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A Qualitative Approach to Understanding the Underlying Beliefs of Microbrewery Consumers

Introduction

Microbreweries have become increasingly popular in the United States. This is demonstrated by their tremendous growth within recent decades. For example, there were only 82 microbreweries in the U.S. in 1982. Fast-forward to 2015, and that number has increased to nearly 2,400 (Brewery Association, 2015; Schnell & Reese, 2013). Regardless of their growing popularity, there is a lack of research regarding microbrewery consumer behavior. Previous studies focused on the operational side of microbreweries, such as simple demographics (e.g. consumer profiles), philosophy, or the history of microbreweries (Carroll & Swaminathan, 2000; Plummer, Telfer, Hashimoto, & Summers, 2005; Schnell & Reese, 2003). More recent studies regarding microbreweries have addressed entrepreneurship (Ellis & Bosworth, 2015), operational efficiency (Fakoya, 2015), marketing strategy (Mathews & Patton, 2016), factors affecting brand loyalty to craft beer (Murray & Kline, 2015), and consumer preferences (Aquilani, Laureti, Poponi, & Secondi, 2015). However, there is a lack of research that focuses on consumer behavior at microbreweries. In contrast, there are numerous studies that exist regarding consumer behavior in other areas of beverage research, such as wine (e.g. Brown & Getz, 2005; Bruwer, 2003; Carmichael, 2005; Gómez, Lopez, & Molina, 2015; Pratt & Sparks, 2014; Quintal, Thomas, & Phau, 2015; Sparks, 2007).

The theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. The underlying dimensions of TPB include, behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. These beliefs were explored regarding microbrewery consumers. As an additional analysis, and to gain a deeper understanding of these beliefs, they were compared to those held by microbrewery owners/operators.

Literature Review

Microbreweries

Microbreweries fall into the "craft beer industry" which can be divided into four segments: microbreweries, brewpubs, contract brewing companies, and regional craft breweries. To be considered a microbrewery, the brewery must produce less than 15,000 barrels of beer each year (Brewers Association, n.d.). Microbreweries typically distribute their products locally and are often associated with one geographical area, giving them a keen sense of local identity (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003).

The 1980's marked the rebirth of microbreweries. During this time, the number of microbreweries began to dramatically increase with nearly 36 new microbreweries opening in 1981 alone (Carroll, & Swaminathan, 2000). Since the 1980's, the number of microbreweries has been gradually increasing (Brewers Association, 2015). For example, in 2005 the number of microbreweries increased to 354, and ten years later, in 2015, that number tripled to nearly 2,400 (Brewers Association, 2015). Between 2014 and 2015 alone, there was a 21.6% increase in the number of microbreweries (Brewers Association, 2015). Due to the growing demand for

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microbreweries and their stimulation of local economies (Flack, 1997), additional research is needed to better understand the type of consumers who frequent them.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

According to the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are the three independent predictors of a person's intention to perform a behavior, which is defined as the observable action an individual performs. Intentions are the predecessors of behavior and can be expressed as the willingness or determination a person exerts to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

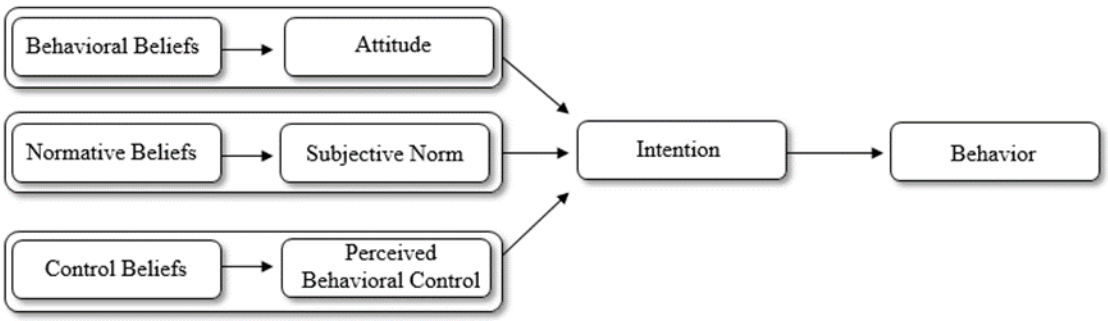
The antecedents of intention are attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2011a). Attitude can be described as a person's positive or negative feelings about a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). An individual's attitude is derived from their behavioral beliefs, which is described by Ajzen (1991) as the subjective possibility of a given outcome. Quintal, Thomas and Phau (2015) used the TPB in conjunction with a winescape to determine the effects it had on wine tourist's behavior. The study found that wine tourist's attitude influenced their intention to revisit wineries.

Subjective norm is a social factor that involves the social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It stems from an individual's normative beliefs, which are behaviors that are expected by influential people in an individual's life (e.g. spouse, friends) (Ajzen, 1991). Normative beliefs are formulated by an individual's desire to appease people in their lives in combination with the views these individuals may already have regarding the

behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Hsu & Huang (2012) used the TPB to analyze tourists' intentions regarding choosing travel destinations, and found that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control all had a positive correlation with tourists' behavioral intentions. This was especially true regarding the subjective norm which represents the opinions and suggestions of important individuals in one's life (Hsu & Huang, 2012; Ajzen, 1991).

Perceived behavioral control is the perceived ease or difficulty that a person associates with a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It is derived from an individual's control beliefs, which involves the perceived control they have over various behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). Quintal et al. (2015), found that perceived behavioral control was a significant predictor of wine tourist's revisit intentions. Additionally, Sparks (2007) found that perceived behavioral control was a major predictor of consumer's intentions. The TPB model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: TPB Model



To gain further insight into consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, Ajzen (1991) recommended accessing the consumers' cognitive foundation, which includes their behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. Therefore, this study uses the TPB as the theoretical framework to explore the underlying behavioral, normative, and control

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beliefs of microbrewery consumers. Many studies have used the TPB framework as a guideline for qualitative interviews, as did this study. For example, Patrícia Silva, Figueiredo, Hogg, & Sottomayor, (2014) applied the TPB framework to identify the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control of young adults regarding wine consumption using in-depth interviews. The study found that the taste of wine and influence from family were the most notable themes to emerge from interviews. In another study by Zoellner, Krzeski, Harden, Cook, Allen, & Estabrooks (2012), the TPB was utilized to conduct interviews which identified culturally specific perceptions regarding beverage consumption. The interviews found several beverage-specific themes related to consumer attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions. The most prominent themes included taste, availability/convenience, habit/addiction, and cost. Ajzen (1991) mentioned that consumers' cognitive foundation is different in various contexts and situations and thus, consumers' cognitive foundation should be examined based on the specific behavior of interest (1991). The use of the TPB in the microbrewery context is unique, as it has never been done before.

Although the TPB has been predominantly applied to consumers, several studies have applied the TPB to managers and operators in the hospitality field (e.g. Clarke & Njite, 2016; Reid & Ritchie, 2011; Roberts & Barrett, 2011; Wang & Ritchie, 2012). Therefore, as an additional analysis, interviews were conducted with several microbrewery owners/operators.

Methodology

The population of the study consisted of U.S. microbrewery consumers who were 21

years of age or older. The sample consisted of consumers of Alabama microbreweries and convenient sampling was used. Convenient sampling was used due to time and monetary limitations. Furthermore, it validated that participants were microbrewery consumers since interviews were conducted at microbreweries. Participants were selected based on their related interest to participate in a microbrewery study, and who wanted to partake in the interview process. Since interviews took place at microbreweries, they were conducted in the first few hours of operation to minimize the risk of participants being intoxicated. The sample size of 25 participants was appropriate for this study based on previous literature (Francis et al., 2004; Godin & Kok, 1996). Furthermore, Glaser & Strauss (1967) explained that as a researcher continues to interview, he/she will eventually begin hearing the same information repeatedly which indicates the point of saturation. This study met the point of saturation before the final interview. The study featured a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which were audio recorded, and transcribed. Data was collected between October and December of 2016. To guide the interviews, a question guideline was created based off the TPB model (Ajzen, 1991). These questions included:

1. Behavioral Beliefs

    a. What do you see as the advantages of visiting microbreweries?

    b. What do you see as the disadvantages of visiting microbreweries?

2. Normative Beliefs

    a. When it comes to visiting microbreweries, there may be individuals or groups who would think that you should or should not perform this behavior. Please list the

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individuals or groups who would approve or think you should visit microbreweries.

b. When it comes to visiting microbreweries, there may be individuals or groups who would think that you should or should not perform this behavior. Please list the individuals or groups who would disapprove or think you should visit microbreweries.

3. Control beliefs

a. What factors or circumstances would make it easier or enable you to visit a microbrewery?

b. What factors or circumstances would make it more difficult or prevent you from visiting a microbrewery?

To gain participants, signup sheets and information were left at microbreweries regarding the study, and the opportunity to participate in a face-to-face interview. Individuals could leave their contact information to schedule an interview. Aside from sign-up sheets, frequent visits were made to microbreweries encouraging consumers to participate in the study. Each interview took approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Aside from the questions listed above, participants were also asked probing questions. According to Cresswell (2007), probing questions serve to keep the participants focused, and ensure that the proper interruptions are gained to adequately answer the research questions. Furthermore, the use of probing questions helps clarify participants initial responses and eliminate researcher bias (Gall, Gall, & Borg 2003; Turner, 2010).

Data Analysis

The data analysis included a four-step process. First, fieldwork was performed to observe and record descriptive data. Fieldwork included visiting microbreweries and recruiting participants for face-to-face interviews. The data was audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Second, the data underwent a content analysis using NVivo 11, a qualitative software. The transcriptions were coded according to the TPB (e.g. attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls) and then further filtered into more specific sub-nodes. The sub-nodes allowed for more specific themes within the nodes to emerge and be analyzed. For example, when discussing the advantages of visiting microbreweries, participants often brought up products, this theme was then categorized into more specific sub-nodes such as product quality, and product variety. Third, the reliability of the data was checked by multiple researchers. Three experts analyzed, and discussed the theme based nodes. When differences of opinion occurred, they were discussed until agreement was reached. Fourth, the most salient beliefs were then identified and recorded. As suggested by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980), the beliefs were then analyzed based on their frequency.

Results

The participants of this study included 25 consumers and five owners/operators of microbreweries in the state of Alabama. Of the 25 consumers, 19 were male and six were female. The ages of the consumers ranged from early 20’s to late 40’s. The female participants were all Caucasian and the male participants were predominantly Caucasian with two being African-American or Hispanic. Of the five owners/operators all five were male. The age range of the

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owners/operators ranged from middle 20's to late 30's and consisted of three Caucasian and two African-Americans.

Behavioral Beliefs of Consumers

Based on consumer interviews, the most salient advantages of visiting microbreweries were local or community support (60%), variety of products (60%), socialization (52%), entertainment (48%), quality of products (40%), and atmosphere (40%). When discussing local or community support, consumers made statements such as:

> "*I think you get to be around the people of the community and typically they're owned by people that have lived in the city for a while, and so you can kind of experience… the local flavor of the city....*"

One consumer discussed the appeal of the products. "*…the beers that are produced out of passion and produced…in a very small batch and made available for a limited amount of time, have a tremendous amount of appeal.*"

Some of the statements made about socialization include: "*talking to people, engaging with people*", "*you come here for the people*", and "*you feel like you've known these people all of your life*".

According to consumers, entertainment and atmosphere were also important advantages of visiting microbreweries. Consumers made comments such as: "*there's stuff to do*", "*they're cool places to be… they're not the places that are on tourist's maps*", and "*it's a very welcoming environment and it makes you feel like you've known these people all of your life*."

Additionally, consumers mentioned going to the source, and having a unique experience as advantages of visiting microbreweries. For example, one consumer explained that "*in a world where everything is packaged and shipped it's cool to know this is where this (beer) came from*."

Some of the disadvantages mentioned by consumers included that there were not any (24%), and the lack of other alcoholic products (20%). The most frequently mentioned disadvantage was the cost of the products. For example:

> "*Around here it's expensive and sometimes it's nice to just get a domestic beer. Like I just want a PBR (Pabst Blue Ribbon) or something…cheap and easy."*

Other statements included "*You're paying a lot for the company and the camaraderie"*, and *"I think a lot of places could be cheaper*."

According to Francis et al. (2004), the beliefs of the sample population can be adequately represented by the top 75% of all stated beliefs. Table 1 depicts the top 75% of behavioral beliefs held by microbrewery consumers.

Table 1. Behavioral Beliefs of Consumers

Concept	Key Themes	Total (N = 25)	%
Advantages			
	Local or Community Support	15	60%
	Variety of Products	15	60%
	Socialization	13	52%
	Entertainment	12	48%
	Quality of Products	10	40%
	Atmosphere	10	40%
Disadvantages			
	Cost	7	28%
	None	6	24%
	Lack of other alcohol	5	20%

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Normative Beliefs of Consumers

Most, consumers stated that, in general, everyone they knew was supportive of them visiting microbreweries (64%). Aside from general responses, family (48%), and friends (28%) were also mentioned as being supportive. One consumer discussed how her father introduced her to craft beer:

> "*I actually got into drinking "Fancy" beers because of my dad…So if anything, I think in my family it's more encouraged rather than going to a big establishment, like a Bud Light or a Budweiser."*

Most consumers (48%) stated that there were not any people who disapproved of them visiting microbreweries. Although, family (36%) was frequently mentioned as a group who was unsupportive of visiting microbreweries. Some statements included "*My mom would probably appreciate it if I went a little less*", "*my mother and my grandparents…think alcohol is bad*", and "*I think people who wouldn't support you going to a microbrewery… would also cut an eye at you for coming out of the grocery store with a 12 pack of beer*." One consumer explained further that his parents didn't want him to visit microbreweries frequently because there was a history of alcoholism in his family. Table 2 summarizes the most salient normative beliefs of microbrewery consumers.

Table 2. Normative Beliefs of Consumers

Concept	Key Themes	Total (N = 25)	%
Approve			

	General (e.g. "Everyone I know")	16	64%
	Family	12	48%
	Friends	7	28%
Disapprove			
	None	12	48%
	Family	9	36%

Control Beliefs of Consumers

Location (72%) and transportation (24%) were the most frequently mentioned facilitators of visiting microbreweries. Some of the comments included "*needs to be reasonably close by*" "*it just boils down to accessibility*", "*I'm not going to go out of my way*", and "*It's on the way to my house*."

Consumer interviews also revealed that transportation was a significant facilitator of visiting microbreweries. One consumer explained the importance of having public transportation:

> *"…the introduction of something like Uber or some kind of affordable transportation that would allow people to get home safely… I think that this would not only increase the attendance of microbreweries and make them more accessible to people, it would also increase public safety by a tremendous amount.*"

Additional facilitators mentioned by consumers included time (12%), family-friendliness (4%), and having someone to go with (4%).

Perceived barriers of visiting microbreweries included distance (60%), and cost (24%). Some of the comments made include, "*if it was to move out of the city's core I wouldn't go to a microbrewery*", and "*If I have to drive a very long time that would be annoying to me.*"

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Regarding cost, one consumer explained that if the cost of beer became higher he may not be able to come to microbreweries as often:

> *"…if it was higher in price. I mean I've kind of cut back on coming here (microbrewery) that often because…of spending more money*."

Additional barriers mentioned by consumers included lack of transportation (12%), lack of marketing (8%), and time restraints (8%). Some of the statements regarding these themes included "*you don't really know about it…other than through grassroots marketing*" and "*most times I'm working at night so I don't get a chance to come here (microbrewery)."* Table 3 displays the most salient control beliefs held by microbrewery consumers.

Table 3. Control Beliefs of Consumers

Concept	Key Themes	Total (N = 25)	%
Facilitators			
	Location	18	72%
	Transportation	6	24%
Barriers			
	Distance	15	60%
	Cost	6	24%

Additional Interviews of Owners/Operators

Although the focus of the study was regarding consumer's beliefs, additional interviews with five microbrewery owners/operators were conducted and analyzed. The purpose of the interviews was to identify commonly held beliefs of owners/operators and in turn, compare them to those held by microbrewery consumers. All the participating owners/operators were male and

their ages ranged from middle 20's to early 40's. Ethnically, the group was made up of three Caucasians and two African-Americans. The results mirrored those held by consumers but also featured notable differences, which should provide more holistic practical implications for microbrewery owners/operators.

Behavioral Beliefs of Owners/Operators

The most salient beliefs held by owners/operators of microbreweries included socialization (100%), and atmosphere (60%). As one operator explained:

> "*You get to interact with the people that put their work into it, whether they're brewers or owners or even the bartenders."*

Owners/operators only mentioned a few disadvantages including that there are not any (40%) and that microbreweries have a limited inventory (40%). One owner explained "*we can't sell anything that we don't make."*

The owners/operators that were interviewed had similar views to those held by microbrewery consumers. Both groups mentioned socialization and atmosphere as advantages and the limited inventory as a disadvantage. Interestingly, the consumers mentioned support of local business and culture, and the variety of the products more frequently than the owners/operators. In addition, consumers specifically mentioned the quality of the products as an advantage and the cost as a disadvantage of visiting microbreweries both of which were not mentioned by owners/operators.

Normative Beliefs of Owners/Operators

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According to owners/operators most people they knew were supportive of visiting microbreweries (80%). This was followed by family (40%) and friends (40%). Some of their statements included "*people are really supportive*", and "*I don't necessarily know anyone who would say don't go*."

Family (40%) was also considered an unsupportive group by microbrewery owners/operators. Two owners mentioned that their families were religious and did not support visiting microbreweries, but in both situation the families were still supportive of them owning and operating a microbrewery. One owner explained:

> *"…my family they're all Southern Baptist…I think they would like for me to make artisan bibles.*"

Both groups reflected similar beliefs regarding supportive and non-supportive individuals and groups. It was most commonly mentioned that "in general", everyone they knew was supportive of them visiting microbreweries and that although there weren't many unsupportive groups some of their family members were not supportive.

Control Beliefs of Owners/Operators

Most owners/operators stated that location (60%) was the most significant facilitator and barrier of visiting microbreweries. The remainder of responses varied but were not mentioned by more than one owner/operator. Additional facilitators mentioned included money (20%), transportation (20%), hours of operation (20%), and family-friendliness (20%). Additional barriers mentioned included cost (20%), not having someone to go with (20%), and the hours of operation (20%).

Unlike consumers, the owners/operators did not mention transportation as a barrier. Consumers also mentioned that lack of marketing was a barrier of visiting microbreweries. Although owners/operators did not specifically state "lack of marketing", one of the owners did mention a database or straightforward way for consumers to locate microbreweries. Table 4 depicts the most salient behavioral, normative, and control beliefs held by microbrewery owners/operators

Table 4. Beliefs of Owners/Operators

Concept	Key Themes	Total (N = 5)	%
Behavioral Beliefs			
Advantages			
	Socialization	5	100%
	Atmosphere	3	60%
Disadvantages			
	None	2	40%
	Limited Inventory	2	40%
Normative Beliefs			
Approve			
	General (e.g. "Everyone I know")	4	80%
	Family	2	40%
	Friends	2	40%
Disapprove			
	None	3	60%
	Family	2	40%
Control Beliefs			
Facilitators			
	Location	3	60%
Barriers			
	Location	3	60%

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Conclusion

There is a lack of research regarding microbrewery consumer behavior. Through in-depth interviews, this study provides a more encompassing understanding of the underlying behavioral, normative, and control beliefs of microbrewery consumers and, as an additional analysis, how they compare to those held by microbrewery owners/operators.

Local or Community Support

According to consumer interviews, one of the primary reasons for visiting microbreweries was to support local business or culture. Microbreweries do not produce enough beer to be consumed on a national scale and typically serve a smaller geographic location. In many cases they are considered "local" and for that reason already have a "local identity." Some ways in which they can further perpetuate this local image is by providing a unique setting, decorating with local artifacts and artwork, and showcasing other memorabilia that embodies the local culture (e.g. maps, sports memorabilia, music) (Schnell & Reese, 2003). Microbreweries should also host or participate in community events. The single most significant determinant of small business success is the support of local patrons and promotion through participating in personal service to the community (Kilkenny, Nalbarte, & Besser, 1999).

Products & Lack of Other Alcohol

The interviews also revealed that products are extremely important to consumers, specifically the quality and variety offered. Several articles have found that beer variety plays a significant role in the overall brewery experience (Kraftchick, Byrd, Canziani, & Gladwell, 2014; Murray & Kline, 2015; Murray& O'Neill, 2012). For this reason, microbreweries may

consider producing small-batches of unique or seasonal beers, or practice a rotation system of assorted styles and flavors. This type of information could be marketed and shared on social media which is proven to be an effective way of reaching consumers (Hassan, Nadzim, & Shiratuddin, 2015). In addition, microbreweries may also consider offering other alcohol products such as local wine.

Socialization & Entertainment

Another theme which emerged in the interviews was that people come to microbreweries to socialize and enjoy themselves. For this reason, microbreweries should be designed with interaction in mind. For example, there should be ample space for people to sit or gather (e.g. large tables, outdoor seating areas, and bars). In some cases, patrons not only want to socialize amongst themselves but also the staff and brew-masters. As mentioned during the interview process, visiting a microbrewery and meeting the brew-master is much like going to a restaurant and having the chef come to your table and ask how your meal was. It creates a personal relationship which can make people feel more connected to the company. Furthermore, consumers with a high personal connection to a business are also more willing to spend more on the products (Hess & Story, 2005). Microbreweries may also consider hosting events where patrons can meet the brew-master, or meet other patrons or home-brewers.

Atmosphere

The elicitation interviews revealed that atmosphere was also considered an advantage of visiting microbreweries. According to Bitner's (1992) servicescape, the physical environment is comprised of temperature, air quality, noise, music, odor, signage, personal artifacts, and style of

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décor. Subsequent studies derived from servicescape have also included items such as lighting, building design, seating arrangement, product presentation, menu design, and crowding (Raajpoot, 2002; Ryu & Jang, 2007). For this reason, microbreweries should carefully consider their atmosphere and the elements which can affect it. It may be appealing for visitors to see art rendered by local artists or memorabilia from local sporting teams, and other significant or historical artifacts.

Cost as a Disadvantage

The cost of beer was mentioned as one of the biggest disadvantages of visiting microbreweries. It was also affirmed that the cost does not always appeal to consumer's budget or monetary goals. Of the owners/operators interviewed, none of them were receptive to daily happy hours. Some stated that it cheapened their products image, and others stated that it would put them in direct competition with their other customers, local bars and restaurants. Although a happy hour may not be appropriate, microbrewery owners/operators may consider selling old products at a discount. For instance, if the microbrewery is at the end of a batch that is about to be replaced with a fresh batch, they may offer a discount on that product until the old batch is depleted.

Family & Friends

Whether positively or negatively, family and friends were found to be the most influential groups to microbrewery consumers. For this reason, it is important to market both directly to consumers and indirectly to their family and friends. For example, microbreweries could host events for families such as family game nights, or family movie nights. Similarly, they can offer

events or activities for groups of friends that promote interaction and foster an environment for socialization. For example, microbreweries could host a weekly trivia, provide entertainment, or have interactive games on-site. It was mentioned that some family and friends do not consume alcohol or dislike beer. In situations like this, microbreweries may consider having a minimum of one non-alcoholic beverage available to patrons, such as cider or root beer, and having alternative alcohols such as local wine.

Other family members were concerned with alcoholism and the abuse of alcohol. Several interview participants stated that they drink craft beer for the flavor and the experience rather than to become intoxicated. Thus, microbreweries should emphasize that craft beer is more akin to wine in that it is consumed for its quality, varying flavors, and innovative recipes, rather than to induce intoxication.

Location & Distance

The single most important facilitator and barrier for visiting a microbrewery was the location. Based on consumer interviews, being in a location that is proximate to their work or home makes them more willing to go. Furthermore, consumers indicated that they did not want to go out of their way to visit a microbrewery. Microbreweries should emphasize nearby attractions (e.g. restaurants) and try to offer services that makes the trip worthwhile. For example, offering unique entertainment (e.g. local bands, comedians), fitness classes, brewery tours, or some sort of festival to draw people in.

Transportation

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Transportation was found to be a significant factor in consumer's decision to visit a microbrewery. Some patrons expressed that although they enjoy craft beer, they do not support drinking and driving. For this reason, microbreweries should lobby for services such as Uber, and Lyft. It may also be helpful if the microbrewery tries to market their support of drinking responsibly. Procedures should be put in place for intoxicated patrons. For instance, employees should be empowered to call a taxi or other service that will transport a person to their home. A full list of taxis could be available at the bar. Furthermore, all patrons should have access to water, either at a fountain or water station.

Cost as a Barrier

Not only was cost found to be a disadvantage it was also identified as a potential barrier. During the interviews, some consumers mentioned that they simply couldn't afford the products even if they wanted to purchase them. Therefore, it may be beneficial for microbreweries to offer cheaper options for patrons who can't spend as much money on beer but would like to support the brewery.

Discussion

To our knowledge, this is the first study to successfully apply the TPB framework to the microbrewery context. More importantly, it fills gaps within microbrewery research by providing a more comprehensive understanding of microbrewery consumer's underlying behavioral, normative, and control beliefs.

This study provides useful information to microbrewery owners/operators which will ultimately help them serve their consumers more effectively. Aside from practical implications,

this study also provides a frequency table that can be used as a guideline for developing a quantitative measurement tool.

Although the focus of this study was consumers underlying beliefs additional analysis was conducted with owners/operators of microbreweries to gain further insight. Future studies may consider focusing solely on the beliefs of owners/operators to offer a more wholesome view of beliefs to be compared to those held by consumers. Also, an increased sample size, of both microbrewery consumers and microbrewery owners/operators, may provide a more wholesome understanding of underlying beliefs. Additionally, this study took place in one specific geographical area. Therefore, the perceptions held may be unique in comparison to those of other geographical areas. For this reason, future researchers may consider investigating whether there are differences amongst various geographical areas and compare them to those held by consumers in Alabama.

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