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# **Examining the Role of Wine Brand Love on Brand Loyalty: A Multi-Country Comparison**

## **Abstract**

This study develops and tests a model through a multi-country study that considers consumer wine knowledge and wine experience, wine brand trust and wine brand satisfaction as antecedents of wine brand love, and wine brand loyalty as a consequence of wine brand love. Data were collected in five wine-producing countries (Australia, Chile, France, Mexico and Portugal) with a final sample of 3462 completed surveys. Hypotheses were tested with structural equation modeling and the findings confirm the importance of brand love as both a mediator and direct influence on brand loyalty for wine consumers. Furthermore, brand satisfaction was positively and significantly related to brand love. In addition, wine experience, rather than wine knowledge, positively influenced brand trust and satisfaction. Finally, results also identify differences between countries thereby providing insights into how companies should focus their marketing strategies internationally.

*Keywords:* Wine, Brand love, Brand loyalty, Brand satisfaction, Brand trust, Wine experience, Wine knowledge

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years wine sales in restaurants and other hospitality businesses have grown significantly (IWRS, 2013). Increasing competition in the wine industry worldwide has augmented the need for wineries to develop improved wine marketing strategies to achieve repurchase and loyalty from consumers. Those involved with the wine industry, such as wine producers, marketers, wine outlets and retailers, need to understand the factors related to wine brand loyalty and love. This can assist with the creation of superior wine marketing strategies that produce growth in sales and profits.

Wine consumption arouses multi-sensory experiences through the bouquet, the color, the shape of the bottle, the labeling and, most importantly, the taste. A particular wine can evoke memories of special occasions, known as historic imagery (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982), or stimulate fantasy imagery related to the excitement and expectation of a pleasant consumption experience. In the case of wine, consumers often seek cues to assist in the purchasing decision, such as brand name, price, variety, style, region and recommendations (Batt & Dean, 2000; Hall, Lockshin & O'Mahony, 2001). However, there is little information about the manner in which consumers choose their wine brands.

For wine buying consumers, especially those from emerging wine countries, the wine brand helps simplify the decision-making process (Lockshin & Albisu, 2006), which is often regarded as complex with a high level of associated risk (Bruwer, Li & Reid, 2002). This paper extends Dodd, Laverie, Wilcox and Duhan's (2005) work on sources of information used in consumer wine purchasing by incorporating the concept of brand love and testing a model of brand love in the wine consumption market across five different countries. As such it contributes to the hospitality literature in terms of hedonic consumption and to practice in providing consumer behavioral insights for those involved with wine sales.

In the last decade marketers have appropriated love as a construct that describes consumers' intense emotional attachments to love objects, whether a brand, product or service (Ahuvia, 1993, 2005). Termed "brand love", this is defined as the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular brand name (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love therefore incorporates passion and declarations of love for the brand, attachment to the brand and positive emotions in response to the brand. Research undertaken by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) suggests that hedonic brands are more likely to gain love from satisfied customers than utilitarian brands as a result of their tendency to generate stronger emotional responses. Hedonic consumption relates "to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products", and involves experiences that include taste, tactile impressions, visual images and scents (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p. 92).

Studies on customer loyalty in the hospitality industry have been consistently growing and many scholars have made efforts to investigate this topic (Dev, Buschmann & Bowen, 2010; Yoo & Bai, 2013). Furthermore, hospitality research has mostly attempted to apply marketing theories and findings to further develop its research scope. However, research in this field is still scarce, which implies that more theory development needs to be achieved in hospitality (Yoo & Bai, 2013). Specifically, the role of brand love and its effect on brand loyalty has not been investigated in a hospitality context.

This research, therefore, examines brand love in the context of wine consumption and focuses on wine brands. Specifically it develops and tests a model through a multi-country study in order to shed light on the degree to which there are cultural similarities or differences in relation to the antecedents and consequences of wine brand love. Although prior research has been undertaken on brand love this is one of the first studies to test a conceptual model for wine brand love across different countries to assess cultural generalizability, thereby examining

different conditions for brand love. The next section presents the wine brand context and reviews the literature that guides the conceptual model.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This section provides the background literature on the constructs of brand loyalty, brand love, brand satisfaction, brand trust and individual consumer characteristics used to develop the conceptual model in this study.

### ***2.1. Brand Loyalty***

Oliver (1999) emphasizes both behavior and attitude in his definition of brand loyalty as “a deeply held predisposition to re-patronize a preferred brand or service consistently in the future, causing repetitive same brand purchasing despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior” (p. 34). While behavioral brand loyalty relates to repeat purchases of the brand, attitudinal brand loyalty relates to the degree of dispositional commitment towards the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Loyalty is subsequently one of the critical indicators used to measure the success of marketing strategies (Reichheld, Markey & Hopton, 2000). Marketing communication costs can also be reduced by loyal customers who are already confident in the purchase decision and process information rapidly, reducing the need for sales promotions or advertising in comparison to brands with a low degree of loyalty. In addition, satisfied and loyal clients tend to become brand advocates who provide brand exposure and reassurance to new customers through word-of-mouth communication. Brand advocates play a powerful role in the decision making of potential customers, who evaluate brands more positively if that brand is perceived as having a loyal customer base.

Dick and Basu (1994) have proposed that brand loyalty should be greater under conditions of positive emotional mood or affect. Brands that make consumers happy or joyful are likely to encourage greater purchase and attitudinal brand loyalty. This is an important factor as research has also shown that loyal customers are more profitable for businesses in view of their tendency to spend more and be less price sensitive (Reichheld et al., 2000).

Several researchers (Fountain, Fish & Charters, 2008; Nowak, Thach & Olsen, 2006; Lockshin & Spawton, 2001; Rundle-Thiele, 2005) have examined brand loyalty in relation to the wine industry. Rundle-Thiele (2005, p. 333) argues that “the very survival of wine retailers depends on consumer loyalty”, and that the wine sector provides an important context in view of deregulation and increased competition. In other research she explores a broad range of loyalty measures in her examination of wine brands (Rundle-Thiele & Bennett, 2001). She defines loyalty as “the state or quality of being loyal, where loyalty is defined as a customer’s allegiance or adherence towards an object” (p. 494), and reports six types of loyalty: attitudinal, behavioral intentions, behavioral loyalty, propensity to be loyal, resistance to competing offers and complaining behavior. In this current study we examine brand loyalty as a behavioral intention to purchase a wine brand.

It is argued that strategies such as knowledge-building programs, special treatment, or recognition and loyalty programs can all play a role in constructing strong emotional bonds between the consumer and the wine brand (Nowak et al., 2006). These strategies are highly important as “brand loyalty is a fickle concept” (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001, p. 75) and is particularly difficult for the wine category which has so many brands and where the choice of wine may be situational.

Research has also shown that wineries can achieve brand loyalty by providing a memorable experience for visitors, thereby stimulating lasting emotional attachment to a brand (Fountain

et al., 2008). This leads to the discussion on brand love as a factor for examination in this research.

## ***2.2. Brand Love***

Brand love is a recent marketing construct and has been shown to influence important marketing variables such as word-of-mouth and purchase decision making (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Batra et al. (2012) found ten key components of how consumers experience brand love: great qualities, strongly held values and existential meaning, intrinsic rewards, self-identity, positive affect, passionate desire, a sense of natural fit, emotional bonding and anticipated heartbreak, willingness to invest, frequent thought and use, as well as a long relationship history. Further, they examined the applicability of theories of interpersonal love to brand love and established that respondents sometimes perceived brand and interpersonal love as comparable. Nevertheless, as a one-way emotion brand love was most often considered less important than interpersonal love.

Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2013) undertook a study on brand passion, defining it as a “psychological construct comprised of excitation, infatuation, and obsession with a brand” (p. 908). The authors found that brand passion in the form of idealization and obsessive presence in the consumer’s mind led to the desire to sustain a long-term relationship with the brand. Batra et al. (2012) also established that brand love was mostly expressed in a self-oriented manner, whereby consumers “were concerned with what the brand could do for them, not what they could do for the brand” (p. 5).

Although brand love has emerged as an important consumer–brand relationship construct there is still little understanding about what generates a love relationship between a consumer and a brand and what its behavioral consequences may be (e.g. loyalty). For example, brand love may be influenced by product or brand characteristics (e.g. hedonic product where fun,

pleasure or enjoyment are primary benefits), and may influence loyalty toward the brand (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Albert and Merunka (2013) recently found that brand trust and brand identification influences brand love. Brands that stimulate deep love from their customers are likely to achieve loyalty to the brand and gain a sustainable competitive advantage over other brands that simply use brand loyalty programs (Yang, 2010).

Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2008) examined whether consumers' love for a brand is equivalent to feeling love for a person, and whether this love relationship has similar representation across different countries and cultures. In their comparison of France and the United States (US) Albert et al. (2008) found two dimensions of brand love shared by both cultures: passion and pleasure. While the declaration of love was found in both cultures US consumers used the word "love" explicitly, while French consumers employed the terms "adore" or "like". Although love may be expressed differently in various countries it is still universally recognized, and this paper examines whether the developed hypotheses are supported across different countries. With reference to the findings of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) and Batra et al. (2012) showing a positive link between brand love and increased brand loyalty, the following hypothesis is proposed in a wine context:

**H1:** Wine brand love has a positive influence on wine brand loyalty across different countries.

### ***2.3. Brand Satisfaction***

Developed as a result of the accumulation of consumer expectations and experiences with the brand over time (Rockwell, 2008) brand satisfaction is likely to lead to repeat purchases (Zeithaml & Berry, 1996). Given that satisfaction is strongly positively related to customer loyalty (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Rust & Zahorik, 1993) brands need to understand the importance of satisfying a customer to create behavioral (purchase) loyalty.



Satisfaction differs from brand love in that satisfaction is a cognitive judgment while brand love is an emotion (Fournier & Mick, 1999). Satisfaction is perceived as transaction-specific in contrast to brand love, which is linked with a longer-term relationship with the brand. This passion for the brand becomes integrated with a consumer's identity, yet is something that not all satisfied customers experience (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Nonetheless, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) argue that brand love is developed through higher levels of satisfaction. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed in the context of wine brands:

**H2:** Wine brand satisfaction has a positive influence on wine brand love across different countries.

**H3:** Wine brand satisfaction has a positive influence on wine brand loyalty across different countries.

#### ***2.4. Brand Trust***

Defined as “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82), trust is a significant driver of loyalty and creates exchange relationships that are highly valued. Hiscock (2001, p. 1) argues that “the ultimate goal of marketing is to generate an intense bond between the consumer and the brand, and the main ingredient of this bond is trust”. Consequently, brand loyalty is an important outcome of maintaining a valued relationship between the brand and the consumer that is built on trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Trust is particularly relevant in situations of uncertainty or risk (Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992; Doney & Cannon, 1997) where consumers feel vulnerable. In a risky situation consumers can alleviate uncertainty because they know they can rely on the trusted brand (Bruwer et al., 2002). For example, purchasing an expensive bottle of wine involves a high level of risk unless the brand is a trusted one. Albert and Merunka (2013), in their French

study of consumer–brand relationships, found that trust was a strong, significant influence on brand love. This research therefore proposes that this will hold true across different countries. Based on the above theoretical analysis this brand trust is likely to impact on brand satisfaction, brand love and brand loyalty, consistent with the concept of one-to-one marketing relationships. This is expressed in the following hypotheses in a wine context:

**H4:** Wine brand trust has a positive influence on wine brand loyalty across different countries.

**H5:** Wine brand trust has a positive influence on wine brand love across different countries.

**H6:** Brand trust has a positive influence on brand satisfaction across different countries.

Characteristics of the individual, such as product knowledge and experience, together with psychological factors are also important factors with regard to brand love (Bruwer, Saliba, & Miller, 2011; Cox, 2009; Dodd et al., 2005; Hall, Binney, & O'Mahony, 2004; Hussain, Cholette, & Castaldi, 2007).

## ***2.5. Consumer Knowledge***

In the wine context, research has established that wine knowledge is a significant driver of wine consumption (Hussain et al., 2007). Consumer knowledge has mainly been researched in Western contexts and for that reason assessing theory generalization and equivalence across different cultural contexts is important (Guo & Meng, 2008). Two major dimensions of consumer knowledge are familiarity (Muthukrishnan & Weitz, 1991) and product knowledge (Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986). Familiarity refers to the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer. Bloch et al. (1986) argue that increased familiarity leads to higher product knowledge. Furthermore, Lurigio and Carroll (1985) suggest that people use prior knowledge to build a body of experience. Research on consumer sophistication confirms that consumers possess varying degrees of skills, knowledge

and experience that impact on their expectations and assessment of a product (Garry, 2007). Knowledge about a product or brand increases the probability of customer satisfaction with that product or brand (Guo & Meng, 2008). Consumers' beliefs about the brand being reliable, consistent and competent lead to a greater level of brand satisfaction (e.g., Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H7:** Consumer wine knowledge has a positive influence on wine brand satisfaction across different countries.

**H8:** Consumer wine knowledge has a positive influence on wine brand trust across different countries.

## ***2.6. Wine Experience***

Experience of a brand is described as the sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli (Schmitt, 2009). A brand's design and identity, packaging, communications and environments where the consumer has been exposed to the brand are all examples of these stimuli (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Brand trust evolves from past experience and prior interaction (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), developing over time as a result of experiential learning. Trust therefore summarizes the consumer's experiences with the brand. As an experience attribute brand trust is influenced by the consumer's evaluation of any direct (e.g., trial, usage) and indirect (e.g., advertising, word-of-mouth) contact with the brand (Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996). Of these different brand contact points the consumption experience is most relevant and important as a source of brand satisfaction. This occurs because consumption experiences generate associations, thoughts and inferences that are more self-relevant and certain (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987; Krishnan, 1996). The following hypotheses are therefore proposed in a wine context:

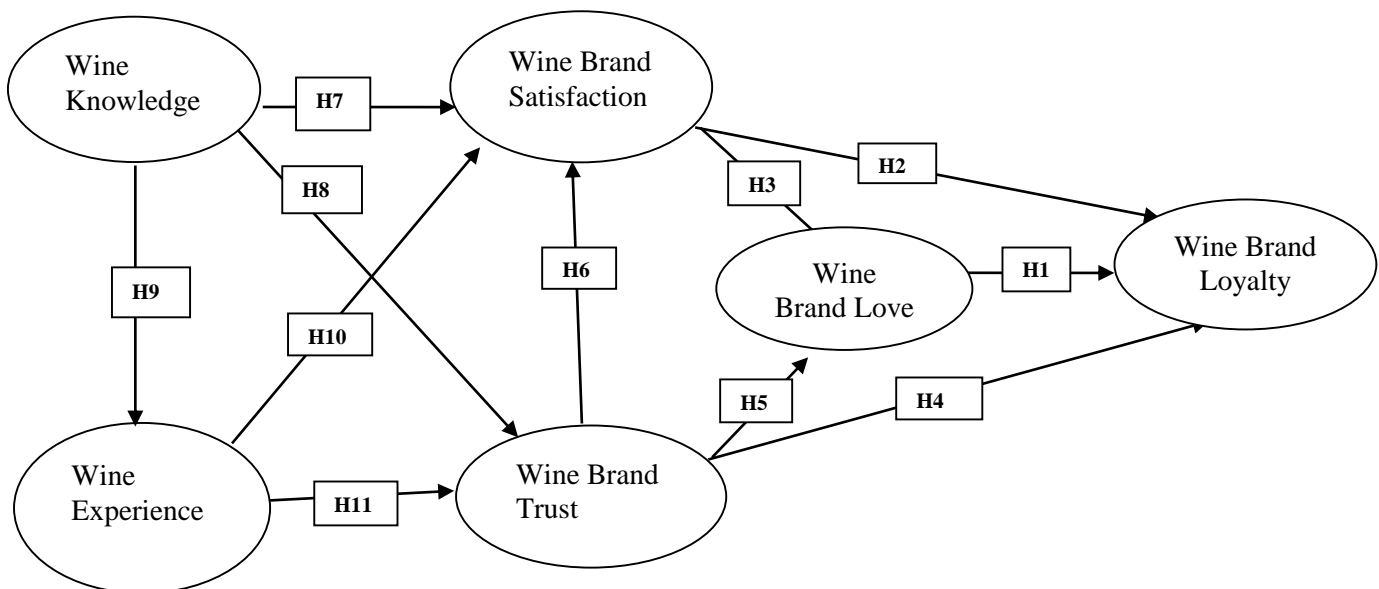
**H9:** Consumer wine knowledge has a positive influence on wine experience across different countries.

**H10:** Consumer wine experience has a positive influence on wine brand satisfaction across different countries.

**H11:** Consumer wine experience has a positive influence on wine brand trust across different countries.

Taking into account the above considerations this research proposes that wine brand trust, brand satisfaction and brand love are antecedents of wine brand loyalty and, at the same time, consumers' wine experience and knowledge influence wine brand trust and satisfaction. Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual model and the structural equation model.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Brand Love in the Wine Consumption Market\***



\* $BLY_t = \gamma + \gamma BL_t + \gamma BS_t + \gamma BT_t + \zeta_t$ ;  $BS_t = \gamma + \gamma WK_t + \gamma WE_t + \gamma BT_t + \zeta_t$ ;  $BT_t = \gamma + \gamma WK_t + \gamma WE_t + \zeta_t$ ;  $BLY$ = Brand Loyalty,  $BL$ = Brand Love,  $BT$ = Brand Trust,  $BS$ = Brand Satisfaction,  $WE$ = Wine Experience,  $WK$ = Wine Knowledge.

### 3. Research Methodology

In order to consider the applicability of the model across multiple settings this research examines five countries that have strong and/or growing wine industries: Australia, Chile, Mexico, France and Portugal. The rationale for selecting these countries is threefold. First, the majority of these countries are key wine producing and consuming nations of the world. Second, including emerging wine countries, such as Australia, Chile and Mexico, in the study enables comparison with traditional wine markets, such as Portugal and France. Mexico in particular has a young wine industry, starting in 1997 in the Valle de Guadalupe. It is important to include this country that only sells within its own borders to consider how this impacts on perceptions of the brand. Third, these countries represent cultural differences in terms of four continents (Europe, North and South America and Australia) and four languages (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish).

Researchers in each country employed an online survey to collect the data. The survey was initially pre-tested in English with a sample of 20 consumers in Australia, which resulted in minor changes to the wording of some questions. The questionnaire was then translated for the Chilean, Mexican, French and Portuguese respondents, and back-translated to ensure equivalent meaning. The final pretested version of all the questionnaires was placed online and accessed through a URL hosted by a faculty of an Australian university. In Australia data were collected from a panel database. In Chile, Portugal, Mexico and France surveys were emailed to alumni databases. The research team used several communication methods to improve the response rates, such as email messages and telephone reminders. The final sample of 3462 completed surveys (64.4% males, 36.6% females) included: 1175 Australian respondents, 299 Chilean respondents, 330 French respondents, 1279 Mexican respondents and 379 Portuguese respondents. Differences in the sample sizes are a result of the data collection method and size of the alumni database. Potential non-response bias was appraised using Armstrong and

Overton's (1977) procedure of comparing early-response and late-response groups (group response comparison). No significant differences were found between these two groups, which indicate that non-response bias was not a concern in this study. The total sample size for the five countries and demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Respondent Demographic Characteristics (N=3463)**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Mexico</b>
<b>Sample size</b>	3462	1175	299	330	379	1279
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	64.4%	43.8%	68.3%	56.4%	56.6%	87.0%
Female	35.6%	56.2%	31.7%	43.6%	43.4%	13.0%
<b>Age Cohorts</b>						
15-24	9.0%	8.7%	6.7%	23.9%	18.4%	3.2%
25-34	22.4%	19.4%	47.9%	22.9%	31.6%	16.2%
35-44	23.6%	19.4%	22.7%	14.6%	26.3%	29.2%
45-54	21.5%	17.8%	14.3%	20.1%	15.5%	28.8%
55-64	13.2%	15.9%	5.7%	10.1%	5.0%	15.9%
65+	10.3%	18.8%	2.7%	8.4%	3.2%	6.7%
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Single	23.9%	23.3%	42.1%	25.9%	43.2%	13.8%
Single w/children	4.9%	6.6%	4.3%	4.5%	2.6%	4.3%
Partner no children	18.3%	26.6%	13.3%	29.3%	19.5%	8.7%
Partner w/children	52.9%	43.5%	39.7%	40.3%	34.7%	73.2%
<b>Education</b>						
School-Standard	6.3%	17.1%	1.3%	3.9%	0%	0%
College	18.7%	48.7%	0%	3.0%	16.0%	0.5%
University Degree	26.8%	23.9%	30%	33.7%	48.9%	20.3%
Post Grad. Degree	40.4%	6.7%	67%	59.4%	30.8%	77.3%
Other	7.8%	3.7%	1.7%	0%	4.3%	1.9%
<b>Income</b>						
Upper Class	8.3%	2.5%	15.0%	12.2%	1.0%	13.4%
Upper-Middle Class	24.0%	10.4%	63.6%	40.9%	18.4%	24.8%
Middle Class	59.0%	70.8%	21.3%	40.0%	59.7%	61.7%
Lower-Middle Class	6.9%	12.7%	0.1%	3.9%	19.7%	0.1%
Lower Class	1.8%	3.7%	0%	3.0%	1.2%	0%

### **3.1. Measurement of Variables**

The survey instrument was divided into four sections. The initial page provided participants with general information about the study and research team. The second section asked participants questions regarding wine consumption and purchase preferences. Section three asked participants to indicate their top-of-mind and preferred wine brand. The survey asked respondents to rate their perception of wine experience and wine knowledge and also to rate their perceptions regarding their preferred wine brand on several scale items related to brand love, brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand loyalty using a five-point scale anchored at (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). The final section included demographic questions.

To address the statistical concern of common method bias variance, five-point Likert-type scales were used (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) and reverse questionnaire items were recoded to make the constructs symmetrical (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for all data sets, with no single factor accounting for most of the variance in the predictor and criterion variables. This also confirmed that common method bias variance was not a problem in this study. Correlations, means and standard deviations for the construct measures are shown in the Appendix.

All measures were adopted from previous literature and adapted to the wine context. *Brand loyalty* was measured by a three-item Likert scale adopted from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) that focuses on behavioral loyalty. *Brand love* was measured by a four-item Likert scale adopted from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). *Brand satisfaction* was measured with a three-item scale adapted from Oliver (1999). *Brand trust* was measured with a three-item Likert scale adapted from Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). *Wine knowledge* was measured with a three-item Likert scale adapted from Muthukrishnan and Weitz (1991) and *wine experience* was measured by a three-item Likert scale adapted from Murray (1985).

### **3.2 Data Analysis**

In the measurement purification process item-to-total correlations, standardized Cronbach Alpha, single measurement models, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (with AMOS 19) were conducted for all constructs. Considering common procedures in structural equation modeling (SEM), all measures in the CFA were used to test the proposed SEM model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1991). The coefficient alpha of each multi-item measure per country was close to or greater than 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and all composite reliabilities were greater than 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). CFA results are presented in Table 2 with details of the items, constructs and coefficient alphas. The measurement model was tested using SEM (Amos 19) in the entire sample, resulting in an acceptable fit indices of NFI= .953, IFI=.957, TLI=.946, CFI=.957, and RMSEA=.061.

**Table 2: Construct Description and Means by Country**

Constructs	Description of Items	Australia		Chile		France		Portugal		Mexico	
		Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
<b>Brand Loyalty</b> ( $\alpha = .892$ ) adapted from Oliver (1999)	I will buy this brand the next time I buy wine	3.7	0.79	3.7	0.84	3.3	0.98	3.3	1.06	3.7	0.79
	I intend to keep purchasing this brand	3.8	0.75	4.0	0.78	3.8	0.89	3.8	0.99	4.0	0.70
	The next time I buy wine for a gift, I will buy this brand	3.3	0.84	3.3	0.92	3.2	1.03	3.1	1.05	3.4	0.83
<b>Brand Love</b> ( $\alpha = .880$ ) adapted from Carroll & Ahuvia (2006)	I am passionate about this brand	3.3	0.83	3.3	0.99	3.1	1.06	3.2	1.13	3.6	0.89
	This brand is totally awesome	3.4	0.84	3.3	0.87	3.3	1.06	3.3	1.04	3.5	0.85
	This brand makes me very happy	3.6	0.78	3.1	0.93	3.1	1.08	3.2	1.14	3.5	0.91
	This is a wonderful brand.	3.6	0.77	3.1	0.86	3.2	1.07	3.4	1.07	3.4	0.87
	This brand is a pure delight	3.5	0.79	3.3	0.83	3.6	0.99	3.3	1.11	3.5	0.86
	I'm very attached to this brand	3.3	0.86	3.0	0.91	3.3	1.06	3.0	1.17	3.2	0.91
<b>Brand Satisfaction</b> ( $\alpha = .870$ ) adapted from Oliver (1980)	My choice to get this brand has been a wise one	3.7	0.74	3.5	0.85	3.6	0.96	3.3	0.99	3.6	0.85
	I feel good about my decision to get this brand	3.7	0.74	3.5	0.85	3.5	1.00	3.5	1.03	3.7	0.81
	I am happy with this brand	3.9	0.68	3.3	0.91	3.7	0.93	3.3	1.16	3.4	0.89
<b>Brand Trust</b> ( $\alpha = .867$ )	This is reliable brand.	4.0	0.70	4.3	0.71	3.9	0.89	4.0	0.95	4.3	0.71
	This brand is likeable	3.9	0.68	4.0	0.73	3.9	0.86	3.6	0.99	4.1	0.70



adapted from Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001)	This brand is a very good brand	4.0	0.73	4.2	0.72	3.9	0.90	3.9	0.97	4.2	0.73
<b>Wine Experience</b> ( $\alpha = .769$ ) adapted from Murray (1985)	I am familiar with many brands of wine	3.1	1.00	3.3	0.98	3.1	1.18	3.5	1.05	3.2	0.99
	I frequently shop for wine	2.8	1.05	3.4	1.10	3.1	1.27	2.3	1.33	3.7	0.96
	I have used or been Exposed to wine a lot in the past	3.0	1.10	3.1	1.20	2.6	1.34	2.4	1.29	3.3	1.15
<b>Wine Knowledge</b> ( $\alpha = .892$ ) adapted from Muthukrishnan & Weitz(1991)	Your knowledge of wine relative to other people?	2.3	0.75	2.8	0.85	2.8	1.01	2.6	0.95	2.9	0.84
	Your knowledge of wine relative to most of your friends?	2.5	0.85	3.1	0.84	3.0	0.96	2.9	1.00	3.0	0.84
	Your knowledge of wine relative to your family?	2.6	0.92	3.1	0.93	2.9	1.08	3.0	1.11	3.3	0.89

A critical issue for cross-national research is measurement invariance. Following Steenkamp and Baumgartner's (1998) procedure a measurement invariance test was conducted to verify the theoretical constructs and their adequacy for cross-national equivalence. A multi-group CFA was run to assess measurement invariance (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). In particular, two types of measurement invariance were assessed: configural and metric invariance. Configural invariance assesses whether the number of factors and observed variables associated with each factor are the same across groups (Horn & McArdle, 1992). Configural invariance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for establishing equivalence. Metric invariance assesses whether the factor loadings are identical for each scale item across countries. If an item has metric invariance cross-national comparisons can be made based on different scores of the item (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).

Measurement invariance was tested, firstly using a multi-group (pairs of two countries) configural model in which no cross-group factor constraint was imposed. All item loadings, variances of the factors, error variances, item intercept and factor covariances were allowed to vary freely across the sample. Four sets of two-group models in which factor loadings were free to vary across groups were analyzed to determine configural invariance. For each country pairing model fit statistics suggested the unconstrained model represented a reasonable fit to the data. While the chi-square fit statistics were all significant ( $P < .001$ ) ranges for the other fit statistics provided ample support:  $\chi^2=1078.02$ ,  $df=274$ ,  $CFI=.955$ ,  $IFI=.955$ ,  $RMSEA=.045$  (Australia-Chile);  $\chi^2=1157.23$ ,  $df=274$ ,  $CFI=.953$ ,  $IFI=.953$ ,  $RMSEA=.046$  (Australia-France);  $\chi^2=1103.92$ ,  $df=274$ ,  $CFI=.959$ ,  $IFI=.960$ ,  $RMSEA=.044$  (Australia-Portugal);  $\chi^2=1614.17$ ,  $df=274$ ,  $CFI=.954$ ,  $IFI=.954$ ,  $RMSEA=.045$  (Australia-Mexico).

Full metric invariance was assessed by constraining all factor loadings to be equal across all country pairings and comparing resultant changes in model fit to those from the configural invariance model. Model fit did not appear to diminish significantly with these restrictions for

any of the country pairings:  $\Delta\chi^2=51.8$ ,  $\Delta df=19$ ,  $p=.000$  (Australia-Chile);  $\Delta\chi^2=122.3$ ,  $\Delta df=19$ ,  $p=.000$  (Australia-France);  $\Delta\chi^2=215.4$ ,  $\Delta df=19$ ,  $p=.000$  (Australia-Portugal); and  $\Delta\chi^2=91.0$ ,  $\Delta df=19$ ,  $p=.000$  (Australia-Mexico). These findings indicate that measurement equivalence across samples is sufficient to confidently test the hypotheses (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Measurement Invariance Results**

	$\chi^2$	Df	CFI	IFI	RMSEA	$\Delta \chi^2$	$\Delta df$	$\Delta p$
					A			
<b>Australia-Chile</b>								
Configural Invariance	1103.92	274	.959	.960	.044			
Metric Invariance	1319.27	293	.950	.950	.048	215.35	19	.000
<b>Australia-France</b>								
Configural Invariance	1157.23	274	.953	.953	.046			
Metric Invariance	1279.50	293	.947	.947	.047	122.27	19	.000
<b>Australia-Portugal</b>								
Configural Invariance	1103.92	274	.959	.960	.044			
Metric Invariance	1319.27	293	.950	.950	.048	215.35	19	.000
<b>Australia-Mexico</b>								
Configural Invariance	1614.17	274	.954	.954	.045			
Metric Invariance	1705.16	.293	.951	.951	.044	90.99	19	.000

#### 4. Findings

Table 4 presents the goodness of fit indices, significance tests and standardized paths estimates for the structural model. The hypothesized model presents an adequate fit overall as well as within each individual country (NFI=.953; IFI=.957; TLI=.946; CFI=.957; RMSEA=.061).

**Table 4: Results of Hypotheses Testing**

Hypotheses		TOTAL		Australia		Chile		France		Mexico		Portugal	
		$\beta$	P	$\beta$	P	$\beta$	P	$\beta$	P	$\beta$	P	$\beta$	P
H1	BL – BLY	.17	.001	.51	.001	.22	.120	.37	.002	-.24	.030	.46	.032
H2	BS – BLY	.48	.001	.40	.001	.47	.001	.51	.001	.79	.001	.22	.330
H3	BS – BL	.77	.001	.67	.001	.86	.001	.59	.001	.77	.001	.85	.001
H4	BT – BLY	.09	.001	-.18	.008	.11	.110	-.17	.110	.14	.003	.07	.434
H5	BT – BL	.18	.000	.24	.000	-.01	.87	.29	.001	.19	.000	.11	.040
H6	BT – BS	.66	.000	.80	.000	.45	.000	.72	.001	.61	.001	.75	.001
H7	WK – BS	-.25	.001	.01	.740	-.38	.150	-.08	.440	-.13	.032	-.21	.002
H8	WK – BT	-.02	.690	.07	.158	-.29	.296	-.13	.342	.00	.978	-.09	.496
H9	WK – WE	.80	.001	.74	.001	.90	.001	.83	.001	.82	.001	.82	.001
H10	WE – BS	.33	.001	.09	.190	.64	.026	.21	.051	.29	.001	.29	.004
H11	WE – BT	.44	.001	.37	.001	.54	.053	.55	.001	.38	.001	.50	.001

*BLY= Brand Loyalty, BL= Brand Love, BT= Brand Trust, BS= Brand Satisfaction, WE= Wine Experience, WK= Wine Knowledge.*  
 $\beta$  = standardized paths estimates

*Fit Statistics: (NFI=.953; IFI=.957; TLI=.946; CFI=.957; RMSEA=.061).*

H1 predicts that the relationship between wine brand love and wine brand loyalty will be positive and significant across all five samples. As Table 4 shows, results indicate that wine brand love is positively related to wine brand loyalty in the overall sample ( $\beta = .17$ ) and three countries: Australia ( $\beta = .51$ ), France ( $\beta = .37$ ) and Portugal ( $\beta = .46$ ). However, wine brand love is not positively related to wine brand loyalty in Chile ( $\beta = .22$ ) or Mexico ( $\beta = -.24$ ). Therefore, H1 is partially supported. The results of H2 indicate that wine brand satisfaction is positively related

to wine brand loyalty in the overall sample ( $\beta = .48$ ) and in four countries: Australia ( $\beta = .41$ ), Chile ( $\beta = .47$ ), France ( $\beta = .51$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .79$ ), but not in Portugal ( $\beta = .22$ ). Thus, H2 is mostly supported. For H3 the results indicate that wine brand satisfaction is positively related to wine brand love in the overall sample ( $\beta = .77$ ) and in all five countries: Australia ( $\beta = .67$ ), Chile ( $\beta = .86$ ), France ( $\beta = .59$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = .85$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .77$ ). Hence, H3 is fully supported.

H4 predicts that wine brand trust is positively related to wine brand loyalty. Results show that wine brand trust is positively related to wine brand loyalty in the overall sample ( $\beta = .09$ ) and in Mexico ( $\beta = .14$ ). However, this relationship is not significant in Australia ( $\beta = -.18$ ), Chile ( $\beta = .11$ ), France ( $\beta = -.17$ ) and Portugal ( $\beta = .07$ ). Hence, H4 is partially supported. The prediction of H5 is that wine brand trust is positively related to wine brand love. Results show this positive association in the overall sample ( $\beta = .18$ ) and in four countries: Australia ( $\beta = .24$ ), France ( $\beta = .29$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = .11$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .19$ ). However, this relationship is not significant in Chile ( $\beta = -.01$ ). Therefore, H5 is mostly supported.

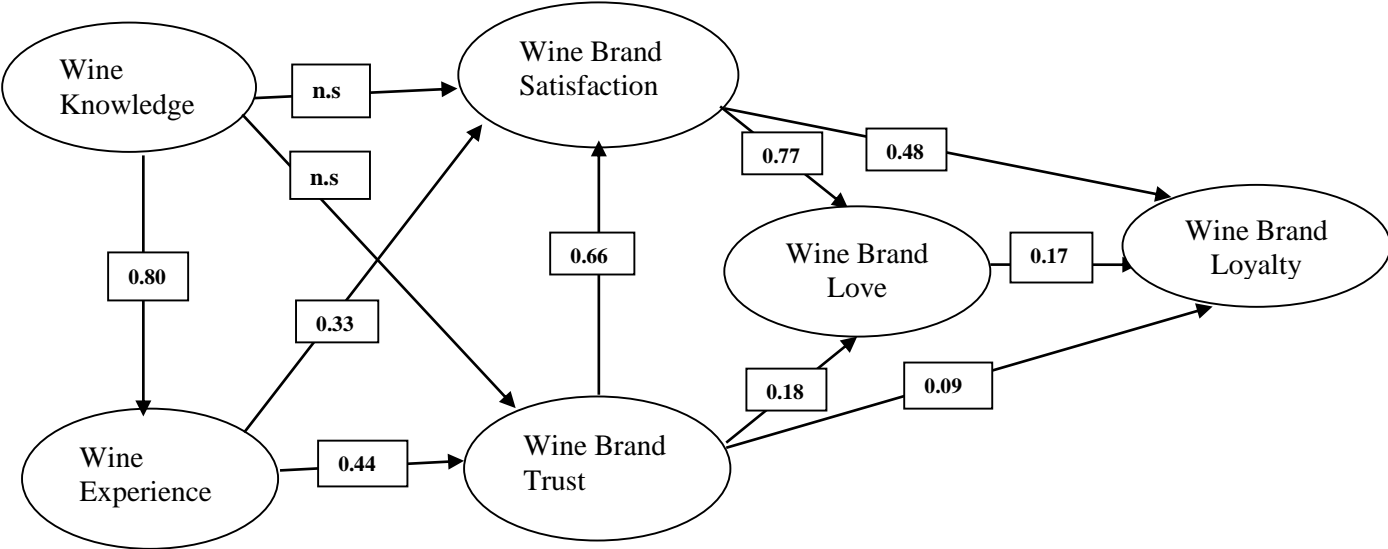
H6 predicts that wine brand trust is positively related to wine brand satisfaction. The analysis shows that wine brand trust is positively related to wine brand love in the overall sample ( $\beta = .66$ ) and in all five countries: Australia ( $\beta = .80$ ), Chile ( $\beta = .45$ ), France ( $\beta = .72$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = .75$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .61$ ). Thus, H6 is fully supported. The results of H7 show that wine knowledge is not positively related to wine brand satisfaction in the overall sample ( $\beta = -.25$ ), or in any of the five countries: Australia ( $\beta = .01$ ), Chile ( $\beta = -.38$ ), France ( $\beta = -.08$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = -.21$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = -.13$ ). Thus, H7 is not supported in any country. Similarly, H8 shows that wine knowledge is not positively related to wine brand trust in the overall sample ( $\beta = -.02$ ), or in any of the five countries: Australia ( $\beta = .07$ ), Chile ( $\beta = -.29$ ), France ( $\beta = -.13$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = -.09$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .00$ ). Therefore, H8 is not supported in any country. On the contrary, the results of H9 indicate that wine knowledge is positively related to wine experience in the overall

sample ( $\beta = .80$ ) and in all five countries: Australia ( $\beta = .74$ ), Chile ( $\beta = .90$ ), France ( $\beta = .83$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = .82$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .82$ ). Thus, H9 is fully supported in all countries.

The results of H10 indicate that wine experience is positively related to wine brand satisfaction in the overall sample ( $\beta = .33, p < .001$ ) and in all five countries, Australia ( $\beta = .09$ ), Chile ( $\beta = .64$ ), France ( $\beta = .21$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = .29$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .29$ ). Therefore, H10 is fully supported in all countries. Similarly, the results of H11 indicate that wine experience is positively related to wine brand trust in the overall sample ( $\beta = .44$ ) and in all five countries: Australia ( $\beta = .37$ ), Chile ( $\beta = .54$ ), France ( $\beta = .55$ ), Portugal ( $\beta = .50$ ) and Mexico ( $\beta = .38$ ). Therefore, H11 is fully supported in all countries.

With the exception of H7 and H8 all the other hypotheses in the model were confirmed by the overall summated data. Overall, in spite of differences found in specific countries, the results of the data analysis confirm the model as a whole, and suggests that this model of the drivers of brand love in a wine context fits the data very well. Figure 2 shows the overall model with the standardized path estimates  $\beta$ .

**Figure 2: Final Model of Brand Love in the Wine Consumption Market**



\* Standardized path estimates  $\beta$  significant at the 0.01 level; n.s. = non-significant path estimates

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Most prior research on brand loyalty and brand love has focused predominantly on functional products in individual countries. Drawing upon extant literature and developed within a theoretical framework of brand loyalty this research comprises a multi-country comparative application of a conceptual model of the antecedents of brand love and their relation to brand loyalty in a wine context. The results of the study demonstrate that developing brand love is pertinent in building brand loyalty for a hedonic product such as wine. Notably, it was found that there were differences in the antecedents and outcomes of wine brand love amongst the five countries examined in the study. These differences will be discussed below.

The overall results showed support for all but two of the hypotheses, H7 and H8, which relate to wine knowledge as an antecedent of wine brand satisfaction and trust. Wine knowledge did not possess a positive relationship with wine brand satisfaction or trust and this was the case across all five countries examined by the research.

One explanation for these results is that wine knowledge has an indirect effect, via wine experience, on brand trust and brand satisfaction. Wine knowledge and experience are highly correlated as shown by the data, and wine experience is significantly related to both brand trust and satisfaction. Another explanation for this result may be that, within the context of wine, the more sophisticated consumers are with regard to wine knowledge the more difficult they are to please or the less likely they will be satisfied with wine brands. Esch, Langer, Schmitt and Geus (2006) reported similar results in their study on the effect of brand knowledge on brand relationships in the context of e-tailing, in which brand knowledge showed no significant relationship with brand satisfaction or brand trust. Past research by Ha and Perks (2005) on chocolates as consumer products also found the direct relationship between brand familiarity and brand trust to be non-significant. In addition, their results indicated that familiarity was indirectly

positively related to brand trust through brand experience. This suggests that knowledge alone is not enough as a basis for brand trust and that experience is more important.

Other results worthy of additional discussion are those related to the differences between countries in terms of the following antecedents of wine brand loyalty: wine brand love (H1) and wine brand trust (H4). While findings from Australia, France and Portugal indicated that brand love positively impacted on brand loyalty this was not the case in Chile and Mexico.

Perusal of the model, specifically in relation to these two countries, shows that for Chile brand trust does not lead to brand love (H5) or brand loyalty (H4), but has a high indirect relationship mediated through brand satisfaction. In contrast, results for Mexico show a direct significant relationship between brand trust and brand love (H5), albeit it low (.19) as well as between brand trust and brand loyalty (H4), which is also low. This finding indicates that brand satisfaction is more important to wine brand loyalty than brand love in Chile, while both brand satisfaction and brand trust play a more important role than brand love in Mexico. This does not necessarily detract from the importance of wine brand love in these countries, but highlights the strength of brand satisfaction as a key factor leading to brand love and brand loyalty.

Given that both Chile and Mexico indicated emotional bonding with wine brands through brand love it is puzzling why this effect did not translate into brand loyalty. An explanation for this result could be the fact that the power of word-of-mouth seems to play a disproportionate role in the decision making of these consumers owing to their tendency to live close to family and friends (Atsmon, Kuentz, & Seong, 2012). While wine consumers in these markets may feel love for a particular brand they may still be willing to purchase a different brand if it is endorsed and encouraged by their family and friends. As such, wine producers need to focus not only on creating brand love through emotional bonding at wine cellars but also on creating word-of-mouth through social media.



As indicated in the previous section, while the relationship between wine brand trust and loyalty was found to be positive for the overall sample this hypothesis was not supported for any individual country except Mexico (see H4). This finding may be explained by Mexico's less-established wine production marketing in relation to the other sampled countries, which may result in more variability in perceptions of wine quality and knowledge of wine brands. In addition, Mexico imports much of their wine from different countries, so consumers there are exposed to more variation and may have less certainty of quality. This differs for consumers located in the other four countries, which have higher levels of wine quality, consistency and reputation. Further, the estimate for the overall sample was very low, which would suggest a stronger indirect relationship to brand loyalty through brand love. Finally, while the overall result for four of the five countries studied showed that wine brand satisfaction was positively related to wine brand love (H3) this was not the case for Portugal. Instead, brand satisfaction was directly related to brand loyalty. Scrutiny of the data shows that the Portuguese sample felt less passionately about the brand than the other countries, which may have impacted on this result. Further research is required to explore this phenomenon within the Portuguese sample.

This research contributes to the current knowledge on wine brand love in two ways. Firstly, it developed a conceptual model of the antecedents of brand loyalty through brand love. Using the wine industry as the context, the research hypothesized that wine brand trust and satisfaction directly impact wine brand love and indirectly influence wine brand loyalty through wine brand love. Furthermore, the research proposed that wine brand trust and satisfaction are influenced by consumers' wine knowledge and experience. Second, the model was tested using data collected through a consumer survey from five countries representing both emerging and traditional wine industries.

The implications of this study for wine producers and marketing managers worldwide are relevant in today's turbulent marketplace. A highly competitive retail environment places

extreme pressure on brands from a price point of view. Retailers' push for their own brands with low price/low quality products has accelerated competition for long-established wine brands. While product quality and fair pricing are a strong foundation for a successful brand this study shows, in line with Novak et al. (2006), that the emotional bond that wine brands form with their customers is a key differentiator in defending against competitors. Brand love, therefore, is an important factor for brand loyalty in the wine industry and is a concept that needs to be recognized and utilized by wine producers, retailers and the overall hospitality industry around the world. Specifically, strategies for emotional bonding may involve giving customers a strong sense of belonging to the brand through wine club functions, positive experiences at winery visits, exclusive wine clubs and the sharing of history. We suggest that the social aspect of consumer wine experience together with the hedonic nature of engaging with a product that delivers instant gratification both act as strong stimulants for wine brand love. Equally important is the capability of this type of strategy to imbue a sense of connectedness to the wine brand so that consumers feel that they are an extension of the brand itself when they purchase and consume the wine.

Further, although prior research has been undertaken on brand love in other contexts, this is one of the first studies to test a conceptual model for wine brand love across different countries, assessing cultural generalizability. This research has established the importance of brand love as both a mediator and direct influence on brand loyalty in the context of wine consumption. No statistically significant differentiator was found between those countries that had strong traditions as wine producers and those countries where the wine industry was still emergent. Further research needs to be undertaken to examine other cultural differences that may impact on brand love in other food and wine contexts and also explore gender and age cohort differences. While this study used a quantitative method to collect data, further studies could integrate qualitative research methods to enable a more in-depth exploration of these outcomes.

Regarding the limitations of this study, several inherent limitations might have affected the generalizability of the results. First, the findings are based on wine consumers' self-reported perceptions of wine knowledge and experience, brand trust, satisfaction and love at a single point in time rather than as a longitudinal assessment. Second, this study is cross-sectional and does not reflect the dynamic nature of the relationship phenomena that occur between a consumer and a brand over time. Finally, the nature of collecting data using convenience samples of alumni databases in four countries implies that results must be interpreted with caution due to a possible sample selection bias. Future research should focus on testing the external validity of these findings by replicating this study in other wine producing/consuming countries, and other food and hospitality sectors. We also suggest that future studies should explore additional antecedents of brand love such as the role of brand image and brand commitment.

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**Appendix: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Matrices**

	Mean	Std. Dev.	BLY	BL	BT	BS	WE	WK
<b>BLY</b>	3.2	.76	1.00	.53**	.44**	.54**	.16**	.06**
<b>BL</b>	3.4	.78	.53**	1.00	.67**	.78**	.39**	.26**
<b>BT</b>	4.0	.69	.44**	.67**	1.00	.66**	.36**	.31**
<b>BS</b>	3.6	.77	.54**	.78**	.66**	1.00	.33**	.21**
<b>WE</b>	3.1	.95	.16**	.39**	.36**	.33**	1.00	.66**
<b>WK</b>	2.8	.85	.06**	.26**	.31**	.21**	.66**	1.00

**BLY**= Brand Loyalty, **BL**= Brand Love, **BT**= Brand Trust, **BS**= Brand Satisfaction, **WE**= Wine Experience, **WK**= Wine Knowledge. \*\* *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*