
Editorial

Kyuhoo Lee*

Department of Business Administration,
School of Business and Economics,
Sonoma State University,
1801 East Cotati Avenue, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, USA
Email: Kyuhoo.Lee@sonoma.edu
*Corresponding author

Thi Hong Van Hoang

Montpellier Business School,
34080 Montpellier, France
Email: thv.hoang@montpellier-bs.com

Biographical notes: Kyuhoo Lee is an Associate Professor of Wine Business and Marketing at Sonoma State University, California, USA. He received his PhD in Hospitality and Tourism Management from Virginia Tech. He also received an AACSB Postdoctoral Bridge to Business Program Certificate (Marketing) at Virginia Tech in 2009. He specialises in the study of wine brand management, and wine consumer behaviour. He has published his works in academic journals, such as *Journal of Retailing*, *Services Marketing*, and *Service Industries Journal*.

Thi Hong Van Hoang is an Associate Professor at Montpellier Business School (France). She received her PhD in Management Sciences in December 2010 from the University of Orléans (France). Her teaching and research topics deal with sustainable finance, financial markets, corporate finance, and environmental economics. Her research has been published in journals such as *Energy Journal*, *Economic History Review*, *Accounting and Finance*, *Finance Research Letters*, *International Review of Financial Analysis*, *Small Business Economics*, *Energy Economics*, *Economic Modelling*, and *Business Strategy and the Environment*.

1 Introduction

The global wine industry is changing dramatically. Global warming, the coronavirus, and evolving technology, such as 5G technology, are all having a significant impact on the global wine industry significantly (Asimov, 2019; Canziani et al., 2020; Dana et al., 2013; Sgroi et al., 2016). In addition to these external factors, several internal factors are also driving change in the industry, including export performance (Dana et al., 2016), cooperation performance (Granata et al., 2017), and network performance (Felzensztein et al., 2019). The competition in the wine industry has become fiercer and is only intensifying further.

The US wine industry has already lost nearly \$6 billion in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic (Swindell, 2020). Specifically, small family-owned wineries that rely on direct to consumer sales at the winery have been impacted more severely than large wineries that sell their wines through diverse distribution channels. To combat this, wineries in California (USA) have introduced virtual tastings, virtual wine education, and virtual events due to the coronavirus (Carlton, 2020). Even after the coronavirus pandemic abates, virtual tastings and wine education may continue to accommodate those who cannot visit wineries. It is expected that more and more wineries will adopt new technologies in their winery operations ranging from virtual tastings to virtual winery tours.

2 Contribution of this special issue

This special issue on the wine sector deals with a variety of subjects ranging from brand management to entrepreneurial innovation in the evolving global wine industry to financial and accounting management of wine firms. The first article of the special issue entitled 'The role of brand architecture and brand heritage for family-owned wineries: the case of Crete, Greece' (Stella Kladou, Maria Psimouli and Ilias Kaparelitis) explores the importance of brand architecture and brand heritage in developing a branding strategy for small wineries in Crete, Greece. The authors stress how a number of small wineries in Crete made family heritage and tradition the key component of their branding development. This research offers a useful branding strategy to small family-owned wineries.

The second study entitled 'Designing a cost accounting system at a winemaking company' (Inês Martins, Maria Major and Alexandra Fernandes) seeks to design an innovative cost accounting system for wine-making firms. This research outlines a method that a wine firm can apply to determine the production costs related to a specific category of wine. This 'homogeneous cost pool method' can help wine firms make better decisions about their prices and ways they can control their costs. On the other hand, the third study of this special issue entitled 'Working capital management and profitability of wine firms in France: an empirical analysis' (Beysül Aytac, Thi Hong Van Hoang, Amine Lahiani and Laure Michel) stresses the importance of efficient working capital management. The authors find that the cash conversion cycle of wine firms in France has a negative impact on their financial performance. It means that a delay in converting working capital into cash plays an important role in the financial management of winemaking firms.

The fourth article entitled 'The entrepreneurship power house of ambition and innovation: exploring German wineries' (Marc Dressler) discusses the impacts of innovation on entrepreneurship in the German wine industry. The author investigates the major forces driving changes as perceived by small German winery operators. In addition, the author examines how external environmental changes, such as changing wine consumer behaviour, have affected innovation activities in German wineries. The findings of the study are insightful and provide small family winery operators with useful suggestions on innovation and the forces driving change in the global wine industry.

The authors of the fifth article entitled ‘Stories a world apart: storytelling differentiation in Napa and Stellenbosch’ (Dan Parrish and James Downing) discuss the storytelling strategy embedded in wineries in California’s Napa Valley (USA), and in Stellenbosch, South Africa. They further identify the major themes of winery stories in the two regions by analysing the websites of wineries selected in both countries. The authors assert that winery stories play a pivotal role in establishing brand identity and brand essence. Given the high fragmentation of the global wine industry, wineries that can integrate a unique story into all the aspects of their brand touchpoints can be successful.

The last article entitled ‘Disintermediation: the optimal distribution strategy for small wineries?’ (Sharon L. Forbes, Mark Wilson and Khalid Alsulaiman) presents a distribution strategy for small wineries based on data collected in New Zealand. The authors discuss how small winery operators can utilise a direct to consumer sales strategy, on which a number of small winery operators rely. In particular, the authors suggest several direct to consumer sales tactics that a small winery owner can adopt, such as using diverse technological tools (CRM, social media, website), and a variety of events to maximise direct to consumer sales.

This special issue of the journal sheds light on the multifaceted aspects of the global wine industry. We hope that the issue contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the wine business. The guest editors would like to thank all the authors and reviewers who contributed to this special issue. We are grateful to the Editor of the journal, Professor Léo-Paul Dana (Montpellier Business School, Montpellier, France), for giving us the opportunity to coordinate in this special issue. Our thanks also go to the Editorial Office of the journal that helped us in the editorial process.

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