THE POTENTIAL FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN WINE AND TOURISM BUSINESSES IN THE PROVISION OF TOURISM EXPERIENCES: THE CASE OF THE DOURO VALLEY OF PORTUGAL

O POTENCIAL PARA A COOPERAÇÃO ENTRE EMPRESAS DE TURISMO E PRODUÇÃO DE VINHO NA OFERTA DE EXPERIÊNCIAS TURÍSTICAS: O CASO DA REGIÃO DO DOURO, EM PORTUGAL

Alexandra Correia[1]
acorreia@estg.ipvc.pt
Lecturer in Tourism Studies at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Portugal

Roger Vaughan
Professor of Tourism Economics, the Head of the Post Graduate Research Awards Program (MPhil and PhD) for the School of Tourism and the School co-ordinator for Erasmus exchanges

Jonathan Edwards
Reader in Tourism at Bournemouth University

Goretti Silva
Lecturer in Tourism Studies at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Portugal

ABSTRACT/RESUMO

The provision of tourism experiences depends on cooperative relationships of businesses operating not only in the same, but also in complementary industries, as it is the case of wine production industry. This paper then focuses on the occurrence, or not, of inter-sectoral and/or diagonal cooperation between businesses operating in wine and tourism industries. The aim is to understand and discuss the current situation of cooperation in the region and its (potential) adoption to the provision of tourism experiences. Data here presented was collected through interview-based face-to-face questionnaire applied to businesses' decision makers, owners/managers. Results indicate cooperation is already being adopted by many of the owners/managers of wine and tourism businesses in the region and that although visitor experiences were not clearly indicated by respondents as one of the reasons to cooperate,

A oferta de experiências turísticas resulta da cooperação não só entre empresas que operam na mesma indústria, mas também entre empresas que operam em indústrias complementares , como é o caso das indústrias de turismo e de produção de vinho. Este artigo analisa a ocorrência, ou não, da cooperação intersectorial e/ou diagonal entre as empresas que operam nas indústrias de produção de vinho e turismo, tendo como objetivo examinar a situação atual da cooperação na região e compreender o potencial da cooperação entre estas empresas para a oferta de experiências turísticas. Os dados apresentados foram recolhidos através de um questionário baseado em entrevistas face-a--face aplicado aos proprietários/gestores das empresas. Os resultados indicam que a cooperação já é implementada por muitas das empresas inquiridas e que, embora as experiências turísticas não tenham sido claramente indicadas

[1] Correia, A. I. (2013), *An Examination of Inter-Business Cooperation by Wine and Tourism Small Sized Businesses in the Douro Valley of Portugal*, Thesis (PhD), School of Tourism, Bournemouth University.

offering complementary and diversified products/services and activities is one of the main reasons for businesses, particularly for tourism businesses, to cooperate with wine businesses. It was acknowledged by respondents an increasing demand for wine-related activities (as participating in harvests and wine tasting) and the need to offer adequate products/services to meet wine-related demand expectations of tourists when vising the region. The results of this paper indicate that respondents, particularly tourism businesses, recognise that this offer is the result of cooperative relationships with wine businesses. Therefore, one can say that there is a great potential for cooperation between wine and tourism in the provision of tourism experiences in this region.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Wine Tourism, Inter-Sectoral Cooperation, Tourism Experiences

JEL Codes: L83, L21, D22

pelos inquiridos como uma das principais razões para cooperar, já a oferta de produtos/serviços e atividades complementares e diversificadas é uma das principais razões para as empresas, sobretudo as turísticas, cooperarem com as empresas produtoras de vinho. Os inquiridos reconheceram, por um lado, uma crescente procura de atividades relacionadas com a participação em vindimas e provas de vinho e, por outro, a necessidade de uma oferta adequada por forma a dar resposta às expectativas dos turistas que visitam a região. Os resultados indicam que há um reconhecimento, por parte dos inquiridos, de que esta oferta resulta da cooperação estabelecida entre as empresas. Desta forma, considera-se que existe um grande potencial para a cooperação entre estas empresas na oferta de experiências turísticas nesta região.

Palavras-chave: Turismo Rural, Enoturismo, Cooperação Intersetorial, Experiências Turísticas

Códigos JEL: L83, L21, D22

1. INTRODUCTION

Overall, the tourism industry is characterised by the existence of multiple players (March and Wilkinson, 2009), and by its interdependent, fragmented and multi-sectoral nature (Fyall and Garrod, 2005). These characteristics contribute to the difficulty of enterprises surviving in isolation (Fyall and Garrod, 2005; Pansiri, 2007) in a highly competitive and complex marketplace (Fyall and Spyriadis, 2003; Buhalis and Peters, 2006) and providing alone all the products and services visitors need (Pesämma et al., 2007). This is particularly true at a time when consumers have become increasingly informed and active (Neuhofer et al., 2012) and that they are more and more in search for unique and diverse authentic experiences when travelling and visiting destinations (Gilmore and Pine, 2002; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Ritchie and Tung, 2011; Clifford and Robinson, 2012).

The provision of tourism experiences to visitors depends on the interaction of different players through which complementary products/services and activities are combined (Scott et al., 2008), to deliver a quality product (Telfer, 2000), more specifically through cooperative initiatives between different players (Morgan et al., 2009). This is particularly true in rural areas, as in the case of wine-based areas, where, according to Getz (1999), the overall tourist experience comprises and depends on the existence of a set of elements, including the population and landscape, as well as different stakeholders and services. Thus, one can argue that the overall tourist experience in rural areas in general, and in wine tourism areas in particular, depends on cooperative business relationships involving different industries (Getz and Brown, 2006). Through cooperation, businesses can save costs, provide added value products and services (Human and Provan, 1997; European Commission, 2003; Fuller-Love and Thomas, 2004; Shaw, 2006), and/or experiences to customers (Morgan et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, owners/managers of SMEs rarely have the time to participate in cooperative initiatives given their day-to-day management activities (Morgan et al., 2009). Thus, it seems important to further extend the existing knowledge in relation to whether owners/managers of small businesses operating in different industries do recognise or not the potential of cooperation to bring in complementary strengths, to provide diverse experiences to visitors and thereby be more competitive.

This paper then examines whether, or not, cooperation is being considered and adopted in the Douro Valley region by owners/managers of micro and small wine and tourism businesses to face these challenges and to be more competitive in the provision of experiences to customers.

A brief overview of tourism in rural areas is firstly presented, followed by a review of the concept of cooperation and an outline of previous research into potential benefits of cooperation. Then follows the methodology and the presentation and discussion of the research findings. Finally, conclusions and implications are outlined.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

Rural areas in Europe are characterised not only by depopulation, infrastructure inadequacies and high dependence on farming (Stathopoulou et al. 2004), but also remoteness and geographical isolation (Anderson, 2000). While remoteness and geographical isolation of rural areas can work as barriers and hinder business development

(Morrison and Thomas, 1999; Getz and Carlsen, 2005), and competiveness (Page et al., 1999), they can simultaneously contribute to its attractiveness and constitute an opportunity for tourism development (Page and Getz, 1997; Edmunds, 1999; Scott, 2000). This attractiveness and opportunity for tourism development is the result of the characteristics of rural areas referred above and also of the developments in tourist-customers behaviour, such as improved lifestyles, increases in health awareness (WTO, 1997), valorisation of the contact with natural and rural settings and culture (Roberts and Hall, 2001) and the increasing search for experiences (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004).

Moreover, tourism in rural areas has been widely promoted and relied upon as a means of addressing the social and economic challenges facing peripheral rural areas, as enabling the safeguarding of the integrity of the countryside resources and maintaining rural ways of life (Shaw and Williams, 2002). Indeed, tourism in rural areas can contribute both to the revitalization and promotion of traditional activities and the differentiation of the regions, particularly through the integration with local products, as it is the case of wine (Hall and Mitchell, 2000; Telfer, 2001). Wine production is, in turn, seen as an important component for the diversification of rural areas and the development of rural tourism. Its contribution to the promotion of agriculture revitalization, and to maintaining people in rural areas is of growing importance. It also contributes to the preservation of traditions and landscapes, and to the promotion of local products and the region where they are produced, contributing in this way to rural diversification (Hall, 2004) and to the attractiveness of rural areas, for example in the form of routes, as it is the case of wine routes (Bruwer, 2003).

2.2. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF SMES IN RURAL AREAS

SMEs are mostly family owned and run (Curran et al., 1993), and characterised by small establishments, lack of information and skills (Morrison, 1998; European Commission, 2003), and scarce resources (e.g. human, financial and material) (Morrison, 1998; European Commission, 2003).

In addition, and although businesses implemented in rural settings can have diverse opportunities (e.g. natural resources, landscape), they may also have to face different constraints to their activity (e.g. North and Smallbone, 1996; Stathopulou et al., 2004). When SMEs are located in rural areas the difficulties associated with their smallness are exacerbated. Competitiveness is particularly influenced by the quality of transport infrastructure, the availability of suitably skilled and professionally trained staff, and external trade factors (Patterson and Anderson, 2003). To survive in remote rural areas, SMEs need to be adaptable, and this can result in them being more innovative in some respects than businesses elsewhere (Patterson and Anderson, 2003; North and Smallbone, 2004). The establishment of cooperation relationships/initiatives comes at the forefront of the list of options that can be adopted by SMEs operating in rural areas to be innovative and overcome some of their location-related difficulties and enhance their performance (Smallbone et al., 2002).

2.3. CONCEPT, TYPES AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF INTER-BUSINESS COOPERATION

For the purposes of this paper, the term cooperation is used as describing the intentional and voluntary relationships/initiatives in which two or more independent businesses and/or individuals interact. Cooperation partners combine their efforts and resources on behalf of their businesses, and the initiatives are usually implemented in order to obtain mutual benefits (e.g. Barnir and Smith, 2002; European Commission, 2003).

Cooperation can be of different types; that will depend on the business context and on the demands that are put upon a business at any given time (European Commission, 2003). Cooperation can be vertical (between businesses that operate at different levels within the distribution channel) (Fyall and Garrod, 2005); horizontal (between two or more unrelated businesses at the same level of the supply chain) (Soosay et al., 2008); and diagonal or inter-sectoral (between businesses operating in different sectors or industries) (Gray, 1989; Fyall and Garrod, 2005). In inter-sectoral cooperation businesses are not seen as competitors but rather as partners providing complementary products or services (Fyall and Garrod, 2005). In this context, cooperation contributes to added value products of each participating business (Weidenfield et al., 2011).

Cooperation is widely recognised to be beneficial for businesses, particularly to SMEs (e.g. Human and Provan, 1997; European Commission, 2003; Fuller-Love and Thomas, 2004; Shaw, 2006). Through cooperation, tourism businesses can improve their facilities and enhance their products/services (Bastakis et al., 2004) in order to respond to tourists' needs (Fyall and Garrod, 2005) and to add perceived value to their products and services (Mitchell van der Linden, 2010). In addition, businesses can also improve their marketing activities (Meyer-Chech, 2005), widen market access and therefore increase their income through greater customers/visitors numbers (Fyall and Garrod, 2005). Also, through cooperation tourism businesses can increase their income (Hall et al., 1997), enhance their image (Fyall and Garrod, 2005), and increase their capacity to compete more effectively, than they would do if in isolation (Fyall and Garrod, 2005). It helps businesses to deal with their limitations (e.g. limited resources) (Pansiri, 2007), particularly those located in peripheral destinations (Morrison, 1998), and to explore innovative opportunities to operate locally and in a globalised business environment (Novelli et al., 2006). In addition, cooperation can contribute to enhance businesses' capacity of attracting, transporting, hosting, and managing tourists in a destination (Palmer and Bejou, 1995), and contribute to a coherent experience for visitors/customers (Lemmetyinen, 2009). Thus, it seems that cooperation may contribute to meet consumers' expectations in terms of the quality of products and/or services, and also in terms of the diversity of activities and the emotional and spiritual benefits sought in unique and memorable experiences (Morgan et al., 2009). This is particularly important at a time when there is a growth in experience-related offer at many destinations, including rural areas and when experiences are increasingly considered important to the survival, differentiation and competitiveness of tourism businesses and destinations (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Morgan et al., 2009). In this context, cooperation is believed as essential as it may contribute to the survival and/or success of tourism businesses (Palmer and Bejou, 1995; Fyall and Garrod, 2005), but also as essential to the enhancement of the overall tourism experience (Lemmetyinen, 2009; Morgan et al., 2009). Customers are increasingly more demanding and they are more and more in search for unique and diverse authentic experiences when travelling and visiting destinations (Gilmore and Pine, 2002; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Ritchie and Tung, 2011; Clifford and Robinson, 2012). As a result, businesses suppliers are in search of new ways to distinguish themselves and to fight for the customer's attention (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009). Thus, the provision of tourism experiences to visitors depends on the interaction of different players through which complementary products/services and activities are combined (Scott et al., 2008), to deliver a quality product (Telfer, 2000), more specifically through cooperative initiatives between different players (Morgan et al., 2009).

3. METHODOLOGY

The results here presented are part of a wider study[2], aiming at examining inter-business cooperation between wine and tourism SMEs in the Douro valley of Portugal. The focus was on cooperation in the same and in a different industry. This paper will only focus on some aspects related to inter-sectoral cooperation.

Empirical data was gathered by means of a survey through the use of a face-to-face interview-based questionnaire. The target population was composed of owners/managers of tourism and wine businesses (decision makers) in the nineteen parishes that comprise the Douro Valley as indicated in Table 1, the tourism/hospitality industry businesses taken into consideration in the current study were: accommodation (hotels and rural tourism establishments), restaurants and leisure businesses. The identification of these categories was facilitated by the fact that there were lists of the number of businesses provided by both industries organisations. A list of the different categories of businesses was obtained in early September of 2009 from the national tourism governmental organisation, Turismo de Portugal, and also the Regional Tourism Authorities and Municipalities. With regard to wine businesses, based on the information about the categories and the number of businesses provided by Institute of Vine and Wine (IVV), two categories of business can be found in the Douro, namely wine producers, and wine producers and bottlers. The latter were selected to be part of the study. These wine businesses were classified by the researcher as 'Quintas' and they refer to those businesses that produce, bottle and sell their products in the market. This name was adopted in this study mainly for two reasons. First, it was the name mostly used by the respondents when referring to wine producers and bottlers. Second, this name was also used in order to not contribute to any confusion when it comes to the legal classifications of wine businesses used in Portugal. The population of wine businesses considered in this study are also presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. TYPOLOGY OF BUSINESSES IN THE TARGET POPULATION

Categories of tourism businesses	Total (population)
Accommodation	17
Rural tourism establishments	79
Restaurants	87
Leisure businesses	14
Total	197
Wine businesses	
"Quintas"	259

Source: Author.

A total of 200 interviews were conducted (100 of tourism businesses and 100 wine businesses). Considering that there are different categories, or strata, within tourism businesses (accommodation, rural accommodation, restaurants and leisure businesses), a stratified random sampling process was undertaken, to ensure that each significant dimension of the population was represented in the sample (Sarantakos, 2005). With regard to wine businesses, a systematic sampling method was used, as only one category was used in the study ("Quintas" – wine producers that sell their products in the market).

Wine and tourism are two different industries, but they are also potentially complementary industries, which is due to their characteristics and more specifically to their products. The potential relationship between the tourism and wine industries has been examined in the literature given the characteristics of both industries and also given the potential benefits that may result from the interaction of pairing tourism and wine together (Telfer, 2001). Thus, understanding perspectives and involvement of owners/managers of businesses of these two industries with regard to cooperation is important to comprehend the potential of cooperation in the provision of experiences to customers.

[2] Correia, A. I. (2013), *An Examination of Inter-Business Cooperation by Wine and Tourism Small and Sized Businesses in the Douro Valley of Portugal*, Thesis (PhD), School of Tourism, Bournemouth University.

Therefore, a comparative analysis has been undertaken, and the type of business (wine and tourism) has been identified as the independent variable. A Chi-Square Test for Independence was used to verify the existence of statistically significant differences between the two groups of the independent variable (wine and tourism respondents) and nominal data (occurrence of cooperation and reasons for cooperation). Chi-square tests were performed for a confidence interval (p) of 0,05. When p = < 0,05 the effect size is also calculated (Phi value for 2 x 2 tables and Cramer's V for bigger tables) (Pallant, 2007). Results of statistical tests will be provided in the respective tables, but reference to it will be kept to the situations where differences are evident. When the significance level (p) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (that there are no differences between the answers given by wine and tourism respondents) was rejected and the alternative (that there were significant differences) was accepted.

In order to determine if the proportion of cases in the sample would differ from the distribution in the population (to determine if they were significantly different statistically) (Pallant, 2007), a Chi-Square Test for Goodness-of-fit was conducted. The test was conducted for categorical data, namely the different categories within the same type of business. In the case of wine businesses, the Chi-Square Test for Goodness-of-fit was not conducted because only one category (wine producers and bottlers) was chosen to be part of this research. The test results indicated that there were no significant differences in the proportion of the categories of tourism businesses identified in the current sample, as compared with proportion in the population ($\chi 2 = 5.005$; n = 100; df = 3; p = 0.171). These results mean that the way tourism businesses are distributed in the sample (in terms of their categories) is suitable for the proposed analyses.

3.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUSINESSES AND OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THE SAMPLE

The businesses that participated in the study are characterised in Table 2. Businesses were essentially micro businesses, as in total, 72% of the businesses had fewer than 10 employees, followed by small businesses (20.5% had more than 10 and less than 50 employees). On average, the businesses had 15 all year full time employees (overall mean value calculated using the original interval type scale). As indicated in the literature, the definition of SMEs adopted in this research was the definition based on the recommendation of European Commission based on the number of (full time) employees. Micro businesses have < 10, Small businesses have < 50 and Medium businesses have < 250, as presented in Table X. In addition, and as shown in Table 2, statistically significant differences were found (p = 0.000), with a small effect size (Cramer's V = 0.206) because tourism businesses were more likely than wine businesses to have less than 10 employees (micro). In turn, there were more wine businesses that would be classified as being small (10-40 employees) and medium (50-249 employees).

The Portuguese market was the main market (73% in total) for both wine and tourism businesses. Nevertheless, significant differences were found (p = 0.002) with a small effect size (Cramer's V = 0.250), because tourism businesses were more likely to sell their products/services to the Portuguese market, than wine businesses. In the case of wine businesses, only a few indicated other markets (n = 17). In this case, the other main markets were USA, Brazil, Canada and Angola. In the case of the tourism businesses, only 3 indicated another market (USA) where they sell their products/services.

TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES IN THE STUDY (SAMPLE)

	Tourism		Wine		Total	
Size (all year full time employees)	n	%	n	%	n	%
<10 (micro)	81	81	63	63	144	72
10-49 (small)	15	15	26	26	41	20.5
50-249 (medium)	4	4	11	11	15	7.5
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0
Chi-Square results	**χ^2= 8.468 d.f. = 2**		**p = 0.014**		**Cramer's V= 0.206**	
Mean	7.99 (13.408)		21.9 (44.235)		14.95 (33.34)	

Markets/sources of turnover of wine and tourism businesses

	Tourism		Wine		Total	
Main markets (by turnover value)	n	%	n	%	n	%
Portugal	82	82	64	64	146	73
European Union	15	15	19	19	34	17
Other	3	3	17	17	20	10
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0
Chi-Square results	**χ^2= 12.490 d.f. = 2**		**p = 0.002**		**Cramer's V = 0.250**	

n – sample; χ^2 – Chi-square value; d.f. – degrees of freedom; p – probability value.

The profile of the respondents (position in the business, experience in working in the position, age, gender and educational background) is presented in Table 3. The results revealed that 59.5% of the respondents were owners and 40.5% managers, with statistically significant differences found. The difference is that the respondents from tourism businesses were more likely to have been the owner than the respondents from the wine businesses. Most of respondents had become either the owner or the manager in the last 20 years prior to the interview. On average, and based on the overall mean value (calculated based on the original interval types scale), the respondents of the wine and tourism businesses had been working in the position of owner/manager for 8 years. The results indicated that wine and tourism respondents differed significantly ($p = 0.028$) with a small effect size (Cramer's' V = 0.189) in terms of their experience in working as owners and/or as managers. This difference is that tourism respondents had less years of experience (44%) as owners and/or as managers than wine respondents (26%).

With regard to their age, the owners/managers of the tourism and wine businesses were likely to be relatively young, as 68% were less than 50 years old and the mean age for tourism business respondents was 45 and for wine business respondents 44. The overall mean age for the respondents of wine and tourism businesses was 48.

As is also shown in Table 3, the owners/managers of wine and tourism businesses were more likely to have been educated at a higher education level (65.5% in total). Nevertheless, there were more respondents from wine businesses having achieved a higher-level education (84%) than tourism respondents. These differences were statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) with a medium effect size (Cramer's V = 0.389).

TABLE 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS (SAMPLE)

	Tourism		Wine		Total	
Position in the business	n	%	n	%	n	%
Owner	69	69	50	50	119	59.5
Manager	31	31	50	50	81	40.5
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0
Chi-Square results	**χ^2= 6.723 d.f. = 1 p = 0.010 Phi = 0.194**					
	Tourism		**Wine**		**Total**	
Age	n	%	n	%	n	%
<= 30 years	13	13	12	12	25	12.5
31-49 years	52	52	59	59	111	55.5
+50 years	35	35	29	29	64	32.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0
Chi-Square results	**χ^2= 1.044 d.f. = 2 p = 0.593**					
Mean (standard deviation)	44.9 (13.596)		43.66 (12.51)		44.28 (13.05)	
Gender	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	71	71	79	79	150	75
Female	29	29	21	21	50	25
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0
Chi-Square results	**χ^2= 1.307 d.f. = 1 p = 0.253**					
Educational background	n	%	n	%	n	%
Pre-Higher education	53	53.0	16	16.0	69	34.5
Higher education	47	47.0	84	84.0	131	65.5
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0
Chi-Square results	**χ^2= 28.676 d.f. = 1 p = 0.000 Cramer's V = 0.389**					

n – sample; χ^2 – Chi-square value; d.f. – degrees of freedom; p – probability value

3.2. THE GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The geographic context of this study is the Douro Valley, corresponding to NUT III, the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics of Portugal, situated in the eastern north of Portugal (Figure 1).

This region is mainly a rural region, with relatively sparse population and relative remoteness from major urban areas. As such, some of its characteristics are similar to what is indicated in the literature with regard to remote rural areas (Anderson, 2000; Stathopoulou et al., 2004), such as a certain degree of depopulation, infrastructure inadequacies with accessibility within and to the region needing improvement and high dependence on agriculture. Douro Valley has been affected over the years by a gradual process of depopulation and aging population and, when compared to regional and national data, educational levels are very low. These contribute to the socio-economic problems of the area and to the Douro Valley being one of the poorest regions in Portugal (Fazenda et al., 2010). The main socio-economic indicators of the Douro Region are presented in Table 4.

FIGURE 1. DOURO VALLEY IN THE CONTEXT OF PORTUGAL

Source: http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:LocalNUTS3Douro.svg accessed 23 April 2014

TABLE 4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF THE DOURO VALLEY

Indicators (2012)	
Area (km2) of national territory by geographic	4 108,02
Population´s density (No./ km2) by place of residence	49,3
Proportion of resident population in statistical cities with more than 10 000 inhabitants (%) by place of residence	13,47
Resident population < 15 years (No.)	25,954
Resident population > 15 years (No.)	176,457
GDP per capita constant prices (thousand euros)	10,932 (1,3% of Portuguese GDP)
Average compensation of employees (thousand euros)	18,1
Main economic activities (total employment – thousand persons) Services	42,8
Agriculture, livestock production, hunting, forestry and fishing	34,7

Source: Adapted from INE 2013.

The Douro Valley is known mainly as the place of origin of the Port wine and as the first demarcated and regulated wine producing region in the world (1756) (Andresen et al., 2004). It comprises an area of approximately 250.000 ha, of which about 40.000 ha are dedicated to vineyards (Andresen et al., 2004). The region is nowadays responsible for the highest wine production and business volume of wine in Portugal as a result of producing Port wine which is distributed to 106 international markets and accounts for about 1/3 of the total of Portuguese wine exports (Fazenda et al., 2010).

The Douro Valley's natural and patrimonial resources make it unique, with an enormous potential for tourism development (Fazenda et al., 2010). Acknowledging its unique characteristics, part of this region was classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, namely the "Prehistoric Rock-Art Sites in the Côa Valley" (classified in 1998) and the Alto Douro Wine Region (classified in 2001) (Fazenda et al., 2010; Turismo do Douro, 2012).

Given its characteristics, the tourism offer of the Douro Valley has been mainly associated with landscapes (the terraced vineyard), gastronomy, wine (the relevance of Port wine) and wine-growing estates, manor houses and villages, natural/archaeological heritage, and cruises on the Douro River. In addition, the wine theme has also been used in the promotion and hosting of events and festivals which have contributed to the raising of market awareness about Port wine, both red and white, as well as other regional wines (Hall and Mitchell, 2000). These wines also produced in the region are gaining international recognition due to the awards received such as Decanter World Wine Awards (Wines of Portugal, 2012).

The Douro Valley has been identified as a "new high quality destination" in the National Strategic Plan for Tourism (2007) and its importance and expectations of growth have also been recognised by private organisations as shown by the increased level of investment in hotel and river cruises. For example, there are several cruise companies providing tourism excursions along the Douro River (from Porto to points in the Upper Douro Valley) that are themselves attracting many visitors. It has been noted that year by year the number of passengers has been growing and that in 2008 approximately 180.000 passengers were registered (Fazenda et al., 2010). In addition, the significant number of private developments that are presently under construction (hotels, resorts and rural accommodations of superior quality) (Fazenda et al., 2010) also demonstrate the recognition of investor interest in the Douro Valley. The target markets of the Douro region include the domestic market and some main European outbound markets such as the UK, France, Germany (Turismo de Portugal, 2007). As regards accommodation, the Douro has a small number of hotels. However, it assumes a distinct reality in terms of the rural tourism accommodation (Table 5).

As far as tourist demand is concerned, the main indicators regarding the hotel activity indicators are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 5. ACCOMMODATION IN THE DOURO

Indicators (2012)	
Hotels establishments (hotels, guest houses, inns, lodging houses) (Total Numbers)	36
Lodging capacity (No.) in hotel establishments in 2012	2303
Rural tourism accommodation	82

Source: Adapted from INE 2013 and Turismo do Douro, 2014.

TABLE 6. DEMAND INDICATORS OF THE DOURO AS A TOURISM REGION

Indicators (2011)	
Guests in hotel establishments (hotels and guest houses)	125 414
Guests in hotel establishments (hotels only)	102 478
Average stay (No.) in hotel establishments (nights)	1,5
Nights in hotel establishments (hotels, guest houses, inns, lodging houses)	192 463
Proportion of foreign guests (%)	17,3

Source: Adapted from INE, 2013.

Although its characteristics would suggest that the Douro would be competitive both for wine and tourism industries, businesses operating in the region have to face some difficulties/challenges. The main difficulties small businesses operating in the Douro have to deal with are the increasing competition in the international markets and the challenge to increase businesses sales of their wine and tourism products, and diversify consumer markets. Also, it is difficult to retain visitors/tourists in the region, a situation reflected in the low average length of stay and in the gross bed occupation rate and lack of coordination and articulation between the various agents in the tourism industry and between these and other public organizations (Fazenda et al., 2010). Thus, the argument here is that cooperation has a great potential to bring in complementary strengths, to provide diverse experiences to visitors and thereby be more competitive.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This paper focuses on the occurrence, or not, of intersectoral and/or diagonal cooperation between businesses operating in wine and tourism industries and on the potential for cooperation between wine and tourism businesses in the provision of tourism experiences.

The results of the study show that most interviewed owners/managers (61.5%) had already cooperated with businesses from the other industry (wine/tourism), being motivated by business objectives, which is in accordance to the literature. It is recognised that SMEs do not have all the necessary resources to fully achieve their objectives and to face the challenges of businesses environment (Ahuja, 2000). This fact implies some level of interdependency between businesses (Selin and Chávez, 1995) and drives businesses to engage in cooperation relationships/initiatives with others as a means by which they can gain access to partners' resources (European Commission, 2003) and to achieve their strategic goals (Hoffman and Schlosser, 2001).

The most relevant business-related objectives motivating what respondents considered to be the examples of successful cooperation initiatives are presented in Table 7. Overall, 'Enhancing promotion and image' was the most frequent answer (56.7%), and particularly relevant for wine businesses, whereas "Complementing and offering more and/or diversified products" assumes a particular importance in the context of tourism businesses ($\chi 2 = 24.241$ d.f. $= 2$ $p = 0.000$ Cramer's $V = 0.449$). For tourism businesses enhancing financial situation and complementing their offer are far more important than for wine businesses, which is in accordance with the literature (e.g. Scott et al., 2008) because of the recognition of the increased value of joint production of tourism services (Weidenfeld et al., 2011). The above business-related objectives are in line with the literature (Fyall and Spyriadis, 2003) and they can be classified into two broad groups, namely input-related objectives and expected outcomes-related. The first is associated to the access of resources (e.g. information, physical resources), which are important for 'Complementing and offering more and/or diversified products/services'. In turn, the objectives related to the expected outcomes refer to risk and cost reduction, learning and improved performance, as it is the case of 'Enhancing promotion and image' and 'Enhancing financial situation'.

Although providing visitor experiences was not clearly indicated by businesses in the region as one of the main reasons for participating in diagonal cooperation, providing more or diversified products is important, especially for tourism businesses, as indicated above. This suggests that tourism respondents recognise that visitors in the region value diversified products/services, otherwise they would not engage into cooperative arrangements with other businesses in order to provide such offer.

TABLE 7. REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION

	Tourism		Wine		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Enhancing promotion and image	21	35.0	47	78.3	68	56.7
Enhancing financial situation	22	36.7	10	16.7	32	26.7
Complementing and offering more and/or diversified products/services	17	28.3	3	5.0	20	16.7
Total	**60**	**100.0**	**60**	**100.0**	**120**	**100.0**
Chi-Square results	χ^2 = 24.241 d.f. = 2 p = 0.000 Cramer's V = 0.449					

n – sample; χ^2 – Chi-square value; d.f. – degrees of freedom; p – probability value
Source: The authors.

In addition, the results of this study also reflect the owners/managers' awareness of current market and consumers' trends, especially as far as the Douro Valley is concerned. Market/consumers trends were perceived as being the most important factor of the external environment if they were to cooperate in the future with other businesses from wine/tourism industry, as it is shown in Table 8. These results are also in line with the literature, as it is acknowledged that external business environment can drive businesses from cooperation (Smallbone et al. 2002). External environment characteristics refer to factors that characterize the external business environment outside the business (in which businesses operate) (Capon, 2009). In the context of SMEs, the external business environment is often considered as a driver because its factors/characteristics 'push' decision makers into cooperation in order to face challenges and explore opportunities to keep themselves in business (Elmuti and Kathawala, 2001; Fyall and Garrod, 2005). New market opportunities may be found, for example, in the new attitudes of consumers as they are much more demanding than a few decades ago. Consumers currently ask for personalised products and services and change very frequently from one product to another (European Commission, 2003). These opportunities are considered drivers to cooperation because businesses will be able to enhance adaptive capabilities to new market trends through cooperation with other businesses. Through cooperation, businesses will be able to increase awareness of the new trends and the ability to understand them and relate them to business opportunities (European Commission, 2003).

TABLE 8. THE EXTERNAL FACTOR OF THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERED BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT IF RESPONDENTS WERE TO COOPERATE IN THE FUTURE

	Tourism		Wine		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Competition	10	11.8	2	2.9	12	7.8
Market/demand trends	63	74.1	56	82.4	119	77.8
Overall economic situation	12	14.1	10	14.7	22	14.4
Total	**85**	**100**	**68**	**100**	**153**	**100**
Chi-Square results	χ^2 = 4.089 d.f. = 2 p = 0.129					

n – sample; χ2 – Chi-square value; d.f. – degrees of freedom; p – probability value.
Source: The authors.

For 77.8% of total respondents, market/demand trends were perceived to be the most important external factor because they wanted to meet/exceed customers' requests/expectations, particularly tourism respondents, namely participating in wine-related activities, such as harvests. These results indicate that tourism businesses are more aware of the current market and consumers trends in the region and that they recognise the importance of offering wine-related products/services to meet the aspirations of customers and visitors when they visit the region. The fact that tourism businesses tend to initiate the cooperation also supports this finding (Table 9).

Given the results above, the study indicates that tourism owners/managers recognise more easily the advantage of cooperating with wine businesses, getting access to complementary activities and providing consumers wine-related products/services. Owners/managers of wine and tourism businesses, especially the latter, cooperate with others because they acknowledge the need of offering complementary products and current market trends. The perception that tourism businesses' performance is more often interdependent on other stakeholders is largely acknowledged in the literature, particularly given the fact that the tourism industry is composed by many and different players offering a variety of products/services (Fyall and Spyriadis, 2003; Fyall and Garrod, 2005; Buhalis and Peters, 2006). Thus, the results suggest that there is a great potential for cooperation being adopted by owners/managers of tourism to provide tourism experiences (being the result of the complementary activities provided through cooperation).

TABLE 9. WHO INITIATED COOPERATION

	Tourism		Wine		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
My Business	37	61.7	17	28.3	54	45.0
The other Business	12	20	21	35.0	33	27.5
Both/all businesses involved	11	18.3	22	36.70	33	27.5
Total	**60**	**100.0**	**60**	**100.0**	**120**	**100.0**
Chi-Square results	χ^2 = 13.529 d.f.= 2 p = 0.001 Cramer's V = 0.336					

n – sample; χ^2 – Chi-square value; d.f. – degrees of freedom; p – probability value

Source: The authors.

Tourism businesses cooperate with "Quintas" (the wine businesses that produce, bottle and sell wine in the market). In turn, wine businesses cooperate more with restaurants (25%), and with rural accommodation (14%) and leisure/entertainment businesses (14%). Overall, 32% of the respondents indicated the resources and products that the other businesses have as the main reason to cooperate with them specifically. This reason has been more frequently indicated by wine businesses (40%). Although tourism respondents also indicated this reason (25%), which reinforces their recognition that they 'need' wine businesses to provide complementary activities and to increase/diversify their offer and therefore better respond to customers' needs and expectations, their most frequent reason was the fact of having 'Prior knowledge and personal trust in the other business people' (33%) (χ^2 = 8.363; d.f. = 4 p = 0.070). Given the results, one can say that apart from the reasons referred above, personal relationships, prior knowledge and trust are also important reasons why owners/managers of tourism businesses cooperate with each other in the region. These results are in line with the literature review as in the importance of personal relationships has been to SMEs has already been noted (OPTOUR, 2003; Silva, 2012).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The foremost contribution of this paper is to offer original data about inter-business cooperation in the Douro Valley in the context of wine and tourism industries. Given that this data has not been collected before, this study is contributing to applied knowledge in this specific region of Portugal. In addition, this paper, based on the results of the study on diagonal cooperation conducted in the Douro Valley, Portugal can provide significant insights regarding the potential of cooperation in the provision of tourism experiences by owners/managers of micro and small businesses, especially wine and tourism.

Cooperation is already being adopted by many of the owners/managers of wine and tourism businesses in the region, being tourism owners/managers those that tend to initiate the cooperation initiatives/arrangements. This adoption is being motivated by perceptions about the external environment, more specifically current market trends, and by business objectives. Cooperation is being adopted to enhance business promotion and image, to improve financial situation and to complement and offer more and/or diversified products. When choosing partners to cooperate with personal relationships, more specifically, prior knowledge and trust are important. Although visitor experiences were not clearly indicated by businesses in the region as one of the main current trends in the tourism market, it is in a way implied, as respondents, especially tourism owners/managers acknowledged an increasing demand for complementary and diversified products/services and activities, such as participating in harvests, wine tasting. This suggests that even though the terminology regarding tourists' experiences was not referred, they are already cooperating to provide experiences-related activities. Thus, it seems that cooperation has a great potential in the provision of tourism experiences in the Douro Valley, particularly by tourism businesses.

These results can have practical implications both for businesses and for trade and governmental organizations promoting the development of tourism experiences in the region. If trade and governmental organizations aim to increase the experiences-related offer in the region and knowing that these experiences are the result of interaction between businesses, particularly through cooperative initiatives, they need to know and/or understand how owners/managers of tourism and wine SMEs view cooperation and their ensuing behaviour, as it can provide insights into what needs are to be addressed when successful establishment of cooperation and tourism experiences are considered and intended.

The findings of this study can facilitate the formulation of appropriate and actionable incentives to cooperation (to those who do not cooperate yet) and also to support strategies that assist the development of SMEs and their industries with a focus on tourism experiences. Because owners/managers perceptions are highly influential in their decisions, it is suggested that professional education for cooperation and tourism experiences is required. Workshops should be put in place with a greater emphasis upon the role of cooperation and the importance of tourism experiences in the achievement of objectives and competitiveness of SMEs. Workshops can help to raise awareness about, and willingness towards, cooperation and the provision of tourism experiences, which is particularly relevant for SMEs under conditions of an increasing intense competition and economic and financial turbulence, and especially when located in rural areas. By integrating their offers, wine and tourism businesses in remote rural areas are in better conditions to face experiences-related competition and to be more competitive in the tourism market in general.

6. LIMITATIONS

This research has focused on measuring 'what is going on' in terms of the behaviour towards cooperation and in terms of the influencing factors. Hence, one can argue that a detailed study focusing specifically tourism experiences is needed in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon, by using qualitative and/or quantitative methodology, or both. Also, in this study only the perceptions of owners/managers were taken into consideration and further studies could explore customers' perspectives with regard to experiences resulting from the products/services and activities offered based on cooperation arrangements/relationships. Hence, future research could focus on the above limitations, strengthen and validate the findings with further studies and expand the knowledge with regard to the potential of cooperation in the provision of tourism experiences.

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