by two websites Index.hu and Origo.hu. n the other hand if want to rank the types of information we describe a different picture. Internet takes the lead with 33% followed by printed information (26%), television (22%) and radios (19%).



**Graph 2. Communication sources used by visitors of the Wine Festival (Source: own research, 2009)**

### Satisfaction with the Budapest International Wine Festival

In 2009 the visitors were mainly satisfied with the wine assortment and with the Festival as a whole. We can state that all the visitors (domestic and foreign) were satisfied with most of the factors seen on Graph 3 excluding the prices.



**Graph 3. Satisfaction about the Wine Festival (Source: own research, 2009)**

Comparing the data from 2009 to the ones from 2008 we can conclude some changes, for instance the Hungarian visitors liked the most the staff work, information desks, arm band system and the speed at the cash registers which is very similar to the situation in 2005.

The foreign visitors gave higher marks which show that they were even more satisfied with the Festival than the Hungarians. They were much more satisfied with the gastronomy we can state that the Festival organisers chose an obviously successful strategy and this is realised in the data as well.

### Conclusions

The transformation brought meaningful changes to the Hungarian wine sector. This paper shows the importance of wine festivals in the wine marketing through the example of the Budapest International Wine Festival.

During the last 10 years the visitor number increased from 30000 to 80000. These numbers support the concept that quality wines and events related to them are gaining more and more importance from the society.

In general both the Hungarian and the foreign visitors were satisfied with the Festival, there is a large amount of the visitors that come regularly to visit the festival.

To sum it up we can conclude that the Festival has fulfilled its objective to provide possibility for wine producers to meet the consumers and generate positive image for the Hungarian wine sector just like to Hungary. The Budapest Wine Festival has also fulfilled its aim with performing as the flagship of the Hungarian wine promotion and marketing through its professional organisation, programs and performance.

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