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Wine prestige and experience in enhancing relationship quality and outcomes: wine tourism in Douro

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Abstract

Purpose: the purpose of this study is twofold: (i) conduct a systematic literature review on relationship quality; (ii) analyse the effect of wine brand prestige and wine consumer experience on consumer satisfaction, as well as the wine brand image and word-of-mouth as outcomes.

Design/methodology/approach: we employ a systematic approach to develop the literature review and a survey designed and used to collect responses from 479 wine consumers and tourists. Partial Least Squares approach is used to test the proposed model and analyse the findings.

Findings: the systematic literature analysis contributes to the conceptualization of the proposed model on wine tourism. The findings of the survey suggest that wine brand prestige is more effective in enhancing consumer satisfaction than the wine consumer experience. Consumer satisfaction acts as a mediator between wine brand prestige and wine consumer experience and the outcomes, which are wine brand image and word-of-mouth.

Originality/value: this research sheds light on a strategic and communicational development of prestigious wine brands to enhance wine image and keep wine tourists captivated.

Keywords: wine brand prestige, wine consumer experience, consumer satisfaction, wine brand image, word-of-mouth, relationship quality, systematic literature approach

Introduction

The wine market today is much more complex than in the previous centuries, with different players from all around the world. Consumers are more sophisticated and the endeavour to reach new customers is more demanding. What might have been unthinkable a few decades ago is now a critical need for business competitiveness. Currently, the market promotes a global offer which ensures the quality of goods and/or services, and also requires from all players in the supply chain, a faster, more efficient and differentiated response. In the midst of aggressive offers that could arise from any part of the world, building a sustainable business exchange requires producing and offering added value in order to sustain the market position (Nyaga and Whipple, 2011).

Therefore, companies tend to focus on holding on to their customers and improving the relationship they have with them (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles, 1990). We cannot forget that each marketing mix action will develop meanings and consequently behaviours of initiation, maintenance, or destruction of the relationships among partners. This means that a manager should be more able to interact with consumers, establishing and maintaining relationships. In this vein, Fournier (1998) is one of the first researchers to study the consumer-brand relationship. When defining a relationship, Fournier states that a "relationship is, in essence, what the relationship means" (p. 345). The type of relationship between partners (e.g., a brand and consumers) is shaped by the context supported by three important sources of meaning: the psychological, the sociocultural, and the relational evolvement.

This reality highlights the awareness for reciprocal and symmetric interdependence of the organizations to have access to expert knowledge and resources, thus complementing internal competences and increasing competitive performance (e.g., Hennig-Thurau and Klee, 1997; Dyer and Singh, 1998; De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci, 2001; Walter, Muller, Helfert, and Ritter, 2003; Kim, Park, Ryoo, and Park, 2010; Zacharia, Nix, and Lusch, 2011; Hammervoll, 2012). Hence, it is not a surprise that producers, distributors, retailers, customers and even competitors join forces to co-create value solutions. Thus, establishing, retaining appropriate exchange relationships, and developing quality relationships results in superior and distinct advantages for both partners (e.g., Gummesson, 1997; Jap, Manolis, and Weitz, 1999; Johnson 1999; Vargo and Lusch 2004; Cannon, Doney, Mullen, and Petersen, 2010; Zacharia et al. 2011; Hammervoll 2012; Rauyruen and Miller, 2007; Wagner, Eggert, and Lindemann, 2010; Nyaga and Whipple, 2011). Indeed, exchange relationship management stresses the relevance of the Relationship Quality (RQ) concept, which is

developed on the basis of human relationship literature and relational marketing, and is used to predict dyadic consequences of established relationships (Fournier, 1998).

In this vein, we conducted a systematic literature review to better understand the state of the art in RQ and find gaps to be analysed and subsequently fill them. With this approach, it is possible to understand the lack of studies on (i) dyadic relationships and (ii) and on drivers that lead to RQ, particularly in the case of brands with heritage and more dedicated to the luxury market. Regarding the first gap, previous studies tend to analyse the relationship only from the point of view of one part of the relationship, the seller or the buyer and more studies are demanding the consideration of the perspectives of all parties involved in a relationship in order to accurately grasp the nature of such relationship. In the current study, we focus on the second gap, by analysing drivers and outcomes of one of the most important relational variables, according to what we found in literature: consumer satisfaction.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold: (i) to conduct a systematic literature review on relationship quality; (ii) to analyse the effect of wine brand prestige and the wine consumer experience on consumer satisfaction, as well as the wine brand image and word-of-mouth as outcomes.

For the purpose of our study, we chose the wine sector for three main reasons: i) Portugal is an old wine country full of tradition and heritage; ii) The wine sector and the wine tourism that is promoted had not been deeply analysed and studied in previous research; and iii) This sector plays an important role in the national economy and the recognition of the quality work carried out in this sector is being acclaimed internationally.

Portugal has several brands from regions such as Douro, Vinho Verde or Alentejo, that are known internationally. At the top of the list is Port wine. The Douro valley is

the world's first officially demarcated wine appellation (18th Century) created under the tutelage of the Marquis of Pombal (Loureiro and Kaufmann, 2012) with the purpose of guaranteeing the authenticity of its wines. Although many port-style wines are made around the world (Australia, South Africa, and United States), the strict usage of the terms "Port" or "Porto" is reserved only for the wines produced in Portugal.

This sector is also related with "wine tourism", which is defined as: visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine events for wine tasting and/or for experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, and Macionis, 2000). Wine tourism is a marketing opportunity for producers to sell their products directly to consumers, but also to educate them (Getz and Brown, 2006).

Indeed, Hall and Mitchell (2002) use the term "touristic terroir" to describe the combination of physical, cultural and natural environments that give each region its distinctive appeal as a destination for wine consumers. This idea is stressed by the well-known, international magazine Wine Spectator (1997) which eloquently noted: "As anybody who loves wines knows, the regions where the finest wine is made are special places, even magical".

After this introduction, the remainder of the article is structured as follows: *First*, a background of RQ concepts are presented based on the systematic literature review, as well as on the foundation for the proposed model; *Afterwards,* the methodology used to develop the empirical study is described; *Subsequently*, the key results are provided. *Finally*, the conclusion, managerial implications and new avenues for future research are proposed.

1. Literature review

1.1. Systematic analysis of literature

This study employs an automated search to collect information and identify, document, and conceptualize all key analysis. This systematic analysis focuses on several keywords generally related with the relationships between producer/distributor and distributor/consumer and specifically with the wine sector.

In a first stage of this study we used as key research terms: "Relationship Quality," "Relationship Distributor-Retailer," "Relationship Distributor-Producer," "Relationship Supplier-Retailer," "Relationship Wine Producer-Distributor," "Relationship Wine-Distributor," "Relationship Distributor-Retail," and "Relationship Consumer-Distributor." The combination of different terms, sequences, and strategies were used to include relevant literature as much as possible. The period considered is from 1967 to 2016.

The Web of Knowledge was the database used to search for articles published in journals classified with a higher rating in the Journal Quality List (Harzing 2016), in which the WU Wien Journal Rating and University of Queensland Adjusted ERA Rankings List were used. This review allowed us to detect that the study of the RQ in the relationship has developed greatly since 2007, which represents 72,67% of the total references. On the other hand, we could observe that not enough attention has been given to it by major journals. When we restricted the focus of study to the wine sector, we did not find relevant studies pertaining to this dyadic relationship.

In a second stage, we developed a systematic review focused on the key word RQ and the period considered was from 1967 to 2016 (see Table 1). The collected articles were subject to a careful selection using filter parameters such as Source type–article, Language–English. Research area–Business economics, Operations research management science, Social sciences and other topics, Psychology, Communication, International relations, and Sociology. These initial filters were followed by title

reading, abstract reading, and full paper reading. After a broad screening of titles and

abstracts, a strict screening of the remaining articles was carried out. Finally, as a result

of a cross-reference of the articles selected, other relevant studies were identified and

added (including journals more converged to the wine context). After the last screening,

a group of 97 articles emerged that were organised chronologically (from 1967 to 2016).

Table 1. Selection criteria for the keyword search

Criteria	Filters - Screening Process
Source type / Language	Article / English
General categories	Management; Business; Operations research management science; Economics; Social sciences interdisciplinary; Agricultural economics policy; Psychology applied; Sociology; International relations; Communication; Ethics
Research field	Business economics; Operations research management science; Social sciences other topics; Psychology; Communication; International relations; Sociology

Figure 1 presents the different stages of the screening process and, as well as each

result until arriving at the final group. As mentioned, each stage implies carrying out a

few tasks before proceeding to the next one.

Figure 1. The screening process
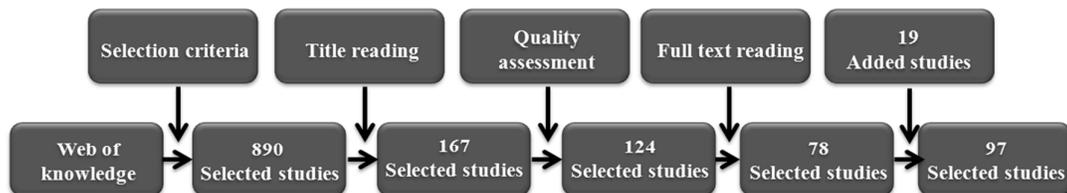
The majority of studies carried out focused on the exchange relationships of

business-to-business (B2B) that represent 74.73% of the empirical studies. In this

group, 80.95% studied products intended to be consumed in the sector. There are very

few studies on international markets; only 12.12% in comparison with the domestic

market, which keeps this research avenue open for future study.

Regarding business-to-consumer (B2C), which represents 25.27% of all studies,

there is a small dominance of studies on goods, 47.83%, in comparison with studies

focused on services, 34.78%. All of them are intended for the domestic consumer market, and we found that there is a lack of studies on the international market.

The market place, which has been considered by the researchers, involves 27 countries, but only eight of those were the main target of study, the USA being the leading country (see Table 2).

Table 2. Main results which characterise the market place of the RQ studies

Countries	B2B	B2C
USA	29,85%	27,59%
Taiwan	8,96%	6,90%
UK	8,96%	3,45%
Netherlands	4,48%	6,90%
France	4,48%	6,90%
Australia	4,48%	3,45%
China	4,48%	3,45%
Germany	2,99%	13,79%
Other	31,34%	27,59%
TOTAL	100,00%	100.00%

The systematic analysis also allowed us to identify the main constructs used in this research. Thus, Trust, Commitment, and Satisfaction are the most employed to access RQ (Crosby et al., 1990; De Wulf et al., 2001; Hibbard, Kumar, and Stern, 2001; Ulaga and Eggert 2006; Skarmeas, Katsikeas, Spyropoulou, and Salehi-Sangari, 2008; Athanasopoulou, 2009; Somogyi, Gyau, Li, and Bruwer, 2010; Somogyi, 2013).

As an antecedent of RQ, one of the most commonly used is Expertise, 16.52%. Communication Orientation, which was revealed by the parties of the relationship, is also relevant as an antecedent, 13.91%. Some other constructs employed are: Satisfaction Orientation, 4.49%, Conflict Solving, 6.96%, Dependence, 6.09%, and Product Value, 5.22%. Globally, the majority reveal that both parties are interested in evaluating the potential of the relationship in a long-term perspective (see Table 3).

In relation to the RQ core constructs, the most frequently used are Trust, 26.51%, Commitment, 19.46%, and Satisfaction, 18.12%, which are consistent with the literature review. Yet other constructs were used in a significant way: Cooperation, 5.37%,

Communication Exchange, 4.07%, Long-term relationship and Adaptation, 2.35%, also

Conflict and Opportunism, representing 2.01% each.

The two more common outcomes are: Recommendation/Loyalty, 26.97%, and

Performance, 15.73%. Other important constructs are: Satisfaction Outcome, 10.11%,

Expectation of Relationship Continuity, 6.74%, Relationship Value, 5.62%, Repurchase

Intention and Retaining, each having 4.49%.

Table 3. Major findings related with the research context

Constructs	Antecedents	Constructs	RQ core	Constructs	Outcomes
Expertise	16.52%	Trust	26.51%	Recommendation Loyalty	26.97%
Communication orientation	13.91%	Commitment	19.46%	Performance	15.73%
Satisfaction orientation	8.70%	Satisfaction	18.12%	Satisfaction Outcome	10.11%
Conflict Solving orientation	6.96%	Cooperation	5.37%		
Dependence	6.09%	Communication Exchange	4.70%	Expectation of Relationship Continuity	6.74%
Product Value	5.22%	Long-term relationship	2.35%		
Long-term orientation	4.35%	Adaptation	2.35%	Relationship Value	5.62%
Similarity	3.48%	Conflict solving	2.01%		
Specific investment orientation	2.61%	Opportunism	2.01%	Repurchase Intension	4.49%
		Inter-dependence	1.68%		
Learning Orientation	2.61%	Specific investment	1.01%		4.49%
		Power	1.01%	Retaining	
Others	29.57%	Others	13.42%	Others	25.84%
Total	**100.00%**	**Total**	**100.00%**	**Total**	**100.00%**

1.2. Relationship quality

Crosby and his colleagues were the first to introduce the concept of RQ (Crosby et al.

1990), which has developed significantly in the last decades. Since then, a few

definitions have emerged (see Table 4).

RQ concept focuses on the core essence of relationship marketing (Jap et al., 1999)

and reflects the overall nature of the exchange relationship (Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh,

1987). It is a higher order construct made of several distinct, though related dimensions,

and promotes a global measure to describe and assess the nature, climate, depth, health

and wellbeing of the inter-organizational relationship between two parties (e.g., Dorsch,

Swanson, and Kelley, 1998; De Wulf et al., 2001; Walter et al., 2003; Lages, Lages, and

Lages, 2005; Rauyruen and Miller, 2007). For Liu et al. (2010), the quality defines the

possibility of success of a long-term exchange relationship and it determines the

likelihood that relationships among partners will continue.

Table 4. Relationship Quality definitions

Sources	RQ concepts
(Crosby et al., 1990, p. 76)	RQ is ''an indicator of the health and wellbeing'' of relationships.
(Johnson, 1999, p. 6)	More than characterize relations that are interdependent, the RQ "describes the overall depth and climate of inter-firm relationships.''
(Jap et al. 1999, p. 304)	"RQ as consisting of evaluations of various aspects of relationship—attitudinal, process, and future expectations."
(Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp 1995, p. 55)	"RQ as a higher order concept, implying that a better quality relationship results in a lower level of conflict as well as greater trust, commitment, expectation of continuity, and willingness to invest.
(Bejou, Wray, and Ingram, 1996, p. 137)	RQ is defined as when "the customer is able to rely on the salesperson's integrity and has confidence in the salesperson's future performance because the level of past performance has been consistently satisfactory."
(Hennig-Thurau and Klee 1997, p. 751)	RQ "can be seen as the degree of appropriateness of a relationship to fulfil the needs of the customer associated with that relationship."
(Smith 1998, p. 4)	RQ "is a higher-order construct comprised of a variety of positive relationship outcomes that reflect the overall strength of a relationship and the extent to which it meets the needs and expectations of the parties. "
(Palmatier 2008, p. 77, 85)	RQ "is a higher-order, holistic view of a relational exchange composed of multiple facets." RQ "captures the overall calibre of relationship ties and their overall impact on outcomes''.
Liu, Li, and Zhang, 2010, p. 4)	"RQ can be defined as the extent of both parties' willingness to pursue common interests, mutual understanding, reciprocity, loyalty to each other, and long-term cooperation".
(Nyaga and Whipple 2011, p. 356)	RQ "as a higher order construct that can be used to represent the overall value of a relationship, be it collaborative or arm's length."
(Song, Su, Liu, and Wang, 2012, p. 290)	RQ is "the degree to which the parties in a relationship are engaged in an active, long-term working relationship that includes cooperation and conflict resolution."
(Leonidou, Leonidou, Coudounaris, and Hultman, 2013, p. 161)	RQ "is a higher-order construct, comprising of cooperation, trust, commitment, and communication."

Even though many authors have been working on this topic, there are a few

definitions that support the concept (Dwyer et al., 1987; Kumar et al., 1995; Skarmeas

and Robison, 2008) and there is no consensus about which is the most appropriate. The

new advances on the topic are quite different, and the range of constructs used to

measure the RQ increased significantly. Thus, it is paramount to understand what is

happening at the present time.

1.3. Consumer satisfaction as a core variable

This construct represents a positive affective or emotional evaluation resulting from the overall appraisal of the meaning and experience in the development of the relationship with other partners (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann, 1994; Anderson and Narus, 1984; Crosby et al., 1990; Dwyer et al., 1987; Oliver, 1999; Verhoef, Franses, and Hoekstra, 2002: Bruwer, 2013), and future performance expectations (Anderson et al., 1994; Strick, 2009). This affective evaluation can contradict the assessment of rational data (Anderson and Narus, 1984, 1990) (see Table 5).

Table 5. The main definitions of Satisfaction

Authors	Definitions
Anderson and Narus (1984, p. 66)	Satisfaction is a "positive affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a firm's working relationship with another firm."
Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988)	The customer's feeling of satisfaction is a result of a comparison process between perceived performance and one or more comparison standards, such as expectations.
Anderson and Narus (1990)	It can be defined as the extent of a business partner's overall affective evaluation of the relationship.
Oliver (1999)	A cumulative process across a series of transactions or service encounters; may comprises two perspectives: cognitive perspective can result from a comparison between service expectations and perceived service performance or disconfirmation; the affective perspective suggests that satisfaction is influenced by emotions
Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, and Evans (2006)	Satisfaction represents the emotional perspective of the relation.
Lahiri and Kedia (2011)	Satisfaction signifies both partners' perceptions of fulfilment based on the matching of relationship-based outcomes with expectations.

1.4. Wine experience and brand prestige as drivers

The wine sector remains a highly fragmented market in Portugal, as demonstrated by existence of a large number of producers in the country (Euromonitor, 2015). This fragmentation is particularly evident in table wine. This is chiefly due to growing interest in smaller premium producers, seeing as consumers increasingly prioritise quality.

Another important and distinguishing aspect of this sector is that we deal with a product that changes, depending on various aspects. For instance, the characteristics of the grape, the terroir, the flavours of the vineyard, the reputation of the winemaker and, almost always, the corporate brand representing the history of a family.

The wine consumption experience is associated with "the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; p. 92), resulting from the colour, the bouquet, the taste, tactile impression, the scents, and also the way the wine is bottled (Bruwer et al., 2013; Hall, 2016; Cardebat and Livat, 2016). Winescape is composed of aesthetically attractive environments of both geographical and natural beauty proving to be a hedonic experience (Bruwer and Alant, 2009).

Experiences comprise several dimensions involving cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial and social components (Schmitt, 2003), which go through a process before composed of three stages; pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Therefore, wineries and wine cellars play a significant role by stimulating emotional attachment and providing memorable experiences (Alonso et al., 2008; Alant and Bruwer, 2010). The cognitive component involves learning to taste, and taking the time to appreciate the wine and its features. The sensorial component implies using the senses: smelling the bouquet, visualising the colour, tasting the actual wine.

This experience may change behaviours, with the tourists learning how to drink wine and enjoy the ritual and not merely using wine to quench their thirst. Other non-alcoholic drinks can be used to quench thirst, not wine. The experience is also associated with the context where the wine is drunk, that is, with family and friends, to celebrate important events, during holidays and weekends, and even daily but in smaller portions (Fountain et al., 2009). Bruwer et al. (2013) claim that the first experience at wineries and wine cellars could be the beginning of what can become an ongoing relationship with a certain wine brand. The satisfied relationship may lead to loyal customers.

Indeed, of these different wine contact points the consumption experience is most relevant as a source of satisfaction (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Alonso et al., 2008; Verdonk et al., 2017). A good wine brand experience tends to generate satisfaction, meaning, pleasure, be happy, feeling good about the decision, to buy and taste that particular wine brand. Tourists more familiar with wine brands, those who shop wine for the pleasure of tasting and drinking wine, may experience prestigious and well-known wine brands with more satisfaction than those that are not aware of the wine's potential features nor have experience with this kind of product. Experienced and well-informed tourists with wine brands can even anticipate what they are going to taste. In the case of a brand they have not yet tried, they can try to predict what they are going to taste, due to their expertise with wine brands. If they already know the brand, they may develop the expectation of repeating what they have tasted and memorized from past experience. As Lemon and Verhoef (2016) claim, experience occurs not only in the moment when we use the product (e.g., tasting the wine), but also before acquiring or buying the product (an anticipation) and after using or tasting it.

The Douro region and primarily Port wine and Douro wine brands are well-known and reputable in Portugal and abroad. The process of selecting, buying and tasting original Port wine is associated with prestige. Prestige has a symbolic meaning embedded in a brand connected to status, uniqueness and luxury. Thus, the concept refers to the relatively high status of product positioning associated with a brand (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden, 2003). Vigneron and Johnson (1999) categorise prestige brands into (1) upmarket brands, (2) premium brands, and (3) luxury brands. A prestigious brand image can induce the psychological experience of a feeling of belonging to the upper classes (Steenkamp et al., 2003), a feeling of pride for living the experience of a certain product. Therefore, we argue that tasting and drinking a

prestigious wine brand may contribute to developing the sensation of pleasure and being happy, as well as the confirmation of having made a good and wise choice with regards to the wine brand. As mentioned above, a favourable wine experience together with the perception of a prestigious brand will influence the level of satisfaction. The following hypotheses are thus suggested in a wine context (see Figure 2):

H1: Wine brand prestige is positively associated with consumer satisfaction

H2: Wine consumer experience is positively associated with consumer satisfaction

1.5. Wine brand image and word-of-mouth as outcomes

Brand image in consumers' minds refers to the set of associations linked to the brand that they hold in memory (Keller, 1993). As for other brands, wine brand image should be built through utilitarian and experiential benefits associated with the brand, the confidence in the reliability of the product (wine) and the emotional and psychological meanings of brand attributes. The organoleptic features of the wine, the heritage of the grape and brands, and the trust in the wine product contribute to the wine brand image (Velikova, Howell, and Dodd, 2015). We consider a wine brand image to signify something that is trustworthy, reliable, likeable, and appealing or in other words, a very good brand. In addition, expert opinions, consumption experience and knowledge contribute to creating a favourable wine image (Chocarro and Cortiñas, 2013). The relationship established at wineries, wine cellars, at home, or at a restaurant may develop the relationship between the wine brand and consumers (Vissak, Francioni, and Musso, 2017) Yet, we argue that consumer satisfaction (a relational variable) (Somogyi et al., 2010) will be a key factor in enhancing the wine brand image. Satisfied consumers are more willing to recommend a wine brand to others (Bruwer and Alant, 2009; Strick, 2009; Loureiro and Kaufmann, 2012).

In this vein, consumer satisfaction may play an important role in influencing the wine brand image and contribute to lead wine consumers to spread the word about the wine brand. Following this line of thought we suggest:

**H3**: Consumer satisfaction is positively associated with wine brand image

H4: Consumer satisfaction is positively associated with word-of-mouth

Consumer satisfaction is regarded as a core variable in relationship quality (Athanasopoulou, 2009; Somogyi, 2013). Satisfaction is regarded as a response, a cognitive (e.g., the brand is a wise choice) and emotional (e.g., feeling happy) judgement. This response could result from the relationship developed between parties, where a favourable experience with the brand and the perception of prestige (in the case of premium brands and luxury brands) may contribute to such a positive response. However, satisfied wine consumers will be more active in promoting the brand to others and will create a better brand image in their minds than unsatisfied consumers. Based on previous studies, all of these arguments, regarding the exchange relationships made between brands and wine consumers, may generate emotions which are based on their appraisal of the experience and on the prestige of the brand. Consequently, these factors, which develop wine brand image and word-of-mouth, lead us to propose consumer satisfaction as a mediator. Thus, we can hypothesise:

H5: Consumer satisfaction mediates the relationships between drivers (wine brand prestige and consumer satisfaction) and outcomes (wine brand image and word-of-mouth)

Figure 2. Conceptual proposed model
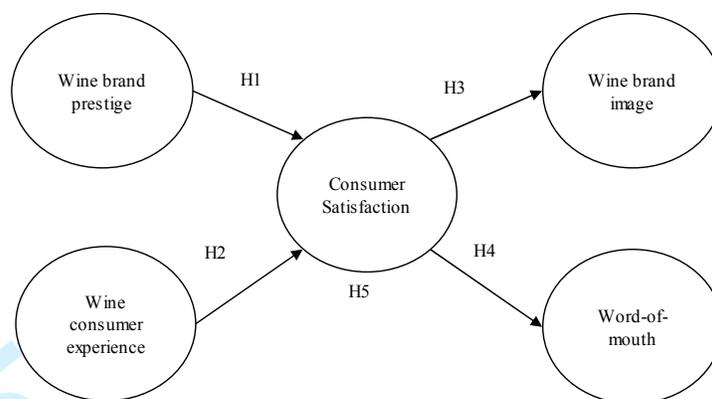
2. Methodology

2.1. Data collection

The questionnaire was prepared in English and based on literature review. It was translated to Portuguese and back translated to English to assure that both conveyed the same content. A pre-test was carried out with 10 graduate students, wine consumers and wine experts interviewed in person, which subsequently allowed us to make slight changes such as the wording of sentences. Although the questionnaire was developed based on instruments applied in previous studies, we prepared the layout taking into consideration several aspects in order to avoid common method bias: (i) the items and questions were presented in written form to avoid ambiguity, namely keeping them simple and concise, avoiding unfamiliar terms and complex syntax; (ii) the physical distance between measurements of the same construct was also considered.

The selection of wine cellars to be included in the study was done by purposeful sampling, including all wine cellars in the Douro Valley. Thus, a group of 10 prestigious and well-known Port wine brands allowed to have access to wine tourists during visits to the wine cellars. Yet, participants in the study only completed the questionnaire after taking a tour through the Port Houses and Oporto city. They experienced tasting the wine during the tour and also at restaurants and hotels or other lodgings.

Data were collected during 2016. A total of 479 fully completed and usable questionnaires (after excluding those with missing information, inconsistent responses or extreme multivariate outliers) were collected from the 500 distributed. The outliers were deleted using the graphic method, with a residual scatter plot in the range of +3 standard deviation (Hair et al., 2010). Of the total participants, 48.6% were female and 51.4% were male. Most participants were aged between 31 and 60 and held a university degree. Finally, most participants were from the UK, Canada, USA, Portugal, Brazil and Angola (see Table 6).

Table 6. Sample profile

Gender	Age	Education	Marital status	Country
Male: 51.4%	18-30: 4.2%	School-Standard	Single: 35,1%	UK: 24,0&
Female: 48.6%	31-40: 30.7%	level: 4.4%	Single with	Canada: 20,3%
	41-50: 27.6%	School-High: level:	children: 7,9%	USA:16,3%
	51-60: 29.8%	24.4%	Partner no children;	Portugal: 18.8%
	> 60: 7.7%	University degree:	19.4%	Brasil: 8,1%
		49.5%	Partner with	Angola: 7.7%
		Post grade: 21.7%	children: 37.6%	Other:4.8%

2.2. Variable and measurement

All items of the five constructs were measured using 5-point Likert-type scale and adopted from previous studies. Wine brand prestige was assessed by three items adapted from Baek, Kim, and Yu (2010). The wine consumer experience (four items) was adapted from Murray (1985). Brand satisfaction was measured using four items based on Brakus et al. (2009) and Oliver (1999).

With regards to outcomes, wine brand image was measured with five items based on Woisetschläger, Hartleb, and Blut (2008). Word-of-mouth was assessed with three items (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996). The last section contained the socio-demographic variables. Finally, participants answered the questionnaire focusing on their favourite Port wine brand they consume the most. Participants wrote the name of their favourite Port wine brand, which allowed us to check if they are set on one of the top brands (see Table7).

Table 7. Constructs, items and sources

Construct	Items	Source
Wine brand prestige	This wine brand is very prestigious This wine brand has high status This wine brand is very upscale	Baek, Kim, and Yu (2010)
Wine consumer experience	I am familiar with many brands of wine I frequently shop for wine I have used or been exposed to wine a lot in the past I have a great deal of experience in buying wine	Murray (1985)
Wine consumer satisfaction	I am satisfied with this wine brand and its features My choice to taste this wine brand has been a wise one I feel good about my decision to taste this wine brand I am happy with this wine brand	Brakus et al. (2009) and Oliver (1999)
Wine brand image	This wine brand is trustworthy This is a reliable wine brand This wine brand is likeable This wine brand is a very good brand This is a very appealing wine brand	Woisetschläger, Hartleb, and Blut (2008)
Word-of-mouth	I will say positive things about this wine brand to other people I will encourage other people to buy this wine brand I will recommend this wine brand to people who seek my advice	Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996)

3. Results

PLS is employed to estimate the measurement and structural parameters of the structural equation model. The adequacy of the measurements was assessed by evaluating the item and the composite reliability, the convergent validity and the discriminant validity (see Table 8). Item reliability for the reflective measures was assessed by examining the loadings of the measurements on their corresponding construct. All items have loadings equal or higher than 0.707. Values of AVE (Average Variance Extracted) are all above 0.5 (convergent validity). Further, the composite reliability values exceed the threshold value of 0.8.

Table 8. Measurement model

	LV mean	Item loading Range	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Wine brand prestige	3.0	(0,756-0,855)	0.640	0.842	0.721
Wine consumer experience	2.4	(0.825-0,903)	0.759	0.926	0.894
Wine consumer satisfaction	3.5	(0.776-0.893)	0.715	0.909	0.867

Wine brand image	3.8	(0.744-0.934)	0.754	0.938	0.916
Word-of-mouth	3.4	(0.707-0.904)	0.646	0.842	0.716

Discriminant validity is assessed according to the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion: the average variance extracted (AVE) should be greater than the variance shared between the construct and other constructs in the model (i.e., the squared correlation between two constructs). Table 9 shows that the criterion is met.

Table 9. Discriminant validity

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
$AVE^{1/2}$	0.800	0.871	0.846	0.868	0.804
1.Wine brand prestige	1.000				
2.Wine consumer experience	0.655	1.000			
3.Wine consumer satisfaction	0.405	0.365	1.000		
4.Wine brand image	0.416	0.376	0.638	1.000	
5.Word-of-mouth	0.340	0.307	0.656	0.624	1.000

Table 10 presents the structural results. A nonparametric bootstrapping procedure with 500 re-samples is performed to obtain the path coefficients and t-values. All path coefficients are found to be significant at the 0.001 or 0.05 level, therefore H1 to H4 are supported.

The Q^2-statistic (i.e., the Stone–Geisser test) can be used to evaluate the predictive relevance of the model. All Q^2-values are positive. Therefore, the relationships in the model have predictive relevance. The model also demonstrated a high level of predictive power (R^2). The modelled constructs explained 17.2% of the variance in Wine consumer satisfaction, 70.2% in Wine brand image, and 73.3% of the variance in Word-of-mouth. The overall goodness of fit (GoF; Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, and Lauro 2005) exceeds the required threshold of 0.36 as suggested by Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder, and van Oppen (2009) indicating a good fit.

Table 10. Structural results

Path	β	t-value	Hypothesis

Wine brand prestige → Wine consumer satisfaction	0.299***	3.880	Supported
Wine consumer experience → Wine consumer satisfaction	0.139*	1.968	Supported
Wine consumer satisfaction → Wine brand image	0.838***	38.259	Supported
Wine consumer satisfaction → word-of-mouth	0.856***	46.245	Supported
R^2 Wine consumer satisfaction	0.172	Q^2 Wine consumer satisfaction	0.119
R^2 Wine brand image	0.702	Q^2 Wine brand image	0.509
R^2 Word-of-mouth	0.733	Q^2 Word-of-mouth	0.468
GoF	0.61		

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; p<0.001

We also analysed the mediating effects by using the bootstrapping procedure (500 re-sampling) to test for the indirect effects (Preacher and Hayes, 2008; Williams and MacKinnon, 2008). The significance of the indirect effects was estimated using percentile bootstrap, which generated a 95% confidence interval (CI) for the indirect paths (Williams & MacKinnon, 2008). If the interval for an indirect path does not contain zero, it means that the indirect effect is significantly different from zero with 95% confidence (see Table 11).

The variance accounted for (VAF) provides a measurement for the degree of partial mediation and is normed between 0% and 100% (Helm, Eggert, and Garnefeld, 2010). Therefore, consumer satisfaction acts as a total mediator in the case of relationships wine brand prestige → word-of-mouth and wine consumer experience → word-of-mouth and as a partial mediator in the case of wine brand prestige → wine brand image and wine consumer experience → wine brand image (see Table 11). Thus, H5 is supported.

Table 11. Mediation analysis

	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	VAF	Percentile 95% CI Lower	Upper	Explained variance
Wine brand prestige -> Wine brand image (without mediation)	0.419***	-	0.419***	-	-	-	R^2 Wine brand image=17.6%
Wine brand prestige → Wine brand image Consumer satisfaction: mediator	0.091 ns	0.179*	0.270**	66.3% partial mediation	0.176	0.182	R^2 C.satisfaction=16.4% R^2 Wine brand image =91.6%
Wine brand prestige → Word-of-mouth (without mediation)	0.366***	-	0.366***	-			R^2 Word-of-mouth=13.4%

Wine brand prestige → Word-of-mouth Consumer satisfaction: mediator	0.006 ns	0.333***	0.339***	98.2% total mediation	0.330	0.336	$R^2_{C.satisfaction}$ =16.2% $R^2_{Word-of-mouth}$=73.2%
Wine consumer experience → Wine brand image (without mediation)	0.387***	-	0.387***	-			$R^2_{Wine brand image}$=15.0%
Wine consumer experience → Wine brand image Consumer satisfaction: mediator	0.081 ns	0.296**	0.377***	78.5% partial mediation	0.290	0.302	$R^2_{C.satisfaction}$ =13.4% $R^2_{Wine brand image}$ =71.0%
Wine consumer experience → Word-of-mouth (without mediation)	0.347***	-	0.347***	-			$R^2_{Word-of-mouth}$=12.1%
Wine consumer experience → Word-of-mouth Consumer satisfaction: mediator	0.006 ns	0.301***	0.307***	98.0% total mediation	0.298	0.304	$R^2_{C.satisfaction}$ =13.3% $R^2_{Word-of-mouth}$ =73.2%

4. Conclusions and implications

The current study investigates whether wine consumer experience and wine brand prestige influence consumer satisfaction and this, in turn, exercises a positive effect on wine brand image and word-of-mouth. The results demonstrated that the strength of wine brand prestige (β= 0.299, p<0.001) on consumer satisfaction is higher than the strength of the relationship between wine consumer experience and satisfaction (β=0.139; p<0.05). Although more studies in other contexts and countries are needed to consolidate these findings, the current study highlights the importance of the role of the prestigious brand on the process consumer satisfaction process. Creating well-known upscale wine brands, with heritage is a long-term process. The process contemplates a continuous improvement of the wine, without forgetting the traditional and ancestral method that gave rise to each brand. The prestigious Port wine brands (in addition to table wines) are not devised for a large-scale production, rather they want to have the control of the whole production process, using traditional manual labour and avoiding the mechanical tasks. In this production process, the grape grower and the winery or the brand owner belongs to the same wine house or have a long-term relationship that passes from one generation to another, where trust, commitment and satisfaction are three important relational variables, as suggested by Somogy et al. (2010).

Second, satisfaction with the wine brand contributes to improving or at least consolidating the wine brand image (β=0.838; p<0.001) and word-of-mouth (β=0.856; p<0,001). Velikova et al. (2015) have evoked the importance of cultural variation in consumer attitudes towards rosé wine, based on perceived image, and its impact on marketing strategies targeting consumers in different markets. Therefore, we reinforce the importance of the positive relationship between satisfaction and wine brand image. The role of satisfaction in enhancing wine brand image is valuable, since it is the last contribute to creating a positive attitude towards a brand and influence purchase decision, as proposed by Verdonk et al. (2017). Furthermore, satisfaction also has an effect on the willingness of wine consumers to recommend the wine brand to others. So, consumers may act as advocates of the brand, communicating the features and the symbolic benefits of the wine brand.

Third, as far as the authors know, this is the first attempt to analyse consumer satisfaction as a mediator between drivers (wine consumer prestige and experience) and outcomes (wine brand image and word-of-mouth). Although all the fours relationships where satisfaction acts as mediator are found to have at least a partial mediation, the mediator role of satisfaction on the relationships wine brand prestige → word-of-mouth and wine consumer experience → word-of-mouth is newsworthy. Thus, wine brand prestige and wine consumer experience will have a favourable effect on word-of-mouth and even on the wine brand image whenever the consumers feel happy with the wine brand and consider their choice as wise.

Fourth, regarding the literature review, the current study allows us to identify the factors to which the wine consumers give more importance and that influence their satisfaction. These are necessary in order to establish and maintain a competitive relationship with a wine brand, which signifies being successful in the market

(Anderson and Narus, 1990). This could happen with a high level of the RQ developed by business partners focused on the final customer or tourist. Aylward and Glynn (2006) refer that to be competitive in the wine markets, companies must have a superior performance taking into consideration critical factors like: Technical innovation; Product differentiation; Marketing innovation; Price competitiveness; Branding. The findings lead us to claim that the strategy of marketing management is facing new challenges that require shifting the attention from tangible dimensions of the business relationship towards intangible. In other words, the wine image in the consumer's mind does not depend only on the organoleptic features of the wine, the quality of the product, but also on the way the product is packed, communicated and experienced.

Fifth, although past research has pointed out several antecedents of RQ (see Table 3), the prestige of a brand and the experience co-created between partners are not among the most studied. Yet, the current study demonstrates their value and interest in influencing consumer satisfaction.

4.1. Managerial implications

Through a more insightful characterization of the constructs relevant to the RQ, managers could use guidelines to improve their ability to tailor brand relationship activities and more effectively allocate resources to match final customer preferences.

Wine producers and their relationships with distributors are engaged in understanding how to achieve and maintain a high level of customer satisfaction. Understanding how to develop relationship strategies that go beyond traditional marketing, helps to strengthen the RQ with the customer and therefore develop, in a consistently way, loyalty and profits (Cunha, Loureiro and Rego, 2015).

Wine brand owners and producers should be more proactive in co-creating new wine products and providing valuable experiences to consumers. They should develop more

integrative and interactive forms to maintain the relationship with consumers. For instance, doing follow-ups with consumers and tourists using online platforms to communicate in real time providing a consistent message during tourist wine experiences and finally inspiring them to experience the wine in a different context. All of these should be done when appealing the health benefits of the wine without forgetting to drink in moderation.

Wine tourism destination managers are recommended to be more active in promoting the wine brand associated with a certain region. This marketing message should be incorporated in the brand wine and other components that are part of a wine destination, a wine cellar, a hotel and spa, where wine is a core element. This process of communicating and promoting the wine region will contribute to enhancing brand prestige. The findings of the current study reveal that brand prestige, more than the experience of buying and drinking wine, contribute to satisfying wine tourists. Wine tourists, who believe in a wine brand, reinforce the brand image in their mind and influence others to be more connected to this wine brand. They spread the brand name and recommend the it, which in turn, contributes to wine brand communication and increases its prestige.

In light of this, taste experiences at wine cellars help consolidate the wine image in the tourists' minds or develop a new network of nodes in memory about a certain brand (for first-time wine tasters). Taste experiences could be regarded as a tool of marketing communication.

4.2. Limitations and further research

The findings of the present study should be interpreted with caution due to its limitations. The study used a convenience sample. Even though they represent the common wine consumers of Douro and Port wine brands, they may not represent all the

wine customers and tourists. Future studies should use more diverse wine consumer populations in different cultural contexts.

We may also propose other researches: i) study other wine regions in order to understand and compare the perspective of the consumer (compare old markets with emerging markets); ii) Further research might identify the relationship marketing strategies and activities that are most effective across the RQ constructs; iii) improve the proposed model, other antecedents analysed in previous studies need to be considered (see Table 5) in addition to those contemplated in the current study; iv) incorporate moderators, such as consumer knowledge, gender or age; v) develop a mix approach to study a dyadic relationship.

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Appendix

	LV mean	Item loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Wine brand prestige	3.0		0.640	0.842	0.721
The wine brand is very prestigious		0.787			
The wine brand has high status		0.855			
The wine brand is very upscale		0.756			
Wine consumer experience	2.4		0.759	0.926	0.894
I have a great deal of experience in buying wine.		0.883			
I have used or been exposed to wine a lot in the past		0.873			
I am familiar with many brands of wine		0.903			
I frequently shop for wine		0.825			
Wine consumer satisfaction	3.5		0.715	0.909	0.867
I am satisfied with this brand and its features		0.821			
My choice to taste this brand has been a wise one		0.776			
I feel good about my decision to taste this brand		0.893			
I am happy with this brand		0.886			
Wine brand imagem	3.8		0.754	0.938	0.916
This wine brand is trustworthy.		0.908			
This is a reliable wine brand.		0.924			
This wine brand is likeable.		0.934			
This wine brand is a very good brand.		0.744			
This is a very appealing wine brand.		0.818			
Word-of-mouth	3.4		0.646	0.842	0.716
I will say positive things about this wine brand to other people.		0.904			
I will encourage other people to buy this wine brand.		0.707			
I will recommend this wine brand to people who seek my advice		0.869			

Dear Prof. Colin Michael Hall and prof. Johan Bruwer

Thank you so much for the opportunity of revise our paper. We followed the suggestions of the reviewers to improve it. We used the colour blue to highlight the changes in the text and tables. We also introduced 9 new references (including from International Journal of Wine Business Research), checked the format of the list of references and asked an English professor to help us improve the English as well.

Best regards

Authors

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Recommendation: Minor Revision

Comments:
In my opinion, the authors should improve the following aspects:
The abstract should reflect the whole paper: The "findings" section could be improved. In the abstract there aren´t references to wine tourism. Please revise this section.
The authors should ensure that all the literature cited is the paper are in the reference list.
Please, revise the English style.
In conclusion, thank you for this interesting work. I hope the suggestions help you to improve the final version of your work.

Authors: Thank you for your kind and encouraging words.

Additional Questions:
1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: The paper contains new and significant information. The authors have chosen a very interesting topic. The findings are also of significance but the article could be improved.
Author: Thank you. We followed your recommendation to improve the paper.

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: In my opinion, a good Theoretical framework review answers the following questions:
(1) What is the topic or research question, and why is it interesting and important in the theoretical framework?
(2) What do we know, what don't we know, and so on? What key theoretical perspectives and

empirical findings have already informed the topic or question? What major controversy, or paradox does this study address, and why does it need to be addressed?

The authors respond to most of the above questions but I would like to suggest a revision of the section: 1. Literature review.

(1)   The epigraph entitled "systemic analysis of literature" can be eliminated or reduced. In my opinion, they do not provide the theoretical qualitative content of the research problem. Table 1 needs to be checked. Figure 2 is not appropriate for the content it represents. Table 3 is not understandable. My recommendation is to eliminate these tables and reduce this "systematic analysis of the literature" (I consider that it is only a beginning to be able to approach and to deepen a subject of investigation).

(2)   The theoretical framework that supports the hypotheses could be improved with arguments in favor but also arguments against.

In mi opinion, I really like this article but this section can be improved. I hope the suggestions help you to improve the final version of your work.

Authors: We eliminated table 1, Figure 2 and table 3 to accommodate new tables in the methodology section. We also improved our arguments for the hypotheses of the theoretical framework. Please see the parts in blue.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: The paper could be improved with two new tables (methodology section)

(1) Technical details of the study and sample description

 (2) Constructs, items and sources

Authors: we provided technical details of the research in the text and we added two new tables, one is Table 6, with the sample profile, and the other is Table 7 - constructs, items and sources.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: Yes

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: <Yes

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: Please, revise the English style.

Should this paper be considered for the annual best paper award?: No

Authors: Thank you again for your important suggestions. We hope that we have made the improvements appropriately. We also introduced 9 new references, checked the format of the

list of references and asked an English professor to help us improve the English as well.

Reviewer: 2

Recommendation: Reject

Comments:
Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. The broad topic area the author(s) sought to explore is an interesting one; what is the relationship between prestige of a wine brand and wine tourism experience in relationship building. In this reviewer's mind, however, what is presented here does not in its current form meet the requirements for publication in this journal.

There is not a clear connection between the literature review in the first half and the empirical research in the second half. Perhaps because of word limits, this means neither the literature review or empirical research is discussed in enough detail to give the reader a clear picture of the problem, or the findings.

It is suggested that the author(s) consider rewriting a paper based more centrally on the empirical data presented here. Give more focus to the existing literature that exists on the wine tourism experience, and in particular, the studies which have explored relationship building and brand loyalty at the cellar door. Explain in more detail the constructs used in the study, and explain the rationale for the items chosen to measure these constructs. Present results that 'tell a story' of the respondents and their experiences of the wine brand and the tourism experiences; don't be so quick to leap straight into model building.

Authors: Thank you for your comments. We went through all of the manuscript improving the theoretical background, and the argumentation of the hypotheses. We eliminated two tables and one figure to add Table 6 and Table 7, both more appropriate to the current study. We also introduced 9 new references based on your recommendation. Please see the final list of references, as well as the parts in Blue.

Additional Questions:
1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: While this topic has the potential to be interesting (the interplay of wine prestige and consumers' experiences of wine through wine tourism), this paper does not present information of a conceptual or empirical nature that adds significantly to our understanding of these issues.
2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: It is clear that the author(s) have undertaken a relatively significant literature review, and describe the methods used to undertake this in some detail, however what is presented is a list of important terms and concepts in the literature, but little in the way of critical analysis or synthesis of these concepts. It seems also that the method the authors used to identify relevant articles may have been somewhat flawed, given that many of the well known articles related to wine tourism and relationship building and/or brand loyalty are not cited (for example, Bruwer et al., 2013; Fountain et al., 2008; Nella & Christou, 2014). Similarly, there are many, many articles about the wine tourism experience in general

that are not discussed, and the wine tourism experience itself is barely mentioned in this paper, which is supposed to be focused on wine tourism.

Authors: Thank you for your suggestions. We introduced 9 new references. We also improved our argumentation about the wine experience. The study deals with the experience in selecting, buying and tasting wine and how that experience may influence satisfaction. We improved the argumentation on this topic.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: It is not entirely clear how the literature review which has been conducted relates to the empirical research which follows. The rationale for establishing the hypotheses is not fully developed, and there are very limited numbers of items used to develop the constructs (and no discussion of what these items are). For example, the wine consumer experience is measured with only four items - do these items relate to the wine tourism experience, or to wine consumption more generally? The authors do not say. Either way, four items seems insufficient to capture the nuances of a wine tourism experience.

Authors: we provided a table 7 with items for all constructs and the source of such items.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: The analysis which is presented is very difficult to follow, and seems somewhat meaningless without clear discussion of what items were used to measure the constructs. There seems to be little connection between the findings and the conclusions, with issues raised that were not addressed, as far as this reader knows, in the empirical research.
Authors, we discuss the results we found from the quantitative data collected, but we also give some insights into the systematic literature review.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: Unfortunately due to the issues outlined above, it is not clear what the implications of this research might be. There are some managerial implications raised, but it is not clear how these emerge from the empirical research.

Authors: Now we have added recommendations that come from the literature review and from the quantitative approach. Please see the parts in blue.

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: It seems that this paper is written by author(s) for whom English is a second language. In general, it is quite well written, but there are some poor word choices and unusual phrasing.

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Should this paper be considered for the annual best paper award?: No

Authors: Thank you for your kind words. We asked an English professor to help us improve the English.