

How to Foster Tourist WOM Behavior in Wine Cultural Tourism Context

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author TFY designed the study, author MHW performed the statistical analysis, author JLX wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors JLX and MHW managed the analyses of the study. Author JLX managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study tried to investigate the influence of involvement, and subjective norms on satisfaction and tourists' WOM intentions in wine cultural context, a historic district at Yibin, China. And the mediating effect of involvement, and subjective norms on the paths from satisfaction to WOM intentions were examined. Data analyzed in this study were collected via an on-site survey and the structural equation modeling approach was employed. Results find that both involvement, and subjective norms directly contribute to the formation of satisfaction and WOM intentions. Furthermore, the positive relationship between involvement and satisfaction is evidenced. Moreover, the fully mediating effect of involvement-satisfaction-WOM and subjective norms-satisfaction-WOM has been confirmed. Consequently, both theoretical and practical implications are elaborated.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Wine cultural tourism has become a popular activity in western China especially in Sichuan province. Previous studies have found that it contains a lot of colorful natural and humanities' resources in those wine cultural destinations [1,2,3]. For example, one of the famous wine culture tourism destination abroad, French, is based on wine estate tourism. Tourism activities include enjoying the scenery of the vineyard, investigating the wine-making process and visiting the wine cellar. Experience wine making fun, wine tasting, exchange with wine master, some wine estates even provide accommodation, forming a wine-centric food, live, travel, entertainment, purchase of rural tourism routes. Therefore, foreign wine culture tourism is more similar to the rural tourism and/or theme tourism of wine [4].

The origin of domestic wine culture tourism cannot be tested, mainly developed after 2000, especially after the issuance of the State Council alcohol restriction order in 2013, in order to respond to the survival crisis caused by overproduction and the decline of output value, wineries began to operate polygonal wineries one after another. Several big liquor enterprises constantly multi-angle, accelerate the industry fusion. Such as Yibin Wuliangye Group into

machinery manufacturing (Ship Group), Licai Group (printing and packaging), Global Group (photoelectric glass), Anji logistics, Sichuan Oak International (tire), Shengshan clothing, health wine and eco-wine company, etc.; In addition to liquor industry-related enterprises, Luzhou Laojiao Group includes certificate papers (Xihua), banks (Luzhou Commercial Bank), investment, micro-loans (Longma Xingda), real estate development, cross-border e-commerce (sea oysters), Subsidiaries of industries such as science and technology and education. These liquor enterprises try to expand the liquor market and attract more consumers through the extension and close integration of primary, secondary and tertiary production [4,5]. However, attracting tourists has become an important issue since the wine festival has been host at Yibin in 2016. How to foster tourist words of mouth has become an emergent item for both wine firms and academia.

Thus, this study tries to investigate its application on wine tourism. The objective of this study is 1) to verify the effects of involvement, subjective norm, and satisfaction on WOM intentions; 2) assessing the mediated and moderated effects of involvement and subjective norm on satisfaction-WOM intentions relations; and 3) offering some implications. Research framework is presented in Fig. 1.

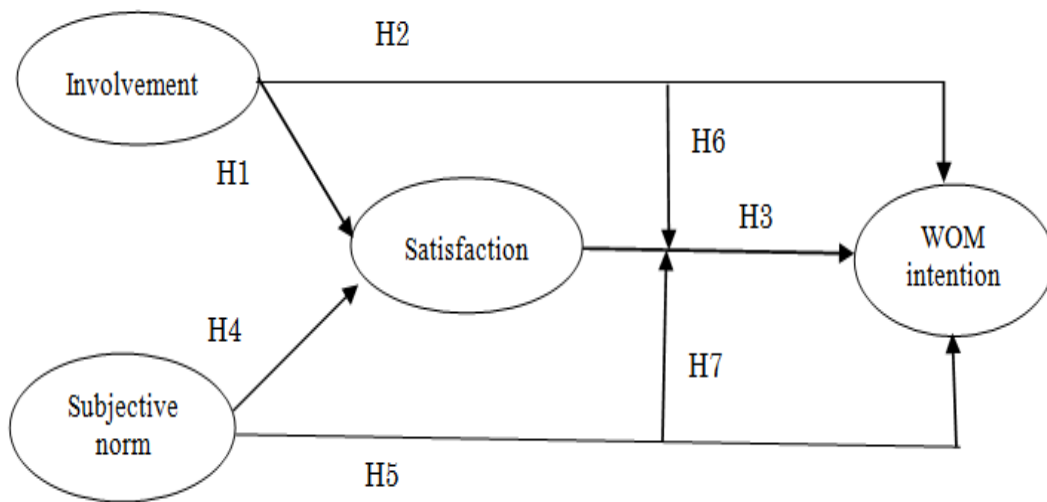


Fig. 1. Research framework

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Studies have recognized that involvement can be viewed as a perceived relevance of the object or product/service of a person [6], levels of psychological connection [7], and/or the degree to which a visitor is committed to an activity, object, place or experience [8]. It comes from inherent needs, interests, and values. Therefore, many studies adopt it as an important antecedent of person's behavior. For example, one stated that visitor who has high involvement with sport would lead to a high level of satisfaction [9]. Another found that involvement could foster the image of a place and enhance satisfaction to a historic district [10]. That is to say, the higher level of involvement a visitor perceived is likely to enhance his/her satisfaction to a specific destination/tourist site.

Furthermore, study also argued that involvement could moderate satisfaction-loyalty relationship after it directly impact satisfaction and loyalty [11]. A customer would have a favourable attitude and /or he/she would give the positive words while he/she involved in a certain product/service. In our case, visitor would satisfy and/or have a favourable attitude with wine tourist sites while he/she perceived relevance of these sites. And he/she would have high probabilities to spread the positive words of his/her tour about wine tourist sites. Therefore, we proposed that:

H1: Visitor perceived higher involvement is likely to lead a high level of satisfaction at wine tourist sites.

H2: Visitor perceived higher involvement is likely to lead a high level of words of mouth intention at wine tourist sites.

Satisfaction has been viewed as an important factor in predicting tourist behavior [12,13,14]. Such a destination choice, consumption at the destination, revisit intention and loyalty including words of mouth, recommend, and revisit would be influenced by satisfaction. Satisfaction referred as the whole evaluation of a destination [2,3]. A number of studies have suggested that satisfaction have a positive effect on words of mouth in wine tourism context [2,3,4,5]. Consequently, this study proposed that:

H3: Visitor perceived higher satisfaction is likely to lead a high level of words of mouth intention at wine tourist sites.

The concept subjective norm came from theory of planned behavior (TPB) which is established by Ajzen [15] and it referred as a social pressure of a person to an object, product, or service [16]. Individual behavior could be influenced by those whom important to him/her. This is so called social pressure. These important ones could be his/her parent, family member, classmate, colleague, and/or better friends. Moreover, it was applied to tourism context for predicting tourist behavior. For example, Yen [16] found that subjective norm could significantly impact visitor behavioral intention which in terms of positive words of mouth, recommend, and revisit while the model only discussed the TPB. The other study suggested that both satisfaction and words of mouth could be influenced by subjective norm [17]. That is to say visitor's satisfaction and his/her words of mouth could be influenced by his/her reference group which is important to him/her. In our case, visitor's perceived subjective norm is likely to influence his/her satisfaction and words of mouth intention in wine tourist sites. Therefore, we proposed that:

H4: Visitor perceived higher subjective norm is likely to lead a high level of satisfaction at wine tourist sites.

H5: Visitor perceived higher subjective norm is likely to lead a high level of words of mouth intention at wine tourist sites.

Moreover, studies have suggested that both involvement and subjective norm could moderate the variables relationships. For example, satisfaction-words of mouth path could be moderated by involvement was evidenced by [11]. The other also found that subjective norms would decline satisfaction-words of mouth relationship in lodging industry [17,18]. In our case, both involvement and subjective norm are likely to have moderated effects on satisfaction-words of mouth relationship in wine cultural context. Therefore, we proposed that:

H6: Visitor perceived involvement is likely to moderate the level of satisfaction at wine tourist sites.

H7: Visitor perceived subjective norm is likely to moderate the level of words of mouth intention at wine tourist sites.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Survey Instrument

The survey instruments used in this study for data collection were largely adapted from existing scales and they were validated by previous studies [1,17,18]. The measured items were altered to be adequate in present study setting. First of all, involvement was measured with three items (e.g., "I like being involved in making visits of wine sites"; "I attach great importance to visiting wine sites"; "Purchases decisions for wine tourism are very important to me"). Second, three items of subjective norm was undertaken (e.g., "People whose opinions I appreciate think that it is okay for me to visit this wine site"; "Most people I valued think that I should visit this wine site"; "It is expected that I visit this wine site to see some wine products/services");.Third, Satisfaction was assessed with three items (e.g., "I am happy with the products/services I have visited on this wine site"; "I am generally happy with having visited from this wine site"; "In general, I have liked visiting this wine site"). Moreover, WOM intention was measured with two items (e.g., "I say positive things about the experiences at wine site"; "I will recommend visiting wine site to anybody who seeks my advice").

A five-point Likert type scale, which anchored from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), was used for all of the questions. The respondents were also requested to provide their socio-demographic information. The survey questionnaire including the measures described above and demographic questions were pre-tested with 30 undergraduate and three faculty members whose frequency of wine tourism visit is relatively high and improved accordingly. The questionnaire was furthermore reviewed and perfected by academic experts whose major is tourism/hospitality management and industry experts who are working in a wine tourism site.

3.2 Data Collection

In order to collect data, this study adopted the personal interview survey methodology. This field survey approach of face to face allowed us to reach a wider sampling range and include a greater number of wine visitors during the survey period. Then, the eligible survey respondents who visited the site and agreed our appointment were instructed to read the description carefully when accessing the survey, and later were requested to fill out the questionnaire. They were

also requested to indicate the name of the wine site in which they visited. After that, a total of 430 completed questionnaires were received. After the screening process by removing unusable responses and extreme cases, 420 usable responses were retained for data analysis yielding an effective response rate of 97%. The socio-demographic profile of the survey respondents was examined. Of 420 participants, 46.9% are males and 53.1% females, most of them between 20 and 39 years old (39.7%), with secondary education (38.1%).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Before CFA and SEM, the descriptive statistics were displayed first. Table 1 reported the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), Skewness, Kurtosis, factor loading, and Cronbach's α of the measure items and concepts used in this study by factor analysis and reliability analysis. The mean of each items were ranging from 3.25 to 3.86 and the standard deviation was ranging from 0.899 to 1.099. Of all the absolute Skewness and Kurtosis were less than 3 (-0.801 to -0.195) and 10 (-0.573 to 0.830) indicating that the normality of the measure items was confirmed. Furthermore, the results of factor analysis revealed that each concept's KMO value was higher than 0.7 ($P < .000$), suggesting that the data used in this study were suitable for factor analysis and it yielded a four-factor solution named involvement, subjective norm, satisfaction, and WOM. The factor loading of all measure items were exceeded 0.7 indicating its construct validity was adequate. Moreover, the Cronbach's alphas were 0.870, 0.832, 0.787, and 0.778 which were exceed 0.7 and indicating that the measure items were reliable.

Besides, the correlations of concepts were assessed. Table 2 reported the correlation matrix and it demonstrated that all of the coefficients of correlation among variables were significant at $p < 0.01$ and ranging from 0.16 to 0.57. All of the values of coefficients of correlation were less than 1 and 5 out of 6 were less than the average variance extracted indicating the discriminate validity of the constructs was validated. This allowed us to assess the measurement model and the structure model.

4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to illustrate results of testing the fit of

measurement models. A measurement model comprising all of the construct measures and four latent variables was generated via the CFA with a maximum likelihood estimation method. The goodness-of-fit statistics of the CFA revealed an adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 137$, $df = 38$, $\chi^2/df = 3.6$, $p < 0.001$, GFI= 0.944; AGFI= 0.903; CFI= 0.952; RMSEA= 0.079). All items were significantly loaded to their associated latent construct ($p < 0.01$) (see Table 3). Thus, convergent validity for each construct was supported. In addition, these AVE values exceeded the square of correlations between variables. Hence, discriminant validity was evident. Composite reliability was 0.51 to 0.75 indicating that the values were relatively equal to or higher than 0.50, confirming the adequate level of internal consistency among the items for each latent variable.

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation

The SEM was conducted using a maximum likelihood estimation approach in order to validate the proposed theoretical framework and to test the hypothesized relationships among study constructs. Three models were adopted for

testing the hypotheses. INV, SA, SN, and WO were conducted in the first model. Further the interaction item INV*SA was added in model 2 and finally the second interaction item SN*SA was added in model 3.

In model 1 (see Table 4), the goodness-of-fit statistics showed the acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 137$, $df = 38$, $\chi^2/df = 3.62$, $p < 0.001$, GFI= 0.944; AGFI= 0.903; CFI= 0.952; RMSEA= 0.079). INV significantly and positively impact SA and WO, and SN significantly and positively impact SA supporting H1, H2, H3, and H4 while H5 was not supported.

Furthermore, model 2 performed the acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 197$, $df = 46$, $\chi^2/df = 4.3$, $p < 0.001$, GFI= 0.925; AGFI= 0.873; CFI= 0.929; RMSEA= 0.089). Again, INV significantly and positively impact SA and WO, and SN significantly and positively impact SA supporting H1, H2, H3, and H4. However, the impact of SN on WO was significant while the interacted item (INV*SA) was added supporting H5 and H6. Moreover, INV could destroy the SA-WO relationships was evidenced.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (n=420)

Concept	Item	M	SD	Skewness	kurtosis	Loading	Cronbach's α
INV	INV1	3.25	1.056	-0.195	-0.405	0.873	0.870
	INV2	3.45	1.075	-0.240	-0.488	0.906	
	INV3	3.33	1.088	-0.229	-0.471	0.894	
SN	SN1	3.69	1.031	-0.501	-0.190	0.824	0.832
	SN2	3.74	1.017	-0.613	-0.086	0.899	
	SN3	3.65	1.052	-0.481	-0.208	0.873	
SA	SA1	3.81	0.863	-0.334	-0.113	0.802	0.787
	SA2	3.67	1.018	-0.413	-0.292	0.848	
	SA3	3.86	0.914	-0.665	0.495	0.864	
WO	WO1	3.86	0.899	-0.801	0.830	0.908	0.778
	WO2	3.53	1.099	-0.311	-0.573	0.908	

Note: INV: involvement; SN: Subjective norm; SA: Satisfaction; WO: Words of mouth

Table 2. Correlation Matrix (n=420)

Items	M	SD	INV	SN	SA	WO
INV	10.04	2.87	0.71			
SN	11.07	2.68	0.160**	0.64		
SA	11.35	2.35	0.350**	0.247**	0.52	
WO	7.40	1.82	0.458**	0.335**	0.570**	0.64

Note: INV: involvement; SN: Subjective norm; SA: Satisfaction; WO: Words of mouth; **Significant at $p < 0.01$, Off diagonal were coefficients of correlation and diagonal were average variance extracted (AVE) of the concepts

Table 3. Results of CFA

Construct	Items	λ	t-values	SMC	CR	AVE
INV	INV1	0.80	18.88	0.64	0.75	0.50
	INV2	0.89	22.05	0.80		
	INV3	0.82	19.47	0.67		
SN	SN1	0.66	14.21	0.44	0.67	0.41
	SN2	0.90	20.81	0.82		
	SN3	0.78	17.29	0.61		
SA	SA1	0.60	12.02	0.35	0.51	0.27
	SA2	0.78	16.56	0.61		
	SA3	0.75	15.75	0.56		
WO	WO1	0.79	16.85	0.62	0.58	0.41
	WO2	0.81	17.52	0.66		

Model fit; $\chi^2=137$; $df= 38(p=.000)$; $\chi^2/df= 3.62$; $GFI= 0.944$; $AGFI= 0.903$; $CFI= 0.952$; $RMSEA= 0.079$

Table 4. Results of SEM

Paths	M1		M2		M3	
	Estimate	t	Estimate	t	Estimate	t
H1:INV-SA	0.30***	5.00	0.30***	5.00	0.30***	5.03
H2:INV-WO	0.36***	6.49	0.39***	7.04	0.39***	7.03
H3:SA-WO	0.50***	6.76	0.44***	6.06	0.44***	6.04
H4:SN-SA	0.37***	5.74	0.38***	5.79	0.39***	5.88
H5:SN-WO	0.09	1.69	0.11*	2.05	0.11*	2.02
H6:INV*SA-WO			-0.17***	-3.86	-0.17***	-3.80
H7:SN*SA-WO					0.01	0.25
R^2_{SA}	0.28		0.28		0.29	
R^2_{WO}	0.58		0.58		0.58	
Model Fit						
χ^2	137		197		243	
df(p)	38(.000)		46(.000)		54(.000)	
χ^2/df	3.62		4.30		4.50	
GFI	0.944		0.925		0.916	
AGFI	0.903		0.873		0.858	
CFI	0.952		0.929		0.914	
RMSEA	0.079		0.089		0.091	

*Significant at $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Besides, the results of model 3 showed that the path SN*SA was added and the goodness-of-fit statistics showed the acceptable fit to the data in model 3 ($\chi^2 = 243$, $df = 54$, $\chi^2/df = 4.50$, $p < 0.001$, $GFI= 0.916$; $AGFI= 0.858$; $CFI= 0.914$; $RMSEA= 0.091$). All the hypotheses in model 3 were supported except H5 and H7. Satisfaction was well accounted for by its predictors ($R^2 = 0.29$). Behavioral intention was also well accounted for by its predictors ($R^2 = 0.58$). In particular, that the relationship between satisfaction and WOM intention to the wine tourism site is moderated by the tourist's level of involvement (H6) was

confirmed. The results of the SEM are exhibited.

5. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to examine the impacts of involvement and subjective norm on both satisfaction WOM intention in wine tourism context. Findings reveal that involvement significantly and positively impact satisfaction and words of mouth, and subjective norm significantly and positively impact satisfaction when the objective was only to clarify the relationships among those variables (Model 1). Satisfaction could be the mediator of involvement- words of mouth intentions. Further,

involvement was confirmed to have a moderated effect on satisfaction- words of mouth intentions path indicating that it's not only a pure determinate of satisfaction and words of mouth intentions but also a moderator (Model 2). Moreover, the interacted item of subjective norm did nothing significantly impact on satisfaction- words of mouth intentions path indicating that its role playing only focus on the direct impact of satisfaction and words of mouth intentions in wine tourism context. Therefore, the social pressure did not decline the satisfaction- words of mouth intentions relationship.

Based on our findings, destination managers who want to enhance visitors' words of mouth intentions should improve visitors' involvement. To let them understand the meanings and importance of wine culture could be the first thing suggested by this study. Public Ads about wine culture and activities associated to promote the awareness and image of wine culture could be concerned the next.

For academia, this study had verified the relations among involvement, subjective norm, satisfaction, and words of mouth intentions in wine tourism context. The inner factor of involvement was evidenced to a determinate and moderator in predicting visitors' words of mouth in wine tourism context. However, the external factor, subjective norm, did not match the role playing of moderator. The reasons could be clarified by further studies. Moreover, the data used in this study only collected from Yibin while there are so many wine tourist sites in other cities. Data collection should content one more cities was suggested to further studies. Besides, the research framework only focus on three factors in predicting visitors' words of mouth intention. There should be one more effective factors could enhance the predicted power of words of mouth intention. For example, the social media issue could be explored by further studies.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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