

**CONCEPTUALISING PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD
AND REVISIT INTENTIONS TO A WINESCAPE**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to conceptualise the commonly referred to 'winescape' in wine tourism literature and develop a scale to measure its effects on wine tourist attitudes and revisit intentions to a wine region. Integrating theoretical underpinnings from services and tourism marketing into existing wine tourism literature a framework for the proposed winescape is presented incorporating the theory of planned behaviour. The proposed winescape construct contains wine region destination attributes, signage and layout and service staff, while the remaining constructs within the study include wine tourist motivation, attitude towards the winescape, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, revisit intentions and past experience with the winescape. Involvement will be used as a background construct to segment the sample and will have a proposed moderating effect on the model. Other relationships within the model and the contributions of the study will also be examined.

INTRODUCTION

Wine tourism is a growing research stream with great importance to both the wine industry and the tourism industry providing great synergies resulting in the development of regional economies (Hall, Johnson and Mitchell 2000; Carlsen 2004; Gammack 2006) and providing benefits to wine producers leading to greater brand awareness and involvement (O'Neill and Charters 2000) and increased post visit purchase behaviour (O'Neill, Palmer & Charters 2002; Mitchell & Hall 2006; Johnson and Bruwer 2007). As a young research stream, while there is now more extensive empirical research being undertaken (e.g. Sparks 2007), most of the early research in the field was conceptual and lacked theoretical underpinning and application (Carlsen 2004; Mitchell and Hall 2006).

One commonly used term within wine tourism literature is 'winescape', mentioned in at least 21 wine tourism papers (e.g. Peters 1997; Getz et al. 1999; Getz 2000; Hall et al. 2000). From its most broad description, the attributes of a grape wine region (Peters 1997), to its most detailed, "the winescape encapsulates the interplay of; vineyards, wineries and other physical structures, wines, natural landscape and setting, people and; heritage, towns and their architecture and artefacts within them" (Johnson and Bruwer 2007, 277), it is used to define the destination attributes of a wine region. Through these studies it is also stated that the winescape is what primarily motivates and drives wine tourist behaviour. Even the widely accepted definition of wine tourism, visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of the grape wine region are the primary motivators" (Hall et al. 2000; Carlsen and Charters 2006), blatantly suggests this. But yet within the wine tourism literature the winescape remains broadly defined and un-conceptualised, leaving the effects of the winescape unmeasurable.

While there have been efforts to develop a scale that measures the attributes of a wine region, they have been exploratory and lacked theoretical underpinning (Getz and Brown 2006). Therefore there is also a need to integrate the winescape into a proven consumer behaviour model to examine its effects on wine tourist attitudes and revisit intentions to a wine region. Therefore it is the aim of this study to first, conceptualise the winescape and develop a scale that will measure the winescape and secondly,

integrate the winescape into a robust consumer behaviour model, i.e. the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) to examine its effects on wine tourist attitudes and revisit intentions to a wine region.

RELEVANT LITERATURE, THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

As noted, much past wine tourism research has lacked theoretical underpinnings. Therefore this study utilises theoretical underpinnings from services (Bitner 1992; Wakefield and Blodgett 1996) and tourism marketing (Lawson and Band-Bovy 1977; Crompton 1979; Pike 2002; Yoon and Uysal 2005) to explain how the winescape will affect wine tourist satisfaction with a wine region.

When deciding on travel destinations people will experience push and pull motivations, meaning that they are 'pushed' towards a travel destination by internal psychological forces and they are 'pulled' by the external forces of the destination attributes (Crompton 1979; Yoon and Uysal 2005). "Destination image is an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination" (Hosany, Ekinici and Uysal 2006, p.638). It consists of two dimensions, cognitive, the beliefs and knowledge held about the physical attributes of a destination, and affective, the appraisal of the affective quality of feeling towards the destination attributes and surrounding environments (Baloglu and McCleary 1999; Hosany, Ekinici and Uysal 2006). As this study will only be focusing on the supply side factors of wine tourism it will be looking at 'pull' motivations and cognitive destination image aspects in isolation.

It has been recognised that tourism destinations (Hu and Ritchie 1993) and wine regions (Hall et al. 2000) are a combination of tourist facilities and services, so therefore it is logical to view a tourist destination/ wine region as a service environment. Viewing a wine region as a service environment servicescape factors such as ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality and signs, symbols and artefacts (Bitner 1992) should have some impact on visitor attitudes (Wakefield and Blodgett 1996).

Destination attributes as defined in tourism, represent the facilities, attractions and experiences that a destination offers a tourist (Morgan, Pritchard and Piggot 2003). Applying this to a wine region setting, winescape destination attributes can be defined as the facilities, attractions and experiences that a wine region offers. In tourism marketing studies, the 'pull' motivating and cognitive destination image attributes (destination attributes) are most commonly identified using the multi-attribute approach. Using this approach wine region specific destination attributes will be identified from existing wine tourism literature (e.g. Hall et al. 2000; Getz 2000, Brown, Havitz and Getz 2006; Getz and Brown 2006; Spark 2007). Wine tourists also get involved in non-wine related features and activities (Carlsen and Dowling 1998), so therefore the scale should also include non-wine related attractions that are present within wine regions. Previous research suggests that WDA will directly affect satisfaction (SAT) with a wine region (Weiermair and Fuchs 1999; Yoon and Uysal 2005; Chen and Tsai 2007).

Therefore, it can be proposed that;

H1a – wine region destination attributes will have a positive effect on wine tourist attitude towards the winescape.

Signage and layout is adapted from services marketing studies (e.g. Wakefield and Blodgett 1996; Lucas 2003; Newman 2007). Layout refers to the way in which the furnishings and equipment are arranged within service environments, and the ability

of those items to facilitate the achievement of performance goals of customers and employees. Signage refers to signage and decor used to direct the consumer through the service environment, and to communicate and enhance a certain image or mood. The use of signage and efficient layout has been found to positively affect customer satisfaction within elaborate service setting such as sports stadiums (Wakefield and Blodgett 1996:1999), casinos (Wakefield and Blodgett 1996; Lucas 2003), hospital, universities and airport terminals (Newman 2007), betting shops (Cockrill, Goode and Emberson 2008) and restaurants (Ryu and Juang 2007).

Therefore, it can be proposed that;

H1b – Signage and layout will have a positive effect on wine tourist attitude towards the winescape.

Service staff can be defined as personnel who interact with the customer and who deliver the service during the service encounter (Shostack 1985; Bitner 1990). They are expected to have expert knowledge of the subject and a pre-disposition to meet the customers' needs (Harris & Ezeh 2008) and highly knowledgeable wine consumers expect cellar door staff to exhibit strong product knowledge (Charters and Ali Knight 2002). The quality of service delivered by the service staff has been found to positively affect perceptions about the service and re-patronage intentions (Wakefield and Blodgett 1999) and good customer service at cellar door has been found to positively affect cellar door visitor attitude and post visit purchase intention (O'Neill and Charters 2000; O'Neill, Palmer and Charters 2002).

Therefore, it can be proposed that;

H1c – Service staff will have a positive effect on wine tourist attitude towards the winescape.

In tourism literature, motivation can be defined as the combination of needs and desires that affects the propensity to engage in travel activity (O'leary and Deegan 2005; Park and Yoon 2009), and are representative of individual internal forces that lead to action (Schiffman and Kanuk 1978). As explained earlier, push motivations are representative of these internal forces that push a tourist to travel to a destination. These push motivations can be viewed as the desire to fulfil the needs of relaxation, socialisation, learning, family togetherness, novelty and excitement (Park and Yoon 2009). In wine tourism, it has been found that the wine tourist is motivated by the feeling of escape, personal growth and learning, authenticity, value for money and excitement (Roberts and Sparks 2006). It has also been found that internal push motivations may be stimulated and reinforced by destination attributes (McGehee et al. 1996; Yoon and Uysal 2005).

Therefore, it can be proposed that;

H2a-c – Wine tourist motivation will mediate the winescape constructs' effects on wine tourist attitude towards the winescape.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen 1991) provides a robust and generally accepted consumer behaviour model to predict the effects of the winescape and wine tourist motivation on the wine tourists' intention to revisit a wine region. The TPB proposes that behaviour is determined by three factors; attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. An attitude is a favorable or unfavorable predisposition to respond in a consistent way toward an object. Subjective norms measure the importance people attach to reference groups' endorsements and people's willingness to conform to these groups' shared beliefs, attitudes and choices. Perceived behavioral control is a measure of the difficulty people attach to the

performance of a behavior (Lam and Hsu, 2006). Past research supports the applicability of the TPB to the tourism (Lam and Hsu 2006) and wine tourism (Sparks 2007) contexts.

Therefore, it can be proposed that;

H3 – Subjective norms will have a positive effect on wine tourist revisit intentions towards a wine region.

H4 – Attitude towards the winescape will have a positive effect on wine tourist revisit intentions towards a wine region.

H5 – Perceived behavioural control will have a positive effect on wine tourist revisit intentions towards a wine region.

While the TPB has been widely accepted as a model to predict consumer behaviour there is an argument from some researchers (e.g. Lam and Hsu 2004; Nysveen, Pedersen and Thorbjorsen 2005) that the model fails to explain enough variance and more exogenous variables are required to properly predict behavioural intentions. It has been found that past behaviour (Lam and Hsu 2006) and past attitude towards wine tourism experiences (Sparks 2007) will both explain more variance and act as a predictor to future behavioural intentions.

Therefore, it can be proposed that;

H6 – Past experience with a winescape will have a positive effect on wine tourist attitude towards the winescape.

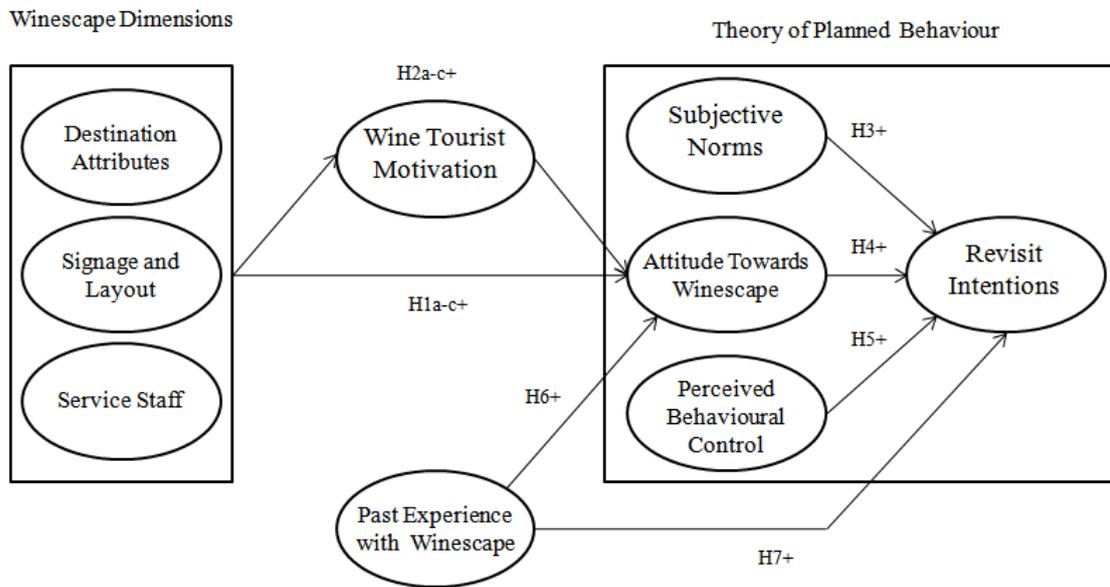
H7 – Past experience with a winescape will have a positive effect on wine tourist revisit intentions towards a wine region.

Involvement is defined as the extent that a person associates themselves with an activity or product and how relevant it is to their needs, wants and values (Zaichkowsky 1985; Sparks 2007). It has been found that involvement will have an effect on effort put into purchase decisions (Bloch, Sherrell and Ridgway 1986) and travel decisions (Laverie and Arnett 2000). It has been noted that wine tourism is not a discreet activity (Charters and Ali-Knight 2002) as wine tourists will also participate in non-wine related activities (Carlsen and Dowling 1998). Wine tourists were segmented by Charters and Ali-Knights (2002) on the basis of wine interest and knowledge providing insight for future research into wine tourist segmentation. Brown, Havitz and Getz (2006) found that wine consumers segmented by involvement profiles were differentiated in their wine purchases, consumption and wine related travel decisions.

Therefore, it can be proposed that;

H8 – Wine tourist segmentation via involvement with the wine tourism experience will moderate the research models relationships.

Figure 1: Proposed research model



CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The preceding literature review provides the basis for the proposed theoretical framework highlighting the higher order winescape construct, containing destination attributes, signage and layout and service staff, and its effects on wine tourist motivation, attitude and revisit intentions. In addition, the model also shows the effects that subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and past experience with the winescape will have on wine tourist attitude and revisit intentions. The next step of the study is to design a research methodology and test these proposed hypotheses. The study offers a number of significant contributions. Theoretically, it introduces theoretical underpinnings from marketing, services marketing and tourism to develop a framework in which to examine insights from existing exploratory wine tourism research. Using the TPB, it will be one of the first studies in wine tourism to integrate a proven consumer behaviour model. Taking a services marketing perspective it will extend and test the applicability of Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework in a wine region setting. One of the main objectives of the study will be to develop and validate a measurement scale for the winescape. This will provide a significant methodological contribution to the field of wine tourism. Scales to measure the remaining constructs will be adopted from existing literature to ensure that reliability and validity is ensured. From a managerial perspective, quantifying supply related attributes and showing their effect on tourist attitude and intention will help guide wine region development by destination marketing organisations, provide a grounding for government policy making to enhance private industry investment, identify winescape factors that wine producers and operators can manage better, i.e service training and finally, provide insight into wine region branding and promotional campaigns.

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