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## **Dimensions of wine hotel experiences shared online**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** This study sought to identify the main themes linked with wine hotel experiences, based on tourists' narratives shared online, and to investigate whether these narratives vary according to traveler type.

**Design:** Content analysis was carried out on 4,114 online reviews of 52 wine hotels located in 27 wine regions across 11 nations in both the Old and New World.

**Findings:** The analysis of these Web reviews revealed that narratives can be grouped under 11 themes organized into 7 main dimensions as follows: wine, lodging (i.e., hotel, area, and room), food service (i.e., restaurant and breakfast), scenery (i.e., views and vineyards), staff, transportation, and recommendation. The main narratives vary according to traveler type.

**Originality/value:** This research adds to the literature by providing a holistic perspective on tourists' experiences in wine hotels. In addition, the results provide evidence supporting the usefulness of Web reviews in studies and traveler types as wine market segmentation variables.

**Keywords:** Wine tourism, wine hotels, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), content analysis, market segmentation

**Article classification:** Research paper

### **Introduction**

Wine tourism is considered a specialized area of tourism (Hall *et al.*, 2000) and is defined as travelers' visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine shows (Carlsen, 2004) involving wine tasting, experiencing wine regions, and enjoying the scenery (Hall *et al.*, 2000; Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2012). Wine tourism consists of three production levels: primary

(i.e., vineyard management of grape production), secondary (i.e., wine production), and tertiary (i.e., services, accommodations, and restaurants). The main wine tourism stakeholders are wineries, the accommodation sector, local businesses, the culinary sector, and government entities (Singh and Hsiung, 2016). Wine tourism is thus related to overall travel experiences that include a range of benefits (Singh and Hsiung, 2016).

Alebaki *et al.* (2014) identified two prominent, overlapping streams in the literature on wine tourism: a “winery” and a “region” focus. The former concentrates on wine quality, wine culture, the promotion of individual wines and wineries, and wine tourists’ behavior, while the latter studies “wine tourism regions, destination attractiveness, and life cycle and tourism management based upon the appeal of wine” (Alebaki *et al.*, 2014: 228-29). The present study tends more toward the “region” focus although, as discussed in the methods section, the analysis was based on reviews of wineries in different regions.

Wine tourism experiences occur in specific destinations branded as denominations of controlled origin, which are also labeled as touristic terroirs (Hall *et al.*, 2000). These experiences take place in viticultural areas designated as wine tourism destinations or winescapes. According to Bruwer and Gross (2017), winescapes’ main dimensions are the infrastructure, social environment, natural and cultural resources, atmosphere, social setting, layout, signage, and people.

Wine tourism is an international phenomenon (Carlsen and Boksberger, 2016). Previous studies have mainly focused on wine tourism experiences according to regions and wine cellars (O’Niell and Charters, 2006; Fernandes and Cruz, 2016). The current research targeted wine hotels located in both the Old and New World. In addition, studies of wine tourism have mainly concentrated on regional and domestic tourism markets, with only a few researchers targeting international markets (Gu *et al.*, 2018).

Web 2.0 and social media tools are becoming increasingly important to wine tourism marketing (Cassarac *et al.*, 2018). Reviews shared online in platforms such as TripAdvisor are perceived as a trustworthy source of information that enable wine tourists and wine enthusiasts to compare different offers and facilities (Cassarac *et al.*, 2018). Recent studies (Zhang and Cole, 2016; Brochado *et al.*, 2017; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2017; Brochado *et al.*, 2018) have also pointed out the advantages of using Web reviews to identify tourist satisfaction dimensions. Therefore, the

present study's first objective was to identify the main dimensions of wine tourism experiences based on online reviews shared by tourists.

The literature on wine tourism is attracting increasing interest, and, more specifically, scholars have called for further market segmentation studies within this area (Nella and Chistou, 2014). Wine tourists are a heterogeneous market (Gu *et al.*, 2018). These travelers' satisfaction is linked to strategic decisions such as market segmentation and targeting (Molina *et al.*, 2015). The current research's second objective was thus to identify narratives shared online by different types of travelers. In summary, this study sought to answer two research questions:

- How do tourists describe their wine hotel experiences in online reviews?
- Do the dimensions of wine tourism experiences shared online vary according to traveler type?

This paper is organized as follows. Section two includes a literature review in which two main topics are examined: wine tourism experiences and market segmentation of wine tourists. Section three describes the data collection and treatment procedures and presents the sample profile. Section four presents the concept map generated, qualitative (i.e., narrative) analyses of the Web reviews collected, and main dimensions by traveler type. Section five and six include the discussion of results, theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and avenues for future research.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Wine Tourism Experiences***

A number of factors influence the wine destinations' attractiveness to visitors. Byrd *et al.* (2016) provide a thorough inventory of the extant literature on this topic. In addition, a variety of prevalent attributes affect visits to wine regions. According to Byrd *et al.* (2016), these factors include wine product and consumption experiences (Alant and Bruwer, 2004; Galloway *et al.*, 2008; Bruwer, 2013; Famularo *et al.*, 2010). Another factor is general winescape features such as the vineyards, winery production facilities, and tasting rooms (Johnson and Bruwer, 2007; Galloway *et al.* 2008; Bruwer and Lesschaeve, 2012). Educational opportunities are also important (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002; Getz and Brown, 2006; Galloway *et al.*, 2008; Bruwer and Alant,

2009), as are entertainment and events (Getz and Brown, 2005; Galloway *et al.*, 2008; Bruwer, 2013).

Studies have further highlighted the natural environment and rural landscapes (Galloway *et al.*, 2008; Bruwer and Alant, 2009; Bruwer and Lesschaeve, 2012), as well as relaxation and recreation (Getz and Brown, 2006; Galloway *et al.*, 2008). Finally, researchers mention customer service (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Cole and Scott, 2004; Galloway *et al.*, 2008), socializing, and wine clubs (Carmichael, 2005; Getz and Brown, 2006; Galloway *et al.*, 2008). Notably, most previous studies have been conducted in isolation from other research.

Byrd *et al.* (2016) studied 23 wineries in the state of North Carolina in the United States (US). Prior research in wine tourism has also involved international comparisons. For example, Charters (2009) and Quintal *et al.* (2015) examined the differences between New World wineries and wine travelers and those in the Mediterranean region. The cited authors found that New World wineries operate more as businesses and tend to be more innovative and entrepreneurial than their Mediterranean counterparts are and that additional products or services can have a positive influence on wine tourism (Byrd *et al.*, 2016). Wineries in the Mediterranean region perceive wine as an agricultural product with a ready market—an attitude that reduces the likelihood of experimentation. (Garibaldi *et al.*, 2017).

Alebaki and Iakovidou's (2010) findings offer a profile of wine tourists from around the world, but the results are based on a survey of various single-country studies and thus are more descriptive than empirical. In what concerns wine tourism's impacts on communities, some researchers found that local residents experience additional benefits or even positive effects on their community (Xu *et al.*, 2016). Managers, in turn, perceive wine tourism as more attractive than visitors do, and providers expect this sector to create a stronger destination image than tourists do (Gómez *et al.*, 2018). O'Neill and Charters (2006) studied cellar door perceived quality using a modified SERVQUAL instrument comprising five dimensions: tangibles, empathy, reliability, response, and assurance. Fernandes and Cruz (2016) concluded that the experience quality of cellar doors depends on the environment, service providers, learning opportunities, entertainment, functional benefits, and trust.

Singh and Hsiung (2016) used importance-performance analysis (IPA) based on 29 items to identify the critical factors for Napa Valley's wine tourism. The top five items in terms of

importance to wine tourists are the scenery, wine quality, activities and opportunities to relax, friendly and service oriented-staff, and fine-dining and gourmet restaurants. The items that received the highest performance evaluations are related to wine: wine purchase opportunities, wine quality, and a consistent wine-related image. Stergiou (2018) also used IPA to study wine service quality in winery visits in Greece. According to the cited study, the most important items for wine visitors are the wines, scenery, people, food, and activities other than drinking and/or tasting wines. In terms of performance, the staff received the highest rating.

### ***Market Segmentation of Wine Tourists***

The typical wine tourist drinks wine regularly, has an intermediate to advanced level of knowledge about wine, is middle aged (i.e., between 30 and 50 years old) and highly educated, and falls within the upper-middle income bracket (Mitchell and Hall, 2006). Wine tourists tend to travel to wine regions accompanied by other people (Bruwer, 2003; Carmichael, 2005). Previous studies (Bruwer, 2003; Carlson, 2004; Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2009) have concluded that wine tourists' primary motivations are to taste and buy wine. Secondary motivations include learning about wine and winemaking, eating at wineries, enjoying entertainment and relaxation, socializing with friends and/or family, escaping daily routines, having rural experiences, and joining winery tours.

The existing research has found this sector could benefit from segmentation of wine tourists (Gu *et al.*, 2018). Thus, segmentation can be viewed as one of the main strategic tools tourism enterprises can use to maintain long-term customer relationships and increase loyalty (Gu *et al.*, 2018). Market segmentation can be defined as the division of a market into smaller homogeneous groups of consumers (Brochado and Martins, 2008). Performing market segmentation in tourism contexts can be a challenging task due to each destination's specific characteristics, external factors, and marketing efforts (Molina *et al.*, 2015).

A market segmentation study involves two primary decisions: segmentation bases (i.e. variables used to classify tourists into homogeneous groups) and the segmentation method (Brochado and Martins, 2008). Previous studies targeting the wine tourism market (see Molina *et al.* [2015] for a review) have used two main types of segmentation variables. The first are demographic and socioeconomic factors including gender, age, and education, while the second

are education and psychographic factors including attitudes, lifestyle, interest in wine, knowledge about wine, motivations, values, lifestyle, sensation seeking, and constraints. Customer satisfaction can thus be linked to strategic decisions such as market segmentation and targeting (Molina *et al.*, 2015).

## **Research Methods**

### ***Information Source and Data Collection***

The data for the present study were collected from online user-generated reviews shared in TripAdvisor, which is widely recognized as a review site with a high volume of traffic (Pearce and Wu, 2016). TripAdvisor's terms of use were checked to ensure that these data can be used for research. The reviews collected were posted from January 2014 to June 2016. As in previous studies of this kind, only wine tourists' reviews focused on wine tourism experiences and written in English were considered. Each review was coded as a case in an Excel file. The titles, review contents, reviewers' overall satisfaction rating, and guest profiles (i.e., solo, family, friends, corporate, and couple) were copied to a spreadsheet. In total, the data collected included 566,606 words from 4,114 reviews about 52 wine hotels, located in 27 wine regions and 11 countries in both the New and Old World.

*Insert Table 1 near here.*

The majority of the reviews were shared by couples (69.1%), followed by families (13.5%) and friends (11.8%). The remaining reviewers were corporate (3.5%) or solo travelers (2.1%). Table 2 provides information about the reviews' structure. Around 75.4% of the experiences reviewed received the maximum rating of 5, and 92.6% got a rating of either 4 or 5 out of 5.

*Insert Table 2 near here.*

### ***Data Analysis***

Content analysis was carried out on the electronic evaluations and comments of customers using Leximancer software to transform the data from natural language into semantic patterns (Wu *et al.*, 2014). Leximancer is text analysis software that processes the content of collections of textual documents and visually displays the extracted information, representing themes containing the main concepts in the texts and information about how the themes are related. Leximancer thus

assists researchers to move analyses of texts “from words to meaning to insight” (Leximancer Pty Ltd, 2016). The program uses word association information to identify automatically concept seed words and suggest these to analysts (Beninger *et al.*, 2014), who can retain them and/or add other seed concepts, as well as controlling the coding process (Tkaczynski *et al.*, 2015).

Leximancer software uses a two-stage quantitative approach to extract co-occurrence information and conduct qualitative conceptual and relational analyses. The program utilizes word occurrence and co-occurrence frequency to infer concept classes and update sets of words highly relevant to the concept seed words in order to extract a thesaurus of terms for each concept. Leximancer further suggests clusters of meaning based on how often concepts appear together in a block of text and uses inductive reasoning to identify themes, with minimal manual intervention.

Leximancer also provides concept maps that give a diagrammatic view of the data, demonstrating visually how different concepts and themes are related and showing the number and strength of relationships between them. This helps researchers to gain insights into and an understanding of the data more efficiently through this process of identifying key concepts and themes. The concept maps allow analysts to view data in a graphical format and examine concepts while exploring texts for deeper contextual associations. Leximancer has been frequently used in the literature on hospitality and tourism (Brochado *et al.*, 2017; Lupu *et al.*, 2017; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2017; Brochado *et al.*, 2018; Brochado and Rita, 2018).

## **Research Results**

### ***General Results***

The present content analysis produced a concept map showing the most common themes and concepts identified in the wine tourists’ reviews selected. The analytical process identified 8 themes, with connectivity levels and/or relevance ranging from 10% to 100%: room (100%), hotel (41%), wine (64%), staff (73%), restaurant (23%), breakfast (28%), area (20%), views (29%), vineyards (29%), recommendation (12%), and drive (10%). These themes can be further grouped into the dimensions of lodging (i.e., themes, hotel, room, and area), scenery (i.e., views and vineyards), food services (i.e., restaurant and breakfast), staff, wine, transportation (i.e., drive), and recommendation.



The themes' proximity in the graph also provides valuable information. For example, the theme of scenery is located close to the lodging themes and to the drive theme since vineyards can be seen from hotel rooms, in tours and/or visits, and on drives to winery properties and/or hotels. Another example is the theme of recommendation that shares boundaries with wine, food services, and hotels—all components of the experiences guests recommend to other travelers. The drive theme is close to the themes of hotel, vineyards, and wine. In addition, the rural location of wine hotels means transportation (i.e., cars or bicycles) is required to enhance all experiences.

*Insert Figure 1 near here.*

### *Lodging*

Lodging experiences are described in narratives including the themes of room, hotel, and area. The rooms describe the accommodations available at hotels. The narratives about hotels are related to the hotel and location concepts. The area theme mainly describes hotel amenities that enhance guests' experiences.

### *Room*

Various guests shared information about rooms offered by wine hotels, including components and comfort. The concepts in this theme are room (3,797, 100%), comfort (719, 19%), bathroom (583, 15%), bed (539, 14%), large (size) (487, 13%), and shower (255, 7%). A typical review written by a couple staying in Australia's Barrosa Valley reads:

You were made welcome from the moment you arrived and when we saw our suite—wow it was enormous! The owners' attention to detail was amazing. They seemed to have thought of everything. There was a huge bathroom with indoor/outdoor showers, a large patio that overlooked the beautiful countryside, a generous size[d], very comfortable bed, a Bose sound system, [and] plenty of storage space including somewhere to put your suitcases—I could go on and on. There was even a rubber duck in the bath!

A review shared by a couple staying in Mendoza, Argentina, reports:

[W]e both agreed that this was the nicest room we have ever been in. Every room is effectively a small apartment with: a lounge area inc[luding] cable TV; [a] king size bed ... [in front of a] fireplace; [a] bathroom with both [a] bath and shower; [a] patio with [a]

plunge pool and outdoor shower; and finally, a private roof terrace overlooking the vineyards with views of the Andes. These rooms are incredibly nice and even people with the highest expectations will be impressed.

## Hotel

The hotel theme is also important. It encompasses the concepts of hotel (1,548, 41%), stay (1,136, 30%), place (649, 17%), location (541, 14%), wonderful (place) (455, 12%), perfect (getaway) (403, 11%), property (362, 10%), guests (268, 10%), town (201, 5%), and car (137, 5%). The hotel theme is thus linked to location.

For example, a guest traveling solo in Napa Valley, California, shared:

The hotel is a 20 minute drive from town and located among beautiful vine[yard]s with views to die for. [It has a] large f[r]ee car park. It is a wonderful place, with ... friendly, helpful staff. There are tons of wineries and other sites to drive to from there, or it is a great place to stay [at] by itself. I was particularly attracted to the cozy feel of the hotel.

A couple who visited a hotel located in Baden, Germany, stated that “[t]he hotel is a 20 minute drive from town and located among beautiful vine[yard]s with views to die for. [It has a] large f[r]ee car park”. A couple staying in Yarra Valley, Australia, wrote:

[This hotel is e]nchanting. What a wonderful getaway [this is], perfection really. I have 1 night left but couldn’t wait to write my review ... [of] this magical accommodation in the Yarra Valley. The ambience and atmosphere are welcoming, elegant and enchanting from the moment you drive down the tree fringed entry road.

## Area

The theme of area encompasses the following concepts: area (771, 20%), lovely (place) (608, 16%), nice (grounds) (728, 19%), pool (555, 15%), and spa (306, 8%). This theme is thus mainly linked with the amenities offered by the hotel to help guests relax.

A family visiting Toscana, Italy, shared:

[This was the p]erfect escape from reality. [We s]tayed for 4 nights and couldn’t have been happier. ... We loved spending an afternoon relaxing by the pool, as well as finding quiet areas around the property to simply enjoy the scenery.

Some friends staying in Mendoza, Argentina, reported that the “beautiful surrounding[s are] calm and relaxing. ... The gardens and pool are attractive and well maintained.” A couple traveling in the same wine region wrote:

While Mendoza and the surrounding areas have much to offer, we didn't want to leave the hotel grounds because it was so relaxing! The pool, lounge chairs, and wine cellar make it feel like [a] five star resort! ... [I]t was very relaxing to be able to end every day of wine tasting and big lunches with a dip in the pool and a light dinner. This place is amazing!

### *Wine*

As expected, wine is also a central theme that comprises the concepts of wine (2,422, 64%), (wine) tasting (656, 17%), tour (537, 14%), winery (447, 12%), and visit (377, 10%). The wine concept includes wine products and activities for guests such as wine tours and wine tasting. A couple staying in the Douro Valley, Portugal, reported:

You are greeted with a glass of delicious white port wine on arrival. In your room will be a complimentary 1/2 bottle of wine and a huge cluster of edible grapes. Definitely [make a reservation] ... for dinner. It was fantastic and [included] perfect wine pairings.

Another couple visiting La Rioja, Spain, shared:

Our stay included a tour of the winery which was interesting, and [our] dinner was memorable. With around 12 courses some were inevitably more successful than others but I enjoyed finding out about the creation of the menu and the philosophy behind it. We next went to another winery where we had dinner outdoors looking at the Andes Mountains[. T]he view was great and the food was good.

A couple who also stayed in La Rioja, Spain, wrote about a tour and their learning experience, noting that “[w]e had a tour of the winery ... [with wine] tasting[. It] ... was very interesting to hear about the history of the family and the business.” A further couple who visited the Douro Region in Portugal also mentioned a learning experience in which “[t]he visit to the winery was great together with the tasting lesson with very expert guides.” This couple warmly recommended the winery.

### *Staff*

The staff theme covers three main concepts: staff (2,755, 73%), helpful (employees) (832, 22%), and friendly (staff) (931, 25%). For example, a review shared by a couple staying in the Western Cape, South Africa, reads, “[this was a s]uperb experience, [and the] staff were amazing. ... [We] would definitely ... stay there again, [and] highly recommend [it].” Another couple staying in the same wine region wrote, “[t]he staff is very friendly and helpful.” A family visiting Mosel, Germany, reported, “[t]he staff is so friendly[. We have] never experienced this before!”

### *Food Service*

Food experiences include the themes of restaurant and breakfast. These are described separately below.

#### Restaurant

The theme of restaurant includes the concepts of restaurant (878, 23%), food (771, 20%), excellent (service) (632, 17%), dinner (445, 12%), amazing (food) (409, 11%), best (wine pairing) (320 8%), and book(ing) (277, 7%). A couple who stayed in the Barossa Valley, Australia, shared:

It is so heavily booked we actually couldn't get in to eat their [sic] when we stayed at this hotel, so be sure to book dinner when you book your rooms. Having said that, we recently went back and dined at Appellation and the food and service was amazing, [and] highly recommended.

A couple traveling in Napa Valley, California, wrote:

[T]hat was a big plus in my book since we really wanted to try them [this restaurant] out first. With the tasting menu we also got ... wine pairing and this of any other restaurant i've [sic] dined at had the best wine pairing i've [sic] ever had!

#### Breakfast

The theme of breakfast includes the following concepts: breakfast (1,080, 28%), service (776, 20%), time (363, 10%), fresh(ness) (313, 8%), feel(ing) (320, 8%), reception (218, 6%), quality (175, 5%), and people (155, 4%). For example, a couple staying in Toscana, Italy, reported:

Eating breakfast every morning on the terrace surrounded by the views of Tuscany was really enjoyable and the food was outstanding—fresh breads, pastries, and a whole

assortment of other delicious options. [This was d]efinitely the best breakfast experience we had throughout our trip.

Friends staying in the same wine region shared:

Our favorite distinguishing factor ... was the unexpected, beautiful gesture of a sweet little surprise each morning at breakfast. In honor of the hotel's philosophy, ["]you should always wake up on the sweet side of life,["] the pastry chef crafts a different little treat to be presented [to] guests as they are seated for breakfast. One of ours included the delicious Bomboloni[:] fluffy pillows of fried pastry dough rolled in sugar, filled with velvety cream, and served hot from the oven—pure heaven!

### *Views and vineyards*

The theme of views is associated with the concepts of views (1,097, 29%), beautiful (vineyards) (926, 24%), outside (of town) (233, 6%), main (road) (278, 7%), and building (281, 7%). Because of the views, vineyards is one of the most important concepts and/or themes (1,093, 29%). The two themes of views and vineyards are related to the hotels' location in rural areas with views and scenery (i.e., vineyards) guests can enjoy during visits.

Travelers who stayed in Bordeaux, France, wrote:

The surroundings are beautiful vineyards all around and low mountains on the horizon. The suites are well back from the main (but extremely quiet) road. The room was very spacious, [and] well set up with great attention to details, and the views of the vineyards through the Gehry metal ribbons were out of this world, as if challenging us to believe if all [of it] could be real.

A couple visiting the Colchagua Valley in Chile stated:

[This place is v]ineyard [p]aradise. What an amazing place for a hotel [it is]. [The hotel is s]mack dab in the middle of a vineyard with the most amazing views. [It's a]bsolutely gorgeous! If nothing else was good it would still be worth the stay, but everything else was wonderful.

Another couple staying in Baden, Germany, shared, “[we w]ish we would [sic] have stayed longer. This hotel is about 20 minutes outside of Baden-Baden ... up into [sic] the hills set in between vineyards. The scenery is gorgeous and peaceful.” A further couple who traveled in Napa Valley,

in the US, praised the views as “[s]ublime” and they had a “[s]uperb suite, [with a] stunning outlook over vineyards.”

### *Transportation (Drive)*

The drive theme (361, 10%) is linked to transportation used to get to the wine regions and hotels. Car driving is also part of experiences in these regions if guests rent a car or use driver services offered by hotels. A reviewer who, as a couple, visited the Colchagua Valley, Chile, wrote:

I would agree with other reviewers that having a car is a must. Colchagua [V]alley in general is better if you rent a car and drive around to the wineries yourself. Santa Cruz is a nearby town (10 minutes away).

In contrast, a couple with a hotel in Mendoza, Argentina, shared:

Whatever you do, do not rent a car, as they have a fleet of 5 vehicles for transportation and their drivers are excellent with helpful advice and relationships in the region. We used their services every day including three full days, two dinners off property, two half days and pick up [at] and return ... [to] the airport.

Guests visiting Eskdale, New Zealand, reported:

[I]f you love the countryside, beautiful wineries and luxury then this is the place. It’s only 15 minutes’ drive to Napier, so you can visit the town, cycle around or drive to the vineyards and then retire ... [to] your own beautiful accommodation nestled amongst the vines[, which is b]liss!

### *Recommendation*

The theme of recommendation includes the concepts of recommendation (469, 12%), experience (376, 10%), local (provider) (259, 7%), trip (192, 5%), and menu (164, 5%). A couple staying in the Alentejo, Portugal, wrote, “I have probably ... [left out] so much about this place, which means you must go and explore for yourselves this amazing place. The wine tours are a must. I cannot recommend this place enough[. I]t is PERFECT [sic].” A couple visiting Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, shared, “[we had the [h]oliday of a lifetime ... [in this] amazing place! We thoroughly recommend [that] you stay here.”

### ***Segmentation by Traveler Type***

The present study's second research objective was to determine whether different traveler types include dissimilar descriptions in narratives about their experiences and thus share different content in Web reviews. The content analysis showed that wine tourists who travel as couples more frequently share narratives around the themes of drive (78% likelihood of co-occurrence), wine (70%), recommendation (71%), and restaurant (68%). Families are more likely to share narratives about the hotel (14%), area (13%), staff (13%), and breakfast (13%). Narratives shared by friends are more likely to include reviews about the themes of breakfast (16%), area (10%), wine (11%), and staff (10%). The most important theme for those who travel solo is the room (7%), hotel (7%), and staff (6%), while corporate travelers are more likely to write about their experiences with the room (7%), area (7%), hotel (6%), views and/or vineyards (6%), and restaurant (6%).

*Insert Table 3 near here.*

### **Conclusions**

This study addressed two research question. The first was: How do tourists describe their wine hotel experiences in online reviews? Content analysis of Web reviews shared by wine tourists traveling in the Old and New World revealed that narratives can be grouped into 11 themes, which are further organized into 7 main dimensions. The latter are wine, lodging (i.e., hotel, area, and room), food services (i.e., restaurant and breakfast), scenery (i.e., views and vineyards), staff, transportation, and recommendation.

The second research question was: Do the dimensions of wine tourism experiences shared online vary according to traveler type? The analysis showed that different themes exhibit the strongest links to reviews posted by couples, friends, families, and solo and business travelers. The most frequent themes for couples are drive, wine, and restaurant. For friends, the main themes are breakfast, area, wine, and staff. For families, the primary themes are the hotel, area, staff, and breakfast.

### ***Discussion***

The most important theme shared in online narratives of wine hotel guests is related to lodging experiences. Thus, the findings provide a clearer perspective on the wine industry-related services that are especially important to tourism and hospitality (e.g., the room, hotel, and surrounding areas) and highlight the importance of service quality. Guests write about the room, amenities that enhance their experiences, and hotel location. The hotels' outdoor areas also offer an overall wellness experience that is a significant dimension of wine tourism experiences (Singh and Hsiung, 2016).

The second most important theme is wine. The largest percentage of studies of wine tourism have investigated the development of wine regions both in New and Old World countries (Gómez *et al.*, 2018). Wine tourists' main motivation for traveling is wine (Gu *et al.*, 2018), and wine and wine-related activities (e.g., wine tasting) are also part of positive wine tourism experiences (Quintal *et al.*, 2015). Overall, wine tourists look for a broader mix of experiences (Gu *et al.*, 2018).

In addition, these tourists stress social factors, which include helpful, friendly staff who often determine tourists' level of satisfaction (Singh and Hsiung, 2016). The literature on wine tourism provides support for the effect winescapes' service staff has on wine tourists' attitudes. For instance, knowledgeable cellar door employees have a positive impact on visitors' perceptions of wineries. The present study's theme of staff is also in accordance with the dimension of winescape people identified by Bruwer and Gross (2017).

The current research found that the dimension of food services encompasses the themes of restaurant and breakfast. Wine tourism facilitates the integration of food, travel, and terroir. Thus, food and restaurants are two of the most important elements of wine tourism experiences (Singh and Hsiung, 2016; Dimitrius, 2018).

Regarding the themes of views and vineyards, wine tourists report that wine hotels are located in places of great natural beauty, which guests can see from the hotels' balconies or during their wine tours. According to Gieryn (2000: 464), "[a] place is a unique spot in the universe." Many wine tourists mention places and surrounding views of beautiful outside areas containing the facilities' main buildings, as many vineyards are located in rural areas, play an important role in rural tourism, and offer an escape from other forms of tourism (Cho *et al.*, 2017).



Wineries have invested in balancing wine tourism and rural and sustainable tourism, so this could contribute to the preservation of vineyards' surrounding natural areas and the restoration of ancient buildings and cellar doors. Singh and Hsiung (2016) and Dimitrius's (2018) studies also identified beauty, attractive scenery, and the good quality of the surrounding environment as important dimensions of wine tourists' experiences. Bruwer and Gross's (2017) research, in turn, confirmed that winescapes include their regions' natural resources.

With regard to the theme of transportation, wine tourists recall traveling by car to wine regions and wine hotels and driving during wine region visits. The present result is in accordance with previous studies (Brochado *et al.*, 2014; Singh and Hsiung, 2016) that concluded most wine tourists reach wine regions by car due to their rural location. Some of the narrative details most frequently shared online indicate that tourists include transportation by car to wine regions and lodging as part of their wine tourism experiences (Pan *et al.*, 2007). Driving significant distances represents an opportunity for domestic wine tourism that does not depend on long flights and that represents the use of less expensive transportation modes and opportunities for short-distance escapes. Bruwer and Gross (2017) also concluded that signage is a dimension of winescapes that, in the present study, is linked with transportation to wine regions and hotels.

In general, marketing researchers have agreed on the importance of a willingness to recommend as an expression of tourists' satisfaction (Kandampully and Hu, 2007). For wine tourists, personal experiences shared online can have a positive influence on decision-making processes (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2017). Unique experiences can add value to wine tourism, so, by offering not only wine but also a menu that pairs food and wine, wine hotels can create competitive advantages.

The wine tourists include in the current study's sample report that they had satisfying wine tourism experiences since 92.6% gave a rating of either 4 or 5 out of 5. Positive wine tourism experiences are also shared online in tourists' narratives, and these travelers recommend wine regions and wine tourism experiences in the post-purchase phase. Wine tourism recommendations are of utmost importance to ensure customer loyalty and long-term relationships (Brochado *et al.*, 2014).

The majority of the reviews analyzed in the current research were written by couples, families, and friends (94.4%), thereby underlining the strong social context of wine tourism

(Bruwer, 2003). For example, families' narratives are linked with the hotel, area, staff, and breakfast. The breakfast, activities in the hotels' outdoor areas (e.g., pool), and the hotels and nearby towns' location allow families to stay together during their trip. This result could be linked to the cluster segment Cho *et al.* (2017) label "family togetherness." For those that travel with children, the cited authors identified the lack of family programs and activities linked with wine regions as the main constraint on visiting these regions for all family members.

### ***Theoretical Contributions***

This paper contributes to the literature on wine tourism in various ways. First, the seven dimensions of wine tourism experiences were derived from narratives shared online by guests who stayed in wine hotels located both in the Old and New World. Second, the social media data used represent wine tourism in 11 countries, which offers an international perspective and confirms the usefulness of this type of data in service quality studies.

Third, the results add important elements of wine tourism lodging experiences that go beyond accommodations. Guests write about the hotel (i.e., room, area, and hotel), hotel staff, and food services (i.e., breakfast and restaurant). In addition, the reviewers share their experiences with wine (i.e., wine tasting, wine pairing, and vineyard visits). Views of the vineyards are related both to the hotel (i.e., views) and transportation (i.e., cars). Guests give details about the overall trip, including how they reached the hotels, hotel amenities and services, and wine-related activities. Thus, wine hotels provide complex experiences that link the primary, secondary, and tertiary sector. Last, this paper also adds to the existing knowledge about wine market segmentation by identifying the narratives shared online by different traveler types.

### **Practical Implications and Future Research Recommendations**

#### ***Managerial Implications***

Word-of-mouth communication has been identified as an importance source of information because travelers expect this to reduce the perceived risk related to the selection of wine regions to visit (Getz and Brown, 2006). Satisfied customers may also buy wine from these wine regions in the future. Overall, wine tourism experiences can be viewed as a complex phenomenon comprising various dimensions. Improving the present understanding of wine tourists' experiences

should help wine hotel managers find new approaches to enhancing visitors' satisfaction and experiences, engaging with wine tourists, and generating positive recommendations.

Because of the central importance of the wine dimension in overall wine tourism experiences, wine hotels need to provide wines of a consistent quality, which taste good and are served properly. This is quite important as travelers expect wineries to offer wine brands only from the winery visited. The staff should be willing to help, instill confidence, be courteous, and appear knowledgeable about the wines served and the surrounding wine region. Therefore, ongoing training is of the utmost importance. Wine tourists' experiences also need to contribute to the guests' feeling of being integrated into wine regions' rural lifestyle. In addition, other stakeholders of the wine industry, including tourism agencies and public entities, can use this study's results to develop strategies to promote wine regions and positively influence wine tourism experiences.

Regarding transportation, cars are clearly important as a way to get to wine tourism destinations, hotels, and winery visits, so local authorities should ensure the proper management of access roads and provide information about wine routes and trails. Driving cars is also part of experiences in wine regions whether guests rent a car or use the driver services offered by hotels. Moreover, hotels can set up partnerships with car rental firms or taxi and/or shuttle services to facilitate guests' visits to wine regions. According to the segmentation results, car services are a particularly important way to enhance couples' experiences.

Wine hotel managers can target families by offering packages that include hotel facilities that might be used by all family members (e.g., pool), promote family-oriented activities linked with wine regions' natural resources, and offer learning activities for children. In addition, the findings highlight breakfasts, thereby revealing the importance of family meals, so packages can include food offers created to address all parts of families' life cycle. Regarding couples, the frequent narratives shared about restaurants suggest that wine hotels can include offers of romantic experiences that pair food with wine.

### ***Limitations and Avenues for Future Research***

This study had some limitations. First, the experience dimensions were identified using a sample restricted to guests who wrote reviews of wine hotels. Second, the lack of demographic and psychographic data connected with these Web reviews prevented any investigation of whether

the narratives vary according to other variables than traveler type. Future studies could further investigate whether drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction vary according to wine regions (e.g., Old and New World). Another area that merits future research is the identification of sensorial elements of wine tourism experiences, that is, the main senses mentioned in online narratives shared by wine tourists.

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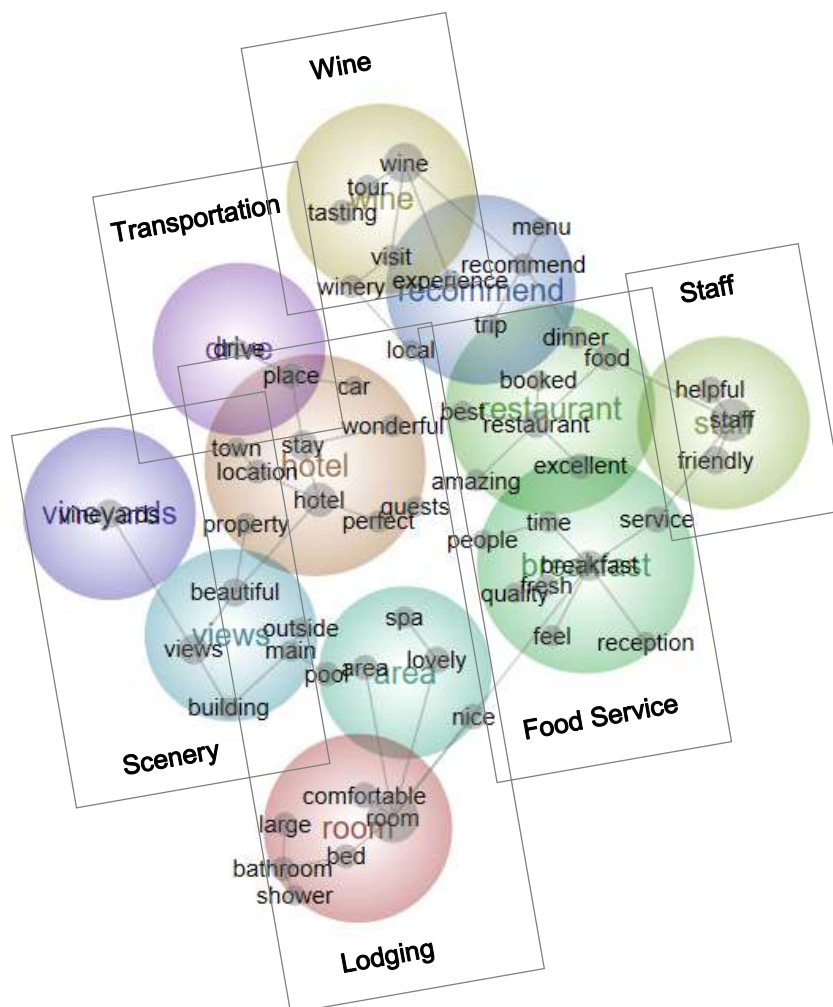


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**Figure 1:** Concept map of wine tour reviews

**Table 1:** New and Old World wine regions

<b>Country</b>	<b>Wine Region</b>	<b>No. Wine Hotels</b>
South Africa	Western Cape	3
Germany	Baden, Mosel, Rhein	9
Argentina	Mendoza, Salta	4
Australia	Barossa Valley, Mornington Peninsula, Tasmânia, Yarra Valley	4
US	Napa Valley	2
Chile	Colchagua Valley, Millahue Valley, Valparaiso	7
Spain	La Rioja	4
France	Bordeaux, Bourgogne, Champagne	3
Italy	Lombardie, Sicilia, Toscana	5
New Zealand	Hawkes Bay, Marlborough, Otago	4
Portugal	The Alentejo, Dão, Douro	7

Note: No. = number

**Table 2:** Satisfaction ratings

<b>Country</b>	<b>Satisfaction Rating</b>				<b>No. Reviews</b>	<b>No. Words</b>
	<b>1-2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
South Africa	2.8%	4.5%	22.5%	70.2%	356	35,564
Germany	0.6%	3.6%	26.4%	69.4%	330	40,584
Argentina	0.5%	4.0%	13.8%	81.7%	427	66,775
Australia	6.1%	10.9%	19.4%	63.5%	458	66,137
US	2.0%	4.6%	10.1%	83.3%	454	56,235
Chile	3.4%	5.2%	18.6%	72.9%	328	47,242
Spain	1.8%	3.9%	19.1%	75.1%	382	62,838
France	1.5%	3.9%	13.0%	81.6%	331	50,059
Italy	4.8%	3.9%	18.5%	72.8%	356	45,747
New Zealand	0.8%	3.6%	14.2%	81.4%	365	48,966
Portugal	3.1%	4.3%	15.3%	77.4%	327	46,459
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>75.4%</b>	<b>4,114</b>	<b>566,606</b>

**Table 3:** Main themes and concepts by traveler type

<b>Traveler Type</b>	<b>Main Themes</b>	<b>Main Concepts (Likelihood of Co-occurrence)</b>
Couple	Drive	Drive (78%)
	Wine	Wine (70%), tour (74%), winery (72%), (wine) tasting (71%), and visit (65%)
	Recommend	Recommendation (71%), menu (71%), local (provider) (69%), experience (66%), and trip (62%)
	Restaurant	Restaurant (68%), food, excellent (service) (68%), dinner (71%), amazing (food) (69%), best (wine pairing) (69%), and book(ing) (68%)
Families	Hotel	Hotel (14%), guests (15%), town (15%), perfect (getaway) (13%), property (13%), wonderful (place) (13%), stay (13%), and location (14%)
	Area	Area (13%), pool (14%), lovely (place) (13%), nice (grounds) (12%), and spa (11%)
	Staff	Staff (13%), friendly (staff) (12%), and helpful (employees) (11%)
	Breakfast	Breakfast (13%), (14%), time (15%), feel(ing) (15%), people (13%), fresh(ness) (12%), reception (10%), and quality (10%)
Friends	Breakfast	Breakfast (13%), fresh(ness) (16%), people (14%), time (12%), amazing (food) (12%), reception (11%), quality (10%), and feel(ing) (10%)
	Area	Area (10%), pool (10%), lovely (place) (11%), and nice (grounds) (10%)
	Wine	Wine (11%), visit (12%), tour (11%), tasting (10%), and winery (10%)
	Staff	Staff (10%), helpful (employees) (12%), and friendly (staff) (12%)
Solo	Room	Room (7%), bed (7%), shower (6%), and comfort (6%)
	Hotel	Hotel (7%), property (7%), perfect (getaway) (7%), location (6%), and town (6%)
	Staff	Staff (6%), helpful (employees) (5%), and friendly (staff) (5%)
Corporate	Room	Room (7%), bed (7%), shower (7%), comfort (6%), bathroom (5%), and large (size) (5%)
	Area	Area (7%), spa (7%), and nice (grounds) (5%)
	Views/Vineyards	Views (6%), vineyards (6%), and outside (of town) (5%)
	Restaurant	Restaurant (6%) and food (5%)