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Validation of Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimensions in North Carolina Wineries

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Abstract – The aim of this article is to test and validate a recently developed Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) scale in the context of North Carolina Wineries. Previous EM literature suggests that EM consists of six dimensions, namely 1) proactive orientation, 2) opportunity orientation, 3) customer intensity, 4) innovation focused, 5) risk management, and 6) value creation. Using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling on data collected from small businesses (e.g., NC wineries), results confirm that EM consists of five of the proposed six dimensions in the NC winery context. No support was found for risk management to be included in the final model. Implications for theory and future research are discussed.

Keywords – Entrepreneurial Marketing, Scale Validation, SEM, wineries, small businesses, entrepreneurship

Relevance to Researchers and Practitioners – By validating five of the six proposed Entrepreneurial Marketing dimensions in the wine industry context, the results contribute to the literature by operationalizing the usefulness of EM not only as a theoretical perspective but also for wineries' strategic and tactical operations.

Introduction

The definition and dimensional scale of Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) has undergone an interesting transformation over the last decade. Originally researched over thirty years ago as the intersection of marketing and entrepreneurship (Eggers, 2020), its description and definition as a marketing concept is in a continual state of redefinition. Morris et al. (2002) made a significant contribution to the defining of EM when they attempted to conceptualize a definition that included such the effects of overlapping markets, fragmentation, reshaped and reconfigured channels, noting that marketing is context driven and the context is continually changing. Borrowing concepts from marketing and entrepreneurship to coalesce on a broad definition of EM, they defined EM as “*the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging, and value creation*” (Morris et al., 2002, p. 5). At its roots, EM is the conglomeration of entrepreneurship, customer-orientation, market-driven approaches of marketing that succeed under constrained resources (Morris et al., 2002). Yet conceptualizations of EM's dimensions are still up for debate.

There are a several models used by marketing researchers to conceptualize the dimensions of EM, and for several reasons. First there is the considered difficulty in finding a single model that consistently encapsulates all dimensions of EM. Second, researchers have attempted to redefine EM to be more collectively exhaustive. Which one of these definitions will completely encompass all the dimensions of EM, or whether a future redefinition will finally contain a comprehensive understanding of the concept is a consideration for marketing researchers interested in EM.

The purpose of this paper is to broaden our understanding of one of the conceptualizations of EM using a scale developed from Morris' et al.'s (2002) original description of EM, which divided the concept into six dimensions; opportunity-driven, proactiveness, innovation-focused, customer intensity, risk management, resource leveraging, and value creation. These dimensions were conceptualized and validated into an Entrepreneurial Marketing scale by Fiore et al. (2013) using small, independently-owned businesses as a sample frame. To test the generalizability of the model, the wine industry in North Carolina was chosen in the current study given that North Carolina wineries are independently-owned businesses but sized from small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) to large businesses. By testing Fiore et al.'s EM model in the wine industry context, this study proposes to validate the model as a test of EM characteristics.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Marketing has a long period of fermentation in both management and marketing literature, with both disciplines finding each other a “fruitful focus” of research (Hillis et al., 2008, p. 99). The discussion of EM began at a conference held in 1982 at the University of Illinois, Chicago (Hillis, et al., 2010). The Journal of Marketing published their first article on Entrepreneurship in 1986 on the subject of entrepreneurial risk (Toghraee et al., 2017).

The concept of EM “has been used in various ways, and often somewhat loosely” (Morris et al., 2002, p. 4). Toghraee et al. (2017) found that EM over its history has been defined no fewer than 28 times over the span of its study, depending on the conceptual background. Correspondingly, with these many different possible definitions, the dimensionality of a construct such as EM is subject to different interpretations. While Togharee et al. (2017) report ten possible models with different dimensions at the time of their study, there are also three additional models (Kilenthong et al., 2015; Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019; Eggers et al., 2020).

Of singular difficulty with a solo acceptable EM model is the concept of generalizability. In the corresponding articles surrounding the unique models, they all start from a redefinition of the concept of EM and continue to create their constructs with the new definition in mind.

Morris et al. (2002) conceptualized EM efforts to be flexible so that organizations should be able to (1) recognize opportunities to create and cultivate new offerings (2) act proactively and be more acceptable to novel ideas, (3) be innovative, (4) allow customers to be active in the process themselves to create value, (5) be willing to accept and manage risk, (6) leverage limited resources in a realm of potentially unlimited opportunities, and (7) be able strive to create value everywhere. These individual concepts directly translate into dimensions of EM. *Proactiveness* reflects the ways groups actively pursue changes in order to prepare for new customer wants (Morris et al.,

2002); a firm's proactiveness anticipates market shifts and changes in consumer needs (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). Proactiveness is defined as anticipating and acting to take advantage of new opportunities, being willing to participate in "creative destruction" by eliminating products and operations in decline, and the willingness to risk competitive reaction to achieve first-mover advantage (Venkatraman, 1989). Proactiveness is a dimension that is in concert with *innovation*, which is a firm's tendency to pursue unique opportunities and create new products (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Morris et al. (2002, p. 10) described innovation as a "healthy dissatisfaction" with the "way things are" and with organizations willingness to pursue future consumer preferences and demands. *Risk-taking* recognizes that while opportunities are infinite, resources are not, and risk-taking involves the capacity of an organization to handle difficulties (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). *Opportunity focus* is an organization's capacity to pursue those unlimited opportunities with their finite resources (Morris et al., 2002, Morris et al. 2013). Opportunities are imperfections in the market, reflected in that the market offerings supplied do not equal the offerings the consumer demands, or desires consumers have that remain unfulfilled. *Resource leveraging* is "doing more with less," or maximizing limited resources (Morris et al., 2002, p. 10). An entrepreneurial organization will rely on their proactiveness and innovativeness to exploit the resources they control to create unique competencies that satisfy consumer desires (Miles & Darroch, 2006). When organizations have insufficient resources to pursue opportunities, they may increase risk-taking by exchanging knowledge with other organizations and discuss strategies to increase the likelihood of success. While it increases risk by giving away core competencies, it can reduce risk and increase intellectual assets (Miles & Darroch, 2006; Kraus et al., 2012). Finally, *value creation* is a key component of entrepreneurship (Stevenson et al., 1989) and implies adding value to the customer experience (Morris et al., 2002), creating a more desired consumer experience.

Fiore et al. (2013) in turn, used Morris et al.'s definition of EM and developed an EM scale based upon the suggested dimensions. From the theoretical dialog of Morris et al. (2002), six sub-dimensions of EM are delineated with the following operational definitions (see Table 1). The scale development by Fiore et al. was tested using three categories of businesses; restaurants and bars, hotels and other lodging facilities, and shopping stores. All of these categories were chosen for the pronounced experiential elements (Fiore et al., 2013). However, by focusing on more than one category of industry, the generalizability of their model is substantially increased. A 72-item instrument was tested for content validity and underwent reduction to a 20-item scale. This final model was tested in a main study that tested the final model against small private companies across the United States. The final model was confirmed to have good fit, discriminant, and nomological validity.

Fiore et al.'s model is proposed to be a good descriptive model for the measuring of EM for the following reasons. First, it closely follows and aligns its theoretical basis from Morris et al.'s, (2002) seminal work on the fundamental understanding of EM and its theoretical dimensions. Second, the scale dimensions accept and incorporates the "unplanned, non-linear and visionary actions of the entrepreneur" (Morris et al., 2002, p. 4). Finally, it considers both the antecedent and consequence variables in relationship to EM. For these reasons, we therefore use Fiore et al.'s scale to validate the EM dimensions involved in the wine industry.

Table 1: Operational Definitions for Fiore et al.'s (2013) Entrepreneurial Marketing Scale

<p><i>Proactive orientation</i> is a business operator's tendency to demonstrate leadership by initiating actions with the goal of affecting change (i.e., altering, shaping) in marketing practices.</p>
<p><i>Opportunity driven</i> is a business operator's tendency to identify unmet market needs and sources of sustainable competitive advantage.</p>
<p><i>Customer-intensity</i> is a business operator's tendency to establish marketing relationships that address individual customer needs/desires/preferences and relate to customers on a more personal level.</p>
<p><i>Innovation-focused</i> is a business operator's tendency to seek new marketing ideas from both within the firm and through external firm activities.</p>
<p><i>Risk-management</i> is a business operator's tendency to demonstrate a creative approach to mitigating risks that surround bold, new actions.</p>
<p><i>Value creation</i> is a business operator's tendency to use marketing efforts and resources to discover and deliver untapped sources of value for the customer.</p>

Source: Fiore et al., (2013, p. 70-71)

The Wine Industry and Entrepreneurism

Research in the wine industry, both national and international, has started to include the concept of entrepreneurship over the last two decades. Recently exploratory research has found preliminary support for entrepreneurial marketing dimensions in small New Mexico wineries (Ray Chaudhury et al., 2014). Their study found that New Mexican winemakers pursued opportunities, engaged in proactiveness and innovation, created value through customer participation, and collaborated through resource sharing when needed. Other research has explored the role of Australian wineries' entrepreneurial orientation (Griffin and Coulthard, 2005), the defining role of entrepreneurial networks in the U.S. wine industry (Brown and Butler, 1995), various entrepreneurial models applied by wineries in Tuscany (Mattiacci et al., 2006), and the impact of entrepreneurial behavior and its effect on return on investment in cross-cultural contexts (Gilinsky et al., 2010). Mattiacci et al. (2006) found an inverse relationship, that smaller wineries concentrate their efforts on wine production and spend less time on strategy, marketing and growth. Charters and Menival (2008) supported Mattiacci et al.'s (2006) findings in a study on vigneron (i.e., wineries that grow their own grapes), and confirmed that most vigneron focus on their vines and land instead of profits or business management. Thomas et al. (2013) found that the practice of EM in the French wine industry has allowed the leveraging of superior knowledge concerning customer preferences, product knowledge, and market intelligence to deliver superior value through brand preferences at the firm level. EM in the wine industry has reached a level of acceptance that Barton et al. (2012) has written a case study for students in entrepreneurship to study strategies in brand management, cooperative relationships, and their importance in the wine industry.

North Carolina Wine Industry and Entrepreneurship

North Carolina (NC) produced wine since around the time Sir Walter Raleigh arrived to the area in the 17th century (North Carolina's Wine History, 2017). In the last twenty years, along with the growth of wine consumption in the United States, the state's wine production has seen tremendous growth. Over the last ten years the 186 wineries within NC have placed the state eleventh in the United States in wine production (ncwine.org). Individually owned grape vineyards and producers, those that do not sell directly to the public, increased from 68 in 1991 to over 525 by 2019 (Miller 2019). NC wineries focus on native muscadine wines and the more common table wine grapes such as European vinifera grapes and have an annual economic impact of over \$1.97 billion annually (as of year 2016/2017), supporting more than 10,000 jobs, and drawing over 1.9 million tourists (Miller, 2019).

NC is currently home to five American Viticultural Areas (AVAs), defined as a certain delimited grape-growing region with special geographic or climatic features that distinguish it from the surrounding regions which affects how grapes are grown (American Viticultural Areas, 2021). AVA labels touting regions have been found to positively affect consumer preferences towards wines (Lim, 2021).

The first federally recognized AVA was Yadkin Valley, established in 2002, which is in northwestern NC. The Swan Creek AVA was the second AVA established in 2008 and is a sub-region of Yakin Valley with six wineries. The Haw River Valley AVA, established in 2009, has six wineries and Upper Hiwassee Highlands AVA, established in 2014, has five wineries. The last AVA, established in 2016, is Appalachian High Country AVA with six wineries (Wine Industry Facts, 2017). NC hosts the most visited winery in the United States, the Biltmore Winery in Asheville, with over a million yearly visitors (Biltmore, 2017). In 1993, the NC Winegrowers Association was established with the aim of cooperation and information sharing among its winemaker members. In 2017, the 525 individually owned grape vineyards in NC that covered over 2,300 acres (ncwine.org). Forty of these wineries are clustered near each other in the Yadkin Valley, comprising some 400 acres. This area is home to many boutique wineries that participate in Yadkin Valley Wine tours which run from January to October and consumers visit different wineries during the season (Yadkin Valley Tours, 2016). Far from competition, the wineries coalesce to create unique venues for tourists, including "trails" through NC to visit multiple wineries in a given day.

Wineries that work together in such a fashion accept risk in banding together and being compared to each other over a short period of time, thus allowing consumers the possibility to mentally "rank" them from superior to inferior. In addition, visiting more than one winery encourages consumers to forgo their total purchase dollars on a single winery and accept only a portion of the overall expenditure. This proactive behavior, while creating risk in comparison-shopping, balance this by creating value through providing variety to the consumer experience. Collective action in rural development practices, including such practices as winery collaboration, has been found to enable local entrepreneurs improve economic performance and create opportunities for sustained growth (Brunori & Rossi, 2000). Therefore, in the pursuit of proactive behaviors and accepting risk, wineries embrace the willingness to engage potential competitors in a collaborative fashion, increasing the value of the overall customer experience. This increase in

value for the customer experience is expected to improve customer satisfaction (Anderson, et al., 1994), which in the long term may yield an increase in future repeat purchasing behavior and winery performance.

Shows et al. (2017) tested EM characteristics of NC wineries and found that innovation and commitment to long-term customer relationships (customer intensity) was positively related to the satisfaction level of performance in wineries. In addition, they found that wineries that rate high on innovativeness and value co-creation were related to higher percentage sales increases. In a market of potentially unlimited opportunities and limited resources, the practice of EM by organizations can contribute to the success of wineries as they chart their course to success. EM practices are more prevalent in wineries that have a designated employee as a marketing director/manager, which in turn leads to increased performance of the winery (Albinsson et al., 2017). In particular, wineries with a designated marketing manager are more proactive and engage more in opportunity driven and customer-intense activities than wineries without a marketing manager. Given the preceding discussion, it is our proposition that the wineries in NC's EM practices are consistent with the dimensions in Fiore et al.'s (2013) EM scale.

Method

Online surveys were distributed via Qualtrics to the 142 members on the list of North Carolina wineries identified by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Data collection proceeded for four months resulting in 53 usable surveys (37% response rate). This response rate is similar to that found by Klapowitz et al. (2004) when comparing web and mail survey response rates.

Survey Instrument and Measures

The survey included two sections, including one defining the winery's entrepreneurial practices. The degree to which a winery employed EM strategies was assessed using a modified version of the scale developed by Fiore et al. (2013). The 20 scale statements identified the six key dimensions of EM (see Appendix 1 for scale items). The degree to which a winery practiced EM was assessed using a 7-point Likert scale anchored by (1) "Does not reflect my winery at all" and (7) "Fully reflects my winery." Overall, scale reliabilities were acceptable (proactive orientation $\alpha = .892$, opportunity driven $\alpha = .881$, customer intensity $\alpha = .804$, innovation focused $\alpha = .811$, value creation $\alpha = .825$, however risk management $\alpha = .615$ was lower than .7).

Results

An Average Variance Extracted was performed to confirm the construct reliability of the EM model (see Table 2). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to determine the construct reliability of the entire model. The model achieved sufficient statistical significance (Chi-square=215.711, df=120, p=.000). However, consistent with the AVE construction, Risk Management was not a viable dimension in the model. Furthermore, the complete model was found to have insufficient goodness of fit (CFI=.826, RMSEA=.124). This could be due to the limited sample size (n=53). In order to achieve a sufficient goodness of fit, several of the scale

items were eliminated, including risk management as a dimension. With these eliminations, a structural equation model (SEM) was run on the remaining dimensions.

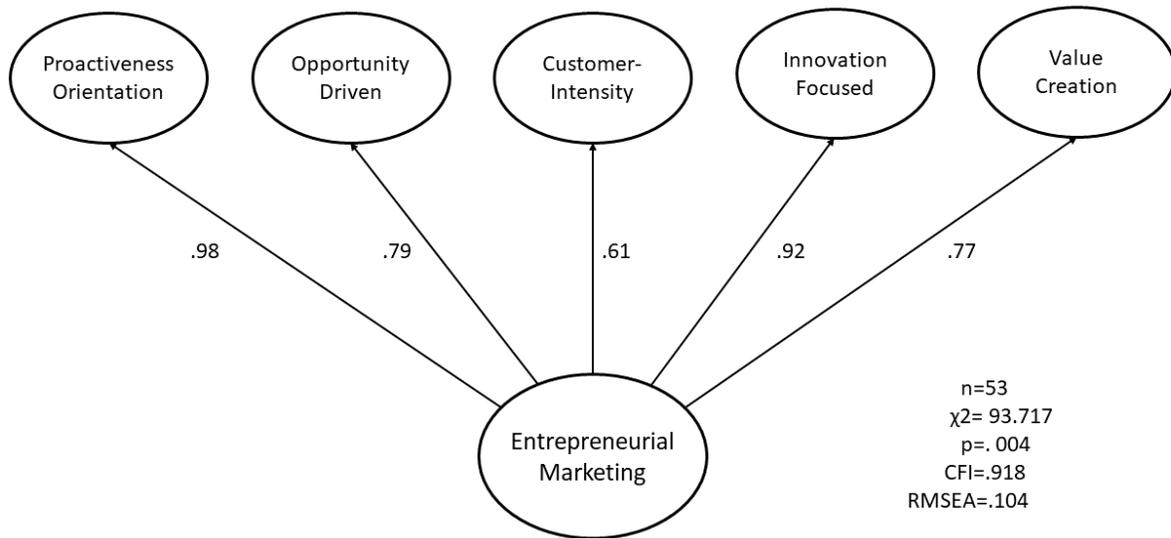
Table 1: Average Variance Extracted for the Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimensions

	Proactiveness Orientation	Opportunity Orientation	Customer Intensity	Value Creation	Risk Management	Innovation Focused
PO-1	0.82					
PO-2	0.87					
PO-3	0.87					
OO-1		0.80				
OO-2		0.80				
OO-3		0.78				
OO-4		0.84				
CI-1			0.82			
CI-2			0.67			
CI-3			0.86			
VC-1				0.87		
VC-2				0.97		
VC-3				0.72		
VC-4				0.37		
RM-1					0.30	
RM-2					0.96	
RM-3					0.47	
IF-1						0.61
IF-2						0.83
IF-3						0.88
Variance Extracted	72.87%	64.85%	62.03%	58.83%	45.65%	68.54%
Construct Reliability	0.89	0.88	0.83	0.84	0.63	0.82

Results from SEM (see Figure 1) confirms that North Carolina Wineries practice dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing as measured by the Fiore model. Despite a limited sample size (n=53), EM was found to have good significance ($\chi^2=93.717$, $p=.004$). It showed acceptable goodness of fit (CFI=.918) with a marginal root mean square (RMSEA=.104). Entrepreneurial marketing dimensions in North Carolina wineries is the most strongly reflected in a proactive orientation (.98). The wineries actively seek to create new marketing methods to create valued propositions to their consumers and demonstrate their leadership by finding new approaches. Next, NC wineries are innovation focused (.92). They create these new marketing practices by their willingness to look both inside their organizations and outside by communicating with consumers. NC wineries are opportunity driven (.79), when in their communication both inside their organizations and outside with consumers, they identify unmet market needs that provide them with competitive advantages. Finally, they constantly replenish their store of marketing ideas reflected in the dimension of customer intensity (.61), their tendency to create long-term

relationship that address individual customer needs which help them relate to their established clientele in a more personal level.

Figure 1: SEM Model of Entrepreneurial Marketing in NC wineries



Risk management was found to be an unstable dimension. As stated, it is possible that the limited sample size (n=53) was insufficient to create construct reliability for this dimension. It is also possible that, in the realm of the wine industry, risk management, defined as the ability to show a creative approach to mitigate risk surrounding new action, does not exist in this form in North Carolina wineries.

Discussion

While the sample size was limited, we validated five out of the six dimensions in Fiore et al.'s EM model. The SEM successfully transitioned from its original sample frame and large sample size to a specific industry with a small population and limited sample size. This confirms the EM scale as a possible framework that is generalizable to a broader context and one that accurately reflects the dimensions of EM.

In an even broader context, it helps support the theoretical framework of EM presented by Morris, et al. (2002). The scale developed by Fiore and colleagues anticipates the non-linear, unplanned and visionary behavior of the entrepreneur noted in Morris et al. and it considers both the antecedent and consequence variables in relationship to EM. It can be considered that both articles gain greater importance together, as the first one posits a logical framework for EM and the latter supports the theoretical framework.

The validation of Fiore et al.'s (2013) EM scale adds a more robust way for describing and measuring the EM efforts by organizations. It adds a structural model for the measuring of EM

dimensions to other constructs such as willingness to buy, customer satisfaction, and many others. Antecedents can be studied for their effect on EM efforts, and EM can be tested for mediating and moderating factors. Future research on EM should be performed in other industries and with corporations of all sizes to further support its acceptance as a viable structural model of entrepreneurial marketing.

In the creation of proper definitions for theories such as EM, two concepts are mandatory for successful execution. The first is the concept of collectively exhaustive. This means that a concept defined includes all ideas and notions that it entails. The second is mutually exclusive. This denotes that no idea or understanding is added to a definition that the concept does not entail. These two standards are the foundation for the proper description of theoretical definitions. Using these two understandings, future research should review the other ten possible models of EM and their theoretical background referenced above. It is logical to assume that these models were derived from a different theoretical definition of EM, and possibly different contexts as well. A complete study would include their definitions and a search for commonality between the models and their significant differences. In these differences will be found the suppositions that support the creation of models of significant difference to the other models. Furthermore, a study of the twenty-eight different definitions needs exploration and the basis of their fundamental variances need to be determined. It is very possible that many of them are part of a process in which the definition continually evolved as research gained a greater knowledge and understanding of the unification of entrepreneurship and marketing. Still other definitions possibly consider specific contextual issues outside the perspective of entrepreneurial marketing and could be modified. Where definitions of EM are both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, yet are different than the considered definition proposed by Morris et al. (2002) and used by Fiore et al. (2013) in the measurement of EM, then it is not difficult to propose that either definition is describing something different than the concept of EM.

There are several limitations in this research. First, we cannot ignore the small sample size. While the total respondent number is a sufficient size to approach normality, the small size can promote significance where one doesn't exist, but more likely remove significance when it does. The research is performed on a specific industry, wineries in North Carolina. Its generalizability is limited, except when compared to the sample of the Fiore et al. (2013) study. While the mix of companies are varied in size and not only small to medium sized businesses, a larger sample would confirm construct reliability to a greater degree. This study should be repeated using the same survey instrument in a different industry with a larger sample size to confirm the observations noted here.

Conclusion

Our study shows that the EM scale developed by Fiore et al. (2013), based upon the seminal work of Morris et al. (2002), represents a valid tested structural model of the dimensions of EM. It accurately codifies the theoretical dimensions discussed in the Morris article and is confirmed in the research on North Carolina wineries. The structure model shows that North Carolina wineries are proactive in their approach, focus on innovation to create new marketing offerings brought about through the communication within their organizations and outside with their customers, and continually stay in contact with their customers to create a long-term relationship and create new

marketing offerings based upon their understanding of customer needs. All of these insights are the result of a structural model that accurately reflects the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing.

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Appendix 1: Survey questions for Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimensions

Proactive Orientation

1. I have a real passion for continually changing the way products/services are marketed in my winery.
2. My winery is frequently one of the first in the community to alter its marketing methods.
3. I consistently monitor and enhance the approach to marketing my winery.

Opportunity Orientation

4. I regularly pursue untapped market opportunities regardless of budgetary constraints.
5. I regularly pursue untapped market opportunities regardless of staff constraints.
6. When new wine industry opportunities arise, my winery very quickly acts on them.
7. My winery excels at identifying marketing opportunities.

Customer Intensity

8. My winery creates lasting relationships with customers through its marketing efforts.
9. I spend considerable resources trying to learn more about my customer base.
10. My winery's marketing efforts reflect knowledge of what our customers really want from our products and services.

Innovation Focused

11. Effectively communicating with customers is a great way to identify innovation opportunities
12. Innovation is the key to achieving competitive advantage in my winery.
13. We encourage our staff to contribute ideas for innovations at our winery.

Risk Management

14. When I decide to pursue a new marketing direction, I do so in stages rather than all at once to reduce the risk involved.
15. My marketing efforts tend to have a low level of risk for my winery.
16. My winery typically uses creative, low cost ways to reduce risks associated with new marketing activities.

Value Creation

17. I expect every employee to be looking for ways my winery can create more value for customers.
18. In my winery, employees contribute to ideas to create value for customers.
19. My winery continuously tries to find new ways to create value for our first-time customers.
20. My winery continuously tries to find new ways to create value for our existing customers.