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## Beer Tourism in Kentucky: An Interpretation of Community Attachment and Locavore Behavior

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# Beer Tourism in Kentucky

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**Abstract:** *Beer tourism in Kentucky is prevalent to the state's economy and culture. This study focuses on community attachment as a means to predict locavore tendencies in the community regarding beer tourism in Kentucky. Using a Likert-scale survey, Bradley, Berend, & Maples analyzed the feeling of community attachment, locavore tendencies, and any existing barriers to locavore behavior. This paper uses their results to interpret Kentucky craft beer tourism and its importance to the community in which it exists. The data included the results from 761 resident responses, where there total complete surveys tallied 1071 responses, including those from non-residents; only responses from residents were used in this study. Visitors were 59.2% male and 37.3% female, 88.8% white, an average of 35.71 years old, earning a median income of \$81,658.67. Results showed 73.3% of respondents have a Bachelor's Degree or higher. With the Likert-scale (1=strongly agree; 5=strongly disagree), community attachment scored an average of 2.1847, showing visitors felt an attachment to their community, including the brewery they were visiting; locavore motivation scored a 1.9853, demonstrating strong motivation to consume locally produced and sold goods and services; and the locavore barriers scored a 3.1464 on the scale, indicating neutral, unsure, or indifferent reactions to any existing barriers in regard to their locavore behavior and choices. Based on these findings, community attachment can be used to predict locavore tendencies, and barriers for the population studied did not hold direct influence over their decisions. Results did show that the respondents agreed they can get a better price through a larger/national brand compared to local products, but does not seem to influence the decisions of the visitors regarding craft beer. Implications of this study are that beer tourism is associated with local consumers and their community attachment in Kentucky, and can help predict future behaviors.*

*Keywords: beer tourism, locavore, community attachment, rural tourism*

## **Beer Tourism in Kentucky**

Tourism is one of the common and unique aspects of any location; it highlights and celebrates the differences of a community or culture to unite individuals in mutual appreciation. Tourism and travel are growing industries in the United States, contributing to the 2016 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) directly by 2.7%, and indirectly by 8.1%, and supporting 5,486,000 directly and 14,207,000 jobs indirectly (Turner & Freiermuth, 2017). That is 9.4% of total employment in the United States.

Craft beer is a growing sector of tourism and contributes to the economy in numerous ways. Locavores, or “people who purchase and value locally produced food,” are prime consumers of craft beer that is produced and sold in their local communities (Bradley, Berend, & Maples, 2016). Acitelli (2013) defines craft beer as a beer that is created in “any small, independently owned brewery that adheres to traditional brewing practices and ingredients. Craft brewers are distinct from larger regional and national breweries, which often use nontraditional ingredients and brew on a much vaster scale” (p. xv). Together, locavores seem to have developed a sense of community attachment regarding craft beer, meaning, to some extent, these locavores have found a sense of identity within the craft brewing of their surroundings and continue to value its addition in their lives (Bradley et al., 2016). Due to this community attachment, the importance of beer tourism, especially local beer tourism, has a growing influence on its local landscape.

### **Current Interpretation of Beer Tourism**

Locavore preferences influence and change the physical and economic landscapes around them. Likewise, local businesses follow trends to better meet the supply and demand at hand. The physical landscape will alter to match demand and serve the needs of its reapers more efficiently. In the case of beer tourism, these physical and economic landscapes are defined by an increase in local hops production, other ingredient suppliers, and craft beer breweries as a whole. Jordan (2016) found that

changes in tastes also lead to changes in landscapes, like the growth in the number of hops farms in places where hops haven’t been cultivated in 100 years, or the effort to build more regional maltheuses for small-scale brewers, or the resurrection of lost orchards whose fruits become top-shelf ciders (like Tilted Shed in Sonoma County, California). (p. 1)

Hops production, barley fields, and maltheuses are now being localized at rates comparable to pre-Prohibition times. As craft brewing and beer tourism increase in popularity, the demand for individualized, unique, and competitive products is reaching new levels, causing a need for micro-maltheuses throughout the United States.

Jordan's (2016) findings also align with those of Bradley et al. (2016) regarding population demographics of the locavores in question; the majority of craft beer consumers are white, middle-class males. Based on this population, current marketing should be geared toward their peers. Not only has craft brewing revolutionized the physical landscape of the United States, but it has also influenced legislation. Hindy (2014), author of *The Craft Beer Revolution*, connects today's craft brewing culture to law changes in the 1970s which "reduced the excise tax on small brewers [and legalized] homebrewing" (as cited in Jordan, 2016, p. 2). Because of this change, the end of Prohibition led the way for local brewing to grow again, contributing to the economy and leading to a revolutionary tourism opportunity for craft beer.

### **Purpose of Study and Interpretation**

The researchers for this study intended to gauge community attachment, locavore motivation, and locavore barriers as the predictors for locavore tendencies. Local businesses within the microbrewery and beer tourism communities as well as other businesses impacted by the locavore's shopping habits, such as markets, artisans, and restaurants, could use this study's findings for numerous reasons. This study is localized to Kentucky and its craft brewing communities; therefore, related findings can further be used in support of local breweries, contributing to the economy. Finally, the findings could be used to argue the value of beer tourism as an influence over the physical and cultural landscapes of Kentucky and their affects on other sectors of the economy.

### **Methods**

In the quantitative study used for this analysis, researchers used Likert-style statements to gauge community attachment, locavore motivation, and locavore barriers as the predictors for locavore tendencies. This survey was conducted at fifteen Kentucky craft breweries. Only responses from individuals eighteen years old or older who were also residents from the city or county of the brewery in question were used. The results from 761 surveys provided the data while a total of 1071 (including responses from non-residents) were collected for the study, giving a response rate of 79.4%.  
Analysis

The data provided promising information. Regarding demographics, the visitors from the study were majority white, educated males averaging 35 years of age with a median income of \$81,658.67, which aligns with other findings (Jordan, 2016). The overall community attachment score for the Likert-scale survey was 2.1847, demonstrating that the visitors to Kentucky breweries are attached to their communities (See Table 1). Locavore motivation scored 1.9853 on the Likert-scale, demonstrating a strong motivation to stay local in their purchases. Barriers to local consumption were studied with a resulting 3.1464 score on the scale, meaning "brewery visitors [were] unsure or indifferent about barriers to buying local food and services" (Bradley et al., 2016).

Overall, these scores reveal that locavore motivations could strongly influence community attachment within the realm of beer tourism in Kentucky. Scores also show that, for the studied population, barriers to local product and service consumption are not predominant. This could be due to their larger income with more of their personal funds available for entertainment.

### **Discussion**

From the analysis, the researchers concluded that community attachment does influence beer tourism in Kentucky. The demographic majority could be influenced by culture, meaning social norms and stigmas could play a role in defining the typical beer consumer. Marketing could have its own affect on the beer tourism industry and the typical consumer as well; targeting current popular consumers could draw in similar populations or leave room for future marketing areas, such as women or other ethnic groups. Barriers to the surveyed population are neutral in their effect on local consumption of goods and services.

Bradley et al. (2016) concluded, “locavore tendencies can be anticipated considering local food purchasing and barrier statements, demographic data and community attachment levels” (p. 21). With the ability to predict these tendencies, the local community could develop and cater more to their intended consumers’ values. This change could lead to an increase in economic development and worth, for example, with new craft beer opportunities throughout the state. Support for other local businesses and events could be supplemented by beer tourism in the area because local consumption of goods and services is expedited when the desired products are sold in the same place it is produced. Repeat visitation could occur due to the community attachment felt by brewery visitors; word of mouth as another source of marketing for the businesses.

Further research is needed based on these findings, possibly focusing on other populations including visitors from different regions than the brewery studied, other states’ beer tourism industries, marketing methods, and areas affected by the breweries. More research on community attachment and its relationship with locavore tendencies would provide an additional understanding of their application to other fields of study. Regarding Kentucky breweries, research in reference to locations not included in this study would help to generalize the results of community attachment, locavore motivations, and existing barriers within the state. To improve local consumption of goods necessary to the craft brewing process, research on Kentucky brewery procurement of beer ingredients could benefit agricultural communities in surrounding areas. This potential increase in business could provide more employment opportunities within the state, thereby increasing the economic benefit of the industry.

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**Table 1**

*Mean Scores of Various Constructs*

	<b>Community Attachment</b>	<b>Locavore Motivation</b>	<b>Locavore Barriers</b>
<b>Mean</b>	2.1847	1.9853	3.1464
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	0.72965	0.65938	.063845

\* 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree

**Table 2**

*Community Attachment (1= strongly agree; 5= strongly disagree)*

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
The settings and facilities provided by this community are the best	2.09	0.825
I prefer living in this community over other communities.	2.01	0.922
I enjoy living in this community more than other communities.	2.01	0.886
I feel this community is a part of me.	2.12	0.950
Living in this community says a lot about who I am.	2.45	1.070
Living in this community means a lot to me.	2.16	0.971
I am very attached to this community.	2.27	1.019
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this community.	2.25	0.993
Many of my friends/family prefers this community over other communities.	2.33	0.992
I identify with the people living in this community.	2.17	0.909

**Table 3**

*Locavore Motivation (1=strongly agree; 5= strongly disagree)*

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Local food is a healthier option.	2.24	0.985
I like the idea of supporting my local farmers and ranchers.	1.37	0.587
Buying local reduces my carbon footprint by decreasing emissions produced by a supply chain.	1.86	0.959
Locally grown food tastes better.	2.03	0.946
Locally grown food is raised/grown humanely.	2.33	0.935
Local food will be better for me, free from antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, chemicals, etc.	2.30	0.978

Local food purchases have a positive effect on my local agricultural community.	1.54	0.692
Buying local food is environmentally responsible.	1.87	0.921
Locally raised/grown food has superior flavor.	2.16	0.965
Smaller, local producers treat their plants/livestock better than larger producers.	2.16	0.936

**Table 4**

*Locavore Barriers (1 = strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree)*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Local food is more expensive.	2.26	0.944
Buying local food is inconvenient.	3.34	1.043
Local foods lack labels/labeling.	3.26	0.986
Local foods have inconsistent quality.	3.59	0.911
I desire better food products than I can get locally.	3.25	1.127
I can get a better price through larger/national brands.	2.46	1.043
Finding a quality local producer can be difficult.	3.10	1.052
I am more confident with a brand name product.	3.49	1.040
With local foods, I am not sure what I am getting.	3.70	0.923
I desire specific food products which may not be offered locally.	2.97	1.116