

Research article

## Elucidating Consumer Experience Behavior in Service Context

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Article history:

Received 5 September 2013; Received in revised form 12 October 2013.

Accepted 30 October 2013; Available online 10 November 2013.

### Abstract

The study was conducted on 358 attendees at a major wine festival in Australia. A positive relationship between quality perception and overall satisfaction constructs exists. New insight to event knowledge is provided through the first time and repeat visitor dynamic as predictor of actual buying behaviour. Higher percentage of repeat visitors correlates with higher likelihood of buying. Overall satisfaction is a stronger predictor of buying behaviour than any individual service quality dimension and of these quality dimensions overall. Repeat visitors, 35 years and older, are the highest yielding visitor group from a financial viewpoint. First time visitors are more short term oriented in their planning when making the final decision to attend the event.

**Keywords:** Customer perception; Satisfaction; Behavioural Intention.

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### 1. Introduction

Traditionally, wine tourism research was focused on what motivated tourists to taste and buy wine when visiting regional wine destinations (Cohen and Ben-Nun, 2009). Most often, these destinations were wineries and, more specifically, their tasting rooms where direct interaction with the tourists took place. Special events in the form of festivals, whether themed or otherwise, received little attention from researchers within the ambit of wine tourism research. The profound benefits a festival have for their local communities have been widely touted, mainly in an economic sense. The supposed beneficial economic impact on the host community surrounding the festival area due to visitor expenditures is one of the most important reasons for arranging a festival in the first place (Thrane, 2002). Not surprising, there has been a sharply increased focus in the literature on festivals, and most of the focus has been on the economic benefits (Jackson et al., 2005; Yoon et al., 2010).

Festivals are also used as a means of destination branding, and there tends to be a big difference between smaller regional festivals (e.g. a wine festival) and national festival mega events held in the metropolitan areas. The difference is not only in size but also in the underlying structure in terms of local community involvement (Lee and Arcodia, 2011). In the words of Derrett (2003, p.38), 'festivals and events

demonstrate the popular definitions of a sense of community through offering connections, belonging, support, empowerment, participation and safety'. Festivals are events generally short in duration, with a specific theme, creating a bundle of experiences that appeal to attendees (Saleh and Ryan, 1993). A recent analysis of the nature and scope of 423 festival research studies concluded that the scholarship level has improved considerably over the past decade or two (Getz, 2010). Three of the identified research themes are relevant to the current study, namely, evaluations (36 citations), economic impact (132 citations) and marketing (57 citations). Often these, themes are also interrelated. The majority of the studies categorized as 'evaluations' assessed quality or satisfaction (Getz, 2010), which is what this study also does.

### 2. Literature review

Festivals held within wine regions form part of the wine tourism product offering and attract visitors to the area.

#### *Festivalscape within the servicescape*

Servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992) contends that the physical environment in which a service response is experienced affects the perception of service quality

and satisfaction. The servicescape context has been likened to what has been described as the 'festivalscape' (Lee et al., 2008). A festivalscape-oriented definition of the servicescape describes it as 'the general atmosphere experienced by festival patrons' (Lee et al., 2008: p.57).

### *Service quality of festivals*

There is little agreement as to how to best define quality, but Cunnell and Prentice (2000) point to its importance because of rising competition, increased consumer choice and other forces. They distinguish between researcher-defined and consumer-defined conceptualizations thereof. The literature base (Getz, 2010) reveals that researcher defined conceptualizations are by far the most common of the two approaches. Our study also adopted that approach.

It has been shown that both service quality and visitor satisfaction influence the future behavioural intentions of festival visitors (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Cole et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2007), whereas Cole and Illum (2006) found that experience quality has a direct impact on visitors' future behavioural intentions. Performance quality is the attributes of a service controlled by a tourism supplier (Baker and Crompton, 2000) within the festivalscape of its servicescape environment. Satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to the 'tourist's emotional state after exposure to the opportunity' (Baker and Crompton, 2000, p.785). The quality of the opportunity to experience the attributes of the service can be controlled and manipulated by the service provider (Lee et al., 2007), e.g. the wine festival provider and management committee.

The debate on the conceptualization of the performance quality and satisfaction constructs rages on, as it does on the nature of their interrelationships (Baker and Crompton, 2000). There is nevertheless widespread acceptance of the need to measure service quality and at least some consensus on two aspects of its conceptualization. It being that service quality relates to tourists' perceptions of the (festival) provider's performance and that their perceptions of the quality of the experience define the satisfaction construct (Childress and Crompton, 1997). Not surprising, studies (36) to evaluate service quality and performance abound in the festival research field as determined in a recent macroanalysis by Getz (2010). Baker and Crompton (2000) used four dimensions, namely, generic features of the festival, specific entertainment features, information sources and comfort amenities, to measure the relationship between quality and satisfaction. This conceptual platform has been used by several other researchers in studies to evaluate the quality perception of festival attendees (Lee et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2008; Cole and Chancellor, 2009).

### *Service satisfaction and festivals*

It is important to make a distinction between service quality and service satisfaction. Quality perception is the cognitive response to a service experience, whereas satisfaction is the affective response to it (Petrick, 2004). Satisfaction has been defined as 'the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience' (Oliver, 1981, p.27). In our study, we operationalized festival satisfaction as overall satisfaction, analogous to the definition of Anderson et al. (1994, p.54) who defined it as 'an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time'. An attendee's overall satisfaction with a festival is therefore more of a holistic attitude towards the event (Cole et al., 2002). Although there is broad consensus that service quality and satisfaction are different constructs, there appears to be little agreement on the nature of their relationship (Cole and Crompton, 2003). It should be noted that because defining the relationship between service quality and satisfaction was not per se the core focus of our study, we operationalized satisfaction as overall satisfaction and only explored its relationship with the service quality dimensions and buying behaviour.

### *Behavioural intentions versus actual behaviour*

The services marketing literature identified the roles of service quality perception and satisfaction in the formation of behavioural intentions. The mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between service quality and behavioural intentions has been confirmed (Cole and Crompton, 2003). Zeithaml et al. (1996) contended that behavioural intentions are desirable behaviour or actions that visitors anticipate they will exhibit in the future and developed a 13-item scale to measure behavioural intention. Baker and Crompton (2000) narrowed the scale by Zeithaml et al. (1996) down to seven items.

Previous wine festival research measured behavioural intentions in terms of intention to revisit the festival (Cole and Illum, 2006), likelihood of visiting local wineries and buying locally produced wines (Yuan and Jang, 2008) and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) (Cole and Illum, 2006). None of these studies attempted to measure whether perceived service quality and satisfaction play a role in the actual behaviour of festival attendees, specifically their buying of wine at the festival. Our study attempted to determine whether service quality perception and overall satisfaction influence wine buying and whether previous festival attendance has a moderating effect on it.

### **Wine festivals**

Wine tourism as a special interest element of tourism is not yet greatly endowed with in-depth theory (Alant and Bruwer, 2010). Wine festivals have been to an even lesser extent the focus of targeted research studies. Wine festivals are transient and short in duration (Yuan et al., 2008), which provides further rationale for focusing research on the assessment of service (performance) quality of various elements of the festivalscape.

One can say that a wine festival is a wine featuring festival that really highlights regional wines and/or has wine-themed activities and programmes (adapted from Lee and Arcodia, 2011, p.357). These festivals have become a popular way for towns, both large and small, to express their unique character and distinctiveness (Lee and Arcodia, 2011). Wine festivals or events are important marketing tools for both the region where it is situated and the individual wineries to create brand awareness and loyalty, educate, entertain and encourage future visitation and wine sales. (Houghton, 2001; Bruwer, 2002, 2003; Getz and Cheyne, 2002; Yuan et al., 2006).

In some cases, the motivations for engaging in wine tourism will revolve around the destination hub, wherein the wine region is the primary motivational factor (Alant and Bruwer, 2004). In other cases, the motivations will revolve around the activity hub (Macionis, 1996), e.g. a wine and food festival event held in a wine region but where the event itself is the primary attraction on that specific occasion (Bruwer, 2002). Telfer (2000) highlighted that wine festivals provide additional sources of income for wine regions in North America, a fact which is reiterated by our study.

#### ***First-time and repeat festival visitors***

The first-time and repeat visitor dynamic plays an important role in the consumption of the wine tourism product (Bruwer et al., 2012). Tourists to a destination consist of both first-time and repeat visitors and their visit decision is influenced by a number of antecedents (Um et al., 2006). The incidence of a high percentage of first-time or repeat visitation in wine tourism could, in some instances, be attributed to the spatial relationship (or lack thereof) of the region with a big source market, as well as through product-related experiences (Dodd, 1999). A high incidence of repeat visitation in wine tourism has been confirmed in diverse recent studies in the USA (Carmichael, 2005), Israel (Jaffe and Pasternak, 2004) and Australia (Bruwer, 2002). The need to distinguish between first-time and repeat visitors to wine festivals has also been emphasized (Shanka and Taylor, 2004).

There is general agreement that a high level of service quality will result in satisfied festival attendees

who are then more likely to be communicators of positive WOM and become repeat visitors (Cole and Illum, 2006; Cole and Chancellor, 2009). Studies by Shanka and Taylor (2004) and Houghton (2001) note that, although many annual festivals rely on repeat visitors, it is worthwhile identifying and analyzing the attributes significantly distinguishing between first-time and repeat visitors. The first time and repeat festival visitor dynamic is therefore relevant and will be further explored in this study.

Following the discussion of the relevant constructs, Figure 1 represents a conceptual model of the interrelationships between all the discussed aspects in the servicescape of a wine festivalscape. To operationalize the assessment of service quality in the festivalscape environment presents an ongoing challenge for researchers. In our study, we used a three step approach, which included assessing the literature base, interviewing key informants and consulting with the festival organizers. Following this, a symmetrical Likert scale consisting of 17 service quality and 3 satisfaction items was designed. The study's aim was to examine the link between perceived festival service quality, satisfaction, buying wine at the event and the first time/repeat visitor dynamic.

### **3. Methodology**

The study was conducted at the Winery Walkabout Festival held annually in June during the long weekend to celebrate the birthday of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in the Rutherglen Wine Region of North East Victoria in Australia. The town is situated 237 kilometres from Melbourne, which is the capital city of the State of Victoria and is very accessible by road, train, bus and air. Although Rutherglen is home to world renowned fortified wines such as muscats and tawny ports, its wine repertoire includes the full spectrum of Australian wines, and the region is also well known for its cuisine, golf courses and water sport activities. The nearby towns of Albury and Wodonga within a radius of 40 kilometres with 87 500 residents (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011) further contribute to a significant population living in the festival's most immediate catchment area. Positioned as the State of Victoria's 'original wine festival' it attracts more than 20 000 visitors and boasts three tourism awards including 'Best Festival in Victoria' and was also named 'Best Festival in Australia' (Rutherglen Victoria, 2011). The festival, first held in 1974, has grown in size and stature since then and now offers an array of entertainment and activities throughout the weekend. With 20 wineries participating, the event offers a range of wine and other culinary experiences, product vendor booths, a variety of entertainment activities and support services/amenities.

A highly structured questionnaire was developed in which the service attributes of the festival were identified based on discussion with the event

organizers and on existing service quality literature. The questionnaire also sought information about attendees' socio demographics, normal wine consumption behaviour and purchase of wine, food and other products at the festival. Information was obtained directly from the target population of visitors (18 years and older) to the festival. Respondents were systematically selected by approaching every fifth

person who obtained a (Australian) \$25 ticket 'passport' for wine tasting at any winery. If a visitor declined to participate, he/she was replaced with the next fifth person and so on. Respondents were handed the questionnaire and requested to complete it, an activity which took between five to eight minutes to complete.

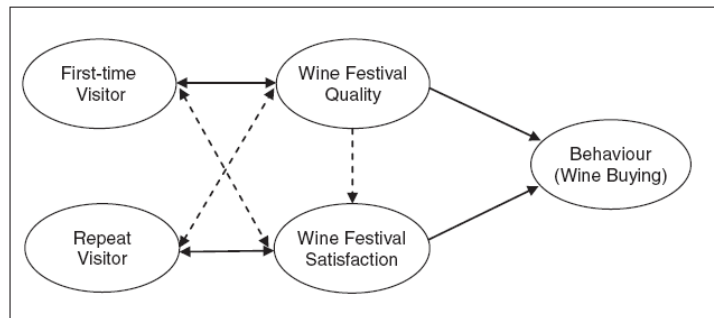


Fig. 1. Conceptual model of interrelationships between visitor type, perceived quality, satisfaction and buying behaviour at a wine festival.

Research administrators were on hand throughout to respond to any queries regarding the questionnaire. No incentives were offered, but a written guarantee of the confidentiality of their personal information was provided. The response rate was just below 71%. A total of 358 respondents completed the surveys, which were thereafter analysed using the PASW 18.0 statistical software package.

To operationalize the research study, the following research questions were developed:

(1) What are the differences between first time and repeat visitors in terms of antecedents that could influence their perception of service quality, satisfaction and wine buying at the wine festival?

(2) What are the nature and number of dimensions of performance quality and satisfaction of the wine festival servicescape?

(3) Is there a relationship between and influence exerted by the dimensions of performance quality individually and collectively and by satisfaction within the wine festival servicescape and the first time and repeat visitor dynamic on wine sales?

#### 4. Results and discussion

The results are discussed starting with the sociodemographic characteristics of the festival visitors, followed by their buying activity-related behaviour at the festival, and finally, service quality

perception, satisfaction and buying behavior are linked together after factor analysis.

#### *Sociodemographics of festival visitors*

A predominance of female visitors (54.5%) as opposed to male visitors (45.5%). The reasons for this were not explored in the study, but a weighting towards female visitors as wine tourists have been reported in several studies

(Bruwer and Lesschaeve, 2012 (Canada); Bruwer and Alant, 2009 (South Africa); Bruwer, 2004 (Australia); Olsen et al., 2007 (USA)). The age distribution of the festival visitors is slanted towards Millennials (18–34 years) who account for 54%, whereas Generation (35–44 years) account for 20%, Baby Boomers (45–65 years) for 25%, with Traditionalists represented by only 1% of the visitors.

The median annual household income level in Australia is \$44 820 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011), and by comparison, the income levels of the festival visitors are noticeably higher, with around 67% from households where the annual income is in excess of \$50 000. This is in all likelihood largely attributable to the high level of post secondary education with 68% in possession of either an undergraduate or postgraduate post secondary qualification. The small household size could also be a contributing factor to their relative affluence with the mean number of persons per household at only 2.6 (number of dependent children plus adults), a figure which

includes very few dependent children. It is insightful to note the very high incidence of both adults in multi person households being wine consumers with a mean of 1.85 persons. Finally, the origin of visitors brings to light the fact that the overwhelming majority of 70% of the visitors originate from outside the destination region versus 30% of visitors from inside the North East Victoria region. The fact that the festival attracts 68% of visitors from other regions all over Australia provides credence to the statement that it is a well established and significant event on the national calendar. This is further underpinned in that 2% of the visitors are from a total of three overseas countries, which also underlines the area's attraction for tourists. The attendance history of festival visitors indicates 62% are repeat visitors with the balance of 38% attending for the first time. Contrary to what is generally expected in terms of tourism destination choice theory when linked to distance from origin (Nicolau and Más, 2006), most visitors are from outside the destination region of North East Victoria (70%), and the highest percentage of repeat visitors (63%) is also represented by visitors from inside the region. Chi square statistical testing however reveals no significant differences between visitors from inside and outside the region in terms of their past attendance of the festival.

Having established that most visitors originate from outside the destination region, the study also investigated whether first time and repeat visitors differed regarding the time frame or planning period in terms of how long before the event the final decision to attend was made. It follows that there is a highly significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 67.106$ ,  $p = 0.000^*$ ) between the decision making time frames of first-time and repeat visitors. For repeat visitors, there is a significantly longer period between making the final decision and actually attending the event with 59% making this decision at least a month before the event, whereas 36% of first time visitors decided within a time span of only 1 week before attending the event. In the case of repeat visitors, this could be an indication of their involvement with and likely 'loyalty' to the festival. Festival buying activity related metrics. Finally, as far as, the base variables are concerned.

This analysis provides context to the core evaluation of the study that follows, which is to determine the relationship between the quality perception of festival elements and overall satisfaction and their influence (or not) on wine buying at the event. It follows that first time and repeat visitors differ significantly as far as having bought the same wine at the festival as in retail within a three month period prior to the festival. Whereas only slightly more repeat than first time visitors (56% vs 53%) bought wine to take home at the festival, the difference of having an established connection with the brand(s) between repeat (27%) and first time visitors (13%) is significant

( $p = 0.020$ ). It is also insightful that repeat visitors bought significantly more bottles of wine (seven bottles) and spent significantly more money on wine (\$103.44) than first time visitors. Repeat visitors also spent significantly more money overall on everything at the festival (\$125.22) than first time visitors. These findings clearly underline some of the differences between first time and repeat visitors and, hence, the rationale for using them as predictor variables in the festivalscape service quality model. Although gender is intertwined with many aspects of human behaviour (Meyers Levy and Maheswaran, 1991), and differences between male and female visitors have also been proven in wine consumer behaviour (Bruwer et al., 2011), this study did not identify many statistically significant differences among festival attendees by gender. One exception is the significantly higher incidence of male (30%) versus female visitors (15%) who bought the wine in retail during the three month period prior to the festival.

Marginally, more female visitors (55%) in comparison with male visitors (54%) bought wine at the festival, and female visitors also bought more bottles and spent more on wine than male visitors. Male visitors bought fewer bottles of wine than female visitors (difference not statistically significant), but their average amount spent per bottle was higher than that of female visitors. Although the underlying reasons were not pursued in this study, it is possible that what was at play here was a brand loyalty risk reduction strategy versus experimenting behaviour. When the age demographic is considered, the differences are quite profound, as has been the case in other studies (Bruwer et al., 2011). Whereas the incidence of wine buying at the festival barely differs between the older than 35 years group (54.8%) and the younger Millennial group (54.7%), older visitors 'outperform' the younger visitors on almost all other metrics. Although the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant as far as prior buying in retail is concerned, the connection older visitors has with the brand is already evident in that 26% of them bought the wines during the three month period prior versus 17% among Millennials. Comparisons between the other wine buying metrics at the festival reveal that the older group bought significantly more wine (8.3 bottles), spent more money thereon (\$120.86) and spent more money overall on everything at the festival (\$151.99). Although the underlying reason could be income related, it has, on the other hand, also been proven that wine consumption peaks at later age (Bruwer et al., 2011), for reasons unknown to date.

### *Festivalscape factor analysis and structural model*

As a first step, the data obtained from the service quality measurement were examined. There are few outliers, and the data were found to be fairly normally

distributed. A five point Likert scale was used for this purpose. The Cronbach alpha value for the scale overall of 0.847 is comfortably above the minimum acceptable level of 0.70. This was also the case with each of the factors extracted, and it was concluded that the scale yielded sufficiently reliable results to warrant further testing using these answers. An assessment of the suitability of the data for factor analysis was the first step in the process. First, two main issues were considered, namely, the strength of the relationship among the items and the size of the sample. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) indicated that a sample size of at least 300 is required for factor analysis, which this study exceeded ( $n = 358$ ). The majority of items in the dataset have correlation coefficients in excess of 0.5 as per the directive provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). Next, the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's statistical test of sphericity were used to help assess the factorability of the data. Although some of the communalities after extraction are slightly below 0.5 (see Table 6), which could suggest that a sample size above 500 is required (MacCallum et al., 1999), the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.857, which is comfortably above the recommendation of 0.50 (Kaiser, 1974). In fact, this value falls within the category (0.70–0.90) that can be regarded as 'very good' according to Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999). Bartlett's test whether the correlations between the scale items are sufficiently large for factor analysis to be appropriate yielded: ( $\chi^2 (136) = 1690.972, p < 0.000$ ) and indicated that the correlations within the R matrix are sufficiently different from zero to warrant factor analysis. Therefore, all the evidence suggests that the sample size ( $n = 358$ ) is adequate and the strength of the relationships among items sufficient to yield distinct and reliable factors from the analysis. To investigate the underlying structure of the scale items in the questionnaire, the data collected from the respondents were then subjected to principal component analysis as an extraction method, utilizing oblimin as the rotation method with Kaiser normalization.

The results show that four factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 were identified as underlying the scale items measuring festival quality perception. In total, these factors accounted for 54% of the variance. The screeplot showed a break between the fourth and fifth components, in the process also pointing to the existence of four factors. Finally, to be confident about the number of factors extracted, parallel analysis was conducted using the Monte Carlo PCA technique. The parallel analysis yielded random eigenvalues above 1 of respectively 1.3949 (0.0458 SD), 1.3105 (0.0312 SD), 1.2572 (0.0283 SD) and 1.022 (0.0290 SD) also confirming there were four components to the factor matrix, the same result obtained in both the screeplot and by means of oblimin rotation with Kaiser normalization. It was therefore

decided that a four factor solution was indeed optimal in the circumstances. Separate factor analysis was conducted for visitor satisfaction with the festival (three items), and this revealed one factor.

Reliability analysis showed acceptable alpha levels of  $> 0.70$  for each of the factors extracted and confirmed that the scale used to measure festival quality perception and satisfaction was indeed reliable. The latent variables (wine buying and visitor type) are categorical in nature, and hence, multiple regression is not suitable for the structural model. This necessitated the use of logistic regression to assess the impact of a set of predictors such as perceived quality and overall satisfaction on a dependent variable (wine buying). Ideally, the predictor variables will be strongly related (above  $r = 0.9$ ); otherwise, multicollinearity may exist.

To determine how well the regression model performs the goodness of fit test (omnibus test of model coefficients) supports the model as being worthwhile as good fit is indicated by a significance value less than 0.05, which is the minimum allowed. The Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness of fit test of model coefficients supports the model as worthwhile as it has a value greater than .05 ( $\chi^2 = 8.958, 6 \text{ d.f.}, p = 0.176$ ). The pseudo R square statistics (from the Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke R square tests) are as follows: 0.101 and 0.134 respectively, indicating that between 10% and 13% of the variability is explained by the set of variables. The positive predictive value of the model is 57.0%, indicating that of the people predicted to buy wine at the festival, the model accurately predicted 57% of them. The variables in the equation reflect the contribution or importance of each of the predictor variables. The values of the Wald test indicate the variables that contribute significantly to the predictive ability of the model. It can be seen that only overall satisfaction features ( $p = 0.008^*$ ) contribute significantly to the predictive ability of the model.

Examining of the odds ratios (Exp B) for each of the independent variables reveals the comfort amenities among festival quality aspects, and first time repeat visitor status are the significant predictors with values  $> 1$ . The upper level of the 95% confidence interval of the odds ratios shows a narrow spread (1.272–2.886 and indicates a 95% certainty that the actual value of the odds ratio lies somewhere between 1.272 and 2.886.

The B values in the equation show the direction of the relationship. A negative B value indicate that an increase in the score of the independent variable will result in a decreased probability of the case recording a score of 1, indicating wine buying in this case. The negative values for generic features and service staff, entertainment and catering, and festival venue and information indicate that the more satisfied overall and the higher visitors perceive those three festival

dimensions, the lower the likelihood they will buy wine at the event.

The results obtained by the logit regression model indicate that actual buying behaviour is influenced by service quality perception but not to the same degree by each dimension thereof. This is akin to previous studies (Lee et al., 2008; Cole and Illum, 2006; Baker and Crompton, 2000), etc.) who confirmed it, albeit for the behavioural intentions construct only. The first time/ repeat visitor dynamic influences the buying behaviour outcome with repeat visitors having the greatest positive influence. Among the quality dimensions, only the comfort amenities affect wine buying behaviour positively, whereas generic festival features and service staff, entertainment and catering, and festival venue and information have a negative relationship with wine buying. Strong positive relationships between satisfaction and wine buying behaviour and between quality perception overall and overall satisfaction were found.

## 5. Conclusions, implications and research recommendations

The study confirmed four festivalscape dimensions, albeit somewhat different from those identified by Baker and Crompton (2000), in that it identified generic festival features and service staff, entertainment and catering, comfort amenities, and festival venue and information as the indicators of quality perception. A strong positive relationship between overall quality perception and overall satisfaction was found. A new perspective was provided for the festival scape knowledge base in that it identified the first time and repeat visitor dynamic as a predictor of wine buying behaviour at the festival. The higher the proportion of repeat visitors, the higher the likelihood of wine buying will be. The quality dimensions, whether individual or overall, are not strong predictors of wine buying behaviour. In fact, the relationships between generic festival features and service staff, entertainment and catering, festival venue and information, and winebuying behaviour, and comfort amenities, is positive but weak. In all, there are relatively strong correlations between the first time/repeat visitor dynamic, overall satisfaction with the festival and wine buying behaviour. The research also differs from previous studies in that contrary to the common approach of attempting to link behavioural intentions to quality perception and satisfaction of a festival, it provided new insights on the link with actual (buying) behaviour and how this is moderated by the firsttime/repeat festival visitor dynamic. As such, it provided a direction based upon which further research on these aspects can be conducted.

As far as the managerial implications of a festival are concerned, it is clearly of the utmost importance to achieve a high degree of repeat attendance as this

correlates with financial gains in the form of selling more wine. That depends of course on whether the objective of the event is to sell as much wine as possible and not to mainly promote and create awareness.

That the service quality dimensions of generic festival features and service staff, entertainment and catering, comfort amenities, and festival venue and information did not have the same positive effect on buying behaviour as overall satisfaction does not mean these are relatively unimportant. The nature and type of activities offered at a festival must be cohesive with the event theme (i.e. wine seminars with a wine festival), continuously evaluated for signs of impact wearout, and renewed or replaced depending on the specific situation.

The measures of service quality and satisfaction were not developed using formal procedures and, hence, are a limitation of this study. They were also not pretested, and the results should thus be interpreted with some caution.

The benchmarking of a festival against others of a similar nature, e.g. food and wine, would be difficult in reality. Events have different key features, and the location of the wine region where such a festival is held would impact on the atmosphere that is created at the festival, whereas the socio demographics of people living in the main source area(s) will also introduce further variability. It is nevertheless recommended that further research studies explore the difference(s) between behavioural intention (as in several past studies) and actual behavior (as in our study) and their respective relationships with perceived quality and satisfaction of a festival. The knowledge base will also benefit greatly if longitudinal research is conducted that measures the effect of festival attendance on actual buying behaviour post event.

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