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Modelling wine tourism experiences

Arlindo Madeira [a] , Antónia Correia [b] and José António Filipe [c]

[a] ISCTE_BRU, Universidade Europeia, Portugal;

[b] CEFAGE, Universidade do Algarve & Universidade Europeia, Portugal;

[c] ISCTE, BRUL_IUL, Portugal

ABSTRACT Wine experiences contributed to attracting tourists to the destinations, in particular in Portugal where wine is worldwide renowned. This research aims to understand what drives tourists to visit a destination to live a wine experience and how this experience may improve the image and retain tourists. This model conceptual in its essence was applied in an emergent wine region in Portugal – Lisbon. Data were collected in 16 wineries from a random sample of 314 visitors in an emergent wine region, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was applied. Structural equation modelling was used to test hypotheses and validate the conceptual model. Results show that motivation positively influences the wine experiences, which in turn is explained by the dimensions presented in the study. Furthermore, the wine experience influences image and satisfaction positively and the brand equity negatively. From the managerial perspective, implications are discussed as well as the main limitations, and then suggestions for further research are provided.

Introduction

The wine tourism experience encompasses many characteristics including a lifestyle experience, education, linkages to art, wine and food, tasting and cellar door sales, winery tours, incorporation within the tourism-destination image and a marketing opportunity which enhances the economic, social and cultural values of a territory (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). The search for pairings between the wines produced in a region and its gastronomy enhances both and gives a unique character to the region and uses the term gastronomic to explain the merger between wine gastronomy and the pairing of the two (Harrington, 2005). Furthermore, culinary elements, as well as all that is related to local wines, contribute to the image and prestige of the destination (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). The benefits of wine tourism should be analysed from three perspectives: the winery, the consumer and the region where it occurs (Getz & Brown, 2006). This triad of factors- winery-tourists-destination is the main contribution of this paper that aside the results proposed a unique framework to furthering the research about wine tourism. Wine tourism offers wineries access to a huge number of visitors to their cellar door (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2000), which helps build brand loyalty, create a positive image of the wine product and develop strong consumer relationships through planned on-site experiences (Bruwer & Alant, 2009). Regarding visitors, tasting rooms at wineries provide an opportunity for them to try new and unknown products at little or no cost and thus improve their awareness as consumers (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997). At the same time, the opportunity to meet staff involved in the winemaking process and to see "behind the

scenes", which leads to positive relationships, may increase both direct sales and indirect sales through positive "word-of-mouth" advertising (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, & Macionis, 2000).

Wine tourism also provides a source of marketing intelligence for wineries, allows revenue to be increased while providing an alternative distribution outlet from cellar door visitors and provides an educational opportunity in a non-threatening environment to develop wine appreciation, and creates awareness and improves knowledge on wines and the wine industry (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997). Finally, wine tourism benefits the economic growth of wine regions around the world through loyalty, increased brand value and repeat visits (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007) as it offers a chance for growth to a number of traditionally depressed rural areas in need of economic stimulus and thus, allows the tourism industry to be consolidated (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2000). It seems to be consensual among researchers that it is experiences that sustain this tourist activity, the experiential approach to research in wine tourism is surprisingly still a topic with few studies (Carmichael, 2005; Charters, Fountain, & Fish, 2009; Cohen & Ben-Nun, 2009; Pikkemaat, Peters, Boksberger, & Secco, 2009; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012). This work aims to understand how food and wine experiences can support the identification of a place as a tourism destination in order to promote wine tourism. It focuses on the region of Lisbon with its very rich and diverse local cuisine, complemented by wines produced in this newly created wine region. However, there is still a lack of well-designed routes and wine tourism products to promote the region's brand image as well as this tourist product.

Literature review

Wine tourism should be seen as a holistic experience that includes many aspects of the visit to a producing wine region, its lifestyle and culture (Mitchell & Hall, 2006). This holistic experience can be provided in a number of ways, mainly by events and festivals, cultural heritage, dining, hospitality, education, tasting and cellar door sales, and winery tours (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). The experience of wine tourism is a confluence between the motivations of wine tourist and the tourism and wine industries, with the region and the wine landscape as scenery (Hall et al., 2000). Thereby, creating memorable experiences is the new weapon to differentiate the product in the minds of consumers, especially in a new wine region (Festa, Vrontis, Thrassou, & Ciasullo, 2015). Thus, wine tourism industry should use the winescape as a performance space for staging memorable experiences, such as through education, engagement and entertainment in an aesthetic environment (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). Hence, literature on the experiential approach calls for further research aimed at filling this research gap and investigation about the nature of these limitations and barriers.

Motivations

According to Alant and Bruwer (2010), the motivations of wine tourism are influenced by their hedonistic nature, taking the specific characteristics of each tourist into account (demography, wine consumption, consumer behaviour, brand awareness and affinity, learning/discovery, socialization); the characteristics of the wine region (geographical location, regional brand image, wine cellar profile, wine products, landscape, attractions, accessibility, proximity, infrastructure, climate, economic development, tourism life cycle); and the visitor dynamic (first time or repeat visit). Although it is unquestionable that the main motivations for the wine tourist are tasting and purchasing wine, participating in a wine tour, attending wine-related festivals or events, pairing wine and food at the winery (Alant & Bruwer, 2004), other secondary or peripheral motivations have been identified, such as learning about wine and

winemaking, meeting the winemaker, socializing with family/friends, being entertained in a relaxing rural setting and experiencing the attributes of the wine grape region (Byrd, Canziani, Hsieh, Debbage, & Sonmez, 2016).

Wine

In a wine tourism context, wine is used as a resource to generate a flow of tourists, whose main motive is to discover the source of the product itself, to have some knowledge of the places and means of production (Asero & Patti, 2009). The choice of a wine region is influenced by the quality of its wines and that will determine the success of the destination (Getz & Brown, 2006). Wine as a tourist product has the unusual ability to attract visitors with different levels of involvement: wine can be seen as a product of high involvement for some consumers and low involvement for others (Ali-Knight & Carlsen, 2003). For the connoisseur or specialist, wine tasting and purchase has a very high involvement with a lot of time and attention dedicated to descriptors such as variety, crop and origin, although there are "generalist" visitors who just want to spend a different day in a winescape context or only take the trip to accompany the connoisseurs (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002).

Staff

Staff members play a key role in the quality of the service provided during the wine tourist's experience at the winery (Roberts & Sparks, 2006). Customers have high expectations and place considerable importance on the staff being friendly, knowledgeable, attentive to visitor needs and capable of providing individual attention (Griffin & Loersch, 2006). The authenticity and quality of the customer's experience is reflected when the staff shows passion for their products, which influences purchase intentions while visiting the winery tasting room (Marlowe, Brown, & Zheng, 2016). Moreover, good service and hospitality have a strong influence on a customer's sense of obligation to purchase (Charters et al., 2009). Training staff is thus an essential issue to deal efficiently and effectively with customers in order to have success in a wine tourism operation (Marlowe et al., 2016). If the tasting-room staff are well trained, they will feel more confident and empowered in speaking with sophisticated wine consumers and thus are better able to sell wines due to their level of understanding of the wines being offered (Thach & Olsen, 2006).

The cellar door

Wine tourism focuses much of its activities on the cellar door, though it encompasses a range of other services (Alant & Bruwer, 2010). The cellar door is the hub of the visitor's wine tourism experience representing an opportunity for winery owners to provide an authentic and memorable experience in that it provides the visitor with a complete profile of the winery and its wines (Bruwer et al., 2013). Visiting the cellar door is a key factor for wine sales and distribution, customer satisfaction and positive brand image for the winery, as well as for the visited region (O'Neill & Charters, 2000). O'Neill and Charters (2006) determined four attributes of the cellar door experience: empathy (the ability of staff to make visitors feel welcome), reliability (providing a consistent level of service), response (ability of staff to meet guests' needs) and assurance (providing a sense of security to customers).

Entertainment

A visit to a wine regions is complemented by a wide range of entertainment activities that vary from region to region and from producer to producer (Carlsen & Boksberger, 2015). The

entertainment experience may occur through a number of cultural and educational activities, when tourists observe other people's activities and/or performances, including listening to music and reading or in an active way which includes wine tours in vineyards with tastings, visits to museums, exhibitions and local cultural sites, participating in harvesting, hiking, cycling and photo taking (Carmichael, 2005). Entertainment requires the offerings to attract and occupy the attention and readiness of visitors with different levels of intersection with wine, such as families (Al-Knight & Charters, 2001). Some studies fuse the dimensions of education and entertainment into one (Al-Knight & Charters, 2001; Getz & Brown, 2006). Pine and Gilmore (1999) describe the overlap of education and entertainment as "edutainment", a term used to describe the informative, fun and social aspects of wine tourism.

Education

Wine tourism help visitors to learn about wine characteristic, as well as the making process and thus develop an appreciation of the wine industry (Charters et al., 2009). By creating awareness and increasing knowledge, it is expected that the wine consumption within that region increase, which will be of benefit to the entire wine tourism industry (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997). Education is thus a vital attribute in personal development for wine tourists as it gives them the opportunity to learn about local wine and the wine industry, as well as about the region's cuisine and culture (Sparks, 2007). Additionally, educational experience plays a fundamental role in creating memories and consequent satisfaction among visitors (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013).

Aesthetics

The aesthetic experience is the immersion of senses in a sensual environment reflected through the winescape's cultural and environmental features and human improvements (Cohen & BenNun, 2009). The aesthetics applied to wine tourism regards a core of different features that derive from the design of the routes, the architecture of the wineries and the environment where the wine and food tasting experience takes place (Pikkemaat et al., 2009). Bruwer and Alant (2009) suggested that during the wine tourism experience there are four levels of aesthetic cognition: the perceptual (senses are involved, viewing, hearing or smelling), expressive (feelings and emotions associated), symptomatic (object signs are symptomatic of something else) and symbolic (ideas and imaginations created in the viewer's mind).

Brand equity

Brand equity is a relevant concept for wine regions that seek to differentiate themselves from rival destinations (Alant & Bruwer, 2010). Wines produced in different regions have unique and distinctive characteristics, based on their strong association with the place where they are produced (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007). These regions have different tangible components and intangible or social dimensions that should be explored in order to create their own identity and brand awareness (Mitchell, Hall, & McIntosh, 2002). For an emerging wine region, the pursuit of a brand equity identity achieves two important goals: i) preparing the wine region to compete in a high competitive market due to the historical dominance of the traditional regional players and ii) providing the leverage for the region and wine businesses to cooperate in the strengthening of positive regional brand equity (Canziani & Byrd, 2017).

Image

The recognition that countries and regions should be seen as brands is gaining acceptance among researchers (Johnson & Bruwer, 2007). From this perspective, wine denominations of origin which work as global brands are the most important certified warranties of product and destination authenticity and act as a protection and value system (Alant & Bruwer, 2010). A wide variety of attributes contribute to the wine region's image, such as the wine products, production systems, landscape features, climate, cultural and heritage assets, local people and their lifestyles (grape growers, winemakers and chefs), leisure activities (dining out, relaxing, nature appreciation, shopping, wine tasting, touring, cooking) and community attractions (Williams, 2001).

Satisfaction

Satisfaction in the context of wine tourism has been approached from different perspectives: attributes of the winery and the winescape (Tanford & Jung, 2017), the post-visit and future purchasing decisions (Charters et al., 2009), service and hospitality attributes (O'Neill & Charters, 2000) and the authenticity of the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Tanford and Jung (2017) claim that the alignment of the winescape attributes (activities, authenticity, concessions, environment, escape and socialization) combined with perceptions (price/value and service quality) leads to a higher or lower level of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfaction is an evaluation of emotion, reflecting how much the consumer believes that using a specific service may evoke positive feelings (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). Thus, positive memories contribute to creating a satisfying wine tourism experience (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013).

Conceptual model

The theoretical model hypothesizes that motivations are a multidimensional construct that explains wine experiences. The wine experience is explained by six dimensions of the service (wine, staff, cellar door interaction, entertainment, education and aesthetics) that determines the destination image and the satisfaction of the tourists. Wine tourists' primary motivations are travel to regions where wine is produced with the purpose of tasting and buying wine, pairing wine and food at the winery and attending wine festivals and events (Bruwer & Alant, 2009). The wine tourism experience is completed by other motivations identified as secondary, like learning about wine and winemaking, socializing with family and friends, entertainment in a relaxing rural environment and escape from the monotony of the daily routines through the excitement provided by the attributes of a destination (Byrd et al., 2016).

Hypothesis 1: Motivation influences experience.

Wine is the decoy to attract visitors who intend to connect with the place where it is produced, because it is the soul of the wine tourism as a touristic product (Asero & Patti, 2009). The hedonistic nature of wine tasting is transported to wine tourism as an experience, involving the indulgence of the senses in the tasting of wine and in the interaction with the landscape (Charters et al., 2009).

Hypothesis 2: Wine explains experience.

The staff's influence in the experience is noticed not only through the hospitality and courtesy with which they receive visitors, but also because of the passion and knowledge they transmit during the visit (Griffin & Loersch, 2006). The training of the staff is determinant for the authenticity and quality of the customer's experience (Thach & Olsen, 2006).

Hypothesis 3: Staff explains experience.

The wine cellar door is crucial in establishing the rhythm and quality of the enogastronomic experience through the relationships established with the service team, the level of service offered and the quality of the products tasted: wines and gastronomy (Carlsen & Boksberger, 2015). Thus, the winery's door is an opportunity for winery owners to provide authentic and memorable experiences and disentangle themselves from their competitors (Bruwer et al., 2013).

Hypothesis 4: Cellar door explains experience.

Entertainment activities during a visit to a wine region serve to emphasize wine products on the one hand and on the other hand to satisfy visitors with varying degrees of involvement in wine tourism (Ali-Knight & Carlsen, 2003). The entertainment experience can happen passively through spectacles and cultural activities such as shows or museums, or active, when tourists participate with other people in playful or sporting activities (Carmichael, 2005).

Hypothesis 5: Entertainment explains experience.

Education is a vital attribute of the wine tourism experience providing visitors with the possibility of personal development by giving them the opportunity to learn about local wines and to pair them with local food (Sparks, 2007). The educational experience represents a fundamental role in the creation of memories about the visit to a wine region and is one of the most valued points for visitors (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013).

Hypothesis 6: Education explains experience.

The aesthetic experience in wine tourism is regarded as the immersion of the senses in a sensual environment through the specific attributes of the winescape such as the route design, the architecture of the wineries, the preservation of the environment and the ambience where the experience takes place (Pikkemaat et al., 2009). The alignment of these winescape attributes may be one of the determining factors for choosing one destination over another (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012).

Hypothesis 7: Aesthetics explains experience.

The search for identities offers each destination the opportunity to enhance its qualities in the minds of consumers and thus leverage the value of the regional brand benefits through the association of wines with a geographical region (Canziani & Byrd, 2017). Thus, unique and authentic wine tourism experiences can influence the formation of brand equity (Scherrer, Alonso, & Sheridan, 2009).

Hypothesis 8: Experience is influenced by brand equity.

Several authors argue that positive experiences in wine tourism contribute to visitor satisfaction (Charters et al., 2009; Tanford & Jung, 2017). Satisfaction is a cognitive and emotional assessment that results from a positive perception of the experiences lived by visitors is extended beyond the visit with the creation of memories (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013).

Hypothesis 9: Experience is influenced by satisfaction.

The attributes of the wine landscape, along with the traditions and cultural heritage of the region, are decisive in the promotion of stories and myths, thus contributing to the notoriety

of the wine region's image and wine-related experiences (Quintal, Thomas, Phau, & Soldat, 2017). The image of the wine region is propagated through the experiences of visitors, writers and critics who visit the region, expressed in magazines, blogs and online commentaries, and word of mouth at wine events (Dawson, Holmes, Jacobs, & Wade, 2011).

Hypothesis 10: Experience is influenced by image.

Methodology

For the purposes of this study, a survey instrument was developed based on existing literature. The survey comprises 10 items derived from the review of the literature (Wine, Staff, Cellar door, Entertainment, Education, Aesthetics, Motivation, Brand equity, Satisfaction and Image). The survey is organized into five sections. The first section is made up of screening questions that allow and understanding the motive of the visit, the country of origin and if they were in Portugal to experience wines and gastronomy. The second section asked respondents to assess their level of agreement with a list of 44 items specifically selected and adapted to define visitors' enogastronomic experience and adequately adapted to suit the specific context under investigation from existing studies in the areas of wine tourism (Gómez, Pratt, & Molina, 2018; Mitchell & Hall, 2006), gastronomy (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Santich, 2004) experience (Pikkemaat et al., 2009; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012) and destination image (Dawson et al., 2011; Williams, 2001). A 5-point Likert scale is used to obtain their answer (1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree and 5 = strongly agree). The third section invites respondents to provide information regarding the type of accommodation they chose, the length of stay and the local/municipality they choose. The fourth section asks respondents to express their loyalty to the destination. The fifth section invites respondents to provide their general socio-demographic characteristics.

Data were collected face-to-face from visitors aged above 18 years old in 16 wineries established in the Lisbon wine region (Portugal). Data were collected in 2017 and at the end of data collection, 314 complete questionnaires were obtained. All the obtained samples need to be considered as convenience samples. For the data analysis, a three-step model was chosen to identify the underlying dimensions of the data and to test the hypotheses of the conceptual model: explanatory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equations model (SEM). Firstly, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was run followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using SPSS (24) and AMOS (15). This sequence of steps allowed latent variables concerning the wine tourism experience to be identified. Finally, a structural equation model (SEM) was estimated to evaluate the dimensions. EFA is used as a preliminary technique in the process of scale development and construct validation (Brown & Moore, 2012). A subsequent CFA allows for evaluation of the resulting scales. This analysis deals specifically with the relationships between observed measures or indicators and latent variables or factors (Brown & Moore, 2012). Finally, a structural model was applied to evaluate the dimensions of the study.

Results

Given the general socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, most respondents were reported to be males (63.7%), holding a college degree (44.2%) or a master's or doctoral

university degree (25.8%). Respondents were foreign visitors (55.1%) and Portuguese (44.9%). The majority of them declared that they were in Portugal to experience gastronomy and wines (70.4%). Furthermore, the vast majority stated that they had already visited Portugal or other countries for the purpose of tasting gastronomy and wines (70.4%). In addition, most of the respondents were repeat visitors (68.8%) and travelled with friends (35.7%), family (37.9%), or in a group (20.1%).

Exploratory factor analysis

For the purposes of the study, the constructs were divided into consumers and experience, based on the review of the literature and thus, two factor analyses were adopted. Hence, exploratory factor analysis extraction method: generalized least squares and varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization were used to reveal the underlying factors. Regarding the experience factor analysis, six factors were identified describing the experience and explaining 71% of the total variance. The KMO index (KaiserMyer-Olkin = 0.91(0.000)) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square = 4966.65; p-value < 0.000) confirm that results are appropriate to explain the data. Cronbach's alpha was then calculated to test the reliability of the extracted factors. Except for one of the factors that showed low consistency (Factor 6: 0.67), all values were 0.7 or higher (Factor 1: 0.85; Factor 2: 0.90; Factor 3: 0.88; Factor 4: 0.78; Factor 5: 0.91), thus suggesting that the factors are reliable.

In the consumer factor analysis, four factors were identified describing the experience and explaining 53.35% of the total variance. The KMO index (Kaiser-Myer-Olkin = 0.79(0.000)) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (chi-square = 4966.65; p-value < 0.000) confirm that results are appropriate to explain data. Cronbach's alpha was then calculated to test the reliability of the extracted factors. All values were 0.7 or higher (Factor 1: 0.83; Factor 2: 0.80; Factor 3: 0.76; Factor 4: 0.73), thus suggesting that the factors are reliable.

Structural equation modelling

Structural equation modelling (SEM) has the ability to simultaneously examine a series of interrelated dependence relationships between sets of constructs represented by multiple variables, while accounting for measurement error, which has contributed to its widespread application (Ali et al., 2017). In this work, a two-step approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was adopted: a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the generalized least squares method to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs of the original model. After this, a preliminary CFA was performed and the model fit was assessed through fit indices as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2009). After analysing the results of the main adjustment measures, we came to the conclusion that they were not completely satisfactory in relation to the reference values. Thus, some changes in the model were introduced by observing data of the modification indices of the covariance matrix of the standardized residues. As a result of the adjustment process, the indicators were retained for inclusion in the final model (the number of indicators was the same as for the exploratory factor analysis). After this adjustment process, the results improved significantly.

In terms of validity and reliability, the final model fits the data well and show levels that can be considered good or very good: composite reliability (CR) considerably exceeds the minimum recommended limits ($\alpha \geq 0.70$ and $\rho \geq 0.70$) (Image: 0.81; Wine: 0.86; Staff: 0.90; Cellar door: 0.87; Entertainment: 0.79; Education: 0.90; Aesthetics: 0.72; Motivation: 0.84; Brand equity: 0.80; Satisfaction: 0.74). Regarding the average variance extracted (AVE), the value obtained also exceeds the reference value (≥ 0.50) set in the literature (Image: 0.69; Wine: 0.60; Staff:

0.75; Cellar door: 0.59; Entertainment: 0.56; Education: 0.91; Aesthetics: 0.57; Motivation: 0.51; Brand equity: 0.51; Satisfaction: 0.59). In addition to this analysis, the verification of convergent validity was performed by examining the adjustment measures estimated by CFA.

The results of an adjustment of dimensional structural are very suitable. The chi-square ($\chi2$) and the degrees of freedom for the dimensional model found indicate that the fit is good with a $\chi2$ value that does not reject the null hypothesis, i.e., the model is supported by the data ($\chi2$ = 1100.86, df = 481, $\chi2$/df = 2.29, p < 0,001) and values of the other indexes, all of them within the recommended values (GFI = 0.82; CFI = 0.90; TLI = 0.88; RMSEA = 0.06). Results support the reliability and validity of the constructs included in the conceptual model. To complete this phase of construct validity, the analysis of the discriminant validity of the measurement model followed to assess to what extent the measure of one construct is not correlated with measurements of others. The evaluation of all variables allows the observation of the discriminant validity of the constructs involved in this research. It is possible to carry out a comparative analysis of the inter-construct correlation coefficients and the square root of the AVE, the values of which are displayed on the main diagonal. To assess the discriminant validity, correlations between all latent variables were analysed. The correlation between the variables must be less than 0,95. Based on this criterion, it can be observed that all variables comply with the suggested limit (Hair et al., 2009). Furthermore, evidence for discriminant validity is present when the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds the corresponding correlations between that and any other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, the square root of the AVE for each construct must show values higher than the correlation coefficients between different constructs (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995). The results meet this condition by confirming the existence of discriminant validity and suggesting that the theoretical model fits the data well and as such the structural model was performed. Structural equation modelling was applied in order to analyse the relationship between the constructs of the model using generalized least squares. The results of the model's overall fit indices ($\chi2$ = 1092.59, df = 510, $\chi2$/df = 2.14, p < 0.001, GFI = 0.82, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.06) are within the reference values based on Hair et al. (2009), confirming the goodness of fit of the model. Results suggest that the proposed model fits well with the empirical data. All hypotheses were supported by the data. Experience is influenced by motivation (H1: 0.35, p-value < 0,01). Moreover, as assumed in the conceptual model based on the literature review, data support the idea that experience is explained by six latents: wine (H2: 0.31, p-value < 0.01), staff (H3: 0.65, p-value < 0.01), cellar door (H4: 0.68, p-value < 0.01) entertainment (H5: 0.72, p-value < 0.01), education (H6: 0,72, p-value < 0.01) and aesthetics (H7: 0.79, p-value < 0.01). Experience also influences brand equity negatively (H8: −0.15, p-value < 0.01) and positively influences satisfaction (H9: 0.39, p-value < 0.01) and image (H10: 0.71, p-value < 0.01).

Conclusion and implications

This study identified the main dimensions that shape the experience of wine tourism (i.e. wine, staff, cellar door, entertainment, education, aesthetics) and contextualizes them in a conceptual model with the objective of testing the influence that each dimension has on the wine experience and at the same time, the influence of experience on the image, brand equity, motivation and satisfaction with the destination. The findings contribute to the current body of knowledge from different perspectives. The contribution of this research is theoretical as it links tourists, wine and destinations, methodological because most of the research in wine tourism does not approach these scales and strategic in positioning Lisbon as a tourism wine

destination. Recent researches around the wine tourism experience suggest that to understand why visitors choose a wine region, it is important to determine the key attributes of the wine tourism experience (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012). Moreover, nowadays, destination image is accepted as an important aspect in destination marketing and successful tourism management (Gómez, Lopez, & Molina, 2015). The relevance of studying each region individually is justified due to the unique combination of the physical, cultural and natural environment that gives each region its distinctive tourist appeal (Hall & Mitchell, 2002). Thus, the findings provide useful information for the stakeholders involved in the wine tourism process (winery owners, hotel industry and local authorities) regarding what the visitor values most in the wine tourism experience, taking into account that it is a pioneering study in an emergent wine region. Most researches around the wine tourism experience (Carmichael, 2005; Cohen & Ben-Nun, 2009; Pikkemaat et al., 2009; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012) are based on the Pine and Gilmore Economy Experience Model (1999). This study suggests a more complex approach in order to understand the wine tourism experience, being this also a contribution to the body of knowledge. All the hypotheses proposed to explain the experience were confirmed. It was also confirmed that experience is influenced by the visitor's motivation and influences positively the visitor's satisfaction through the destination, as well as the positive destination image. Finally, the negative impact of brand equity may be explained by the fact that the study occurs in an emergent wine region and therefore the brand is not yet consolidated in visitors' minds. Although this study contributes to the knowledge about this subject and proposes some implications for professionals, there are some limitations that should be pointed out. First, it used convenience samples from each research setting, thus making the results for each destination hardly generalizable, at least at a destination level. Secondly, data were collected in a new wine region where wine tourism is still expanding and most of the producers are very close to the city of Lisbon, which makes visits are shorter and visitors in the great majority of cases do not stay overnight. In the future research, it would be interesting to investigate whether the length of stay influences the perception of experience by the visitors. This research, that has a context of a very new wine region in Portugal – Lisbon, suggests that the tourists experience in these wineries is positive due to the quality of the wines and the image of the destination. However, this image seems to be imported by the reputation of Portuguese wines as the brand equity of Lisbon wines are still far to be consolidated. Wine experiences at the destination are mostly supported by aesthetics, education, cellar door and staff. Wine and entertainment activities need to be further developed to ensure tourists experiences. These results open paths to strategically plan the consolidation of Lisbon as a wine region. The brand and reputation of the Lisbon wines need to be publicized. More entertainment activities need to be developed. Wine route is a strategic priority to increase the brand equity of Lisbon as a wine region, where service encounters and aesthetics are the major competitive advantages.

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