The Creative Turn of the Wine Industry

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ABSTRACT

This article describes how there is a large amount of research on strategic management literature on wine industry; however, there is insufficient published literature that underlines the importance of wine as a creative product. In the aesthetic economy, specific industries such as food, there is an active contribution to economic growth. In this context, artistic creation plays a fundamental role and creativity and savoir-faire to become symbols of a new way to produce. In this context, wine can be considered an aesthetic product. It is a symbol of quality, civilization and authenticity. Wine is defined as “the liquid art” also, because its production process is a combination of emotions and creativity, but also branding and design. This article aims to understand if wine can really be considered a creative product and if the wine industry can be considered a creative industry with the goal of developing a creative wine business. Finally, this article presents a synthesis of a qualitative analysis based on secondary data, with contributions coming from literature and empirical cases.

KEYWORDS

Aesthetic Economy, Creative Industries, Creative Turn, Creativity, Culture, Robert Mondavi, Wine Industry, Wine

INTRODUCTION

There is growing interest in wine sector and in the role wine economy in contemporary economy today. In fact, contemporary economy finds its reason of being in the production of contents and in their ability to tell stories. Nowadays, consumers are careful about products and services’ quality, but more than everything, they are interested in the “story of quality”, rather than in quality, objectively measured (Sacco, 2012). Post-industry economy, is characterized by a focus on immaterial and intangible assets, such as culture and creativity. They represent competitive stimuli, which governments, communities, companies and individuals cannot underestimate. The process in which beauty and creativity not only represent a piece of art, but also drivers to the economic development is defined “the aesthetization of economy” (Livat-Pécheux, 2009). In the aesthetic economy or aesthetic capitalism, some specific sectors such as luxury, fashion and gastronomy, actively contribute to the economic growth. Rifkin (2000) claimed that also traditional industrial sectors have been influenced by the research of beauty. The same author added that in contemporary economy, there has been the passage from the industrial production to the cultural one. In this context, artistic creations, together with their creators, play a fundamental role (Garnham, 2005) and creativity and savoir-faire become symbols of a new way to produce (Menger, 2002). The consequence of this process of aesthetization reveals itself in the fact that any individual choice is subjected to the taste’s judgement. As a result, taste and feelings have become market values. In this context cultural and creative productions can be regarded as the sources of a contemporary and competitive advantage, even if they are often seen as unproductive processes. In this sense, wine is a cultural product (Gombault & Livat-Pècheux, 2009). Today, some DOI: 10.4018/IJTHMDA.2018010103

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countries such as Italy, France and Spain, are champions among the finest wine producers. Wine has always represented an inevitable element in men’s tables and diets; its symbolic and aesthetic features have encouraged some cultures to associate it with various meanings of cultural and creative nature (Gombault, 2011). Wine is a cultural heritage, which has to be enhanced and protected, since it is the result of a combination between natural and cultural heritage. Nowadays, wine is still a cultural product; both wine culture and vineyard landscapes are celebrated by important awards, like a chance to be entered in the UNESCO List.

However, there are many researches in strategic management literature on wine industry, but today there are not enough works that underline the importance of wine as creative product. The study of this gap in strategic management literature is very important, because it allows us to interpret the new frontiers of wine industry. The paper wants to explore new marketing frontiers applied to wine sector, starting from more established marketing strategies adopted by luxury wine brand up to the foreshadowing of new possibilities of valorization for small wineries. Beyond literary review and beyond direct knowledge, the method of the research is inductive-predictive type; in particular, the method crossed available information about the most popular strategies, in order to outline possible applications in small wine firms, through a qualitative research approach base on cases study.

The paper is organized as follow: theoretical background briefly describes the importance of creative industries, cultural meaning of wine, the role of wine design and the role of wine tourism for the sector. The following section is dedicated to the methodology and research design. The presentation of results is dealt with in the following paragraph. A discussion and the proposed future work conclude this paper.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Role of Creativity and Creative Industries

Today, it is clear that culture makes part of economic development strategies and it is evident that communities, which pursue a barely ambitious strategy of local development, consider culture as a privileged resource (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003). In this context, cultural and creative Industries play a central role. Even though the issue of creative and cultural industries has been discussed for more than twenty years and characterized by the presence of numerous and important papers, it does not have a shared and generally accepted definition (Cunningham et al., 2008). Often, in common language, the concepts of cultural and creative industries overlap, even if subtle but important differences exist among them. Galloway and Dunlop (2007), bitterly criticized the definition of creative and cultural industries; the two authors strongly underlined the lack in rigor and the presence of a great confusion about the issue. The first and important explanation about cultural industries was Adorno and Horkeimer’s (2002). The purpose of their definition was to underline the ability of the market to satisfy people’ cultural needs, overcoming the classic vision of culture, made only by state funding (Galloway & Dunlop, 2007). In a work realized by Raymond Williams about the acknowledgment of high culture, there was an attempt to historicize the notion of art and culture. At the same time, it was given a sociological essence, rather than a conservative official vision. In his definition of culture, holistic and more orientated towards the comprehension of the “way of life”, Williams added, in the meaning of the term, popular culture and new music expressions (such as jazz music), but also the attire, public spaces of integration and the consume of new cultural products. In this perspective “not as passive consume but as active forms of symbolic resistance to the dominant social order” (O’Connor, 2007). Garnham (2005) defines culture as the production and the consumption of symbolic goods, through a pragmatic approach, more interested in the functioning of the cultural sector on the market. Cultural industries are defined as those institutions of our society which employ production and organization ways, typical of isandustrial corporations to produce and diffuse symbols in the form of cultural goods and services, generally and though not exclusively as “goods.” Despite the fact
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