Workshop Wine Wednesdays: Improving knowledge and motivations about local wines.

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The grape and wine industry in the United States is driven by the California wine industry, which represents 85% of the overall U.S. wine production (United States Wine and Grape Industry FAQS, 2017). California produces wines from *Vitis vinifera* grape cultivars, including Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, which are commonly grown around the world. However, in Iowa and other U.S. midwestern states with a cold climate, those *Vitis vinifera* grape cultivars do not survive the harsh cold winter. Due to climatic conditions, the Iowa wine industry produces interspecific cold hardy grape wines, such as Marquette and La Crescent cultivars, that are not well-known by consumers (Yontz, 2016). The wine industry in Iowa is growing, with more than 350 vineyards and wineries (Midwest Grape and Wine Industry Institute, 2021). The volume of Iowa wine, mead, and cider produced in 2021 increased by 33% compared to 2020 (Farm, Food and Enterprise Development, 2021). Similarly, sales of 167,436 gallons of native Iowa wines in 2021 represented an increase of 58.8% from 2020 (Farm, Food and Enterprise Development, 2021).

In 2016, the Vernon Research Group surveyed Iowa wine consumers and found 67% of respondents consumed Iowa-made wine at least a few times per year, and 33% consumed Iowa-made wine at least once monthly (Vernon Research Group, 2016). Additionally, these Iowa wine consumers perceived Iowa-produced wines as sweet and delicious, which was correlated with the frequency of Iowa wine consumers tasting Iowa wines (Vernon Research Group, 2016).
(Vernon Research Group, 2016). Based on these findings, Iowa wine industry members suggested that Extension programs, such as roundtables, webinars, and YouTube videos, be developed in order to promote knowledge and awareness of local wines and wineries among local consumers. In particular, an Iowa Wine Consumer Extension program designed to provide consumers the educational opportunity to learn about Iowa grapes and wines and to change their objective and subjective knowledge was suggested.

**PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this pilot study was to: (a) create a new educational program for Iowa wine consumers; (b) evaluate its impact on participants’ knowledge; and (c) determine its impact on participants’ motivation to purchase and consume local Iowa wines. This project was reviewed and was not considered a research project and, therefore, did not need Institutional Review Board (IRB ID: 21–293) approval.

**METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

First, a team comprised of an enologist, local winemakers, and Human Sciences Extension and Outreach Food and Health specialists developed and pilot tested a three-hour Wine Consumer Workshop, Wine Wednesday. This workshop was offered to anyone aged 21 years and older interested in learning about Iowa grapes and wines. The workshop was developed following a logic model design process to account for inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Implementing a logic model provided researchers the tools to effectively design the program evaluation (Workman & Scheer, 2012). The Wine Wednesday workshop was designed for Iowans, consumers, winemakers, associations, and Extension county staff, to create a hands-on workshop. The goal of this hands-on workshop was to create knowledge change to Iowa wine consumers. In this article, we focused on measuring the outcomes of change in awareness, knowledge, and motivation (short-term outcomes), change in behavior and decision-making (medium-term outcomes), and the long-term impact for social and economic change. This workshop included some support materials, such as a brochure, a PowerPoint presentation, discussion with winemakers, and organization with winemakers and Extension county staff, as well as conducting the workshops with handouts and wine-tasting (Table 1).

We assessed the impact of the workshop by using a 12-question paper-pencil retrospective evaluation provided at the end of the workshop (n = 57 responses). The evaluation inquired after sociodemographic attributes (four questions), knowledge (four questions), and their planned behavior with open-ended questions about their feedback on the workshop (four questions) (Table 1).

Participants assessed their pre- and post- perceived knowledge, answering the question, “For each statement, please indicate your overall knowledge BEFORE and AFTER participating in this workshop by circling the most appropriate response,” on: (a) overall knowledge about grapes and wines in the world; (b) Iowa grapes and wines; (c) the steps and process of winemaking, including the different types of wines; (d) the taste and flavors of Iowa wines; and (e) local Iowa wineries, using a four-point Likert scale (1 = poor, 4 = excellent). Participant likelihood of visiting local wineries and purchasing Iowa wine were assessed with a five-point Likert scale (1 = not likely, 5 = very likely). This survey was reviewed for face validity by two Food and Health program specialists and an evaluation expert and then exported to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 26.0, IBM) for further analysis. Pre- and post- changes in knowledge and likelihood of purchasing Iowa wines were assessed using a Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

**RESULTS**

**PARTICIPANTS**

We delivered six workshops during fall 2021, reaching 63 participants living in Iowa; 57 completed the program evaluation. Participants were mostly older than 61 years (46%), female (72%), and white (98%) (Table 2).

Significant changes in self-perceived knowledge were detected for all five questions (p<0.0001). Prior to the workshops, very few participants rated their knowledge as “good” or “excellent” (16.1%) for all areas, compared to 43.7% at POST (Figure 1).

At the end of the workshop, the majority of participants selected that they were “very likely” to visit a winery in their county/region within the next year (94.6%) and to visit a winery in another county/region (91.1%) (Figure 2). Furthermore, the likelihood of purchasing wine significantly increased from PRE (71.9% very likely) to POST (96.5%) (p<0.0001) (Figure 2).

Participant feedback revealed they liked the interactive and engaging nature of the workshops. Participants found the workshops to be informative. One shared, “[The workshop was] highly informative for the general consumer.” Another commented, “I liked learning about grapes grown in Iowa and intro [sic] to some local wineries.” Participants also reported the workshops opened their eyes to Iowa wines. One stated, “Iowa wine is great! [I] Learned some great new info [sic] about local wineries and the local industry. Iowa wines have improved since I last tried them—that’s a good thing. I enjoyed all of them.” These statements show an overall positive trend of impacting their awareness and knowledge of local grapes and wines and changing their perception of them, which would help the grape and wine industry to get more customers.
This hands-on pilot wine education program showed that when consumers interact with the product, their overall knowledge, awareness, and planned behavior increases. This was anticipated, as previous research has indicated that by providing resources from Extension to industry and consumers about the specific product, there is a positive impact on the overall motivation for behavior change (Brown et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2018). However, different groups of consumers exist based on their subjective and objective knowledge, and the change of knowledge and behavior is different depending on the category of consumers being engaged in those workshops. Our results suggested that the group of consumers who participated in this study knew their level of knowledge prior to the workshops and would be “neophytes” who like to consume wine and are a target for education by marketers (Ellis & Caruana, 2018).

The positive change in knowledge, awareness, and planned behavior detected in this pilot project may be due to the unique structure of the Wine Wednesday workshop. For the Wine Wednesday workshops, we used technical information appropriate for a lay audience in an interactive face-to-face education session. Bloom et al. (2017) also reported that utilization of the product examples is an effective education strategy for promoting local food products. The tasting component of this workshop and discussion with other participants and winemakers also helped consumers to learn and adjust their initial expectations. Another workshop feature that likely contributed to the outcomes detected was the wine selection, as it helped provide a broad range of wine types

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**Table 1. Wine Wednesdays Description Evaluation Process**

| Program Locations | Six Iowa wineries across Iowa, based on a minimum of two wineries in each county:  
| Central Iowa: Polk, Webster  
| Eastern Iowa: Dubuque, Iowa  
| Western Iowa: Woodbury, Pottawattamie |
| Program Promotion | Email announcements sent to various Extension and Outreach list serves in the designated counties  
| Press releases to Extension and Outreach  
| Promotion of the workshop from hosting wineries (e.g., on the winery website, flyer in tasting room) |
| Topics Discussed | Specific characteristics of Iowa grapes and wines  
| Challenges of growing grapes in Iowa  
| Winemaking process for various types of wines (e.g., difference between red and white winemaking)  
| Wine-tasting and wine description  
| Wine storage |
| Delivery Modality | Face-to-face |
| Educational Activities | Accompanying PowerPoint  
| Supplemental printed educational materials  
| Iowa wine brochure (https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/Iowa-Wine-Brochure)  
| Aroma wheel (A. C. Noble - Wine Aroma Wheel Duo, Amazon)  
| Wine-tasting to better understand the taste and aroma specificities of Iowa wines |
| Program Partners | Local wineries (n = 17 total)  
| County Extension offices (n = 7 total) |
| Pilot Program Evaluation Details | Retrospective 12-question evaluation provided to participants at the end of the workshop with:  
| Sociodemographic  
| Perceived knowledge on:  
| grapes and wines;  
| Iowa grapes and wines;  
| winemaking process;  
| Iowa wine-tasting; and  
| local wineries  
| Planned behavior |
Watrelot, Al-Mazroa Smith, and Francis

These findings indicate the Wine Wednesday workshops positively impacted consumer knowledge about Iowa wines and wineries, as well as the intention to visit local wineries and purchase wine. Therefore, these workshops offer promise for both consumers and the Iowa grape and wine industry. This may aid the Iowa wine industry, which is concerned about the promotion and advertisement of their industry. A follow-up study is recommended to evaluate the program’s medium-term outcomes, which focus on specific behavior changes, including consumption and purchase of Iowa wines and in visits to Iowa wineries. Though this pilot program and evaluation data were specific to Iowa, this study can be used

Table 2. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Workshop Participants (n = 54 respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics (number of responses)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years) (n = 54)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<td>51–60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>61 and older</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender (n = 53)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>71.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race (n = 52)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Self-perceived knowledge before and after the workshop (n = 57 respondents).
to develop the awareness and knowledge of non-\textit{Vitis vinifera} wines to consumers from U.S. midwestern and northern states sharing the same challenges.

**REFERENCES**


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**Figure 2.** Post-workshop outcomes of likelihood for planned behavior change.


