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Food and Wine Tourism as a Pull Factor for Tuscany¹

Lemmi, E.*

Siena Tangheroni, M. ‡

University of Pisa (Italy)

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to underline the importance of the experience based tourism with reference to food and wine tourism in Tuscany. Starting from a literature review that has been focusing on a wide range of topics for long time, we explain first the different forms of tourism of taste; secondly the wide diffusion of this kind of tourism in Tuscany thanks to its important assets, as key factors to the tourist success; finally how the lack of upgraded tourist products and a standard communication are restraining its further improvement. The experience based tourism with its peculiar customization of the supply and the communication especially built for the new technological devices could upgrade the Tuscan tourist features. Just to give some examples, the more current tools include gamification and geocatching as new and amusing outputs that can involve the active tourist in search of new experiences, as well as the Sentiment Analysis as a process able to transform the customer opinions into useful data for a market segmentation and implementation of branding reputation.

Keywords: Enogastronomic Tourism, Integrated Tourism, Experience Based Tourism, Enogastronomic Tourism in Tuscany, New Tourist Communication.

¹ Although the work is a result of a collective reflection, introduction and paragraphs 2 and 3 are by Enrica Lemmi and paragraphs 1 and conclusions are by Monica Siena Tangheroni.

* E-mail address: e.lemmi@geog.unipi.it

‡ E-mail address: monica.siena@yahoo.it

Introduction: the literature and its multidisciplinary approach

The significant implications of tourist food consumption on destinations have recently been highlighted in the context of tourism (Mak *et al.*, 2012). Despite the current negative economic trends, food and wine are still important resources for Italian tourism. Effectively food and wine tourism will continue to expand, assuming different features: today it is characterized as just a short weekend break, a typical form of tourism for people having a short amount of time for a holiday. Reports and research studies on this subject have been written about each year according to various disciplinary approaches. The attention to rural spaces as typical areas for agricultural productions gained great importance from an environmental, cultural and commercial point of view; an importance that generated an in-depth analysis of some themes, starting from the early years when the urban entrepreneurs, with their pioneering spirit, began revitalizing old buildings and creating new services in accommodation, catering, commerce sectors and opening the rural areas to outsourcing.

In general, the various scientific field focused on food and drink tourism starting from the '90 (Antonioli Corigliano, 1996; Gatti & Incerti, 1998; Gatti, 2001; Antonioli Corigliano, 2004; Hoffman, 2006; Croce & Perri, 2008), with the aim to emphasize a new way of touring; but they also focused on the changes that were occurring in the companies and on the valorization of the produce and the quality of the products. In relation to the last topic, the socio cultural perspectives have not been left out especially for what the dichotomy related to the globalization (with the McDonald's effect) and localization might concern (Alcook, 1995; Csergo, 1996; Amin, 1997; Bessièrè, 1998; Hall & Mitchel, 2002; Sims, 2010; Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012).

Later, some studies followed concerning the cultural value of local productions as a potential for the economic development of rural tourism (Boyne, Williams & Hall, 2002; Jones & Jenkins, 2002; Okumus, Okumus & McKercher, 2007); on the other hand, the studies concerning tourists behaviour have been particularly based on those tourists with a different culture like Chinese (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010; Antonioli Corigliano, 2011; Mak, Lumbers, Eves & Chang, 2012; Dall'Ara, 2012). Recently this kind of literature has attempted to make neat the meaning of the link between tourism and food and drink through the discernment of different typologies of tourism, such as agricultural tourism, culinary tourism, enogastronomic tourism, which can all be included in one more generic class "tourism of taste" (Hall *et al.*, 2003; Sidali, Spiller & Schulze, 2011). Hall *et al.* identify five different typologies of tourism within the "tourism of taste": the *gourmet tourism*, where the tourist is highly interested in visiting the places of eateries and tastings: it is a kind of tourist highlighting the food related activities; the typologies called *gastronomic tourism* and *cuisine tourism* where interest in tasting food is not the main one, because the tourist is attracted by a different kind of tourism (art, cultural heritage, wellness *etc.*); *culinary tourism*, characterized by a poor and fortuitous tourist propulsion because the approaches to food and wine is just a mean to find something new; then, *rural/urban tourism* that

offers a case in which the connection with food is even less meaningful because the tourist has his meals just for his own need, showing no curiosity toward the local specialties. This last case shows us a high number of people using local restaurants with the minimal involvement; the opposite situation is offered by *gourmet tourism*, as niche tourism distinguished by a strong interest and involvement.

Considering the more recent trends of the rural policy in relation to the multifunctionalist approach, the roles of the agriculture, firms and rural areas are expanding and their new tasks and competences are working as accelerators within the territorial system and the integrated tourism. This makes us presume a sixth typology of tourism within the “tourism taste” that could be indicated as “territorial food and drink tourism” (fig.1), an addition to the other tourism typologies that can account for tourists called ‘foodies’, the festival, fair, and wine cellar attenders; this is a tourist class to which food is rich in experiences and meanings as a form of expression of the local culture.

A psychographic interpretation of the link tourist/food, following the Plog model (1973), considers the tourist approaching to local food for a new experience as an allocentric tourist; on the contrary, the psychocentric tourist shows his skepticism and poor attraction to local food and cuisine. This is also the typical behaviour of the “institutionalized tourist” (as Murphy identifies him) who marks out the mass tourism, is in search of familiar destinations and experiences and inclined to a tourist product with a package configuration: a kind of tourist who can be seen in destinations at a maturity stage with the typical arrivals slowing down and tourist groups or guided tour oriented. Tourism and food can be united in a relation that is able to take on a different meaning depending on the level of tourist reaction and acceptance, as well as on the application of new strategies for the territorial economic development. An integrated approach to territory and food is, on the contrary, the typical approach of the consumer wishing to escape from an inflexible and standardized path as the one offered through the package tourist product, and is aiming instead to get a network product. The network product is generated by a well-structured, integrated and flexible system, able to give more choices and alternatives when in the destination: a product that is instep with the multifunctionality values (Bencardino & Greco, 2007; Lemmi, 2009). It is an upgrading path that is feasible through the use of Internet and, mainly, the interactive acquisition of the information: two important tools that caused the repositioning of the barycentre within the distribution chain, where the relation supply/intermediary has been replaced by the intermediary/customer one (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003).

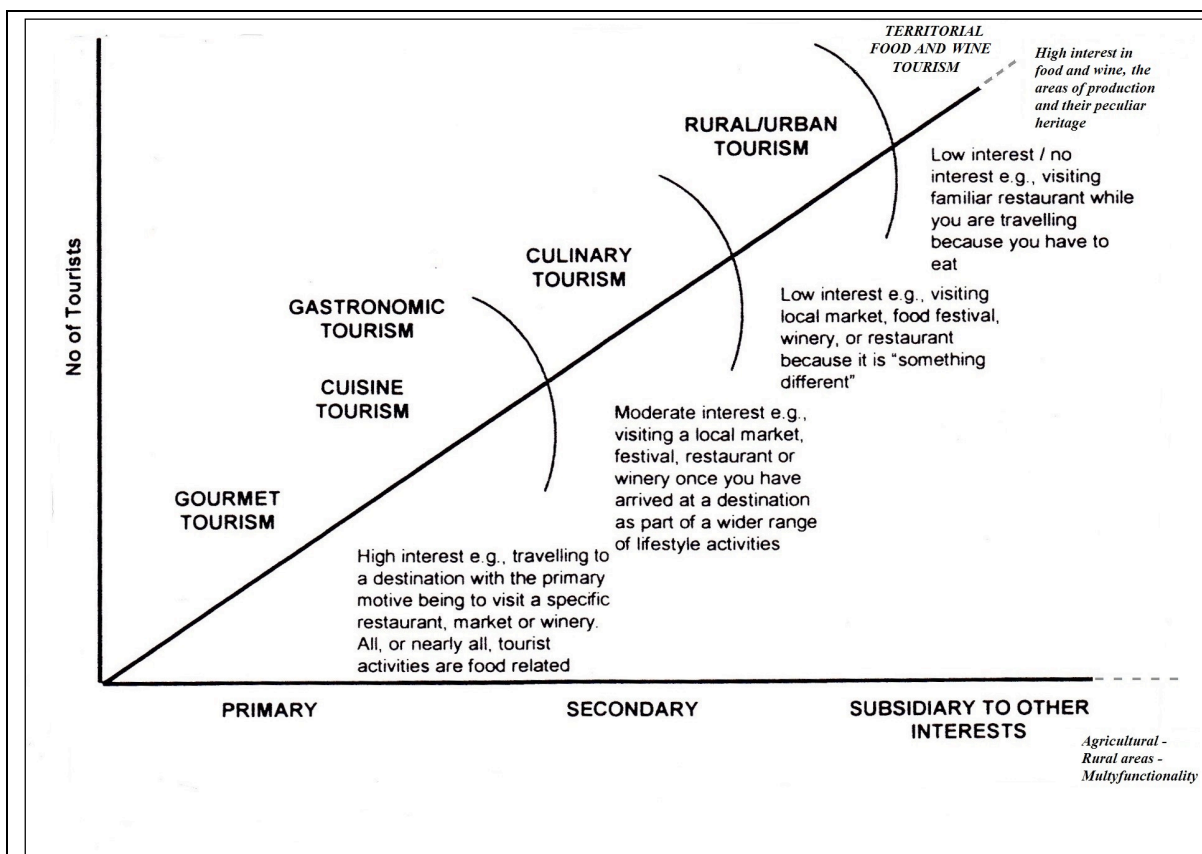


Fig. 1: Holiday motivation and food attraction
(Source: Hall et al., 2003, modified)

According to the Conference of Cork, the integrated approach is one of the ten pinpoints of the final declaration; it implies the policy of multidisciplinary and multi-sector development, but it however does not pay less attention to the local peculiarities.

The recent policy concerning territorial development, supports those processes helping the integration of the various resources in order to reach a systemic presentation of the region and encourages links and exchanges through an interactive network of different stakeholders. For this purpose, the "Strade del vino" (Wine Roads) have been the first example of collaboration between persons with different roles and functions in the same territory, such as firms, dealers, services for tasting, restaurants, hotels, museums, historical cellars and mills. (Gatti, 2001). In fact, in accordance with the experience based tourism trends, a wide knowledge of the territory through its history, traditions, local culture, etc. is essential to actively participate. The literature clearly underlines also the evolution of a change that involved the Tuscan produce first, and then the farms and the territory as a whole (Telleschi, 1992; Falcioni, 1995; Cassi & Meini, 2004; Balestrieri, 2005; Telleschi, Lemmi, Siena & De Leo, 2007; Lemmi, & Siena Tangheroni, 2013a); a change that is still pushing to make up a network in order to foster the innovation and the entrepreneurial stimulus (Hoffmann, 2006). A function of a mutual support between farmers and tourism has been strengthening for a long time

: the farmers assist in the tourist promotion of the territory through their products and sometimes the hospitality in the farm; on the other hand the tourist operators facilitates the diffusion, promotion and selling of the agricultural produce and products.

1. Food and wine tourism: a value added for Tuscany

In Tuscany the development of food and wine tourism -local products tasting, genuine and quality products purchase- is involving the rural areas. Farms making their goods available to their guests through restaurants and other form of services increased by 11.6% between 2011 and 2013 and they stand for the 27% of the total farms (Istat 2013). Wine tourism is the driving factor through which Tuscany has gained first place at the Wayn Award in 2012 achieving the nomination as “Best Wine Destination” one year after Florence and Siena received a similar nomination through “Travellers Choice Awards” by Tripadvisor (www.intoscana.it).

According to a research carried out by Censis & Coldiretti, the more recent trends would concern:

- 1.** The revival and the appreciation of festivals, local fairs, exhibition, etc. which have been receiving more attention for the last few years and are spawning a very broad participation with 23,6 million of Italians of all ages;
- 2.** The further diffusion of the happy hour fashion with friends, which basically involves the under thirty moving more than 5 million people;
- 3.** The visit to a higher number of web sites with the participation of 14,8 million people researching in order to compare prices and the quality of food and wine products.

In addition, the events linked to food and wine are oriented to a holistic experience, where the tourist’s involvement arises at a sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and social level (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). Then, one could consider that the landscape, culture and territory as a whole represent the essential factors for a food and wine experience. The opportunities for an uttermost increase of this typology of tourism must be looked for through the broadening of the BRICS countries markets, which already stand for an intense flux towards Italy, attracted by the *Made in Italy* products and the *Italian Lifestyle* (Lemmi & Siena Tangheroni, 2013b). In particular, it has been observed that in Italy Russian and Brazilian tourists prefer food and wine tourism because they consider it as a status symbol; the Chinese market, that has a high potential for our tourism, draws the line at the Italian food due to the strong difference in culture and behaviour, so that an educational communication could be a good solution rather than an adaptation of the offer that could cause a loss in specificity and authenticity (Quan & Wang, 2004; Antonioli Corigliano, 2011a; Dall’Ara & Dioniso, 2012); but the same market is widely consuming the Italian wine as the Chinese consumption has considerably increased by 290% in ten years (www.intoscana.it). Without any doubt the Made in Italy production is gaining a very good rating in popularity, considering that in 2013 the expense for food and wine rose

14% compared with the data from the previous year and 66% compared with 2008 data (Unioncamere-Isnart). Wine is the leading element with its business totalling more than half billion of euro and the production exceeding two million and a half of hectolitres.

Considering Tuscan food and wine tourism we understand that in the region there are some key factors able to foster and wide the market:

- The landscape
- The cultural *heritage*
- The *italian life style* and the *rural lifestyle*
- The richness in typical and quality agricultural produce and products
- The products brands and the territorial brands.

Each features is a value added to Tuscan tourism, a competitive advantage as well as an important element in the supply segmentation. The entire world is longing for our set of values that makes up a different life style. It can seduce both a traveller sharing a similar culture and the one considerably differing in it.

The Tuscan landscape is the symbol of the cultural and rural life, conveyed by paintings, travel journals, photographs, films, novel and recipe books. Let us shortly recall the novels by the American journalist Frances Mayes (*Bella Tuscany* and *Under the Tuscan Sun*) focusing on her experience in Tuscany and the recipe book by the English chef Jamie Oliver (*Jamie's Italy*) describing his journey in Italy through the local meals and stimulating the Anglo Saxon reader's imagination.

Moreover, Internet is offering a wide range of web sites concerning the online selling, the farms offering hospitality, tour operators' offers and comments, judgments and opinions by the customer which have an important role in the tourist's choice of the destination and the services.

The rural lifestyle is a synonym for slow life, slow food, slow cities that underlines the will to communicate the values of a relaxed life devoted to the traditional and genuine food. Some years ago Irpet in one of its research studies tried to clarify the meaning of typical and traditional food. In fact, 'typical' has an ambiguous meaning because it can be related both to a limited geographical area and to a whole Country; 'traditional' is generally related to something coming from a historical period (Malevolti, 2004). The class of traditional Tuscan products has more than 400 items (divided into eight types, following a classification made by Ministry of Agricultural Policies: vegetables, beekeeping products, cheese, oil, pasta and bakery, fish, drinks, meat) and are described by A.R.S.I.A. Toscana using a card for each item describing the main features, the territory and other details. Besides the wine and the certified products which are included in a different list, give a wide framework about the peculiarity and the excellence of the region: a heritage that definitely affects tourism and that represents a richness that along with the local cultural heritage push the visitor to better understand the features of the place. It is a valuable starting approach to becoming an insider and living one's own experience as an authentic one during the stay.

With regards to wine, some famous brands like Chianti and Brunello have the power to suggest high quality, authenticity, a peculiar landscape of a territory where the climate and the characteristics of the soil offer a unique and precious wine production. Therefore the *terroir* and the cultural heritage have a strategic role also in the creation of the destination branding. They are generally connected to the other brands, such as *Strade del vino e del gusto*, *Slow Tourism* and *Slow cities*. In general the taste roads represent a brand given to a wide area where the local specialties are integrated with various kinds of heritage and services, suggesting the visitors to follow an exploratory itinerary. At the time of their institution they were innovative tools able to invite tourists to visit cellars and oil mills, to meet the entrepreneurs, get information and create active tourists. While *Città Slow* is a brand limited to a small urban area, some brands such as “Terre di Siena” and “Maremma” are far away connected to a wider territory covering both administrative and historical regions.

More broadly, the connection between the brand and the territorial heritage gives the brand itself a synergic impulse that strengthens the local identity and makes the territory more competitive; as a matter of fact it represents a potentiality for a performance improvement. Thus the brand must be able to include all the assets of the area so that it can stand out for what the market is demanding: the tangible and intangible values, the cultural heritage, the local identity and the spirit of the place (Croci, 2009; Pollice, 2010). In their own way all the typologies of brands associated to some periodical events celebrating the local products (such as *Calici di stelle*, *Festa dell'olio*, etc.) support the regional productions, enhance the destination image and build a competitive advantage (Lee & Arcodia, 2011).

2. From the integrated tourism to a new featured tourism

Some gaps restraining the tourist performance of Tuscany and weakening the competitiveness of the food and wine tourism must be considered. Since integrated tourism is an important goal, in order to reach it a strategy oriented to horizontal, vertical and diagonal integration must be followed. The horizontal integration concerns the product innovation, the renovation and the improvement of the current products as a system to diversify and guarantee a better quality finalized to increase the sales volume. In the vertical integration, the food and wine tourism is considered as a tourism oriented to the aggregations with other appeals so that creating a complex experience based tourism through thematic trails, cultural assets, special events and cooking labs. Finally, the diagonal integration includes knowledge transfer and gaps filling through the intervention of educational paths and the fulfilment of a network of firms (Hjalager, 2002).

Specifically, the creation of peculiar tourist products is requested, through which a manifold demand is satisfied and not only a single niche tourism, to be set up on more resources and activity involvement. The resources as a whole are able to stimulate the start up of interrelated thematic trails and to arouse new opportunities for boosting the tourist destination value. It is even more so because according to a recent research

study, the motivations driving this kind of tourism also involved the desire to relax (28%), to enjoy natural beauties (27%), to experience an adventure (21%), to have fun (19%), at a moderate price (19%). In addition, the 18% of the tourists is motivated by the presence of artistic and historical heritage and the 16% is attracted by sport activities (Unioncamere, 2013).

Unfortunately, the way to integration is made difficult by an unstated tourist entrepreneurship with a stronger consequence in rural areas, where a poor orientation to the tourist products integration does exist, as well as the lack of professionals able to understand the importance of stakeholders collaborations. The main intervention useful to lessen some inadequacies is the education, a process already launched by Regione Toscana that in any case must branch out of the urban milieu, with the aim to improve the competitiveness and pursue the development of a responsible and creative tourism in rural areas too. The successful educational paths are those planned starting from the territory and from the analysis of the dynamics that affected the change of the tourists profile both at national and international level in the last years; because the educational paths can help the stakeholders in having an appropriate approach toward the tourists. Thus, a requalification of the staff responsible of the reception must be taught marketing 2.0, foreign languages, regional heritage, etc. More complex educational paths must be provided for the upgrading of the entrepreneurial capacity: it is an important tool to broaden the inter-company communication, as an advantage that can generate the integration of tourist services, a less fragmented and more diversified tourist offer.

Ultimately, the creation of a networks of local firms amplifies the supply of products and outputs for different price categories, both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. An offer so conceived guarantees the continuity of the productive and commercial processes as well as a quality and not seasonal tourism. The tourist offer through the Smart Box, widely diffused thanks its availability in the large-scale retail trade, is one of the first examples also concerning food and wine tourism. It provides the opportunity to choose a food and drink tasting tourism by staying on a farm, a more sophisticated gourmet tourism or the combination of two different experiences due to the high number of firms that joined this venture. The *Osservatorio nazionale sul turismo del vino* highlights some of the gaps through a research carried out in Italy at provincial level, underlying that just Siena is within a cluster of 20 provinces (it is at the third place) according to a good enogastronomic ranking, thanks to the presence of firms networks, tourist associations and the high number of agritourisms (Censis 2013). The communication of food and wine sector needs to get away from conventional slogans and images, that have become so obsolete by now: typical food and quality products represent an extra richness for tourist destinations and they must be sold like the other tourist resources. At present one of the international and well known tourism browser is providing the user with the opportunity to specify a destination by linking it to a preferred attraction through a selection options: *food, gourmet food, greater for wine* and some other proposals for customers with special inclinations in the food and wine sector: *seafood, food trucks, healthy food, street food* etc. They also invite

customers to share photos of inviting meals tasted during one's own holiday as a way to verify the number of people that tried and approved the same option. This is a clear attempt to match more personalized proposals and obtain an evaluation depending on a personal experience. A promotional campaign followed it two weeks after, with some proposals of integrated tourism with the aim to connect shopping, food, and seaside as preferred activities to some other suggestions, considering the destination ('tapas' and 'beach' in Barcellona; 'historical landmarks' and 'history', in Rome; 'nightlife' in Madrid, etc.) and according to a particular style ('romantic', 'luxury', etc.) so offering some customized services. Nonetheless, the showed examples seem to give just a wrapping and does not contain additional information which can involve the customer and contribute to creating individual and authentic tourist experience. To the foreign tourist the approach to the Italian taste is much more important than the overcoming of the language gap. With the aim to face this problem, the start up of a direct contact of the tourist with the destination is suggested; it can be taught with the help of some actions and information such as the diffusion of geo-enogastronomic maps showing the distribution of the produce and products, the shops and restaurants in the various Italian regions; itineraries concerning places rich in quality products and small restaurants serving local meals; tasting organized by the producers, restaurants and tourist offices; guided tours of farms, wine cellars, mills, etc.; tasting combined with teaching, demonstrating and explaining local specialties; the connections with the associations of enogastronomic culture promotion (Capatti, 2012). Tasting, thematic routes and educational laboratories are often offered by tour operators; however they are not always strictly associated to the local cultural heritage.

3. Experience based tourism

We can visit the same place several time and each time we can discover new elements: it is like reading different stories -romance, crime, horror, tragedy- set in the same place but each time in a different state of mind, observing and experiencing new things as it were for the first time. Each situation will be a unique experience because each will be driven by a different state of mind of the person having it. Effectively, experience based tourism allows tourist to be fully involved in the visit and in all the connected activities and to be the leading actor in the choice. Experience based tourism is able to start up a process that gradually increases the tourist's awareness to become an active tourist. His awareness will allow him to feel authentic emotions according to a "frame" suggested by himself in which more themes can be combined. Inspired by Pine and Gilmore (1999) the tourist experience is compared to the theatrical performance, where the territory is a stage (in this case it is the landscape and the location), with the actors' show and interaction; in this special case the tour operators and the customers or tourists themselves can carry out a theatrical representation that is to say the tourist experience. The putting up of the representation can not exclude the theme, the involvement of the five senses, the integration of the holiday with the shopping of some souvenirs and gadgets because the experiences must bring on strong emotions and permanently affect one's memory. We come to a strong personalization of every kind of tourism through tailored services

and products. This extraordinary customization can be reached with the help of a detailed analysis of the market in order to identify the targets, overcoming the over generic classic segmentation considering sex, age and country of origin. Experience based tourism relies on the research of the potential tourist's needs, motivations and attractions as qualitative data concerning the person to be juxtaposed by the traditional ones concerning the market.

The idea of the experience must also be spread to the tourist destination; firstly a theme must be identified choosing among the territorial features, secondly the theme must have a strong and suggestive denomination, just like a brand. In this process, the concept of dematerialization becomes important, in economic terms it means that the creation, transfer, sharing of information and knowledge are able to increase the value of a destination (Tamma, 2010; Lemmi & Siena Tangheroni, 2013a). The creation of a product for the experience based tourism needs great changes geared towards innovation and the strategic differentiation of the supply in order to meet the emergent wishes according to the new tourist profile. Similar changes inevitably affect communication that nowadays has a central role thanks to the present interactive means.

Following the tourist vocation, the experience value will arise through the identification of some tourist *concepts*, such as cultural, naturalistic, luxury, trendy ones. This first phase allows a further segmentation of the tourist product creating a unique way of living one's own holiday, related to each concept: that means that a cultural holiday can be lived in a relaxing, romantic or active way. The theme concerning food and wine may differ according to a peculiar mood and this one can vary in every concept. Thus, it gives the chance to create a great number of modulated products in order to meet every different request, from the more sophisticated for a romantic tourism joined to a luxury concept to a more relaxed one connected to a naturalistic concept. This strategy implies a high level of job sharing public and private institutions, especially when assembling the pieces of the puzzle, according to the fuzzy set models, in a different and creative way. A fundamental role is performed by the elements called "wow", which are feasible through special experiential opportunities able to instil astonishment and wonder.

Conclusion: the experience based supply and the communication

The strong dependence of the success of a tourist product on the need for tourist's satisfaction is today helped by the diffusion of the new technologies. Through them the customer can look for and choose the most suitable service. The use of the technology, in particular of the *Information Communication Technology* (ICT) addressed the stakeholders to organize themselves in carrying out a diversified and more updated supply allowing the customer looking for new tourist experiences to find them browsing on line (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

A lot of selling strategies have been built to get the greatest forcefulness through the newest communication systems both by the private firms and the public institutions.

Regione Toscana has recently presented an innovative project concerning the wine offer; it merges the use of the technologies with the *terroir* features with the help of a smartphone to get all the information through the wine bottle label (area of origin, producer, vine variety, wine-making process, etc.) and to know all the other territorial quality products. Besides, the idea of the “Smart Village” -still at a preliminary step-based on tourist innovation, is envisaging the alphabetization of the territory as a tool that permits the attaining of all the information concerning the culture of a particular area. This is a typology of research that could offer more and more information through the “geocatching” with a wide range of the participants involvement using GPS or smartphone, in order to create further classes of customization. The geocatching is a treasure hunt that connects a ‘community’ of participants, offering a more sophisticated system than “gamification”. Effectively, gamification helps to discover new tourist experience overtaking different levels, without the challenge of a treasure hunt.

The transit from a mass tourism to different kinds of niche tourism mainly depends on a trend running on a double track: the diffusion of technology and the new consumer’s needs. Customization and flexibility are two very important factors at an entrepreneurial level because they influence the business competitive ability. The tourist has the chance to get a huge quantity of information and to exchange his evaluation through blogs, portals, social networks and on line travel agencies: a lot of means that allow him to look for, choose, buy and then tell his own experience, becoming a ‘prosumer’ rather than a consumer (Cozzi, 2010).

The wish to tell and compare one’s own experience with the Internet community, has been influencing the experience based tourist supply, addressing it to the use of a special *storytelling* provided with appealing and peculiar effects.

Storytelling, as a matter of facts, must have the rights features to identify the experience, its expository writing must be able to draw the attention, inspire the imagination of the reader and persuade to share the same experience. This kind of communication must be transmitted by common and real people so that the tale could be as much authentic and involving as possible (Rossi & Goetz, 2011). This form, used in commercials for every kind of products, in case of tourist products is specifically built turning to people belonging to the community of the tourist destination, in order to broadcast news that can be perceived as genuine and to rid off the stereotypes publicized in the old fashioned brochures. The site *cantforget.it* presents all the features of the new communication; among the existing *digital diary* -set of photos, short clips- the one concerning *Musei nel Piatto* filmed in Emilia Romagna or the *videotelling* filmed in Basilicata and Friuli Venezia Giulia misured the communication through the celebration of the local specialties which are experienced every day by the local producers. It is a way to present the enogastronomy together with the buildings, the squares, the real people inside tranquil villages and hamlets; it directly connects the user to the territory and creates a storytelling with the aim to “get emotions and information and communicate them through a universal and effective language” (<http://bigjump.cemitds.it>). Actually, those websites fill the institutional gap since in Italy no update portal is at present working. Spain.info, for instance, in the item *Spain*

for you the profile of the potential tourist can be cross-checked with the consumer's preferences in order to generate a proposal, sometimes combined with a video.

The idea that the travel is like a film is basic to the communication of the experience tourism. In Italy it is still a new field to be fully explored and the tour operators offering this kind of tourism are just a few: in some case their work is at a start up phase, in others they are able to give partially involved products. Food and wine tourism can be introduced through the visit to the production site, tastings, cuisine laboratories, the search of fruit and vegetable markets, as activities for a direct approach to the local culture and an interaction with the territory (fig. 2).



Fig. 2 : A picture about the experience based enogastronomic tourism: the naturalistic mood (**Source:** www.getyourguide.it);

Definitely, it is a way to remember the tourist experience (Antonioli Corigliano, 2011). A turn of well-structured experience based products have been created tanks to a project carried out by one of the more specialized Tour Operator in Tuscany. This Agency conceived some Tuscan related products to the foreign high price category markets (such as China, Russia, Brasile, India, United States, Middle East), using six concepts. Its brochure is very refined and is eye-catching for the consumer; the pictures are really incisive and the text offers an original presentation of the team of experts, starting from the first creative steps of their product and showing then a storyboard. In particular the storyboard is like a screenplay to be performed by the consumer as an actor in a travel film.



Fig. 3: The travel like a film (Source: www.superto.it)

Consumer involvement in the ITC expands his interaction with the supply system. The expression of judgments and opinions about his appreciations of the tourist services following his experience helps Internet in gaining the function as an opinions source, helpful in the process of reputation branding.

Effectively, the users are interested in finding judgements and comments from tourists who had a similar experience, while tour operators are motivated to extract the online responses (Gräbner et al, 2012). Recently, a seven million tweets analysis in six different languages, during one month only (October) pointed out that Chianti wine is the protagonist inside the wine related messages sharing the 18% of the references (www.intoscana.it).

The *Sentiment Analysis* (SA), a qualitative analysis that can be applied in many fields including tourism, and analyzes comments by tourists on their holiday experiences, is the tool to be used to understand the approval or disapproval rating for each service (transfer, overnight stay, restaurant, etc.)¹. The SA hold a fundamental role in the identification of new market opportunities, in the find of new and better items filling the tourist service gaps. By way of the SA the experience based tourism itself can profit by a continuous upgrade of its services facing the market continuous changes and growth.

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¹ The Sentiment Analysis is a process that analyses a text through a complex methodology with the aim to extract both positive and negatives judgments from written information. One of the main difficulties consists in the evaluation of all the factors that influenced the texts writing, such as the culture and the language, in the various contexts.