Do we really remember the view? The cellar door schema and its contribution to memorable experiences: Recommendations for cellar door practices

Genevieve d’Ament a,*, Tahmid Nayeem b, Anthony J. Saliba a

a Charles Sturt University, School of Psychology, Faculty of Business, Justice, and Behavioural Sciences, Wagga Wagga, NSW Australia
b Charles Sturt University, School of Business, Faculty of Business, Justice, and Behavioural Sciences, Albury, NSW Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Consumer behaviour
Wine tourism
Cellardoorscape
Marketing
Bayesian
Constructivist grounded theory
Mixed methods
Convergent design

ABSTRACT

The importance of enjoyable, memorable cellar door experiences is well-established in the literature. The winescape, which incorporates views, building design, and ambience is recognised as a central motivation for wine tourism and the most repeated content in word-of-mouth communication, a valuable marketing tool. Recent research has prioritised human interaction, which develops a connection as the most important component of the cellar door experience (d’Ament, Nayeem, & Saliba, 2022). The current study expands previous research methodologies, adopting memory work and cellar door surveys in a mixed methods approach to explore the cellar door schema and its influence on cellar door expectations, assessments, purchases, and future positive word-of-mouth communication. A constructivist grounded theory approach was adopted to analyse participant memories. A Bayesian network was produced from 136 cellar door surveys to determine the influence of cellar door schema on purchases and intention to engage in word-of-mouth communication. The results supported recent findings that the human element is the most remembered and valued; it fosters a connection, strengthens brand attachment and creates enduring customers. The winescape, while important for grounding the memory, is less prominent in recollections. Additionally, the results demonstrate the importance of word-of-mouth as a contributor to cellar door schemas. Recommendations are made for cellar door managers and staff who strive to create memorable cellar door experiences for their customers.

1. Introduction

The winescape, incorporating cellar door views, interior and exterior design and ambience, has been recognised as “what visitors will remember the longest and talk about the most in their word-of-mouth communications with others” (Bruwer & Reilly, 2006, p. 50). Understanding winescape is therefore crucial as what we remember and go on to talk about creates and reinforces the schemas (i.e., mental shortcuts used to organise information into categories) we have for various experiences in our lives. Winescape research revealed that natural beauty is frequently cited as the most critical motivational element among wine tourists. Bruwer and Alant (2009) found the scenic beauty of the Paarl Wine Route in South Africa to be the most important characteristic of 12 wineries in the region to attract wine tourists. When searching for perceived winescape dimensions, Bruwer et al. (2017) found that the winery’s natural beauty and geographical setting “far out-weighs all other dimensions” (p. 172). Consequently, Bruwer et al. (2018) suggest showcasing views when designing buildings. Social aspects, such as the importance of staff and human interaction, were mentioned in these papers but as secondary considerations. Even the variable ‘ambience’ referred to climatic conditions and the ability of the winery to counter extremes through building design rather than any socially generated atmosphere.

This prioritisation of built environmental factors in creating cellar door experience (CDE) has recently been challenged; it may not be the only important factor or even the most important factor. For instance, customer eye-tracking has revealed that not all customers look at the view during their CDE (d’Ament, Saliba, et al., 2022). In contrast, a wave of new research has underlined the importance of human interactions in the CDE. Williams (2021) has proposed cellardoorscape as a discrete “-scape” to elevate the unique properties of the human resource of a CDE (p. 246). A qualitative analysis of over two thousand

* Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: gdament@csu.edu.au (G. d’Ament), tnayeem@csu.edu.au (T. Nayeem), asaliba@csu.edu.au (A.J. Saliba).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2023.113611
Received 23 May 2023; Received in revised form 14 October 2023; Accepted 20 October 2023
Available online 21 October 2023
0963-9969/© 2023 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).
Trip Advisor reviews of wineries in the Okanagan Valley of British Colombia, Canada, prompted the addition of social and human interaction to the existing categories of Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) 4 E’s of Consumer Experience (Joy et al., 2021). Another qualitative study found that the human connection created during the CDE could either increase purchases and word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations when positive or decrease purchases and create WOM warnings when negative (d’Ament, Nayeem, et al., 2022).

Charters et al., (2009) found the co-created connection between staff and customer to be the most important contributing factor to enjoyable CDEs, but these findings have only recently been objectively confirmed using lightweight wearable eye-trackers during the CDE (d’Ament, Saliba, et al., 2022). Although the extent literature has focused more on winescape and CDE than cellar door staff, emerging research has shown that staff are vitally important to the overall assessment of a positive CDE (Gómez et al., 2018; Quintal et al., 2015). If increased sales and WOM recommendations are desired, there may be a need to give staff equal credence to design and environmental considerations, thus generating a need to understand how best to support cellar door staff to engage customers and create a positive and memorable CDE.

Important questions now emerge: does the human element eclipse winescape in visitors’ recollections (either positive or negative)? How important are these recollections to assessing CDEs, purchases, and future WOM recommendations? To our knowledge, the content and influence of cellar door schemas on purchase and WOM consumer behaviour have not been explored in depth. The current study adopts a mixed methods approach, using memory work and Bayesian networks to identify the content of recollections and the influence of recommendations of CDEs. It analyses those aspects of CDEs most remembered and talked about post-visit, to determine which contribute to customers’ cellar door schemas and the impact of those schemas on future cellar door experiences. This exploration will determine if it is essential to include pre- and post-visit communication and WOM marketing into the concept of the CDE.

2. Theoretical underpinning

Schemas are individual collections of a person’s knowledge of different events in their world (Bartlett, 1932). Each experience creates another memory, adding detail or confirming known aspects of each schema, creating shortcuts to build anticipation of, or assist decision-making in future events (Needham & Jacobson, 2020). Such decision-making has been explored in wine industry research using the schema incongruity effect (Lanseng & Sivertsen, 2019) where schema congruency with a wine product was evaluated, and the influence of prior knowledge on the assessment of a wine during a tasting experience is acknowledged (Parr, 2019). Further exploration of cognitive representations of words relating to wine descriptors has revealed that experiences significantly influence an individual’s internal representations of still and sparkling wine-related concepts (Shepherd et al., 2023). Festinger’s (1962) cognitive dissonance theory (i.e., the psychological discomfort created by differences between cognitions) was used to understand CDE evaluations, which contribute to developing schema (d’Ament, Nayeem, et al., 2022). Their finding that the tensions resulting from expectations of CDEs are resolved through connections developed by human interactions supports that individual schema not only influences decision-making but is continually updated and refined with each new experience or communication of new information. New information can be received via WOM, which is recognised as a powerful marketing tool created during staff and customer interaction throughout a winery visit (Bruwer & Reilly, 2006).

How are the schemas encoded in our memories impacted by information received via WOM, or how does memory interact with future thinking? Is it important to understand the possible impact of WOM on anticipated or future events in the context of CDE? Frankenstein et al. (2020) investigated the influence of information consistent or inconsistent with memory on the future thinking or expectation of others (i.e., social targets). While previous research had predominantly focused on the self in certain situations or on product evaluation, their study focused on how we might predict a social target’s future behaviour based on information learned about the target, asking: if WOM information was inconsistent with reality, do we then reform our memory and expectation to the target performing that behaviour? It was found that memories for outcomes consistent with previously learned information were superior to those inconsistent. Memories of outcomes consistent with the participant’s expectation were similarly superior. However, outcomes inconsistent with expectations could gain a memory advantage. Memory for inconsistent outcomes was strengthened if those outcomes were considered unexpected. For example when a person’s behaviour differs from how we expect them to behave, the new behaviour replaces the previously expected behaviour. Therefore, if a CDE is consistent with expectation, memories are expected to be stronger, and the information would reinforce a CDE schema. However, if a CDE was unexpectedly inconsistent with an established schema, the new experience would be remembered, and the CDE schema could be altered to accommodate the newly discovered information. Customers acting on WOM would generally attend in response to positive WOM; therefore, an enjoyable experience would be remembered. However, a negative experience, being inconsistent with expectations created by positive WOM, would still gain a memory advantage and add to a CDE schema while risking future WOM warnings. However, is that an important consideration if what is most remembered and talked about is the landscape and architecture?

Agapito et al. (2017) found that interaction with people during a tourism experience was only mentioned in recollections six months post-visit but not during surveys completed in situ, which could explain the consistent findings that winescape overshadows personal interactions as most studies were conducted immediately after the conclusion of the CDE (e.g., Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012; Bruwer et al., 2017; Quintal et al., 2017). Interestingly, where significant positive effects were found between winescape, service staff and wine tourist attitude, surveys were completed post-visit (Quintal et al., 2015). While we cannot control the natural landscape beyond maximising appreciation through the building design (Bruwer et al., 2018), research raising the possibility that social discourse impacts future recollections of CDEs supports the need to investigate the prevalence of human interaction factors in recollections and the impact resulting cellar door schema have on expectations and WOM communication.

3. Defining the experience

Another important consideration is determining when the CDE begins and ends. It has been assumed that the CDE begins with the arrival at the winery, before the wine tasting in the cellar door, and extends until the customers depart the winery (Bruwer et al., 2013). However, wineries that employ a dedicated staff member to manage their post-visit and wine club communications have increased cellar door sales post-visit (Szempter, 2018) leading to an understanding in the current study that engagement with a winery begins with the first contact through WOM or online investigations through to post-visit engagement either via wine club or post-visit newsletters and purchases. Consequently, clear non-jargonistic communication from the first moment of a visitor’s introduction to the winery is likely important. Clear communication is an key consideration as wine is an information-dense product, and the wine industry has been perceived as exclusive and mysterious, with the average customer feeling quite out of depth, believing they lack the required knowledge and are further intimidated by imposing cellar doors and impertious staff (d’Ament, Nayeem, et al., 2022). While research has expanded the winery experience beyond time spent tasting (Bruwer et al., 2013) an aspect of the communication of information that is overlooked is the individual’s internal self-talk or schema, their understanding of what a CDE should be, which, like
comparing competing experiences, all are compared to their schema compiled from previous experiences. The importance of this internal communication to the appreciation of and purchase arising from the CDE will be explored in this study.

The study aims to investigate the extent to which pre- and post-visit communication and WOM marketing contribute to customers’ CDE schemas. In doing so the research will answer two research questions:

- To what extent do customers’ recollections of human interaction factors (i.e., conversation) shape CDE schema?
- How important are these recollections to the CDEs, the purchases made, and future WOM recommendations compared to other winescape factors (i.e., building, interiors, or view)?

4. Method

4.1. Ethics

Based on the guidelines in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Source: National Health and Medical Research Council), ethics approval for the involvement of human subjects in this study was granted by Charles Sturt University Human Ethics Committee on 2nd December 2020 (protocol number H20350).

4.2. Mixed methods approach

In response to suggested future directions for research to explore how we communicate our wine-related experiences (Parr, 2019), the current study aims to provide an understanding of several psychological phenomena present during a CDE. Psychology-related studies often adopt quantitative frequentist statistical methods to test for the occurrence of a phenomenon at various levels in a certain percentage of the generalised population (i.e., ANOVA, SEM, regression analysis). However, reliance on such a methodological approach can restrict the depth of investigation and may not reveal the antecedents of these phenomena and how they might influence expectations of future experiences. Studies of tourist motivations have encountered similar shortcomings with relevant literature focusing on factors in isolation, resulting in calls for more expansive methodological approaches (Campos et al., 2018). Adopting a mixed methods approach enables a more detailed understanding of the phenomena and allows for an exploratory enquiry (So et al., 2018). The aims of the current research are best served by adopting a mixed methodology with a qualitative memory work component coupled with a quantitative cellar door survey. A convergent design will be followed, collecting and analysing the data from two separate sets and then comparing and interpreting the results of each without preferring either qualitative or quantitative approaches. Analysing data collected during temporally different experiences of a CDE facilitates a holistic understanding (see Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, p. 65). In the current paper, the two data sets will be presented separately—memory work followed by the cellar door survey—and will include the method, analysis, and results sections before the comparison and interpretation of the results are presented in the discussion.

As the experience we are exploring is created by two or more actors, each bringing unique experience and understanding, a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT; Charmaz, 2015) methodology (see Fig. 1) is most suitable. CGT is suited to applied studies in ‘real world’ settings, as it is not constrained to test within controlled parameters but allows the exploration of uniquely constructed experiences (Charmaz, 2015). Each participant responds to questions based on their memories, experiences, expectations, and knowledge. As such, the current study is not focusing on a CDE at a winery, the memory work called for recollections from any cellar door and the survey collected data in various cellar doors across several wine regions in southeast Australia. Allowing us to explore the experience that has occurred once, twice, or multiple times provided a more comprehensive understanding of the cellar door customer. Further, both the CGT and Bayesian analysis methods being used recognise the value of prior knowledge, which utilises the extensive experience in the qualitative study discipline and the strong commitment to communication within wine and tourism research of all three researchers.

4.3. Memory work

4.3.1. Participants and method

The memory work component was based on a study conducted by Stone et al. (2018) and involves asking participants to provide their most memorable CDE. No direction was given as to the positive or negative nature of a CDE recollection, just the most memorable. No minimum or maximum word limit was placed on the written response. Contact was made via email using winery databases or contacts of the researchers, with a link provided to an online form constructed in the online questionnaire program Survey Monkey. A snowballing strategy was used to maximise participant numbers with contacts of the researchers invited to participate and invite their contacts to participate (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). Memories were submitted via the online form with a total of 49 memories submitted; one was discarded as it did not describe a CDE. Participants were asked a single open-ended question: “Of all your cellar door experiences, both in Australia and abroad, please share your story of the most memorable. Please write in the third person and include as much detail as you can remember about the experience.” The advantages of using memory work as opposed to netnography for example, is that participants were able to write with anonymity, their accounts providing an unprompted memory of their experience, in contrast to many online review systems which give prompts to aid reviewers. Furthermore, a memory work approach reduces the possibility

![Fig. 1. Constructivist Grounded Theory as a method.](image-url)
of including reviews generated by artificial intelligence (Toumi, 2021).

4.3.2. Data analysis – Constructivist grounded theory method

Memories submitted online were de-identified by the lead researcher. Emergent coding (where codes are drawn from texts) was used to find themes using NVivo software. The data was then systematically analysed, following the approach developed by Charmaz (2014) including initial coding, focused coding, generating categories and memo writing.

Content analysis is a qualitative analysis technique used to compress many words of text into a few categories based on explicit rules of coding (Stemler, 2001). The coding process used ‘clause’ level coding following coding schemes (Saldana, 2021), specifically focusing on words, sentence structure, and symbolism (semiotic) to evaluate perceptions and motivations. This study used the technique to explain participants’ feelings and sentiments while retelling their CDE (Grant et al., 2013).

4.3.3. Findings

The analysis of memory scripts submitted online revealed wine quality, engaging staff, and opportunities to increase wine knowledge to be recalled in detail contributing to emerging themes. Participants were asked to recall their most memorable CDE. As such, two negative experiences were submitted. Both negative memories were related to the behaviour of the staff, only detailing their interaction with the staff member and no other information given as to the wines being tasted, the built environment, or the view. The five main findings in this study were: inclusive connection, winescape grounds the memory, sharing of knowledge, emotional energy and value versus cost. These will now be discussed with italicised quotes taken from participant recollections.

4.3.3.1. Inclusive connection. Participants often recalled being engaged and connected with staff, beginning with a warm welcome. The welcome led to conversations in which stories of the vintage, the history of the winery and, seemingly most treasured, the staff member’s story were told. The intimidation customers felt in the presence of grand structures and at the perceived requirement of in-depth wine knowledge, seemingly allayed by a welcoming smile, was well articulated. Memories told of their feeling “privileged” for being “treated like family”, recognising “authenticity in the interaction” and finally “leaving elated”. At no point did the building, view, a barrel, or bench inspire verbose description. A view described in detail only once as “an old stone walled garden” with most views briefly mentioned as beautiful.

4.3.3.2. Winescape grounds the memory. Although not the focus, the building or landscape is important for the storyteller to ground their memory, providing a setting for the relationship at the centre of the memory. The built environment was generally mentioned when describing an action of the social group “we were taken to the cellar” and “sitting enjoying delicious new wines in a simple setting” or “sitting on hay bales” or simple descriptors “the building was divine”. The natural environment was similarly referred to with simple descriptors “beautiful surroundings” or “landscape and the cellars were magical” and created a sense of the space rather than a clear image.

Descriptions of the winescape were not always included in memories. When the winescape was mentioned it was typically conveyed in far less detail than the human relationships experienced or the wines which were tasted. As can be seen in the word clouds in Fig. 2, view was not mentioned in the top 100 words. The top 20 words predominantly relate to wine and people. However, the relationship co-created with staff, the building, and the natural environment were all included when memories conveyed a sense of peacefulness.

4.3.3.3. Sharing of knowledge. Memories of enjoyable experiences contained detailed descriptions of meeting with a winemaker or knowledgeable staff who were able to not only provide technical wine education but develop deeper connections through sharing the stories and history of the winery and the wines being tasted. These connections increased trust in the wines, any recommendations made, and the brand “we all still look for and buy their wines”. The staff member’s personal pathway to the wine industry was especially valued. Whether the staff member was embarking on a new career, had vast experience and was educating future generations, or was the new generation, these stories fascinated and were recalled in detail.

4.3.3.4. Emotional energy. A distinct difference was noticed in the writing style and words used between memories of experiences where the staff and wines were recalled in detail with either no or brief mention of the winescape and those recollections that included references to the winescape. Memories focused on wine and people were more purposeful and engaged and communicated a more intense energy; winescape was mentioned only briefly, if at all. Memories that included winescape were less effusive in their descriptions of the experience, providing a more rounded recollection with all elements mentioned equally “lovely views… local wines…local produce…easy parking…lovely sunny aspect…warm and inviting.” These more generalised memories could have been about any enjoyable tourism experience and did not convey any sense of excitement about the wine.

4.3.3.5. Value versus cost. A distinction between cost and value was conveyed in the memories. The monetary value of the wine or experience was commented on in positive memories where the participants had been made to feel welcome, had been told the story of the winery, felt included and respected, or experienced what they perceived to be an exclusive or rare occurrence or special insight into the mysterious ways of a winemaker. However, the cost was conveyed repeatedly when the participant experienced poor customer service, and those participants left without purchasing wine, “The employee assigned to our experience (of the value of $20) was very disengaged … paid the $20 and left after one

---

Fig. 2. Most frequent 20, 50, and 100 words used to describe memorable CDE.
A Bayesian network model was developed to understand the relationship of schema on expectations, sales and intention to recommend (WOM). A concept model was developed from the data collected in cellar doors across Australia (see Fig. 3), with dependent and independent variables connected by the expected direction of influence on and between variables.

Netica 6.09 for Bayes nets was then used to develop a Bayesian network model (see Fig. 4). Clean data sets were converted from Excel files to a format recognised by the software, with node groupings decided and linked depending on the relationship determined by the lead researcher.

The current study focuses on one part of the overall CDE survey, with all variables from the cellar door survey built into the Bayesian network. The aim of this study was to discover the impact of schema on expectation, sales, and WOM, therefore only variables associated with those outcomes are reported here. An advantage of adopting a Bayesian approach for survey data is the ability to make specific observations of network segments (Kaikkonen et al., 2021; Pollino & Henderson, 2010).

Analysis of 136 complete questionnaires was completed, creating a Bayesian network (see Fig. 4). The joint distribution calculations for all variables contained within the network means any variable may be appointed an outcome variable, allowing inferential analysis to be completed for each level (i.e., 3 to 6 bottles, 100 to 200 Australian Dollars (AUD), very likely) of different outcomes (i.e., bottles purchase, total spend, recommendation respectively) for each category (e.g., range 0–11) of independent variables (e.g., wine club memberships).

Sensitivity to findings of each outcome variable relevant to the current article is shown in Table 1. Each outcome variable is then addressed individually, with greater detail provided in separate tables for those variables that the outcome variable shows the greatest sensitivity of findings of the variables from the Bayesian network being considered in the current study.

4.4.2. Quantitative results

The number of bottles purchased is most sensitive to purchase expectations, wine club memberships, and the frequency of visits to the winery (see Table 2); however, sensitivity to wine club memberships and visit frequency was only half that of expectation.

Higher-than-expected purchases were associated with the highest purchase amounts, meaning most customers purchased in line with their expectations. The sensitivity to wine club membership would suggest people who regularly purchase wine tend to be enduring customers. The frequency of visits reflects that many customers are first-time visitors to the winery and therefore their expectations are based on a cellar door schema rather than prior experience at the winery.

4.4.2.2. Bottle number purchased. The number of bottles purchased is most sensitive to purchase expectations, wine club memberships and wine knowledge (see Table 3). In line with ‘total spend’ higher bottle numbers were associated with purchases above expectations and single bottle purchases were associated with lower-than-expected purchases with the result not as strong as for higher bottle numbers. Similar to ‘total spend’ a sensitivity to wine club memberships indicates that people who regularly purchase wine, purchase wine at cellar doors. Possible self-rated wine knowledge scores range from level 1 novice to level 8 expert with the novice rating most associated with zero bottle purchases. Higher than average bottles purchased were associated with a self-rated wine knowledge more so with expert than novice self-ratings.

4.4.2.3. WOM intentions CDE. Most participants (81.9 %) intended to engage in positive WOM for their CDE. Intentions to recommend CDE were most sensitive to the expectation of wine quality, frequency of...
purchases at boutique wine shops, and expectations of the CDE, with the WOM intentions being similarly sensitive to all three. (see Table 4).

Participants rating wine quality and CDE expectations well above and above expectations were more likely to engage in WOM for the CDE. Participants rating wine quality and CDE expectations below and well below expectations were unlikely to recommend the CDE and would possibly engage in negative WOM. Participants who regularly purchase wine in boutique retail settings were more likely to engage in positive WOM.

The results for the expectation of wine quality and CDE for the small
percentage of participants unlikely to engage in WOM (3.84%) indicate that as the quality was as expected or better, factors outside these measures were more influential to their intention to engage in WOM.

4.4.2.4. WOM intentions winery. Most participants (92.5%) intended to engage in positive WOM for the winery. Intention to recommend the winery was most sensitive to the expectation of wine quality, the expectation of CDE, and self-rated wine knowledge (see Table 5).

Participants rating wine quality and expectations of CDE well above, and above expectations were more likely to engage in WOM for the winery. Wine quality rated below expectations had greater influence and above expectations were more likely to engage in WOM for the winery. Intention to recommend the winery is more sensitive to expectations of wine quality. Participants with greater self-rated wine knowledge were more likely to engage in WOM for the winery, similarly to WOM for the CDE.

5. Discussion of findings and results

The current study aimed to discover which aspects of the cellar door experience contribute to customers’ cellar door schemas and if it is essential to include pre- and post-visit communication and WOM marketing into the concept of the CDE. Two separate methods, one exploring the influence of expectation and established purchase behaviour during a CDE, the other determining the most memorable elements of a CDE, provided both insight to and the influence of a CDE schema. The results and findings will now be compared and interpreted to answer the research questions: To what extent do customers’ recollections of human interaction factors (i.e., conversation) shape CDE schema? Customer connection with staff and, through staff’s knowledge, the winery, was a strong theme emerging from the memory work. The second research question, how important CDE recollections are to purchases and future WOM recommendations compared to other winescapes factors such as the interior or view? The Bayesian analysis showed individual’s CDE schema influences spending and intentions to recommend the experience. As discussed in the findings below, starting with the Bayesian network, it is important to recognise how all co-creators in a CDE, both staff and customers, contribute to customer CDE schema and how such knowledge can inform the development of positive CDEs.

The Bayesian network provided a mathematically coherent chart depicting the influence and associations between independent and outcome variables. It was found that expectations, purchase behaviour, and self-rated wine knowledge were influential. These measures all reflect the self and contribute to the interpretation of the environment which with which participants build their schema of a CDE and find their place within that experience. New experiences, create new memories, update the schema and can create, confirm, or strengthen a connection (Frankenstein et al., 2020). Each point of contact during a winery experience updates an individual’s schema and as Bruwer and Reilly (2006) stated, these points of contact create marketing content for WOM. How connected a customer feels, their sense of belonging or being welcomed into a new experience constantly updates their schema. The boundary of the winery experience has slowly expanded from the tasting experience to including the arrival and departure (Bruwer et al., 2013) and more.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total spend</th>
<th>Bottle no. purchased</th>
<th>WOM CDE</th>
<th>WOM Winery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectation purchase</td>
<td>28.20</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>6.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation cellar door experience</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>12.70</td>
<td>9.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation wine quality</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>14.80</td>
<td>13.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine knowledge</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of retail purchases</td>
<td>11.40</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of boutique purchases</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>9.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total spend</th>
<th>Expectation purchase (28.20%)</th>
<th>Wine club memberships (14.60%)</th>
<th>Frequency of visit to the winery (14.20%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUD M 133 ± 150</td>
<td>Well above</td>
<td>Above</td>
<td>As expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–20</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>9.94</td>
<td>64.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–50</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>14.80</td>
<td>32.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–100</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>71.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100–200</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>47.70</td>
<td>44.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200–380</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>15.10</td>
<td>31.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380–500</td>
<td>24.50</td>
<td>41.40</td>
<td>27.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500–750</td>
<td>45.10</td>
<td>26.70</td>
<td>11.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottle number purchased</th>
<th>Expectation purchase (21.40%)</th>
<th>Wine club memberships (17.60%)</th>
<th>Wine knowledge (12.50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUD M 3.87 ± 3.2</td>
<td>Well above</td>
<td>Above</td>
<td>As expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.470</td>
<td>4.480</td>
<td>82.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>7.400</td>
<td>63.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>10.900</td>
<td>74.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>29.000</td>
<td>65.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–6</td>
<td>4.730</td>
<td>59.900</td>
<td>34.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>16.800</td>
<td>32.700</td>
<td>48.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–14</td>
<td>26.400</td>
<td>32.800</td>
<td>39.300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Sensitivity of findings for ‘Recommend CDE’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOM</th>
<th>CDE</th>
<th>Expectation wine quality (14.80 %)</th>
<th>Frequency Boutique Purchases (12.90 %)</th>
<th>Expectation cellar door experience (12.70 %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Well above</td>
<td>Above</td>
<td>As expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>(62.0 %)</td>
<td>51.500</td>
<td>41.400</td>
<td>7.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>(29.9 %)</td>
<td>18.700</td>
<td>51.700</td>
<td>24.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>(4.12 %)</td>
<td>28.600</td>
<td>17.900</td>
<td>35.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>(1.92 %)</td>
<td>61.400</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unlikely</td>
<td>(1.92 %)</td>
<td>23.100</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>38.400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Sensitive to findings for ‘Recommend Winery as a whole’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOM</th>
<th>Winery</th>
<th>Expectation wine quality (13.70 %)</th>
<th>Expectation cellar door experience (9.49 %)</th>
<th>Wine knowledge (9.43 %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Well above</td>
<td>Above</td>
<td>As expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>(63.0 %)</td>
<td>51.000</td>
<td>39.600</td>
<td>9.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>(28.5 %)</td>
<td>20.000</td>
<td>54.200</td>
<td>23.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>(7.17 %)</td>
<td>28.200</td>
<td>20.500</td>
<td>20.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>(1.29 %)</td>
<td>42.800</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
recently pre and post-visit online communications (Szentpeteri, 2018). These considerations should now include WOM (see Fig. 5).

Over the past two decades, Bruwer and colleagues have contributed valuable research to the field in relation to WOM and the CDE. Their research has consistently shown the importance of all aspects of the cellar door to brand awareness and the need to work in conjunction with wine tourism to continue to expand the consumer base (Ip-Soo-Ching et al., 2019). The current project adds to that body of work and extends the importance of WOM to demonstrate its unique role in developing brand attachment to not only individual wineries but the wine industry.

The winescapes, the buildings, views, and vineyards provide a context for that schema. However, the connection is co-created through the dyadic relationship between staff and customers. Our findings support recent eye-tracking research conducted during CDEs, which found participants’ visual attention to be held by people, predominantly faces (d’Ament, Saliba, & Nayeem, 2022). The fact that faces held visual attention makes sense as staff are the connection with the winery through which information about the wine being tasted flows. The importance of providing adequate staff training cannot be understated here as participants with greater self-rated wine knowledge were more likely to engage in WOM marketing for the winery.

A sense of belonging or connection was prevalent throughout the recollections of enjoyable CDEs. Conversely, there was a notable absence of connection with staff in the negative CDEs recalled. Arrogance or ignorance inhibits the connection from developing. Customers can arrive expecting extensive wine knowledge to be a pre-requisite for feeling relaxed and welcome in a CDE. Therefore developed CDE schema may prevent future wine-involved customers from visiting wineries. Take one example from the data:

“thought it might have been an awkward thing to do not being a knowledgeable wine person... friendly relaxed ambience was crucial for an enjoyable experience”.

A new experience incongruent with this participant’s schema changed their understanding of CDEs. Alternatively, the dissonance between their ability and perception of required abilities to enjoy an experience had been dispelled. An inclusive connection should, therefore, be a goal of each interaction, not just within the CDE but at each point of contact in the winery at every stage: pre, during, and post-visit.

While these self-imposed barriers can be removed with a welcoming smile, a stronger connection and trust are built by staff who can engage the customer and provide wine and winery-related knowledge commensurate with the customer’s needs. Just as customers may arrive with self-imposed barriers, staff can construct almost insurmountable walls through condescension or a barrage of impenetrable or incorrect jargon. In contrast to the previous example, an experience that did not meet expectations, where staff were disengaged and ignorant, was not enjoyed and emphasised the cost. Therefore, staff unable to connect with a customer risk altering the schema whereby future CDEs could be considered a cost risk rather than a value-added experience. That value can be in the form of wine knowledge, friendship, the discovery of a new favourite varietal, or wine club, all of which contribute to positive WOM, a great story to share with friends and family, thus extending brand attachment.

6. Conclusion

The current study has shown the importance of consistently developing a wine-focused customer-centred connection during the cellar door experience. CDEs should provide knowledge about the winery, and the wines they produce. Staff need to determine a customer’s interest and engage appropriately with the customer’s abilities to foster a connection with the wines and the winery, building trust in the brand. CDEs that fail to build this connection risk fracturing the developed schema of the customer, reducing trust, revisitation, and continued involvement with the brand, and creating negative WOM.

The winescapes is less prominent in recollections of CDEs but was still found to be necessary for providing context for a memory. Cellar door management cannot rely on spectacular natural beauty, or impressively proportioned structures to create enduring customers. Enduring customers are created through building a relationship via the connection developed with staff during CDEs. The current study has established that developing this connection was paramount.

Future research could address the staff cellar door schema focusing on staff and management workplace experiences, as this remains unexplored. The cellar door building and daily experience contribute to a workplace schema and, therefore, may place a greater emphasis on a built environment, which could impact their focus on the human connection so valued by customers. As the CDE human resource has emerged as an essential asset, understanding the needs of cellar door staff to ensure staff retention would benefit the industry. Future research could address these with a focus on staff and management workplace experiences. The findings of the current study provide clear evidence of the importance of informed and engaged staff for co-creating positive cellar door experiences. The good news for businesses is that unlike the large architecturally designed cellar door, staff training and retention is a manageable cost, and the financial payback is likely to be many orders of magnitude greater.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Genevieve d’Ament: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Project administration.
Tahmid Nayeem: Supervision, Writing – review & editing. Anthony J. Saliba: Supervision, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.
Data availability
Data will be made available on request.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the assistance of Gang Xie for his guidance and tutoring on Bayesian networks, and the editorial assistance of Mark Filmer.

References


