

## **Predictors of Attitude and Intention to Revisit a Winescape**

### **Abstract**

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This paper aims to conceptualise the commonly referred to 'winescape' in wine tourism literature by identifying key winescape dimensions that affect wine tourist buying behaviour. Integrating theoretical underpinnings from the services, tourism and wine tourism marketing literature, a winescape framework that encapsulates destination features, signage and layout and service staff in a wine region is introduced to an empirically tested consumer behaviour model. It is expected that the winescape will have positive effects on wine tourist motivation, attitude and intention to revisit a wine region.

**Keywords:** Winescape, theory of planned behaviour, motivation, attitude, revisit intention

# **Predictors of Attitude and Intention to Revisit a Winescape**

## **Introduction**

Visitor perceptions about a destination can help to determine the destination's success or failure (Formica, 2002; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). The perceived attractiveness (Um, Chon and Ro, 2006) and perceived quality (Atilgan, Akinci and Aksoy, 2003) of a destination can influence repeat visitations. The popularity of a destination has the potential to contribute to its economic success through an increase in modern infrastructure and employment (Darnell and Johnson, 2001).

Visitation to a wine region contributes toward the development of its regional economies (Carlsen, 2004; Gammack, 2006; Hall, Johnson and Mitchell, 2000), provides greater brand awareness and involvement (O'Neill and Charters, 2000) and increases post visit purchase behaviour (Johnson and Bruwer, 2007; Mitchell and Hall, 2006; O'Neill, Palmer and Charters, 2002). While some empirical research on wine tourism has been conducted in recent years (e.g. Sparks, 2007), early research in the area has largely been conceptual, lacking theoretical underpinning and application (Carlsen, 2004; Mitchell and Hall, 2006).

A widely accepted definition of wine tourism is the 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 (Carlsen and Charters, 2006; Hall, Johnson and Mitchell, 2000). One commonly used term within wine tourism literature is the 'winescape', mentioned in at least 21 wine tourism papers (e.g. Getz, 2000; Getz et al., 1999; Hall, Johnson and Mitchell, 2000; Peters, 1997). From its most broad definition, as referring to the attributes of a grape wine region (Peters, 1997) to its most specific, as encapsulating "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, p. 277), these definitions acknowledge the destination attributes of a wine region. Such studies conclude that the winescape is what primarily motivates and drives wine tourist behaviour. Yet, despite frequent references to the winescape, it remains loosely defined and unconceptualised. This is because efforts to conceptualise the winescape and its attributes have largely been exploratory and lack theoretical underpinning (Getz and Brown, 2006). Also, previous studies have focused on other variable effects on the wine tourist experience, and the winescape is simply a by-product of this aim (e.g. Brown, Havitz and Getz, 2006; Galloway et al., 2008).

Clearly, there is a critical need to integrate literature in the area to conceptualise a winescape framework that is grounded in theory. Such a framework would encapsulate all aspects of the wine region that can effectively predict wine tourist buying behaviour. This paper has two aims. First, it sets out to conceptualise the winescape and develop a scale that taps into dimensions of the wine tourist experience, and examines wine tourist motivation. Second, it introduces the proposed winescape scale into a robust consumer behaviour model, such as Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour, to examine its effects on wine tourist attitude and intention to revisit a wine region.

## **Relevant Literature, Theory and Hypotheses**

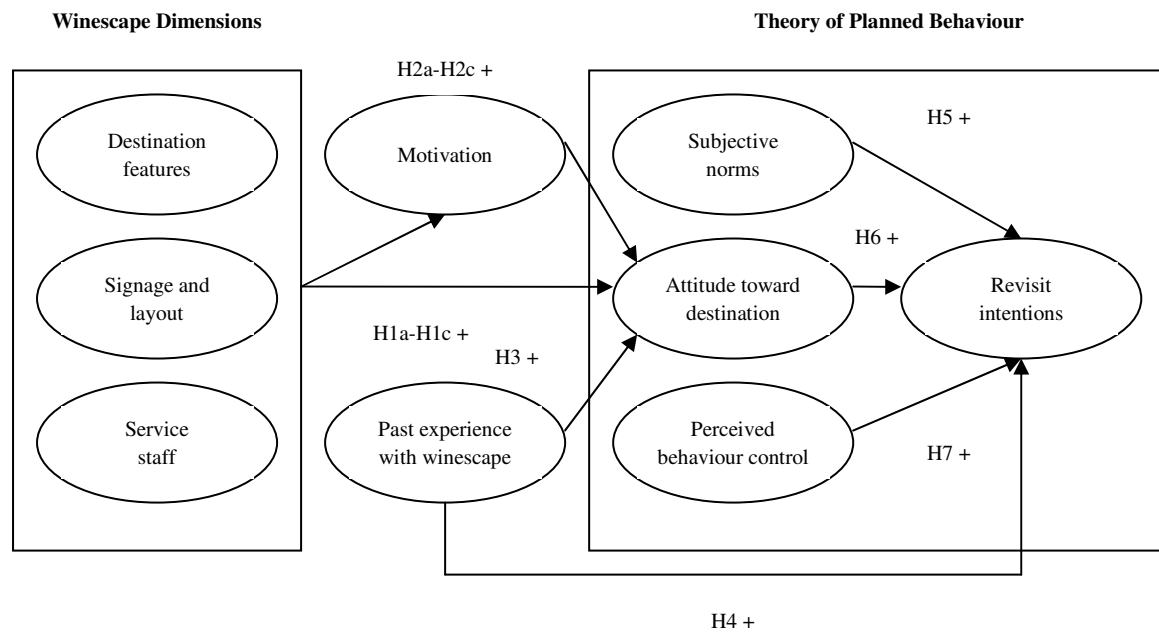
Tourism destinations (Hu and Ritchie, 1993) and wine regions (Hall, Johnson and Mitchell, 2000) are a combination of tourist facilities and services. Thus, it is logical to view a wine region as a tourist destination with a context-specific service environment or winescape. In conceptualising the winescape, this paper attempts to integrate theoretical underpinnings from literature in services marketing (e.g. Bitner, 1992; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996), tourism marketing (e.g. Pike, 2002; Yoon and Uysal, 2005) and wine tourism marketing (e.g. Getz, 2000; Getz and Brown, 2006) to explain how the winescape will affect wine tourist behaviour.

Destination image refers to “an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination” (Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006, p. 638). Destination image consists of two dimensions, namely: (1) cognitive, the beliefs and knowledge held about the physical attributes of a destination and (2) affective, the appraisal of the affective quality of feeling toward the destination attributes and surrounding environments (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006). Thus, visitors to a wine region are expected to have cognitive and affective experiences of the winescape.

Applying Bitner’s (1992) servicescape theory to the winescape, it would appear that wine tourists will have cognitive and affective experiences on three dimensions of the service environment, namely: (1) ambient conditions such as weather, temperature, music, air quality and scents; (2) spatial functionality and layout such as the arrangement of the machinery, equipment and furnishings and the ability of these items to facilitate performance goals and enjoyment and (3) signs, symbols and artefacts used to communicate and enhance mood and image and/or provide directional cues for customers (Bitner, 1992). In a wine region, such factors are expected to impact on wine tourist attitudes as observed in studies conducted in other servicescapes (e.g. Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994, 1996, 1999). Thus, in this paper, we conceptualise a winescape framework to include tourists’ cognitive and affective experiences of the three servicescape dimensions, and we extend servicescape theory by including additional dimensions that together, encapsulate the natural landscape and setting, heritage, towns, architecture, artefacts, vineyards, wineries, wines and people.

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) provides a robust and empirically tested consumer behaviour model that has been used in tourism and wine tourism contexts (e.g. Lam and Hsu, 2006; Quintal, Lee and Soutar, 2010; Sparks, 2007). The TPB proposes that behaviour is determined by three factors, namely: (1) attitude, which is a favourable or unfavourable predisposition to respond in a consistent way toward an object; (2) subjective norms, which measures the importance people attach to reference groups’ endorsements and people’s willingness to conform to these groups’ shared beliefs, attitudes and choices and (3) perceived behavioural control, which measures the difficulty people attach to the performance of a behaviour (Lam and Hsu, 2006). All three factors are expected to impact on purchase intentions and actual purchase. In this paper, we propose to introduce the winescape framework into the TPB model to predict the effects the winescape has on wine tourist motivation, attitude and intention to revisit a wine region. The proposed research model and its constructs, seen in Figure 1, are briefly outlined in the following paragraphs.

**Figure 1: Proposed research model**



Destination features are adapted from tourism marketing literature (e.g. Cai, 2002; Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006). Destination features represent the facilities, attractions and experiences that a destination offers a tourist (Morgan, Pritchard and Piggot, 2003). In a wine region, destination features would include the natural landscape and setting, heritage, towns, architecture, artefacts, vineyards, wineries and wines identified from existing wine tourism literature (e.g. Brown, Havitz and Getz, 2006; Getz, 2000; Getz and Brown, 2006; Hall, Johnson and Mitchell, 2000; Sparks, 2007). Destination features also include non-wine related aspects and activities (Carlsen and Dowling, 1998) such as river boat cruises, fishing, horse riding, bicycle tours, cooking tours as well as visits to local markets that produce olive oil, pasta and chocolate. Researchers found that appealing destination features of a wine region directly affected attitude toward a wine region (e.g. Chen and Tsai, 2007; Weiermair and Fuchs, 1999; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Therefore, it is proposed that:

*H1a: Appealing destination features in the winescape will positively affect wine tourist attitude toward the winescape*

Signage and layout extends from services marketing literature (e.g. Lucas, 2003; Newman, 2007; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996). Signage refers to signs and decor used to direct the consumer through the service environment and to communicate and enhance a certain image or mood (Bitner, 1992). 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 (Bitner, 1992). Findings suggested that clear signage and efficient layout directly affected customer attitudes in elaborate service settings such as a sports stadium (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994, 1996, 1999), casino (Lucas, 2003; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996), hospital, university, airport terminal (Newman, 2007), betting shop (Cockrill, Goode and Emberson, 2008) and restaurant (Ryu and Juang, 2007). Therefore, it is proposed that:

*H1b: Efficient signage and layout in the winescape will positively affect wine tourist attitude toward the winescape*

Service staff is adapted from services marketing literature (e.g. Kim and Moon, 2009; Lucas, 2003; Ryu and Juang, 2007) Service staff refer to personnel who interact with the customer and who deliver the service during the service encounter (Bitner, 1990; Shostack, 1985). They are expected to have expert knowledge of the subject and a pre-disposition to meet customers' needs (Harris and Ezech, 2008). Highly knowledgeable wine consumers expect cellar door staff to exhibit strong product knowledge (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). Researchers concluded that good customer service at the cellar door directly affected cellar door visitor attitude (e.g. O'Neill and Charters, 2000; O'Neill, Palmer and Charters, 2002). Therefore, it is proposed that:

*H1c: Quality service staff in the winescape will positively affect wine tourist attitude toward the winescape*

Motivation, in the tourism marketing literature, refers to the combination of needs and desires that affect the propensity to engage in travel activity (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005; Park and Yoon, 2009). Motivation is representative of individual internal forces that lead to action (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1978). When deciding on travel destinations, people will experience push and pull motivations, meaning that they are 'pushed' toward 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). The proposed model in this paper only focuses on the supply factors of wine tourism, thus exploring 'pull' motivations of a destination's external forces. While the winescape's features, layout and signage and service staff may have direct effects on attitude toward the winescape, as premised in the above hypotheses, some researchers found that such destination dimensions also affected motivation to visit a destination (e.g. McGehee, Loker-Murphy and Uysal, 1996; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Therefore, it is proposed that:

*H2a-c: Wine tourist motivation will mediate the winescape's effects on wine tourist attitude toward the winescape*

Researchers in tourism marketing also observed the effects past behaviour (e.g. Lam and Hsu, 2006) had on attitude toward a wine region (e.g. Sparks, 2007) and intention to revisit the region (e.g. Chen and Tsai, 2007). Therefore, it is proposed that:

*H3: Favourable past experience with a winescape will positively affect wine tourist attitude toward the winescape*

*H4: Favourable past experience with a winescape will positively affect wine tourist intention to revisit the winescape*

Current literature demonstrates support for the applicability of the TPB to tourism (e.g. Lam and Hsu, 2006; Quintal, Lee and Soutar, 2010) and wine tourism (e.g. Sparks, 2007) contexts. Therefore, it is proposed that:

*H5: Subjective norms will positively affect wine tourist intention to revisit the winescape*

*H6: Favourable attitude toward the winescape will positively affect wine tourist intention to revisit the winescape*

*H7: Perceived behavioural control will positively affect wine tourist intention to revisit the winescape*

## **Concluding Comments**

The preceding literature review integrates services, tourism and wine tourism marketing research and provides the basis for a proposed theoretical framework that encapsulates the wine tourist experience. This framework highlights a winescape that contains destination features, signage and layout and service staff. The winescape framework is introduced into an empirically tested consumer behaviour model, Ajzen's (1991) TPB, and examined for its effects on wine tourist attitude and intention to revisit a wine region. Additionally, the proposed winescape framework is examined for the mediating effects wine tourist motivation has on wine tourist attitude toward the wine region. The next step of the proposed study is to design research methodology that develops a winescape scale following procedures suggested by Churchill (1979) and DeVellis (2003). The proposed winescape scale will be subsequently tested for its hypothesised effects in the proposed research model.

The proposed study offers a number of significant theoretical contributions. First, the study integrates conceptual underpinnings from services, tourism and wine tourism marketing to develop a theoretically-supported winescape framework. It is envisaged that the winescape framework will have reliability, validity and relevance in many cross-cultural contexts of the wine world. Second, the winescape framework will test and extend the applicability of Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework to a wine region context. This can add empirical evidence to the current body of research that supports and extends servicescape theory in many context-specific environments (e.g. Cockrill, Goode and Emberson, 2008; Lucas, 2003; Newman, 2007; Ryu and Juang, 2007; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994, 1996, 1999). Third, the winescape framework will be one of the first studies in wine tourism literature, grounded in theory, which integrates with an empirically tested consumer behaviour model, such as the TPB. This can help in the prediction of wine tourist purchase and post purchase behaviours.

The study also offers some practical contributions. Quantifying supply-related attributes and demonstrating their effects on wine tourist attitude and intention to revisit a wine region can help in several ways. First, it will provide support for government policy-making that enhances private industry investment. Second, it can guide destination managers in wine region development that benefits the wine route. Third, it will give destination marketers insight into what aspects of the winescape can be used for branding and promotional campaigns. Finally, it can identify aspects of the winescape that wine producers and operators can better manage, such as service training, which satisfies the wine tourist and encourages intention to revisit.

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