



Incorporating the winescape into the theory of planned behaviour: Examining ‘new world’ wineries



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HIGHLIGHTS

- There is critical need for a decision-making framework that explains wine tourist behaviour.
- This study interviewed 1135 wine tourists across four wineries in Australia and America.
- Winescape service staff and complementary product influenced wine tourist attitude.
- The research model offers researchers a generalisable framework for ‘new world’ wineries.
- Findings help practitioners identify which winescape attributes influence decision-making.

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ABSTRACT

The current study sets out to examine the winescape for its effects on wine tourist behaviour. In doing so, an empirical winescape scale is introduced to an established decision-making model, the theory of planned behaviour. A total of 1135 responses were collected through a survey that was self-administered to wine tourists across four wineries in Australia and the USA. Structural equation modelling suggested that winescape service staff and complementary product had significant effects on wine tourist attitude toward the winery, making them instrumental in wine tourist decision-making. Winescape setting and wine value were also significant attributes in influencing wine tourist attitude. Findings provide greater insight into which winescape attributes are most critical in shaping wine tourist attitude and in turn, behavioural intention toward the winery. The research model offers an empirical decision-making framework that is easy to use and generalisable in wine tourism contexts.

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1. Introduction

People have paid tribute to the grape and enjoyed its wine since the Neolithic period and beyond (McGovern, 2003). In 2012, wine produced in France and Italy, ‘old world’ wine economies accounted for 41,422 million hectares and 40,060 million hectares respectively. In the same year, wine produced in Australia and the USA, ‘new world’ wine economies accounted for 12,660 million hectares and 20,510 million hectares respectively (International Organisation of Vine and Wine, 2013). Visitation to wineries to

experience wine-making and wine consumption *in situ* has become a tourism activity that offers visitors an “incentive to participate” (Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2012, p. 134). In fact, Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, and Macionis (2002, p. 3) have observed the phenomenon of wine tourism as “visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors.” Thus, a favourable wine tourist experience occurs when a wine tourist has a positive interaction with these wine attributes.

Wine tourism affords several advantages. From a macro perspective, it contributes to sustainable regional development (Carlsen, 2004; Gammack, 2006). Skinner (2000) has observed that as wine regions become increasingly involved or even reliant on wine tourism, the need to sustain tourism as an economic resource is crucial. According to Poitras and Getz (2006),

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sustainable wine tourism takes into account the identification and management of unique issues related to the infrastructure and resources used, specific forms of wine tourism development and detailed impacts caused by wine tourism. From a micro perspective, wine tourism benefits wine producers with cellar doors where the wines they produce are showcased and sold. For instance, in the Margaret River wine region of Western Australia, cellar door sales represent 34% of total wine sales, with 15% of wineries dependent on cellar door sales for over 80% of their sales revenue (O'Neill, Palmer, & Charters, 2002). Thus, delivering a positive wine tourist experience at the cellar door is crucial. First, it increases brand awareness and allows the wine tourist to engage with the winery, enabling wine producers to communicate their history and present their brand's product portfolio. Second, it impacts on post-visit purchase behaviour (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007; O'Neill et al., 2002), instigating repeat wine purchases and increasing sales for the winery.

From an academic perspective, interest in wine tourism can provide in-depth knowledge of wine tourist characteristics, motives and preferences that determine decision-making (Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2010). Clearly, a positive cellar door experience can shape favourable wine tourist attitude toward the cellar door and in turn, behavioural intention such as willingness to revisit the winery and recommend it to others. The phenomenon of experiencing the grape wine environment or 'winescape' was first introduced by Peters (1997, p. 124) when he referred to it as a cultural/viticultural landscape with "a winsome combination of vineyards, wineries and supporting activities necessary for modern production." Since then, over 30 academic publications have made reference to the winescape (e.g. Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Getz, Dowling, Carlsen, & Anderson, 1999; Hall et al., 2002; Johnson & Bruwer, 2007; Mitchell, Charters, & Albrecht, 2012; Sharples, 2002; Sparks, 2007; Telfer, 2000).

Despite many publications devoted to the winescape, the wine tourism literature remains fragmented and in its infancy stage. These limitations may be summarised into two areas. First, varying winescape conceptualisations with scant theoretical underpinnings have given rise to crude operationalisations of the construct (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012). This has resulted in a lack of consensus about how the winescape is perceived and what attributes it encapsulates (Hall et al., 2002). Second, limited empirical studies have examined causal relationships between the winescape and wine tourist behavioural intention. For instance, Getz and Brown (2006b) have identified an *a priori* list of supply-related winescape attributes but have not proceeded to test the effects of these attributes on wine tourist behavioural intention. Further, Lockshin and Corsi (2012) have observed that the buying behaviour of wine tourists *in situ* is an under researched area that requires consideration.

The current study aims to address these identified gaps in the literature. To attend to the first gap, it introduces servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992) that underpins conceptualisation of the winescape and its attributes. Then, it identifies and clarifies the diverse approaches adopted in winescape definitions and offers an approach which can be commonly adopted in future research. To address the second gap, the study introduces an empirical winescape scale developed by Thomas, Quintal, and Phau (2010a, 2010b, 2011) to an established decision-making model, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). While the said scale has been validated in Australia, the current study is the first to replicate the scale in the USA and the first to utilise the TPB in a wine tourism context in the USA. Introducing the winescape scale to the TPB offers a generalisable framework that can be commonly utilised to predict wine tourist behavioural intention.

2. Literature review

2.1. The winescape

The servicescape was introduced by Bitner (1992, p. 65) to the discipline of services marketing as "the dimensions of the physical surroundings (of a service environment) ... that can be controlled by the firm to enhance (or constrain) employee and customer actions." In Bitner's (1992) seminal study, the servicescape comprises three key dimensions: (1) ambient conditions; (2) spatial layout and functionality; and (3) signs, symbols and artefacts. According to the author, these attributes come together to affect mood state and attitude in customers and employees, leading to either approach or avoidance behaviours.

Servicescape theory has underpinned a range of studies across contexts such as banks (e.g. Reimer & Kuehn, 2005), retail settings (e.g. Wirtz, Mattila, & Tan, 2007), sports stadiums (e.g. Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999), airport terminals, universities, hospitals (e.g. Newman, 2007), restaurants, bars (e.g. Kim & Moon, 2009) and casinos (e.g. Lucas, 2003). In fact, some empirical studies have extended servicescape theory to more specific contexts that have unique attributes, resulting in the shipscape (Kwortnik, 2008), the festivalscape (Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008) and the musicscape (Oakes & North, 2008). For instance, Kwortnik's (2008) shipscape has identified: (1) the natural environment (sea); (2) ambient conditions (scents, sounds, cleanliness and lighting); (3) design factors (decor, colour schemes, furnishings and layout); and (4) social factors (crowds, queuing and service staff interactions) for their influence on passengers' attitude toward their cruise experience. Alternatively, Lee et al.'s *festivascape* (2008) has observed: (1) program content; (2) staff interactions; (3) festival facilities; (4) food options; (5) souvenirs; (6) convenience; and (7) information availability that affect festival goers' satisfaction. This suggests there is potential to extend servicescape theory to the winery's specific context of the winescape.

Since Peters' (1997) seminal paper, the winescape has been conceptualised from both general and specific perspectives. General conceptualisations include Hall et al.'s (2002, p. 4) reference to "attributes of a grape wine region" and Douglas, Douglas, and Derrett's (2001, p. 313) "physical, social and cultural dimensions of the winescape and its components." Specific conceptualisations include Telfer's (2000, p. 73) reference to "three main elements; the presence of vineyards, the wine-making activity and the wineries where the wine is produced and stored" and Johnson and Bruwer's (2007, p. 277) "interplay of; vineyards, wineries and other physical structures, wines, natural landscape and setting, people and; heritage, towns and their architecture and artefacts within them."

The winescape has also been conceptualised from two approaches. The macro approach views the winescape as a wine region or wine route and is most predominate in wine tourism literature (e.g. Getz & Brown, 2006a). However, this approach presents several limitations. First, it takes into account many factors such as history, culture, facilities, amenities, layout and signage, resulting in too broad definitions of the winescape. Second, its wide regional scope makes it difficult to identify and measure specific winescape attributes for their influence on wine tourist attitude and subsequent behavioural intention, resulting in few empirical studies of the winescape. The micro approach focuses on the winescape as the environment at a specific winery (e.g. Carmichael, 2005). Adopting this approach offers some advantages. First, it provides focus to a wine tourist experience in a specific winery service environment, defining parameters for conceptual and operational definitions of the winescape. Second, it allows specific winescape attributes to be examined for their effects in an identified environment, enabling an empirical study to be conducted. In

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