

## MOTIVATION, BEHAVIORS, AND TRAVEL ACTIVITIES OF BEER TOURISTS

MATTHEW J. STONE,\* ROBERTA GARIBALDI,† AND ANDREA POZZI†

\*Department of Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management, California State University,  
Chico, Chico, CA, USA

†Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy

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This article explores the demand side of beer tourism, in particular the characteristics of travelers motivated by beer experiences using a survey of American leisure travelers ( $N = 562$ ). Travelers motivated by beer (called “beer tourists” or “beer travelers”) can be considered a distinct market segment. They take part in both food tourism (e.g., taking a food or beverage tour) and many general tourism activities (e.g., attending major events, attending performing arts events) at a higher rate than other leisure travelers. This fits within cultural omnivore theory, and beer tourists can be considered “cultural omnivores” participating in activities not solely related with their primary travel motivation. While traveling, beer tourists also reported spending 42% more per day on food and beverage than other leisure travelers, indicating their value to destinations. Practical implications for destinations include cross-marketing and promotion, as beer-motivated tourists spend money across a wide variety of experiences. Theoretical implications are also discussed.

**Key words: Beer tourism; Culinary tourism; Food tourism; Beverage tourism;  
Cultural omnivore theory; Tourist motivation**

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### Introduction

Breweries, beer museums and exhibits, beer festivals, and beer trails are growing as tourist attractions across Europe and the US. Guinness Storehouse is the Ireland’s leading international visitor attraction and accounted for over 1.7 million guests in 2018 (Guinness Storehouse, 2019) while the Munich Oktoberfest in Germany attracted about 6.3 million visitors during the 2019 event

(Oktoberfest, 2019). In the US, large and small cities have recently become hubs for breweries and beer trails or routes, festivals, and “camps” (Armon, 2017; Arnold, 2014; Batz, 2018; Herz, 2016). For instance, the city of Denver (Colorado) was visited by over 60,000 people during the 3-day Great American Beer Festival (Meyer, 2019). In Oregon, breweries, pubs, and tasting rooms accounted for about 19 million guests in 2016 (Oregon Craft Beer, 2017). In general, beer tourism includes visitation

Address correspondence to Matthew J. Stone, Department of Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management, California State University, Chico, 400 West First Street, Chico, CA 95929-0560, USA. Tel: +1 530-898-4051; E-mail: [mjstone@csuchico.edu](mailto:mjstone@csuchico.edu)

to beer-related attractions, such as breweries, beer festivals, beer shows, and beer trails (Plummer, Telder, Hashimoto, & Summers, 2005).

The growing popularity of beer tourism has stimulated breweries and destination marketing organizations to actively create and promote beer-related activities to attract niche tourists and supplement current offerings (e.g., Alonso, 2011; Alonso & Alexander, 2017; Baginski & Bell, 2011; Dunn & Kregor, 2014; Eberts, 2014; Murray & Kline, 2015; Plummer, Telfer, & Hashimoto, 2006; Plummer et al., 2005; Rogerson & Collins, 2015; Spracklen, Laurencic, & Kenyon, 2013). Attracting beer tourists generates market advantages for producers (Dunn & Kregor, 2014; Dunn & Wickham, 2015) and contributes to increase the overall attractiveness of destinations (Bujdosó & Szucs, 2012; Murray & Kline, 2015; Savastano, 2011). However, little attention has been devoted to understanding characteristics of beer tourists (also called “beer travelers”). Beer tourists are those who have been motivated to travel to participate in a beer activity (such as to visit a brewery, beer trail, or beer festival) (Plummer et al., 2005).

Determining the attributes of beer tourists and what activities they actively seek is important to attract these tourists and to develop destinations. Previous studies created profiles of beer tourists by capturing travelers in the field (Francioni, 2012; Francioni & Byrd, 2012; Francioni Kraftchick, Byrd, Canziani, & Gladwell, 2014; Plummer et al., 2005; Rogerson & Collins, 2015), but they tended to consider beer-related activities in isolation, without considering the wide range of activities that a destination offers. This study examined beer tourism in a broader context, and aims to: (1) identify a profile of beer tourists in terms of travel behaviors; (2) provide evidence that it is a distinct segment of travelers by determining differences from non-beer tourists; and (3) place beer tourists in a cultural omnivore theoretical framework. In doing so, it attempts to extend food tourism theory by connecting beer travel activities with other food and non-food travel activities.

Recommendations for tourism practitioners are also provided. It is hoped that this study will theoretically advance food and beverage tourism studies by furthering beer tourism research, which is still in its infancy (Howlett, 2013) with little empirical

research (Everett, 2016). We also try to answer the call by Robinson, Getz, and Dolnicar (2018) to investigate motivational and behavioral preferences in food and beverage tourism segments.

## Review of Literature

### *What Is Beer Tourism?*

Beer tourism is generally considered a subset of food tourism or beverage tourism (Murray & Kline, 2015). Preliminary studies drew on wine tourism literature (e.g., Hall, 1996; Macionis, 1996) to highlight concepts that may have been applicable to beer tourism. The most cited and comprehensive definition of beer tourism is based on that proposed by Hall (1996) and Macionis (1996) for wine tourism, namely a “visitation to breweries, beer festivals and beer shows for which beer tasting and experiencing the attributes of beer region are the prime motivating factors for visitors” (Plummer et al., 2005, p. 449).

Beer tourism typically includes activities such as “brewery excursions, beer tasting, beer festivals, beer trails or more complex organized tours with beer themes” (Jablonská, Pobis, & Timcak, 2013, p. 25). Bujdosó and Szucs (2012) proposed a further conceptualization, dividing beer tourism in two distinct groups. For one group, beer is the primary motivation. For the other, place is the primary motivation, although these places are often connected to beer (including festivals, themed museums, beer houses, and breweries).

Other studies considered beer and beer attractions in connection with heritage tourism. Henderson (2009), Dillivan (2012), and Spracklen et al. (2013) pointed out that beer tourism is an integral part of tourists’ consumption of local heritage and experiencing local history and cultures as reflected in food and drink. Thus, it can be viewed as an attempt to create or maintain an attachment to a locality or place, as in the case of “real ale tourism” in Northern England (Maye, 2012; Niester, 2008) or brewery tourism in Bavaria (Pechlaner, Raich, & Hashimoto, 2009). In an extension of local heritage, Holtkamp, Shelton, Dalt, Hiner, and Hagelman III (2016) assessed neolocalism in microbreweries. While they did not specifically consider beer tourism, they found that many breweries used localized factors in their naming and

branding, and they also were active in many community engagement metrics.

*Who Are the Beer Tourists (Beer Travelers) and What Do They Want?*

The limited existing literature has called (implicitly or explicitly) for research into a profile of beer tourists. Several studies have developed a profile of beer tourists by capturing travelers in the field (e.g., in breweries and beer trails). Plummer et al. (2005) investigated activities and outcomes of visitors participating in an Ale Trail in Canada as well as demographic profiles. They found that beer tourists were mainly locals or domestic tourists aged 30–50 with a specific interest in beer and beer-related activities (e.g., visits to local breweries, tastings of new types of beer). Similar results were reported by Rogerson and Collins (2015) when surveying visitors to South African beer festivals.

These studies partly assumed that all visitors of beer attractions have a reasonable level of interest in beer. However, as the food and wine tourism literature demonstrates (Brown, Havitz, & Getz, 2007; Robinson et al., 2018), couples or groups may partake in certain activities to gratify the desire of only a single member of the party; this may be the case with travelers who have a specific interest in beer. Francioni and associates (Francioni, 2012; Francioni & Byrd, 2012; Francioni Kraftchick et al., 2014) tried to address this shortcoming by investigating beer attractions and their visitors (travelers who visited beer attractions but had no specific motivation). In their studies they reported that beer tourists are a distinct segment of travelers, and the desire for beer-related experiences (e.g., visits to breweries, tasting new beers) was more often combined with the search for enjoyment, socialization, and relaxation within such activities than in non-beer tourists. Similar findings were reported by Berend (2017) and Bradley, Maples, Lewis, and Berend (2017) in surveying brewery visitors in Kentucky (USA). This is the beginning of a linkage between beer tourism and a range of cultural activities.

From a consumer behavior standpoint, many predominantly North American empirical studies, using national samples of leisure travelers, investigated the likelihood of participating in beer, food,

and wine activities among the general population. The Travel Activities and Motivation Survey (TAMS) (Lang Research, 2001) and World Food Travel Association (Stone & Migacz, 2016) studies reported an increasing interest toward visits to breweries and themed festivals, especially among food tourists. They also showed that such activities are often combined with food and wine experiences. Although these market researchers did not focus on beer tourists, they highlight that beer tourism is an interesting travel market to pursue for destinations. Furthermore, they demonstrated a wide variance in attitudes and behaviors toward beer tourism activities—from “dabblers” to lovers.

Further empirical and conceptual studies are required in order to generate an understanding of beer tourism (Dunn & Wickham, 2015) and beer tourists (Plummer et al., 2005; Francioni Kraftchick et al., 2014). Most studies conducted on demand-side issues tend to ignore the fact that people are active when they travel and pursue a wide variety of activities, some related to their trip purpose, but many more unrelated. For example, a tourist may visit a brewery during a sightseeing tour or in a rainy day while he/she is enjoying a ski vacation. Beer tourism does not occur in isolation, so examining beer activities within the broader context of food and beverage tourism may allow a deeper comprehension of travel behavior of beer tourism.

*Beer Consumption in Tourism*

There are many conceptualizations of travelers' food and drink consumption patterns. Mitchell and Hall (2003), for instance, categorized travelers consuming food and beverage experiences into clusters accordingly with their level of involvement and interest in food, from “gastronomes” to “familiar foods.” Croce and Perri (2010) classified them by considering their exposure and experience both in private and professional contexts. Garibaldi (2017) identified different segments on the basis of their knowledge, interest, and types of activity they are seeking (e.g., cultural, social, consumptive). A more sophisticated segmentation based on field research was proposed by the International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA) (2010) (now the World Food Travel Association), which investigated psychographic portraits of food travelers.

These “PsychoCulinary” profiles were developed on the basis of travelers’ opinions, expectations, and attitudes, as to better define food tourism market segments. Apart from these conceptualizations, there appears to be evidence that: i) there is often a delineation between higher and lower involvement, meaning that the market is not homogenous but can be segmented; ii) involvement and risk are closely related, with more involved consumers that seek more often novel environments, situations and activities.

Existing studies on beer tourists mainly provided descriptions in terms of travelers’ motivations, themed activities, and sociodemographic characteristics. However, they have lacked advanced insights about how travelers consume beer activities on holiday. Cultural omnivore theory finds that there is a segment of individuals that can be considered “cultural omnivores” who participated in a variety of leisure activities and at a higher rate. Based on the limited beer tourism research, it can be argued that beer tourists have a reasonable high level of interest in varied activities. They are also likely to express a higher degree of openness to experience and desire to increase breadth of their tastes (not only related to beer but to all food and beverage experiences). On the contrary, non-beer tourists may seek more familiar and less threatening activities, and in a lower number.

### *Cultural Omnivore Theory*

Throughout time, there has been a contrast between “highbrow” and “lowbrow” tastes. In the arts, the concept of high and low culture was used to mark class distinctions. Peterson and Simkus (1992) found that highbrow and lowbrow consumption had changed. In a study of musical tastes, they found that high-status groups, traditionally thought of as participating in “highbrow” activities, actually had a broad range of musical tastes and leisure activities. Therefore, they proposed the term “cultural omnivore” for this group. On the other end of the spectrum, “univores” tended to be involved in one (or a few) aesthetic traditions. A study conducted 10 years later (Peterson & Kern, 1996) found that the omnivores had become even more “omnivorous” by increasing the breadth of their tastes. They proposed that these omnivores do

not necessarily like *everything*, but they are open to a great variety of activities. Emmison (2003) “generally” endorsed the cultural omnivore theory but proposed an additional role of cultural mobility. Thus, it can be stated that cultural omnivores participate in a broader range of activities than others. Within tourism, it could be argued that these travelers would be more important to destinations, as they will consume more activities, likely spending more time and money.

This theory has been applied to tourism. Robinson et al. (2018) surveyed a sample of self-identified foodies and identified differences between “highbrow” individuals and “lowbrow” individuals. The “highbrows” participated in a broad range of cultural activities (not just elite activities). While it could be argued that the authors were utilizing different definitions (highbrow–lowbrow instead of omnivore–univore), they did find distinctions among foodies. The research showed evidence of an “omnivore” segment who had “an appetite . . . for differing food related activities when travelling” (Robinson et al., 2018, p. 375). However, they considered only “foodies” instead of a range of leisure travelers. As well, there was limited practical differentiation between some segments. Stone (2018) also applied cultural omnivore theory to tourism, finding that travel writers in mass media publications presented a variety of highbrow and lowbrow activities, which may appeal to a cultural omnivore.

This study advances cultural omnivore theory in tourism by considering how a market segment (in this instance beer tourists) can be considered on the omnivore–univore spectrum. In particular, are beer tourists open to a great variety of activities that range from usual to novel? And is segmentation based on beer tourism behavior a useful differentiator in terms of tourist behavior?

### Methodology

An approach similar to that of McKercher, Okumus, and Okumus (2008) in their research on food tourism was used. This study examines beer tourism within a broader range of tourism products and activities (primarily those related with food and wine) rather than just beer activities. Much of the research on beer tourism, as well as food and wine, examined the activity in isolation of the broader

suite of products available in the destination mix. This approach may not be useful in determining the characteristics of a specific market segment (Kivela & Crotts, 2005; McKercher et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2018), as it assumes that beer tourists have all the same interest in beer and they visit a single destination for the beer aspects alone. A more holistic approach was considered here.

Additionally, much of the previous research captured travelers who were partaking in beer activities instead of surveying general interest toward food and beverage activities among the leisure traveler population. In doing so, the setting may have an influence (positive or negative) on the results obtained (McKinnon, 1988). A traveler captured at a brewery may be more likely to be a beer-motivated tourist, because he or she is actively participating in the experience. Identifying travelers who have a previous predisposition towards beer travels (namely the motivation of travel) would not allow comparison between beer tourists and others.

Data were collected online utilizing Survey Monkey software. The invitation to participate was sent to a survey panel in the US balanced by gender and by generational cohort. Respondents were required to be at least 18 years of age and have taken at least one overnight trip (minimum 80 km/50 miles) in the past year. In total, 645 responses were collected over a period of less than a week. Data cleansing involved the elimination of 11% of cases due to missing or invalid responses or unqualified respondents. Only respondents at least 21 years old (the legal US drinking age) were retained, for a total of 562 individuals. Table 1 provides a sociodemographic profile of the respondents.

Two batteries of items identified the food-, wine-, and beer-related activities and other tourist activities. The former groups were developed from previous studies (e.g., Lang Research, 2001; Spark et al., 2005; Travel Industry Association [TIAA] and Edge Research, 2006) and comprise 17 food travel activities, including specific beer activities such as “attending a beer festival” and “visiting a beer experience (brewery, taproom, or beer trail).” The latter includes seven general tourist activities (e.g., hiking/walking; attending performing arts, concerts, or plays) that travelers can perform while visiting a destination. In the survey, respondents were required to indicate which of these activities

Table 1  
Demographics of Sample ( $N = 562$ )

Characteristics	%
Generation	
Silent (born pre-1946)	5.6%
Boomers (born 1946–1964)	30.2%
Generation X (born 1965–1980)	31.1%
Millennials (born after 1980)	33.1%
Gender	
Male	45.4%
Female	54.6%
Education	
Have graduated from college	66.3%
Children	
Have children under 18 at home	38.9%

they had participated in during their holidays of the past 2 years.

To qualify the sample, respondents were asked whether they have been motivated to take a trip or visit a destination to visit a beer experience (brewery, taproom, or beer trail) in the past 2 years. Beer tourists were thus defined as travelers who had been motivated to travel to participate in one of the above-mentioned activities (Plummer et al., 2005); tourists who participated in themed activities without being primarily motivated by beer were defined as non-beer tourists (Francioni Kraftchick et al., 2014). Statistical comparisons are made between these two groups to highlight similarities and differences. It must be noted that such distinction, although based on literature, may be limitative because travelers can travel for food and beverage reasons or in combination with other motivations (Quan & Wang, 2004), and even those who attend specific culinary events (like culinary festivals) may each be motivated by different factors, such as socialization, a unique offering, or a sensory experience (Viljoen, Kruger, & Saayman, 2017). It has been proposed that a person could be a food or beverage tourist once in a while or all the time (Getz, Robinson, Andersson, & Vujicic, 2014). This is true also for beer tourists. However, this “beer-motivated” segment has been utilized by past researchers. Further, this market segment is important to identify for breweries and destinations with many beer attractions, as it separates leisure travelers who have not been motivated by beer attractions from those who have.

## Results

### *Sociodemographic Profile*

About one fifth (20.5%) of respondents can be considered beer tourists, as they have been motivated to take a trip or visit a destination for a beer experience (brewery, taproom, or beer trail) in the past 2 years (see Table 2) (following Plummer et al.'s 2015 segmentation). Individuals may be motivated to travel by many different factors, but this delineates those travelers for whom beer attractions are a travel motivator. This provides initial evidence of the breadth of beer tourism.

Not surprisingly, beer travel was associated with male (over one quarter of male travelers were beer tourists, compared to about 15% of females) and younger [over one quarter of both Generation X and Millennials were beer tourists (or beer travelers), compared to about 10% of older generations] travelers. Furthermore, beer tourists are more likely to drink local beers ( $M = 4.03$ ) and local wine ( $M = 3.57$ ) than non-beer travelers (respectively  $M = 2.53$  and  $M = 2.81$ ). However, to portray beer tourists as young, single, and focused on drinking appears to be inaccurate. For example, 23.5% of American married respondents (or in a domestic partnership) were beer tourists, compared to 16.4% of singles. Additionally, a larger percentage of college graduates and individuals with children at home were beer motivated.

Respondents were also asked about travel frequency and expenditure. No statistically significant difference was found between beer and non-beer tourists concerning the number of trips they had

taken in the past 12 months, while the average daily expenditure for food and beverage was, not surprisingly, higher in the former group ( $t = 2.56$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ). Beer-motivated travelers reported spending about 42% more on food and drink while traveling ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, there were not significant differences in expenditures on lodging ( $p = 0.115$ ) or shopping ( $p = 0.673$ ). This indicates their importance to other culinary attractions and destinations.

### *Participation in Food and Beverage Activities*

While traveling, a beer tourist (as with all travelers) may take part in many other travel activities, including both culinary (e.g., eating at a gourmet restaurant) and more general (e.g., shopping) activities. Individuals were asked which food travel activities they had participated in while traveling in the past 2 years. Results show that beer tourists participated in many food and beverage activities. These include visiting wineries; attending food, beer, and wine festivals; eating at food trucks, carts, stalls; and taking cooking classes (see Table 3). Compared to travelers who have not been motivated by beer, beer tourists are more likely to participate in nearly every type of food and beverage travel activity, excluding the most common or "usual" (namely going to a restaurant for a memorable experience, eating at a fine dining restaurant, and going to an agricultural fair/farmers market). On average, they participated in 6.03 different types of activities, compared to 3.24 for non-beer tourists ( $t = -8.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), providing evidence that the beer tourist group tends to consume the destination's offering

Table 2  
Percentage of Travelers Who Are Beer Tourists (or "Beer Travelers") ( $N = 562$ )

Characteristics	Beer Travelers ("Beer Travelers") (Motivated to Travel to Visit Beer Activities)
Full sample (US leisure travelers)	20.5% can be considered beer tourists
Boomers (born 1946–1964)	10.2% can be considered beer tourists
Generation X (born 1965–1980)	27.3% can be considered beer tourists
Millennials (born after 1980)	26.2% can be considered beer tourists
Male	27.1% can be considered beer tourists
Female	15.6% can be considered beer tourists
Have graduated from college	23.2% can be considered beer tourists
Have not graduated from college	16.1% can be considered beer tourists
Have children under 18 at home	24.7% can be considered beer tourists
Do not have children under 18 at home	18.3% can be considered beer tourists

Table 3  
Participation in Food/Beverage/Culinary Activities on Recent Trips

Variable	Beer Tourists	Other Leisure Travelers	Difference in Means	
			Chi -Square	<i>p</i>
Went to a restaurant for a memorable experience	76.5%	67.8%	3.30	0.07
Ate at a food truck, food cart, or food stall	60.0%	29.8%	36.34	<0.001
Ate at a fine dining (gourmet) restaurant	56.5%	48.8%	2.20	0.14
Ate or drank at a famous or landmark restaurant or bar	56.5%	35.1%	17.53	<0.001
Took cooking classes	15.7%	6.5%	10.02	0.002
Participated in a food or beverage tour of a destination	35.7%	8.9%	52.88	<0.001
Attended a food festival	38.3%	24.2%	9.22	0.002
Attended a beer festival	48.7%	9.6%	96.23	<0.001
Attended a wine festival	31.3%	10.7%	30.43	<0.001
Visited a winery or wine trail	36.5%	21.7%	10.79	0.001
Went to a distillery or a beverage trail (such as a whiskey trail)	29.6%	7.8%	40.12	<0.001
Visited a farmers' market or agricultural fair	40.9%	29.3%	5.65	0.017

Note. Percentage of respondents who have participated in the activities while traveling in the past 2 years.

related to food and beverage more intensely than other tourists.

Results also indicate that beer tourists are not just interested in beer. While beer activities may often be a motive to travel, beer tourists are also taking part in other food and beverage travel activities at a higher rate than other travelers. For example, beer tourists are more likely to visit a winery or wine trail ( $\chi^2 = 10.79$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Among beer tourists, over 36% have visited a winery on a recent trip, compared to only 22% of other travelers. Additionally, they are more likely to have visited both food festivals ( $\chi^2 = 9.22$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) and wine festivals ( $\chi^2 = 30.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) than other travelers. This provides evidence of a large overlap of beer and wine travel.

#### *Participation in Other Tourist Activities*

Travelers usually partake in a variety of activities during their holiday, and many of them are not related with their initial motivation for a trip. This survey asked travelers the likelihood of participating in a non-food and beverage of activities when visiting a destination for one or more nights (using a 5-point Likert-type scale). Beer tourists are likely to participate in many different activities while traveling. The most popular were: sightseeing (walking or driving) (4.36), visiting bars/pubs/nightclubs (4.23), visiting historical/cultural attractions (4.20), and shopping (4.10).

When compared with non-beer tourists, they seem to seek active “experiences” beyond simply material consumption. Results shows that beer tourists are more likely ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) to participate in a variety of activities, including: attending major events (sporting events, festivals) ( $p = 0.001$ ); performing arts events (concerts or plays) ( $p < 0.001$ ); hiking/walking ( $p < 0.001$ ); and visiting bars, clubs, and nightclubs ( $p < 0.001$ ). Many of these activities also generate economic benefits for the destination, again underlining the importance of beer tourists.

#### *Attitudes and Beliefs About Food and Drink While Traveling*

The previous questions demonstrated that beer-motivated travelers had particular behavioral characteristics by participating in more culinary travel activities and general travel experiences. Questions about attitudes and beliefs were included to assess the centrality of food and beverage in their holidays and, thus, to help determine whether beer tourists could be considered a distinct market segment. It was expected that these travelers were more likely to rate their knowledge about food and beverage higher, and the overall importance of food and beverage before, during and after their vacation as more important when compared to other leisure travelers.

Findings shown in Table 4 were statistically significant and in the direction predicted, with beer

Table 4  
Attitudes and Beliefs of Beer Tourists (“Beer Travelers”)

Variable	Beer Tourists [Mean (SD)]	Other Leisure Travelers [Mean (SD)]	Difference in Means	
			<i>t</i>	Sig.
I consider myself to be knowledgeable about food and drink	4.09 (0.77)	3.71 (0.88)	-4.513	<0.001
I travel to enjoy memorable eating and drinking experiences	4.21 (0.74)	3.61 (1.02)	-7.116	<0.001
I believe my eating & drinking experiences help me to understand the local culture when I travel	4.27 (0.69)	3.93 (0.95)	-4.369	<0.001
My food & drink experiences are important to the overall satisfaction of my trip	4.26 (0.73)	4.03 (0.84)	-2.747	0.006
When I think back on trips I have enjoyed, dining, food & drink experiences are an important part of the memories	4.37 (0.68)	4.06 (0.81)	-3.751	<0.001

Note. Likert-type scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

tourists considering themselves to be more knowledgeable about food and beverage than other travelers ( $p < 0.001$ ), and being more likely to believe that eating and drinking experiences help to understand the local culture when traveling ( $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, they were more likely to consider the availability of food and beverage and related activities when selecting a travel destination ( $t = -5.135$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Their posttravel experiences and attitudes also differed significantly from other travelers. Beer tourists were more likely to believe that food and beverage experiences were important to their overall trip satisfaction ( $p = 0.006$ ), and they also believed that these were an important part of the memories ( $p < 0.001$ ). Results suggest that food and beverage are not simply something beer tourists do while they travel but are central to their travel experience.

### Discussion

This study attempts to develop a profile of beer tourists by extending food tourism theory and considering beer tourism within the context of other products (food and non-food) in the destination, rather than just considering travelers consuming beer. Furthermore, it compares beer tourists with other travelers (non-beer tourists) to better assess specific characteristics of this segment and evaluate whether it may be considered a viable market for beer attractions and destinations. Finally, it considers application of the cultural omnivore theory to beer tourists.

Few, although notable, differences between beer and non-beer tourists were noted in demographic characteristics. Within this research, beer tourists are mainly male, aged under 50, with children at home. Similar findings were also reported by previous studies (Francioni, 2012; Francioni & Byrd, 2012; Francioni Kraftchick et al., 2014; Rogerson & Collins, 2015). While beer tourists having children may seem counterintuitive, there are several reasons this is logical. First, travel separate from immediate families has become more common, so travelers may take part in beer activities while traveling alone or with friends. Second, tourists are more likely to participate to travel activities also with their families. Beer travel destinations may also offer many family-friendly activities, from parks to zoos and museums. Additionally, beer attractions also motivate many American female travelers.

More substantive differences were found in response to travel activities. Although beer tourists travel to a destination with the intention of experiencing beer, there is evidence that they seek a variety of food, beverage, and other experiences. As McKercher et al. (2008) and Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) noticed for food and wine tourism, it is conceivable that beer tourism is rarely a discrete activity, and it will be probably undertaken in conjunction with some other forms of tourism (e.g., culinary, cultural, etc.). Findings show that travelers who are motivated by beer consume destinations' food and beverage offerings more intensely than others and pursue a wide range of related

activities. For instance, they may dine at gourmet restaurants as well as eat at food trucks, visit prestigious breweries or wineries, and also participate in local festivals.

Regarding other travel activities, beer tourists also seek active and unique event-type experiences when they travel, including attending events, more often than other travelers. While simply providing evidence that beer tourists display differentiated behaviors, there is also theoretical application. Because beer tourists sought a larger range of experiences than non-beer travelers, they fit into Peterson and Kern's (1996) definition of "cultural omnivores." Identifying an "omnivore" segment of food tourists corroborates with Robinson et al. (2018), who found a subsegment of foodies who can be considered "omnivores." Any supposition that participating in beer tourism is exclusively or predominantly a lowbrow activity is rejected, as beer tourists are broad in their behaviors.

This research extends Robinson et al.'s (2018) research from a self-selected sample of foodies to the American leisure traveler population. This study considered a balanced sample of leisure travelers and segmented them based on beer-motivated travel behavior prior to conducting any analysis. Comparison of the two segments of leisure travelers (beer motivated and other) determined their omnivore behaviors in both food-related activities and general activities. This study found significant differences in 10 of 12 culinary travel activities (in addition to many general travel activities) between beer travelers and other leisure travelers. Additionally, there were significant differences in attitudes toward food. In contrast, the segmentation of Robinson et al. (2018) found significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) differences in only 2 of 19 travel-related behaviors between segments. Because the segments' behaviors were so similar, those segments may not be useful for destinations to divide into potential target markets. We argue that the current study would be effective for destinations seeking to differentiate beer tourists.

Evidence has been presented that beer tourists have distinct attributes and that they can be considered cultural omnivores. Beer tourists are "more engaged" travelers (Richards, 2012), because they are interested not only in consumptive attractions such as dining, drinking, and shopping for food and beverage souvenirs—which are usually defined as

the most ubiquitous as they appeal to all tourists in a destination—but also in active experiences that can provide them enjoyment and socialization opportunities. Such findings seem to corroborate what Francioni (2012), Francioni and Byrd (2012), and Francioni Kraftchick et al. (2014) noticed in their investigation among visitors in North Carolina breweries. Finally, in our study, four of five attitude measures showed significant differences, providing further evidence of a beer tourist ("beer traveler") market segment.

This study shows that beer-motivated tourists demonstrate unique behaviors and attitudes. This simple segmentation can be used by destinations (without using advanced statistical tools) because it is simple to divide into beer-motivated travelers and others. Beer tourists may be an important market segment for destinations because of the economic impact of these travelers. This study also supports Robinson et al. (2018) by contradicting Mc Kercher et al.'s (2008) proposition that food tourism may not be a unique market segment.

### Conclusion

This study provided evidence of beer tourists as a segment of the travel market as well as indicating that beer tourists (or beer travelers) are more active participants in travel activities, including visiting landmark restaurants/bars, enjoying food, beer, or wine festivals, attending major events and concerts. There appears to be evidence that beer tourists are also an important market segment to pursue, as their travel dollars are spent not just at beer attractions, but also at many other locations. Beer tourists are not lowbrow tourists, but can be considered cultural omnivores, building upon Robinson et al.'s (2018) application of cultural omnivore theory into food tourism. Destinations with beer attractions are likely to benefit by marketing to attract more beer tourists, as they are likely to take advantage of many other culinary, food, beverage, and other tourist attractions while visiting.

### Managerial Implications

This research provides insight into marketing to beer tourists by beer attractions (breweries, brewpubs, and beer festivals) and destinations. While

nightclubs, bars, and pubs are clearly popular among beer tourists, destinations should promote a greater range of food and drink activities because beer tourists also participated in many other culinary activities, including wine, fine dining, and farmers markets. Of greatest importance may be promoting landmark restaurants or bars. Destinations could partner with these locations to ensure that they are offering a selection of “authentic” food and beverages that would satisfy beer tourists. Destinations could also offer guides for beer tourists that do not solely include breweries and brewpubs.

There is a great potential for cross-marketing and cross-promoting food and drink activities. It is traditional that a destination’s wine guide or beer guide would feature exclusively wineries/wine activities or breweries/beer activities. Yet, this ignores the cultural omnivore nature of many beer tourists. Because beer tourists are not just looking for beer activities, destination marketing materials and websites focused on beer activities should include cultural attractions and active participation in events, festivals, and concerts. Hiking, walking, and other outdoor activities should also be highlighted. A strategic framework, such as that suggested by Sotiriadis (2015), would be useful in incorporating food tourism into a broader destination strategy. This could make the difference in potential visitors choosing one destination over another, as a destination promoting beer *and* other activities may be preferred over one promoting simply beer activities.

There are also implications for beer attractions, which are recommended to cross-sell other activities in a city. Because beer is not the only motivation for travel, they could present a brief overview of events and attractions that may enhance the potential travelers’ motivations to visit. Further, beer attractions may be a great venue to promote other attractions within a city that beer tourists may learn about once they have completed a visit to the (beer) attraction that was a primary motivation for visitation. One example of a cross-promotional opportunity is marketing all beverage activities (such as beer, wine, distilleries) together. While it must be acknowledged that these may be considered to be competitors of beer attractions, it is unlikely that a traveler would visit a destination and visit only one attraction. Another recommendation

is for breweries and beer attractions to include more general visitor information on their websites.

While Millennials are interested in beer activities, the focus should also include Generation X (born after 1965) because a similar percentage are motivated to travel for beer (and may have larger disposable incomes). Likewise, an assumption should not be made that beer tourists are single or without children. They may travel without their children, without their spouse, or they may find beer-related activities (such as brewery–restaurants) they can visit with children. There may be opportunities to provide beer experiences in a family-friendly format, such as beer tastings at restaurants. Like many market segments, beer tourists are frequently cultural omnivores—seeking a variety of unique and memorable experiences.

#### *Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research*

While this study identifies that beer tourists are unique from other leisure travelers, there are limitations. First, the sample used is similar but not identical to the American travel population. Second, the study adopts a descriptive approach that may lack in providing further evidence of the findings obtained. Future research is recommended to apply a more rigorous sampling methodology and to use more sophisticated analysis (e.g., those proposed by Robinson et al., 2018) with the purpose of a better assessment of motivational and behavioral preferences of beer tourists. Further, the theoretical concept of involvement could be expanded upon in future studies. Using multi-item scales of traveler activity and motivation may further extend this research. More details on the exact beer travel activities (e.g. breweries, beer trails, tasting rooms) should be also considered to determine differences in behaviors, as well as better investigating geographic differences. Investigating potential overlaps and differences with wine tourists are also recommended.

The current study identified behaviors and attitudes, but it did not answer “why” beer tourists felt or behaved in a certain way. A qualitative follow-up study is recommended to better understand motivations and behaviors in more detail. Future studies could also determine attributes of beer attractions that make them appealing and extend the analysis to travelers in other countries.

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