

**TASTING ROOM EXPERIENCE, PERSONALITY, AND CONSUMER EMOTIONAL  
ATTACHMENT TO BRANDS**

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**Extended Abstract**

A substantial body of research in environmental psychology and store atmospherics has demonstrated the powerful short-term impact of the shopping experience on a wide variety of consumer behaviors. A recurring conclusion of work in this area is that both consumer affective and cognitive responses to the store environment play a mediating role in influencing purchase behavior. However, the bulk of studies on shopping experiential effects has focused on immediate short-term outcomes and has not studied effects of the experience extending i.e. beyond the winery visit, possibly influencing future behavior. Such an interaction between the tasting room visit and future wine purchases would appear to be particularly important.

This paper examines how consumer visits to tasting rooms, the Big Five factors of human personality, and brand personality interact in influencing consumer emotional attachments to wine brands. The model is tested in survey data from a sample of 319 U.S. visitors to thirteen wine tasting rooms in the U.S. states of California, Oregon, and Washington.

Overall, the study shows that experiential outcomes of a tasting room visit, specifically cognitions and affect (arousal, pleasure) interact with consumer personality and brand personality leading to differential attachments. Consumer personality played a key role in this process. With neurotic individuals, both tasting room-evoked pleasure and arousal had a smaller influence on satisfaction; a finding that also holds for tasting room-evoked cognitions. The downstream satisfaction – emotional attachment interaction is also less pronounced with neurotic people who further attach themselves less to exciting brands, and more to sincere brands. With extraverts, arousal has a greater influence on satisfaction, whereas the influence from pleasure on satisfaction is greater with introverts. The interaction between cognitions and consumer emotional attachment is more positive with extraverts who attach themselves more to exciting and less to sincere brands. Unexpectedly, open and agreeable individuals do not emotionally attach themselves to brands more than less open and less agreeable individuals.

Two managerial issues emerged. First is the proven usefulness of designing tasting room visits

for stronger attaching consumers to the brand. Cognitive evaluations (i.e., staff friendliness and competence, service environment, offerings, interior design, and atmosphere) together with arousal and pleasure experienced during the visit contributed to consumer attachment. Second, from a segmentation perspective, these attachments come especially true under the facilitating conditions of matching consumer and brand personalities; when tasting room-evoked affect, cognitions, and satisfaction are tailored to consumer personality and the prominent dimensions of brand personality. Third, given the interactions established between consumer personality and brand personality, the need for more targeted marketing efforts is underscored. At first sight, the concept of segmenting and targeting consumers according to non-observable personality traits may appear difficult or even unpractical. Yet, established links between personality traits, genetic differences, and demographic variables should allow wineries to better group and understand their customers, and design tasting room experiences matching their personalities.