The Winery Experience from the Perspective of Generation Z

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this research is to investigate the wine tourism experience from the perspective of Generation Z adults in Greece, following an actual winery visit.

Design/methodology/approach – Responses were obtained from a total of 306 respondents drawn from student groups visiting a winery in the Achaia region of the Peloponnese, Western Greece, using convenience sampling. A list of winescape attributes was adopted for testing and used to structure self-administered questionnaires. The data collected were analysed using a factor-analytic and Importance-Performance Analysis framework.

Findings – Five factors that promote understanding of the desired wine tourism experience of Generation Z adults were identified, namely: Cost Considerations and Wine & Entertainment both perceived to be important but the winery’s performance on the same was poor; Destination Attributes and Service Staff both perceived to be important with good performance; and Learning about Wine perceived unimportant with low performance.

Originality/value – This is the first academic study focusing specifically on the winery experience from the perspective of Generation Z. As such it has provided new and useful insights for researchers and managers in the wine industry concerning the experience of this under-researched generational cohort.

Keywords: Greece, Generation Z, Winescape, Winery, Wine Tourism
Introduction

A significant rise in the number of tourists interested in wine has led many communities to develop wine tourism. In fact, wine tourism has emerged as a strong and growing segment of the tourism industry (O’Neill et al., 2002), with many destinations developing wine trails and wineries as major attractions (Santeramo et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2016). This trend might not be surprising, in light of the significant advantages for wine businesses from such visits: opportunities to sell wines directly to consumers; increase brand loyalty; improve consumer awareness and knowledge; reinforce the brand image of the wine product; and develop strong consumer relationships through planned on-site experiences (Dodd, 1995; Byrd et al., 2016). That said, researchers in this field have suggested that many of the issues related to the nature of the wine tourist have yet to be revealed and warrant additional research on the different wine tourist segments (Hall et al., 2000; Getz and Brown, 2006). This is very important because “wine tourists are not a single homogeneous group, but seek different components of the overall wine tourism experience” (Ali-Knight and Charters, 2001, p. 79). As a result, the need for studies of the wine tourist has emerged and been manifested in the literature in the significant increase in the number of studies focusing on visitors’ perspectives (Getz and Brown, 2006; Quadri-Felliti and Fiore, 2016).

One segment that has been of particular interest to wine tourism scholars is that of the young wine tourists, with many studies suggesting that the wine industry needs to look beyond aging markets for its next generation of consumers if it is to have a long-term future (e.g. Beverland, 2001; Olsen et al., 2007). In this regard, Carlsen et al. (2006, p. 6) have explicitly called for research into the characteristics and behaviour of young wine tourists, “as it is possible that they are searching for something different than previous generations”. As a quick glance at the reference list of this paper reveals, this and similar calls were taken up by wine tourism scholars who shifted attention from older wine consumers (Baby Boomers) to the wine tourism experience of

Connecting this research orientation to today’s context, Generation Z (Gen Z) is the generational cohort following Gen Y. Gen Z comprises those born from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s (Bassiouni and Hackley, 2014). The fact that the oldest of this generation just turned 21 in 2016 makes this cohort of current interest to the wine industry, which needs to understand this future customer base. But very little is known about their wine behaviour and, to the best of the authors’ knowledge, no previous published studies have focused on Gen Z and wine tourism. To this end, this study aims to add to the limited understanding of this new market segment by exploring the winery visitation experience from the perspective of Gen Z in Greece, in relation to an actual winery visit. In particular, the focus is on their evaluation of a number of winescapes attributes, in terms of their pre-visit importance and post-visit performance, utilising an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA). Based on this approach, the study aims to promote understanding of their desired wine tourism experience and provide practical implications for prioritisation and management of attributes.

**Literature Review**

Wine tourism is gaining in importance both as an industry and as an area of research. The wine industry, which initially focused on wine production, has now extended its scope to the experiential and tourism aspects of wine consumption (Williams, 2001). Bruwer and Lesschaeve (2012) provide insight into the relationship between wine and tourism. They explain that wine is recognised as a lifestyle beverage and wine consumption itself can be considered as a sensual and pleasurable activity that may take place in a myriad of potential social experiences, including tourism. They go on to argue that “the activity of wine tourism is an extension of the rather complex relationship between wine region as a tourist destination, wineries, and the

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1 There is not a general consensus for the birth range of different generations, but the following age group classifications are generally accepted in mainstream generational research (Johnson and Johnson, 2010): Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Gen X (born 1965-1980), Gen Y (born 1981-1994).
The engagement of people in wine tourism would therefore seem to represent a search for a better acquaintance with the product, and also for the elements of the wider tourism experience of a region. Wine tourism is thus related to both wine and tourism demand, representing a niche tourism product (Croce and Perry, 2017; Wu et al., 2016). When viewed from this perspective, wine tourism refers to “visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape wine tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a grape wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors” (Skinner, 2000, p. 298). From this definition it follows logically that the key to a favourable wine tourism experience is the positive engagement of wine tourists with the winescape attributes (Thomas et al., 2016).

The winescape is a central tenet in wine-related research. The concept was coined by Peters (1997, p. 124) as a cultural/viticultural landscape with “a winsome combination of vineyards, wineries and supporting activities necessary for modern production”. Subsequently it has often seen use in wine tourism research, appearing in more than 30 academic studies to date and has been examined at both the macro- and micro levels of analysis (Thomas et al., 2016). In the macro-level approach, the attention focuses on the attributes of a wine region. In contrast to this wide regional scope, the micro approach views the winescape as the environment at a specific winery. In both cases this winescape exists in the wider setting of rural tourism where interest in vineyards and wineries may take place alongside other aspects of rural tourism from farm visits and stays to countryside recreation. These are themes that have been explored by, amongst others, Bruwer (2003), Tew and Barbieri (2012), Barbieri and Mshenga (2008), and most recently by Santeramo et al. (2017), who have acknowledged that wine tourism represents a significant component of the regional and rural tourism products of many wine-producing countries, especially in Europe and the New World.

From an academic perspective, the wine tourism experience has been more or less explored in relation to the “traditional” wine drinker, who is middle-aged with an above average income (Charters and Carlsen, 2006). However, in recent years more emphasis has been placed on younger cohorts
as the result of an increasing awareness by both the wine and wine tourism industries that these young people are the next generation of wine consumers and wine tourists (Fountain and Lamb, 2011). Accordingly, over the last decade or so there has been a growth in research that has explored the significance of age/generational groupings as a factor in the wine tourism experience and wine consumption.

Within this strand of research, generational analysis has become a serious element in the research space. This approach draws on considerations of generational segmentation, suggesting that each generation has their own set of values and subsequent consumer behaviour and preferences, which set them apart from preceding generations and those that are to come (Noble and Schewe, 2003). Generational analysis is fundamentally based on the inference that only by understanding how consuming motivations are tied to the underlying values of the generation to which they belong, will businesses be able to cater for the desires of their different customer segments (Velikova et al., 2013). This understanding, therefore, represents a key competitive advantage in the marketplace, in the sense that businesses will be in a better position to anticipate the desires of a specific generation of consumers, rather than merely be reactive to their dissatisfaction. This approach is not intended to replace all other segmentation approaches, but it does add a useful perspective (Howe and Strauss 1991).

This research approach has developed as a useful tool in research on the winery visitation experience, focusing on comparisons between the characteristics of younger and older generational cohorts. An early study was that of Dodd and Bigotte (1997), who found evidence that younger visitors rated overall service and the price of the wine to be more important in determining satisfaction with the visit than older customers. They also suggested that the younger group were generally more critical of winery service and staff than their older counterparts. This conclusion seems to be corroborated by Charters and Fountain (2006) who found that older wine tourists (Baby Boomers) were generally less critical of their winery experience than younger ones (Gens X and Y). The issue of cost as an inhibiting factor in buying wine and/or visiting wineries for younger consumers has also been
brought up in other studies (e.g. Charters et al., 2009; Treloar et al., 2004). However, Alonso et al. (2007) observed that segments of older visitors with higher income levels might not necessarily result in higher expenditures.

Bruwer (2002) published work on aspects relating to the visitation of Gen X consumers to wineries. The results suggested that Gen X consumers used the cellar door visit not only to taste and buy wines but also to learn more about wine. This seems to support the findings of previous studies (e.g. Fountain and Charters, 2010; Mitchell and Hall, 2001), that Gens X and Y are more interested in furthering their wine knowledge than Baby Boomers, possibly because of the latter cohort having more experience of wine and wineries. Likewise, Carlsen et al. (2006) concluded that both Gens X and Y placed emphasis on the quality of wine and information received about wines and the winery area, as opposed to focusing on the social elements of the wine tourism experience. These findings, however, contradict those of Treloar et al. (2004) that the social and leisure aspects of the winery visit are more important to Gen Y than learning about wine/cellaring from winery staff and winemakers themselves.

More recently, Fountain and colleagues have specifically studied generation Y at the cellar door (Fountain and Charters, 2010; Fountain and Lamb 2011). These studies provide more balanced findings, suggesting that Generation Y visitors wish to extend their knowledge of wine and wineries but also place emphasis on enjoying the entire winery experience with friends. Further, they seek interaction with winery staff and want their unique needs understood and catered for. Lack of funds was again raised as a barrier to visiting wineries and buying wines.

Despite any differences between studies, two common factors are worth addressing. First, all studies highlight the interest of young generations in wine and/or their potential for growth both in terms of wine consumption and wine tourism. Second, stemming from this, they share the conviction that the development of wine tourism depends on understanding the characteristics of young generations.
These studies are limited to English-speaking markets of the New World comprising Australia, New Zealand and the United States (US). While not directly relevant to the winery experience, it is interesting to note that a number of studies on the wine behaviour of different generations to non-English-speaking countries in Europe do not echo this optimism. These studies suggest that unlike their counterparts in New World markets, young Europeans are not particularly fond of wine, and wine consumption among them is falling (Kevany, 2008; Mueller et al., 2011; Velikova et al., 2013). Based on these indications of cross-cultural differences among young consumers in geographically distinct markets, they concur that ongoing research into the wine-related experiences of young generations is essential to assess whether any observed differences are due to generational effects or based on lifecycle or contextual factors.

Against this background, it seems useful to examine the next generation of wine consumers (Gen Z) to understand their relationship to the winery experience. This study seeks to explore this in the context of Greece, a country growing as a wine producing country and as a wine tourism destination. In fact, today Greece is the seventh largest wine producer in Europe (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service [FAS], 2015), with more than 700 wineries operating in the country (Ritchie and Rotsios, 2016). The bulk of winery visitation in Greece is made up of domestic travellers, who account for approximately 70% of the total number of winery visitors (Alebaki and Iakovidou, 2011). This is a clear manifestation of the natural relationship Greeks have with wine, with 30% of Greeks drinking wine on a daily basis (USDA FAS, 2015). Yet, it is also suggestive of the insufficient promotional efforts by the Greek wine sector to reach international tourists (Critical Publics, 2008).

While the quality and international recognition of Greek wines has improved over the last few decades (Ritchie and Rotsios, 2016), wine producers are today faced with considerable pressure due to the economic crisis. Greek per capita wine consumption fell by more than 45% between 2010-2014, and consumers are opting for the lowest-priced wines (World
Health Organisation, 2014; USDA FAS, 2015). There is also the issue of the younger demographic being especially hard hit by the fiscal realities in the country. With nearly 50% unemployed (Trading Economics, 2016), younger Greeks are not spending as much as they might have spent under better economic circumstances. On top of this, recent data show that 78% of Greek consumers aged 18-24 prefer other alcoholic beverages to wine (USDA FAS, 2015). With such a large segment currently lying dormant, concern is now present within the Greek wine industry about the prospects of this market to take up wine consumption and wine-related travel. The examination of the Gen Z winery experience in the Greek context is therefore a timely study given its relevance to the current circumstances of the country’s wine industry.

Research Methodology

The results for this research were gathered over a five-month period (February-June 2016) through the distribution of a questionnaire survey to a winery in the Achaia region of the Peloponnese, Western Greece. This winery was selected as the location for distribution because it regularly hosts field trips for student groups. Its manager also expressed interest in participating in this research and learning more about its methodology after hearing about its managerial implications. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to target 18 to 21 year olds en masse – i.e. those Gen Z-ers over the legal age to buy and consume alcohol publicly in Greece. This convenience sampling process resulted in 306 valid responses. It should be noted that the winery visit for all students was part of wider field trips – i.e. wine was not the exclusive reason for their trip. However, for the purposes of this research, participants are referred to as wine tourists.

According to O’Neill et al. (2002), consumer satisfaction in wine tourism, as in all aspects of tourism, may be usefully conceptualised as a function of the importance level related to certain winery attributes and the performance level of these attributes. Studies and practice in tourism management have shown that determining both importance and performance levels is critical, because if evaluative factors important to the tourist customer
are overlooked, the usefulness of measuring only the performance level will be severely limited (Wade and Eagles, 2003). Given these considerations, this study adopted the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) proposed by Martilla and James (1977) as a useful technique to examine the relationship between the importance and performance of winescape attributes. While SERVQUAL has been more commonly used than IPA for measuring visitor satisfaction in winery settings (e.g. Charters and O’Neill, 2000; O’Neill et al., 2002), a comparison of these methods in a tourism context did not produce statistically different results (Hudson et al., 2004). Moreover, the application of SERVQUAL often requires the administration of lengthy survey instruments and expertise in the interpretation of data. These requirements were deemed as too complex for a study involving a sample of potentially inexperienced wine tourists and a winery with limited research experience.

The application of IPA is well-documented and the technique has shown its capability to provide decision-makers with valuable information for both satisfaction measurement and the efficient allocation of resources, all in an easily applicable format. In brief, importance and performance scores attained from survey instrument Likert scales are plotted onto a two-dimensional grid and, by a simple visual analysis of this matrix, policy makers can identify areas where the resources and programs need to be concentrated (see Figure 1). In the context of this study, the fact that IPA is easily interpreted by managers meant that it proved attractive to the owner of the participating winery.

[Figure 1 here]

The study adopted for testing a list of winescape attributes, drawing on the work of Thomas et al. (2016) who conceptualised the winescape as specifically encapsulating seven dimensions: setting; atmospherics; wine quality; wine value; signage; service staff; and complementary products. Their resultant 20-item scale of winescape attributes was found to be both reliable and valid across six studies in Australia and the US. For this reason it was used in the context of this study with minor adaptations, so that the attributes could
be examined in a micro-perspective, i.e. providing focus to a wine tourist experience in a specific winery. This process involved rephrasing items, merging items that were similar in meaning and deleting items that could not be adapted. An additional five items were added by the researchers to tap attributes not addressed in the original scale, resulting in 24 attributes in total.

Asking respondents to rate importance and performance in different sequences has been found to reduce the stereotypical effects associated with studies rating both dimensions on a single occasion (Lai and Hitchcock, 2015). Accordingly, a two-part questionnaire was developed and administered on two separate occasions each time with the same sample. In particular, before entering the winery premises respondents were asked to complete a first questionnaire. This asked them to rate the importance of each winescape attribute, using a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1, not at all important to 7, extremely important). Questions asking demographic information, level of wine knowledge, and prior visit experience were also present. In a second questionnaire following the end of their visit to the site, respondents were asked to rate in a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1, completely dissatisfied to 7, completely satisfied) the performance of the same winescape attributes. All questionnaires were distributed on tour buses and collected by researchers accompanying the student groups, then handed to the researchers.

Research Results

Respondent characteristics

As far as demographic and other information is concerned, most respondents were female (73.6%) and the sample mean age was 20.3. Using Mitchell and Hall’s (2001) self-ascribed measure of wine knowledge, respondents were asked to rate their wine knowledge using one of four categories: advanced knowledge, intermediate knowledge, basic knowledge, or no prior knowledge. The vast majority of respondents (82.3%) rated their knowledge as basic, with the remaining respondents (17.7%) indicating they had no prior knowledge. No respondents had visited a winery before. With winery visits being booked on a tight schedule, there was only a limited window of time for respondents to
complete the questionnaire. To keep the questionnaire completion time short, no further background information was collected.

**Factor analysis**

The initial results of the perceived importance of the 24 winery attributes formed the basis for a factor analysis. The procedure of factor analysis was used here in order to explore the underlying structure of the data and simplify the subsequent IPA analyses (Chu and Choi, 2000). The analysis was conducted on the responses of 306 participants, which provide a comforting number of cases for factor analytic work (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). In ensuring the factorability of the data, the inter-item correlations among the variables were inspected for values in excess of 0.30. The reason for this is that lower correlations indicate items that are producing error and unreliability (Churchill, 1979). The inter-item correlation matrix revealed numerous correlations in excess of 0.30 and some considerably higher, suggesting that the matrix was factorable. Subsequently, the factorability of the data was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett’s (1954) test of sphericity. The current study obtained a value of .87 for the KMO measure, which falls in the “meritorious” category of the 0.80s (Kaiser, 1974, p. 33). With respect to Bartlett’s test of sphericity, the study obtained a value of 3892.123 and an associated significance level of 0.000. The high KMO value obtained and the highly significant level of the test of sphericity are both comfortable indications that the given set of data was adequate for factor analysis.

Based on the Kaiser (eigenvalue-greater-than-1) and scree-plot criteria, five factors were extracted through principal component analysis with orthogonal (VARIMAX) rotation. As another test of the adequacy of the number of factors, communality values were also inspected. If communalities equal or exceed 1, the number of factors extracted is wrong (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Communalities ranged from 0.36 to 0.68, further confirming that a reasonable number of factors is five. With respect to the variables used in defining each factor, Comrey and Lee (1992) suggest that loadings in excess of
0.71 are considered excellent, 0.63 very good, 0.55 good, 0.45 fair, and 0.32 poor. Comrey (1978) also states that if no loadings greater than 0.40 are identified, then the value of the analysis is limited. In the context of this study, an examination of the pattern of high and low loadings across variables revealed a gap. This gap was the cut-off value of 0.50 which was adopted for inclusion of a variable in interpretation of a factor. This was in line with Comrey’s rule for meaningful analysis and greater than the minimum cut-off of 0.32 used in common social science practice. The resultant five-factor model explained 53.86 percent of the variance and included 16 winescape attributes, with factor loadings greater than 0.50. The alpha coefficients for the five factors through the Cronbach’s alpha (α) test ranged from 0.723 to 0.867, all meeting the minimum acceptable value of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978). This suggested that, despite small variations in their alpha values, all factors were internally consistent, thus indicating that the measures used in each factor were reliable and should therefore be retained for interpretation (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996).

The factor analysis yielded two major factors with eigenvalues higher than 3.00, which accounted for 39.28% of the total variance, plus three smaller factors (Table 1). With respect to the two major factors, Factor 1 seems to reflect a preoccupation with spending power and the price of wines available for purchase and was therefore named Cost Considerations. Factor 2, named Wine & Entertainment, was composed of items indicating that wine tasting is part of a wider experience, offering opportunities for more holistic leisure activities and entertainment that extend beyond the wine consumption aspect. As regards the three smaller factors, Factor 3 seems to represent a Destination Attributes dimension, with emphasis placed on information about and destination characteristics of the winery region. Items that loaded on Factor 4 appeared to deal with important components of service quality that customer service staff can provide and was therefore named Service Staff. The final factor (Factor 5) included items related to the educational aspect of the winery visit and was named Learning about Wine. Following standard practice in IPA studies using factor-analytic work (e.g. Chu and Choi, 2000; Pan, 2015;
Somkeatkun and Wongsurawat, 2017), the ensuing analysis is based on the presentation of the factors distribution in IPA mapping.

| Table 1 here |

**Importance Performance Analysis (IPA)**

Table 1 presents the mean and performance scores of the five winescape factors and the attributes grouped under each factor. A paired-sample t-test was conducted to assess significant differences between respondents’ perceptions of importance and performance on the five winescape factors. As Lai and Hitchcock (2015) explain, only factors which show a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) should be transferred to IPA grid presentation for further exploration. The results revealed that the mean scores for performance were significantly lower than importance on all factors ($F1: t = -15.52$, $F2: t = -12.20$, $F3: t = -7.11$, $F4: t = -4.28$, $F5: t = -4.71$; all $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, the importance and performance means for all factors were plotted in IPA mapping for interpretation.

Figure 2 illustrates the results of the IPA grid for the winescape factors, where Importance values form the vertical axis, while Performance values form the horizontal axis. The IPA grid was divided into four quadrants by crosshairs based on the overall mean scores of the Importance and Performance parts. This cross-point selection method was adopted as it carries the advantage of comparing attributes relative to each other, which is suggested to be of high management utility in guiding decisions on the allocation of limited resources between attributes (Junio et al., 2016). Accordingly, the two axes formed crosshairs at the value of 5.73 (overall mean score of importance attributes) and 5.03 (overall mean score of performance attributes).

[Figure 2 here]

According to the grid, two factors fell into each of the “Concentrate Here” and “Keep up the Good Work” quadrants, one factor was identified in
the “Low Priority” quadrant and none in the “Possible Overkill” quadrant. The following provides insights about the quadrant presentation.

**Quadrant I – Concentrate Here (high importance/low performance): Cost Considerations (F1) and Wine & Entertainment (F2) were identified in this quadrant as illustrated in Figure 2. Cost Considerations, with a mean rating of 6.22, appears to be the most important factor for the winery tourism experience of participants. Interestingly, this is the only factor where all attributes were rated above the average score for Importance and below average for Performance. This is indicative of both strong feelings about the cost of wines and of the failure of the winery to provide wines at prices that young wine tourists would consider to be reasonable. Even though the price sensitivity of young wine tourists is not new to the literature, the financial hardship experienced by young Greeks may explain the particularly strong importance attached by respondents to cost considerations while at the winery. As a side-note in this context, the participating winery prides itself on producing a range of different wines, including budget-friendly labels with excellent value for money. This sends a meaningful message to wineries, in that they should analyse pricing from the perspective of different customer groups – i.e. the idea of what is considered affordable may be perceived differently by different types of tourists (Moutinho et al., 2011).

Wine & Entertainment was the next important factor as perceived by respondents. What is of particular interest here is that “The wines we tasted” had an Importance mean score marginally lower than the average ($M = 5.72$), with all the other winescapes attributes in the factor rated above the mean Importance score. These results suggest that respondents in this study visited the winery looking for an enjoyable social experience, having no apparent interest in wine. In this connection, the absence of, or poor, food and “entertainment opportunities” were found to upset the winery experience of young wine tourists, who rated them two of the most important but least well performed winescape attributes.
Quadrant II – Keep Up the Good Work (high importance/high performance):

Two winescape factors were identified in this quadrant: Destination Attributes (F3) and Service Staff (F4). The emergence of Destination Attributes as a winescape factor suggests that respondents perceived the winery region as a tourist destination. In this context, the winery experience of young consumers is clearly conceived as more than a typical visit to wineries to taste and purchase wines, to include destination benefits of the surrounding community, i.e. appealing environment, scenic beauty, and availability of local products. This interest on tourism aspects of the winery region is also illustrated by the importance respondents placed on “information... about the wider area”. It is interesting to note that respondents were more satisfied with the destination appeal (i.e. outlook and attractiveness of the scenery) rather than with the elements that can be directly controlled by the provider (i.e. information provided about the region and local products sold on the site), suggesting there is room for further improvement. This draws out the extent to which wine tourism needs to be seen in the context of broader rural tourism, indicating a desire to partner the winery visit with natural attractions and, as suggested by the location of Wine & Entertainment in the Concentrate Here quadrant, a programme of activities, food and entertainment.

Service Staff is, of course, at the core of the winery visit in terms of what can be controlled by the supplier (O’Neill and Charters, 2000). The inclusion of this factor in quadrant II indicates the importance of and satisfaction with the wine tourism experience delivered by winery employees. What appear to be crucial attributes in this respect are the individual attention provided by and, particularly, the friendliness of staff. In fact, friendliness was rated as the best performed attribute in this study (\( M = 5.93 \)) and the only one that generated a higher performance score than its importance score. This perhaps indicates a conscious evaluation on the part of respondents of what they are really looking for in their interactions with winery staff. On the other hand, “the courtesy of the staff” scored below average on importance. Taken together these findings may suggest that young wine tourists are looking to be recognised in a casual and friendly atmosphere, as opposed to the crowded,
often intimidating, impersonal experiences that sometimes characterise winery visits (Bruwer et al., 2013).

**Quadrant III – Low Priority (low importance/low performance):** There was one factor, namely *Learning about Wine* (F5), allocated to the “Low Priority” quadrant. The location of this factor in this quadrant is perhaps the most interesting finding to emerge from the exploration of the three weak factors. This is because it implies a lack of interest or indifference in the educational element of wine tourism – i.e. information provided about wine and meeting the winemaker. This represents a clear departure from the findings of previous studies on the winery experience of young visitors, which indicated that new generations have a particular interest in expanding their wine knowledge (e.g. Bruwer, 2002; Fountain and Charters, 2010). The IPA literature suggests that attributes in this cell do not require urgent attention and that limited resources should be expended on them. However, although perceived as less important than items in the “Concentrate Here” or “Keep up the Good Work” quadrants, the low performance levels shown in this category may alert managers to needed improvements (Kuo, 2009). Clearly, this is all the more so in the case of wine education, which may be a key determinant of added-value by giving customers a better understanding of wine which will add to their enjoyment of the core wine product (Byrd et al., 2016). This is very relevant for entry-level customers like the respondents of this study, who may be intimidated by their lack of wine knowledge and overwhelmed by the technical elements of wine education offered (Ali-Knight and Charters, 2001). As such, poor performance in this area may also generate further dissatisfaction with the winery experience.

**Quadrant IV – Possible Overkill (low importance/high performance):** The IPA analysis did not identify any attributes allocated to the “Possible Overkill” quadrant. This meant that there was no identified “wasted effort” in resource input into attributes which are low in terms of importance.
Conclusions, Implications, Limitations and Future Research

To the authors’ best knowledge this is the first academic research to have focused specifically on the winery experience from the perspective of Gen Z. As such, and in line with its aims, the study contributes to existing literature by offering empirical insights concerning the desirable experience of this under-researched generational cohort and practical implications for winery managers.

The empirical findings of the study suggest that wine tourism is of limited appeal to Greek Gen Z winery visitors. At the same time, they are particularly price-sensitive and do not seem to appreciate the intermediation of wine experts and information about wine, favouring a more casual approach. One might argue that the importance attached to cost considerations is suggestive of their interest in buying wines and, by extension, in wine. However, given the ongoing economic crisis, it seems more logical to assume that their display of strong price sensitivity represents a reaction to high wine prices in relation to their financial situation. As a matter of fact, winery visitation from the perspective of Gen Z seems to be less about wine and more about opportunities to enjoy the scenery, entertain themselves, socialise, and discover local food and products.

The review of the literature identified a number of studies that have explored the winery experience of younger generations (e.g. Bruwer, 2002; Treloar et al., 2004; Charters and Fountain, 2006; Fountain and Lamb, 2011) and these provide a starting point for comparison. However, given that this is the first study to examine the experience of Gen Z direct comparisons have to be treated with a degree of caution. Nevertheless, in general, it is fair to say that the departure of the findings reported here to those from prior studies concerns the limited appeal of wine to Gen Z and their disinterest in extending their wine knowledge. Other findings are not particularly surprising in the sense that they have been repeated in previous research. It is not unexpected, for example, that young wine tourists seek a broader experience or that they are sensitive to wine prices. This study is valuable, then, in that it brings these
findings together to paint a picture of the nature of the desired wine tourism experience of, the previously unexplored, Gen Z in Greece.

Herein also lies the practical value of IPA in revealing what is most important to winery visitors, by examining their evaluation of a “real” winery visit. Following the IPA classification in this study, what appears to be critical for Greek wineries wishing to approach Gen Z consumers is to focus their attention on making their wine prices more attractive for young visitors and on offering opportunities for activities that fall under the realm of entertainment as it relates to tourism (food-tasting, socialising). In this connection, it might be necessary to develop alliances with the regional community tourism industry (local producers, restaurants, tourist information centres, etc.) and with rural tourism more generally to offer a bundle of activities, services and benefits with various attractions, instead of relying solely on the winery tour. In doing so, they need to continue and improve on efforts to highlight the scenic features of wine tours to give them greater appeal, and provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy the scenery. They should also ensure that their Gen Z visitors are treated in a personal and friendly manner by winery staff, to ensure their desire for a casual atmosphere.

Following the earlier discussion on the importance of wine information for young segments, they may also attempt to give young consumers the confidence to engage with wine, by introducing them to wine tasting and developing their wine knowledge in an informative but fun way. Providing human interest stories about the winery instead of technical wine information, and connecting local foods with wine via on-site educational seminars may be fruitful in this direction. In such a context, both tangible (wines, food) and intangible aspects of the winery visitation experience (knowledge, friendliness of staff) may be used to promote an integrated educational experience and this can provide a guide to marketing to this group.

In closing, it is important to be mindful of the limitations of this study. First, the fact that it is based solely on the experience of a convenience sample of young winery visitors in Greece means that the findings are specific to this sample and, therefore, cannot be generalised to larger populations or other cultures. Second, the empirical analysis covers only student responses. Recent
studies have found student samples to differ significantly from the general public and even from non-student samples within the same age group in terms of their wine and alcohol behaviour (Carter et al., 2010; Mueller et al., 2008). Third, the study has adopted a micro-approach to the winescape, which was winery-specific and restricted to the specific context of the participating winery and, therefore, of limited scope.

It is important to consider these results in the light of these limitations. They present the micro-perspective of one winery in Greece visited by students. But in doing so, they point, for the first time, to some potentially important characteristics of the next generation of wine tourists and wine drinkers. This investigation could now usefully be extended to international comparative studies to examine whether generational similarities across countries exist or whether cultural and contextual differences are more significant than age-related similarities. It is hoped that the issues raised here will stimulate interest to further understand the wine tourism experience of Gen Z consumers.

References


Figure 1 IPA Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Q1: Concentrate here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Q3: Low priority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Martilla and James (1977)
**Table 1** Factor Analysis Results and Mean Scores of Winescape Factors and Attributes in Importance and Performance Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Factor Loadings (Sorted)</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Pct. of variance</th>
<th>Importance Mean</th>
<th>Performance Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F1 – Cost Considerations (a = .867)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.317</td>
<td>26.94</td>
<td>6.22*</td>
<td>4.66*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of the wines sold</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wines available at prices within my spending budget</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable pricing of wine at the cellar door</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F2 – Wine &amp; Entertainment (a = .834)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.432</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>6.07*</td>
<td>4.92*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wines we tasted</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment opportunities</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The food we ate</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people on the tour with me</td>
<td>.564</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F3 – Destination Attributes (a = .769)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.789</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>5.97*</td>
<td>5.53*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scenic outlook</td>
<td>.637</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The attractive scenery</td>
<td>.618</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information we received about the wider area</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local products from the region on offer</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F4 – Service Staff (a = .748)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.331</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>5.77*</td>
<td>5.50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The friendliness of the staff</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The courtesy of the staff</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The individual attention provided by staff</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F5 – Learning about Wine (a = .723)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.076</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>4.63*</td>
<td>4.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the winemaker</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information we received about wine</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall mean score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*53.86% of cumulative variance explained.
*Mean scale: 1 – Not at all important to 7 – Extremely important.
*Mean scale: 1 – Completely dissatisfied to 7 – Completely satisfied.
*: Grand mean scores of factor.
Figure 2 IPA Grid for Winescape Factors
We would like, once again, to thank the Editor for his constructive suggestions and for giving us the opportunity to revise our manuscript, as well as the two referees for their kind comments, thorough reviews and constructive suggestions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Revisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>We have changed the heading of the last section (p. 17). Clearly the heading now reflects more accurately the content of the section. Thank you for this suggestion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Please change the heading of the last section to read: Conclusions, implications, limitations and future research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Please attend to the points raised by Reviewer 1.</td>
<td>We have addressed the comments made by the Reviewer 1 and we provide relevant details below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Give the paper another thorough proofreading to eliminate grammatical and typographical errors.</td>
<td>Please accept our apologies for the overlooked errors. We have carefully edited our text to eliminate these.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referee 1</th>
<th>Revisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Thank you for this constructive comment and for taking the time to suggest a range of useful studies, providing us with all the relevant details. We have now stressed the link between rural tourism and wine (p. 4, lines 20-28). In doing so, we have followed your recommendation and have included four of your proposed studies here. To further stress this link, we also added a sentence on p. 15 (lines 15-19) and p. 18 (lines 11-12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The paper still does not demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and fails to cite an appropriate range of literature sources. In particular, the link between rural tourism and wine industry should be further stressed. Let me suggest relevant papers on rural tourism and on wine industry [list of papers follows]</td>
<td>Thank you for this constructive comment and for taking the time to suggest a range of useful studies, providing us with all the relevant details. We have now stressed the link between rural tourism and wine (p. 4, lines 20-28). In doing so, we have followed your recommendation and have included four of your proposed studies here. To further stress this link, we also added a sentence on p. 15 (lines 15-19) and p. 18 (lines 11-12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is never a good idea to state that “a direct comparison between these findings and those of other studies on the winery experience of young generations is difficult” and fail to cite papers that have addressed similar issues. You are communicating the idea that either your research question is of no relevance, or that you have no sufficient knowledge of the literature to compare your results with existing studies. More efforts should be devoted to this issue.</td>
<td>Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. We have deleted this sentence and re-written part of this paragraph to address your comment (p. 17, lines 20-25). In doing so, we have followed your suggestion to cite papers that have addressed similar issues, drawing links between our findings and literature review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is a bit frustrating to read that “given study limitations the results have no claims to generalisability” and that therefore you “argue that findings should be taken as preliminary and suggestive”. If so, why should we pay attention to your study? More effort must be devoted in communicating when and where your results may be valid and when and where they are not.</td>
<td>Thank you for noting this issue. Following your comment we have deleted this sentence and re-written part of the closing paragraph of the paper to provide a clear link between study limitations, the scope of our results, and directions for future research (p. 19, lines 7-11).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Apart from a careful reading</td>
<td>Thank you for your comment. We have carefully edited our text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to eliminate awkward expressions, I have no further comments.