

Differentiated Pleasure and the Wine Tourism Experience

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Abstract

◦Purpose – Holbrook & Hirschman's (1982) seminal paper pointed out that consumers are often motivated by desires outside of the economic or transactional. In pointing out the importance of fantasies, feelings, and fun, their work heralded a new way of looking at consumption. Subsequently, the popular text published by Pine and Gilmore (1999) proffered advice to marketers on how to transform their offerings, moving away from fungible commodities, tangible products, or intangible services towards a focus on memorable experiences. The nature of memorable consumption experiences was recognized as being multifaceted in these early works with authors noting the symbolic, hedonic, and esthetic nature of consumption through models such as Pine and Gilmore's entertainment, education, esthetics, and escape or Schmitt's (1999) sense, feel, think, act, relate.

Later research measured the dimensions of hedonic consumption experiences and determined that pleasure is not summative. Instead, there are four pleasure types: sensory (involving the senses); social (interactions with others); emotional (experiences that move us); and intellectual (involving learning). These pleasures differ qualitatively, and one tends to dominate in any hedonic consumption experience (Dubé & Le Bel, 2003; Le Bel, Sears, & Dubé, 2004; Sears, 2003; 2011).

Although the hedonic nature of wine tourism is recognized (Bruwer & Alant, 2009; Charters & Pettigrew, 2005; Hall, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2002) and wine tourism researchers have embraced the notion of wine tourism as a consumption experience (for a review see Santos, Ramos, Almeida, & Santos-Pavón, 2019), to date research exploring the Wine Tourism Experience (WTE) is largely confined to using the dimensions derived from Pine and Gilmore's circumplex (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012, 2016; Sigala, 2019). Thus, the measurement of the WTEs is either summative (e.g., through measures of satisfaction or enjoyment) or only indirect (e.g., through measures associated with the winescape) and fails to capture the differentiated nature of hedonic experience.

◦*Design/methodology/approach* – The differentiated pleasure scale developed by Sears (2011) was adapted for the wine tourism context and administered in an online survey of wine tourists who had participated in an organized, guided wine tour.

◦*Findings* – Consistent with previous research, all four pleasure types were present in the WTE and one pleasure type dominated the hedonic consumption experience of survey respondents. In descending order of strength, the reported pleasures were emotional, sensory, social, and intellectual. Of the four pleasure types, emotional pleasure alone predicted wine tourist's reported happiness with the wine tour. These findings build on the previous literature regarding wine tourist behaviour and segmentation. The pleasure types are differentially related to the commonly used measures for segmentation; wine knowledge and interest (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002) thus serving to further our understanding of WTE's as hedonic consumption experiences.

Key words: wine tourist experience, hedonic consumption experience, wine tourism

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