

The Measurement for the Service Quality of Rural Wineries

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Providing quality service is critical for winery operation. However, there are still some concerns unsolved regarding the management of service quality in winery operation, such as the measure of service quality is not consistent and highly mixed that different conceptualizations and indicators are used. The current study aims to identify the key service attributes for enhancing tourist satisfaction and loyalty in wine tourism, as well as to compare the efficiency of the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF models for measuring wineries' service quality. The statistical results indicated that reliability and tangibles are the determinants for both tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Meanwhile, the SERVPERF model explains more variance for tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Wine tourism is defined as tour visitations to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows, and is associated with a broad range of tour activities (Hall & Macionis, 1998; Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Yuan *et al.*, 2005). Due to its manifold economic benefits, such as creating more job opportunities, increasing the value of agricultural production, as well as facilitating the re-structuring of local regions, many countries, like Australia, the U.S.A., South Africa, Thailand, and so on, have attempted to develop their respective tourism business for their wine industry (Batra, 2008; Beames, 2003; Bruwer, 2003; Economist, 2008; Hanagriff & Lau, 2007).

In fact, many wineries are depending on visitors and cellar door sales to survive. Carmichael (2005) found that 70% of the wine tourism visitors purchased wine at the winery. In the cases of most of the wineries visited, cellar door sales represented 70-80% of their total sales. Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu and Haydam (2004) studied wine tourists in South Africa and found that of the visitors' expenditure on wine tourism, 53.1% was attributable to wine purchases, 26.1% to restaurants and food, and an average of 8.3% was spent on curios and gifts. Wine tourism also functions in marketing promotion for the wine sales of wineries. Through wine tourism-related activities, such as wine tasting, vineyard tours, and local cultural experiences, wineries are able to educate their visitors knowing about their wine and brands, while also having good opportunities to interact with their customers to foster good customer relationships (Bruwer, 2003; Getz *et al.*, 1999; Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004; Martin & Williams, 2003; Williams & Kelly, 2001). All these come with the consequences of increases in wine sales and brand promotion in the short term, and ultimately their impact on the visitors' loyalty toward the wineries in the long term. Obviously, the development of wine tourism is very important for the wine sales of wineries. Therefore, how to attract visitors is a very important concern of the winery managers.

O'Neill and Palmer (2004) suggested that the quality of wine is not the only reason for the success of wineries. It was found that recommendations and/or previous experiences determined the visitors'

decisions regarding which wineries to visit; the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations and previous experiences was even greater than that of the published materials, such as travel guides, magazines and travel publicity/brochures (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu & Haydam, 2004). Moreover, for some wineries, the majority of wine tourists were found to be repeat visitors. When Carmichael (2005) investigated the visitor behavior in related to the wineries within the region of Niagara, Ontario, Canada, he found that 56.9% of tourists were repeat visitors. Meanwhile, most of the repeat visitors returned between two and five times per year, and 8% returned more than 12 times per year. It is thus clear that, discovering how to satisfy and delight the visitors, in order to generate the synergy of good word-of-mouth recommendations and visitors' loyalty, is very decisive for the success of wineries. Service quality may be the key.

Although the importance of service quality has been proved in the case of wine tourism, as in the case of the influence of the brand equity of the winery (Nowak, Thach & Olsen, 2006), the visitors' wine purchasing decisions (O'Neill, Palmer & Charters, 2002), and other successful elements of wineries (Hall & Mitchell, 2002; Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004; Martin & Williams, 2003; O'Neill & Charters, 2000), there are several problems that need to be faced in regard to the service quality management in wine tourism. First, the measure of service quality is not consistent and is highly mixed for the market of wine tourism, where different conceptualizations, indicators and criteria are used (Cole & Illum, 2006; Eraqi, 2006; Reisinger & Waryszak, 1994). Second, since key service attributes related to the consumers' overall perceived service quality vary from business to business (Gupta & Chen, 1995), to find the key service attributes which are critical for tourist satisfaction and loyalty is essential for wineries to succeed in wine tourism. Third, since the enhancement of service quality usually costs money, how to balance the cost and gain is critical for the management of the service quality of wineries. Besides, the component of the value chain in tourism is complex that many external industries are involved in strategic alliances with regard to the value delivery system, namely, travel agencies, tour operators, carriers, hoteliers, restaurants, etc. Therefore, the control of service quality becomes more challenging for the managers in the wine tourism than in the other service sectors (Eraqi, 2006).

Even though service quality is important for the success of wineries and there are still some critical problems unsolved regarding the management of service quality for of wineries, as described above, there has been little academic research conducted on these and related issues. This study therefore seeks to address this shortcoming. The objectives for this study are: 1) to compare the efficiency of the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF approaches, which are the two most well-known conceptualizations for the measurement of service quality, for the prediction of tourist satisfaction with and tourist loyalty toward wineries, and 2) to identify the key service attributes of the service quality of wine tourism by evaluating the effects of service attributes on tourist satisfaction with and loyalty toward wineries.

Even though wine tourism is not a new business for wine industry, there are still significant differences among the different regions with regard to knowledge about the development of wine tourism (Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Howley & van Westering, 2008; Mowle & Merrilees, 2005). In particular, wine tourism is a new growing industry for many countries, and how to link wine production with tourism to yield economic synergy is still a goal that is being pursued by many winery owners and governments (Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Howley & van Westering, 2008; O'Neill, Palmer & Charters, 2002). More knowledge regarding the service quality of wineries is worth exploring and sharing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Service Quality of Wine Tourism

Wine tourists rely on word-of-mouth to decide which winery to visit (Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004). O'Neill and Palmer (2004) suggest that quality of wine is not the only reason determines the success of winery operation. Due to its effect on consumer satisfaction, brand loyalty and long-term behavior intention, service quality plays an important role for the success of winery operation.

As O'Neill, Palmer and Charters (2002) studied the relationship of service quality and tourists' behavior intention of purchasing wine, they found the service process factors were more closely related to

wine purchase rather than tangible elements. The importance of service quality to competitiveness of wineries has also been proved by other previous studies (Martin & Williams, 2003; Nowak, Thach & Olsen, 2006). O'Neill, Palmer and Charters (2002) claimed that there are several characteristics for the wineries which are different from other sector of service industry regarding service quality. For example, wine tourism involves customers visiting a vineyard where experience of tangibles and service production processes are an essential part of the service benefit.

Studies of service quality in tourism industry showed that key service attributes for enhancing tourist satisfaction and loyalty is varied with the ethnic cultures of the tourists, as well as the nature of tourism. For example, Atilgan, Akinci and Aksoy (2003) found the service attributes of assurance, tangibility, responsiveness and reliability had positive impact to discriminate Germany tourists' by the levels of overall satisfaction, and especially assurance and reliability had the highest weights. For the tourists of Russian, assurance, empathy, responsiveness, and reliability had positive impact to discriminate Russian tourists' groups divided with the levels of overall satisfaction, and especially assurance, empathy and reliability had strongest weights. Since consumers tend to use specific attributes or cues to infer quality, Gould-Williams (1999) used hotel service environment as a setting to study the impact of employee performance cues on guest loyalty, perceived value and service quality. The findings indicate that the employee performance cues in leisure, reception, housekeeping, room service and restaurant influence guest perceptions of service quality, and guest perceptions of service quality influence guest loyalty to the hotel.

The measure of service quality is not consistent and highly mixed in tourism marketing. Different standards, criteria or conceptualization are used in the measurement of service quality, like expert interview, TQM, SERVQUAL, importance-performance analysis, etc. (Cole & Illum, 2005; Eraqi, 2006; O'Neill & Palmer, 2004; Reisinger & Waryszak, 1994). As the component of value chain in tourism is complex that many external industries, like the travel agencies, tour operators, carriers, hoteliers and restaurants, are involved in strategic alliance for the value delivery system, the management of service quality becomes more challenge for the managers in winery industry (Eraqi, 2006). The importance of more research on the service quality of wine tourism for the wineries has been called by many researchers.

The Relationships among Service Quality, Tourist Satisfaction and Tourist Loyalty

In many marketing studies, service quality has been demonstrated to be the antecedent of customer satisfaction and loyalty across a broad range of business sectors, including the tourism industry (Atilgan, Akinci & Aksoy, 2003; Brady & Robertson, 2001; Caruana, 2002; Chadee & Mattsson, 1996; Cole, Crompton & Willson, 2002; Cole & Illum, 2006; Ismail *et al.*, 2006; Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007; Venetis & Ghauri, 2004). Brady and Robertson (2001) found that, in the fast food service industry, the effect of service quality on the consumer's behavioral intention, such as repurchase intentions, loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendation, was mediated by consumer satisfaction, and the relationship was consistent for consumers spread across different cultures. As Chadee and Mattsson (1996) studied the customer satisfaction for four tourism activities, including eating-out, hotel accommodation, renting a car and going on a sightseeing tour, they found that distinct quality factors were significant for different tourist encounters regarding the visitors' satisfaction judgments. Atilgan, Akinci and Aksoy (2003) also had similar findings that service quality was related to the tourists' satisfaction, and which service attributes were emphasized varied with the differences in the tourists' ethnic cultures.

Across different industry sectors, consumer loyalty is mostly portrayed from the aspects of good word-of-mouth recommendations, repeat purchases, and tolerance for price changes (Berry & Parasuraman, 1997; Binninger, 2007). Customer loyalty brings several financial benefits to the company, including saving on the cost of advertising in developing new customers, good word-of-mouth recommendations from the old customers, the increased sales volume from the old customers, and the avoidance of the impact of bad reputation among the customers; bad service quality always leads consumers to complain, reduce their purchases, or to switch their choice of purchase (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). Tourist loyalty for a destination is usually conceptualized in terms of repeat

patronage, switching behavior and word-of-mouth recommendations (Gould-Williams, 1999; Huang & Chiu, 2006).

In the tourism industry, service quality is also believed to be able to enhance tourist loyalty, in terms of spreading good word-of-mouth recommendations and repeating visits (Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007). Several empirical studies back up this belief. For example, Cole and Illum (2006) collected data from tourists of a rural heritage festival and found that performance quality influenced the tourist's behavioral intention of spreading good word-of-mouth recommendation and repeating visits via its influence on the quality of the tourist's experience and overall satisfaction. Yet again, Cole, Crompton and Willson (2002) studied the relationships between service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions among visitors to a wildlife refuge. Their study results verified that, at the transaction level, service quality contributed to visitor satisfaction, meanwhile both overall service quality and visitor satisfaction were found to directly influence the visitors' future behavioral intentions. Huang and Chiu (2006) also found that customers who had had satisfactory experiences with a tourist destination were more likely to exhibit positive behavioral intentions, leading to increased destination loyalty.

Due to its effect on the customers' satisfaction and loyalty, service quality always brings a resulting synergy in the form of repeat purchases, the customers' tolerance for price changes, the prevention of customer choice switching, saving on the cost of advertising, and avoiding the impact of a bad reputation (Berry & Parasuraman, 1997; Binniger, 2007; Cole, Crompton & Willson, 2002; Cole & Illum, 2006; Gould-Williams, 1999; Huang & Chiu, 2006; Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2007; Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996).

Debates over SERVQUAL and SERVPERF

Due to the characteristics of being highly intangible, heterogeneous and inseparable (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985), it is usually difficult for customers to claim their perception of service quality perceived, which in turn puts the service providers in a difficult position regarding the measurement and control of service quality (Gronroos, 1988). There are two very well-known theoretical conceptualizations for the measurement of service quality, namely, the perception-minus-expectation-based SERVQUAL approach and the perception-based SERVPERF approach. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988) claimed that consumer perception of service quality results from a comparison of their expectations in relation to the perceived service performance, namely, service quality represents the gap between the customer's expectation and perception of service performance. Based on the perception-minus-expectation conceptualization, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) developed the SERVQUAL scale to measure service quality according to five dimensions, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

However, there are arguments among scholars regarding the measure of service quality, and the validity of the SERVQUAL scale has been questioned in certain respects. For example, Cronin and Taylor (1992) tested the dimensionality of the SERVQUAL scale using confirmatory factor analysis with the samples being recruited from the banking, pest control, dry cleaning and fast food service sectors. Based on the study's results, they argued about the reliability and construct validity of the SERVQUAL scale. They also found that through the use of regression analysis the service quality measured by means of the SERVPERF scale explained more of the variation in the consumers' overall perception, compared with the service quality measured using the SERVQUAL conceptualization (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggested that the performance-based SERVPERF scale was better than the performance-minus-expectation-based SERVQUAL approach in terms of both the content validity and discriminant validity regarding the measure of service quality, and thus suggested using SERVPERF instead of SERVQUAL as the measurement instrument for service quality. The instability of the dimensionality of SERVQUAL was also raised by Babakus and Mangold (1992). Teas (1993a) also raised issues regarding the application of the SERVQUAL scale, such as the incongruence between the definitions for the "expectation" element and the "gap" conceptualization of the SERVQUAL scale.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994) defended the questions raised by Cronin and Taylor (1992) in terms of the conceptual issues, methodological/analytical issues and practical issues. They claimed that

misinterpretation of the conceptualization of SERVQUAL and inappropriate methodology in relation to the confirmation test lead Cronin and Taylor to misjudge the validity of SERVQUAL. Meanwhile, they claimed that the explanation in the literature that cited support for Cronin and Taylor's argument was questionable and the evidence provided by Cronin and Taylor (1992) was not strong enough to claim the superiority of SERVPERF. Regarding Teas' (1993a) argument for the SERVQUAL scale that the standards for the measurement of expectations and the operationalization of the standards were questionable, especially when the attributes measured were classical ideal point attributes, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994) responded that for most situations the proposed performance-minus-expectation approach was valid for the measurement of perceived service quality, except for certain special situations in when the attribute measured was a classical ideal point attribute.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire Design and the Measure of Variables

Questionnaires were used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaires were mainly composed of four sections, namely, the scale items for measuring the tourists' level of expectations for the service quality of the wineries, the tourists' perception regarding how well the service quality provided by the wineries was, the tourists' overall satisfaction and loyalty toward the wineries, and the tourists' socio-demographics. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the wordings of the questionnaire items were comprehensible and in an appropriate format. Based on the factor structure of the SERVQUAL scale, the service quality of the wineries investigated in this study was evaluated based on the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The component scale items for each dimension are presented in Table 2. The tourists' expectations and perception regarding the quality of various service attributes performed by the wineries visited were measured with the average of the tourists' agreement levels to the statements of the multiple scale items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The measurement of service quality was presented in two different formats. One consisted of the scores for the gap in the tourists' perception-minus-expectations for the service attributes of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, under the conceptualization of SERVQUAL theory. The other was recorded as the scores of the tourists' perception towards wineries' performance on the service attributes of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, a perception-based measure under the approach of SERVPERF theory.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) suggested that appropriate adaptation of the instrument may be desirable when a single service is investigated. Therefore, these scale items were adjusted according to the characteristics of wineries engaged in wine tourism to ensure their contextual validity. The consistent reliabilities for the scale items measuring the tourists' expectations regarding the service attributes of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy were 0.83, 0.82, 0.94, 0.86 and 0.90 using Cronbach's α , and 0.79, 0.85, 0.92, 0.87 and 0.89 for those measures of the tourists' perception of the service attributes of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, respectively, as shown in Table 2. It is obvious from these results that the internal consistencies for these scale items were qualified.

The tourists' satisfaction with and loyalty toward the wineries visited were also measured with the average of the tourists' agreement levels to the statements of the multiple scale items of tourist satisfaction and loyalty, based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Tourist satisfaction with a destination is defined as an affective state resulting from overall appraisal of the tourist psychological preference and pleasure towards the destination (Huang & Chiu, 2006). According to the definition, the variable of tourist satisfaction was measured using the items "I am pleased with the winery" and "I am satisfied with the winery," with a good consistent reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$). These two items are commonly used by the researchers to evaluate tourists' satisfaction (Clark & Maher, 2007; Cole & Illum, 2006). In marketing, consumer loyalty is illustrated mostly from the aspects of good word-of-mouth, repeat purchase, or tolerance for the price

change (Binninger, 2007; Berry & Parasuraman, 1997). Based on the fundamental definition of consumer loyalty in marketing, tourist loyalty for a destination is usually conceptualized in terms of repeat patronage, switching behavior and word-of-mouth recommendations (Huang & Chiu, 2006). Accordingly, tourist loyalty in this study was measured using the items “If there is an opportunity in the future, I will visit this winery again,” “I am willing to introduce this winery to my relatives or friends” and “This winery is worthy being introduced to other customers.” The consistent reliability among these scale items was 0.93 using Cronbach’s α .

Data Collection

Visitors from five wineries were selected for the survey. These five wineries were selected due to their having a typical operating style which was representative of the wineries in Taiwan, and they could be used as an example for the wineries engaged in wine tourism in Taiwan. Therefore, the data collected from the tourists visiting these five wineries were supposed to have the most representativeness in terms of the study’s objectives. Tourists from the selected wineries were asked whether they were willing to participate in the survey. Once they agreed to do so, they acknowledged the purpose of this study with a consent letter, and then they were instructed as to how to complete the self-administered questionnaires. Data were collected on weekends or national holidays, which were the times when most of the tourists actually visited the wineries. To maximize the generalizability of the data, visitors were sampled from different periods of time, namely, morning, noon, or afternoon, to ensure that the various types of visitors had an equal opportunity to be sampled. The entire survey took place between the middle of July and the end of September 2007. Most of the participants spent about 10-15 minutes completing the questionnaire. A total of 316 questionnaires were completed. After the deletion of the questionnaires that were completed by subjects who were under the age of 18, a total of 302 completed questionnaires were used for further statistical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

The distribution of the samples’ socio-economics was portrayed by means of a descriptive analysis. A paired samples *t*-test was applied to test the significance of the gap between the tourists’ perception and the tourists’ expectations regarding the service quality measured with SERVQUAL approach. The predictive power of service quality towards visitors’ satisfaction and loyalty was analyzed and compared for the approaches of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF, using multiple regression analysis. All statistical analyses were processed using SPSS (Version 15.0, SPSS, Inc., Chicago).

RESULTS

Profile of Samples

Among the participants, 43.7% were male and 55.0% were female. A further 1.3% of the participants did not report their gender information. The age distribution was 14.2% for those aged 18-24 years old; 27.8% for those aged 25-34 years old; 29.1% for those aged 35-44 years old; 20.5% for those aged 45-54 years old; 6.3% for those aged 55-64 years old; and 2.0% were 65 years old or older. Participants were sampled from different occupations, including the agricultural industry (3.3%), manufacturing (10.3%), commercial or service industry (29.5%), government employees (28.8%), students (12.6%), housekeeping (7.0%), the retired group (1.7%), and others (5.0%). About 2.0% of the participants did not report their occupation. In terms of the participants’ education levels, 2.3% were primary school educated, 5.6% junior high school educated, 27.2% senior high school educated, 54.6% college educated, and 10.3% graduate school educated. The income levels for the participants indicated that 36.4% had an average monthly income of less than NT\$ (New Taiwan Dollars) 30,000, 35.8% from NT\$30,001-50,000; 20.5% from NT\$50,001-80,000; 2.6% from NT\$80,001-100,000; 0.7% from NT\$100,001-150,000; while 1.3% had an average monthly income of NT\$150,001 or over. About 2.6% of the participants did not report their income level. The statistical results are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
THE SOCIO-ECONOMICS OF THE SAMPLE

Demographics	Sample (%)
Gender	
Male	43.7
Female	55.0
Missing data	1.3
Age	
18-24	14.2
25-34	27.8
35-44	29.1
45-54	20.5
55-64	6.3
65 or older	2.0
Education	
Primary school	2.3
Junior high school	5.6
Senior high school	27.2
College/university	54.6
Graduate school	10.3
Monthly income (New Taiwan dollars)	
NT\$30,000 and under	36.4
NT\$30,001 - NT\$50,000	35.8
NT\$50,001 - NT\$80,000	20.5
NT\$80,001 - NT\$100,000	2.6
NT\$100,001 - NT\$150,000	0.7
NT\$150,000 and over	1.3
Missing data	2.6
Occupation	
Agricultural industry	3.3
Manufacturing	10.3
Commercial/Service industry	29.5
Government employees	28.8
Students	12.6
Housekeeping	7.0
Retired group	1.7
Others	5.0
Missing data	2.0

Compared with the population census data for Taiwan, the sample included in this study had the characteristics of more females, mostly at the age of 25-54 years old and highly educated that 64.9% of the samples had their highest educational achievement at college or graduate school, and most of the samples had low- to middle-level income. However, the sample used in this study are found to be valid for research into tourist behavior in wine tourism, because many studies in the literatures have shown that visitors of wineries tend to have the characteristics of being middle-aged, highly educated and with above average income as suggested by most of the researchers (Dodd, 1995; Getz & Brown, 2006; Mitchell & Hall, 2001). From the literature, Carlsen (2004) found that most researchers suggested that wine tourists tended to mainly include those in older age groups in their 40s and 50s who had greater knowledge of wine and also tended to be more socially aware, although a few researchers did suggest that wine tourists

tended to be younger. Batra (2008) studied the specific preferences and characteristics of wine tourists in the PB valley winery in Thailand. The study results also indicated that the majority of the respondents were between 40-49 years of age and had a higher level of income. However, Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) suggested that wine tourism age demographics and psychographics varied from region to region. Dodd (1999) surveyed the winery visitors in Texas and his samples revealed demographic characteristics where 54% were female, the mean age for the sample was 40 years old, and 77% of respondents were under 51 years of age. Their respondents had considerably higher levels of education with two-thirds having been awarded an undergraduate or graduate degree.

Service Quality for the Wineries in Wine Tourism

The Comparison of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF Approaches

In this section, the service quality of the wineries in wine tourism is measured with the conceptualizations of SERVPERF and SERVQUAL and the outcomes are compared. The scores for tourist expectations regarding the service attributes of tangibles ranged from 3.92 to 4.12 (mean 4.01), whereas they ranged from 3.60 to 4.00 for tourist perceptions regarding the service attributes of tangibles (mean 3.70). Since the expectation scores were higher than the perception scores, scores for the gap in performance-minus-expectations regarding the service attributes of tangibles were all negative, and ranged from -0.11 to -0.47 (mean -0.31). As the statistical results of the paired samples *t*-test indicated that these gap scores were all significant, namely, the tourists' perceived service quality was significantly lower than their expectations. This result implies that the service performance perceived fell short of the tourists' expectations. Consequently, according to the conceptualization of SERVQUAL, it was assumed that there was not enough quality regarding the service performance in terms of the attributes of tangibles. However, the SERVPERF approach gave rise to a different interpretation. When measured in the context of the tourists' perceived service quality, the wineries' service performance in term of the attributes of tangibles was close to a "good" level (3.60 to 4.00 on a 5-point Likert scale). Obviously, SERVQUAL and SERVPERF scales could lead the evaluation of service quality to different conclusions. In this study, such a phenomenon also occurred in relation to all the other service attributes, namely, reliabilities, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, as illustrated in Table 2.

Tourists' expectations regarding the service quality evaluated in this study tend to be high. Such high scores may reflect the actual high-expectations from the tourists engaged in wine tourism, or may just be a biased result caused by the deficiencies inherent in the SERVQUAL approach. When explaining the pros and cons of the SERVQUAL scale, Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1991) claimed that the wording structure in the expectation section was intended to measure the customers' normative expectations, and thus the expectation scores tended to be very high. Teas (1993b) also argued that the original expectation scale in SERVQUAL was easily misunderstood by the respondents and that it may have led to a biased measure of service quality.

Although the SERVQUAL conceptualization indicated that the service quality of wineries did not meet the tourists' expectations, the measure for the tourists' overall satisfaction (a mean of 3.83 on a 5-point Likert scale) and loyalty (a mean of 4.02 on a 5-point Likert scale) revealed that tourists were largely satisfied with the wineries, and indicated a positive behavioral intention to revisit or recommend the wineries to others. The finding based on the measure of the tourists' satisfaction and loyalty conflicted with the study results generated by the SERVQUAL conceptualization. The conflict implies that the saturation point may exist for the service quality of wineries. The saturation point is the point beyond which further increases in service quality do not lead to increases in customer intention (Pérez *et al.*, 2007). In the present study, even though tourists' expectations are much higher than their perception of the wineries' service quality, the measures of the tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intention of loyalty are still positive. This may be caused by a saturation point which is likely to be at a level lower than the tourists' expectations toward the wineries' service quality. As a result, even though the tourists' expectations are not satisfied with the performance, according to the measure of SERVQUAL, the measure of tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty still exhibits a positive trend.

However, the measure based on the SERVPERF approach tended to match the conclusion derived

from the measure of the tourists' satisfaction and loyalty. When measured in terms of the tourists' perceived service quality, the scores for service quality ranged from 3.64 to 3.83 on a 5-point Likert scale, which was close to the satisfactory level when transformed into its semantic meaning.

When regressing the variables of service quality against tourist satisfaction, the adjusted coefficient of determination (adjusted R^2) for the regression model with the service quality measured using the SERVQUAL approach was 0.176, and was 0.423 for the regression model with the service quality measured using the SERVPERF approach, an increase of 2.4 times compared with the former one. The increase in the adjusted R^2 indicated that the service quality measured using the SERVPERF approach had better prediction power to tourist satisfaction. Similarly, the change in the adjusted R^2 for the tourist loyalty regression model illustrated that the prediction power for tourist loyalty increased by 2.8 times when the service quality was measured using the SERVPERF conceptualization, compared with when it was measured using the SERVQUAL approach. It is obvious from these findings that service quality measured using the SERVPERF approach explained a greater portion of the variance of tourist satisfaction and loyalty. In actual fact, when introducing the SERVQUAL scale, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) examined the predictive validity of the SERVQUAL scale for the consumers' overall quality ratings to a firm and their study results showed that the predictive power of the SERVQUAL scale was not good for some service industry sectors, such as banks and credit card companies. This study confirms that a similar situation applies to the business of wine tourism.

TABLE 2
SERVICE QUALITY MEASURED WITH SERVQUAL AND SERVPERF MODELS

Service attribute	Scale items	Mean of expectation	Mean of perception (SERVPERF Approach)	Mean difference (SERVQUAL Score)	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Tangibles	1: The equipments are updated.	3.923	3.604	-0.317	- 5.373	0.000
	2: The physical facilities are appealing.	3.933	3.604	-0.327	- 5.651	0.000
	3: The employees are well dressed and appear neat.	4.117	4.003	-0.111	- 2.164	0.031
	4: The physical facilities match the architecture of the winery.	4.080	3.604	-0.475	- 7.510	0.000
(Cronbach's α) (Mean)		($\alpha=0.83$) (4.013)	($\alpha=0.79$) (3.704)	(-0.307)		
Reliability	1: The wineries are sophisticated in wine brewing.	4.181	3.781	-0.397	- 6.850	0.000
	2: The wineries are confident about their skill in wine brewing.	4.146	3.821	-0.325	- 5.656	0.000
	3: The wineries are capable of providing good wines.	4.321	3.893	-0.415	- 8.243	0.000

(Cronbach's α) (Mean)	4: The wineries are capable of delivering the service demanded by the visitors.	4.073 ($\alpha=0.82$) (4.180)	3.667 ($\alpha=0.85$) (3.790)	-0.408 (-0.386)	- 6.746	0.000
Responsiveness	1: The employees are able to provide prompt service to the visitors.	4.047	3.676	-0.366	- 6.784	0.000
	2: The employees are willing to solve the problems for the visitors.	4.064	3.696	-0.366	- 5.812	0.000
	3: The employees are able to respond to the visitors' requests promptly.	4.027 ($\alpha=0.94$) (4.046)	3.635 ($\alpha=0.92$) (3.669)	-0.393 (-0.375)	- 7.273	0.000
Assurance	1: The visitors can trust the professionalism of the winery.	4.159	3.793	-0.363	- 6.526	0.000
	2: The employees behave in a professional manner.	4.122	3.769	-0.360	- 6.791	0.000
	3: The employees are polite.	4.176	4.034	-0.140	- 2.517	0.012
	4: The employees are well trained.	4.095 ($\alpha=0.86$) (4.138)	3.738 ($\alpha=0.87$) (3.833)	-0.360 (-0.306)	- 6.481	0.000
Empathy	1: Visitors' individual needs are emphasized by the employees.	3.939	3.640	-0.300	- 5.458	0.000
	2: The winery clearly knows about the needs of the visitors.	4.020	3.644	-0.383	- 6.744	0.000
	3: The employees of the winery can empathize with the visitors.	4.078 ($\alpha=0.90$) (4.012)	3.634 ($\alpha=0.89$) (3.639)	-0.441 (-0.375)	- 7.815	0.000

Key Service Attributes

Since the service quality measured using the SERVPERF conceptualization has a better prediction power for the tourist satisfaction and loyalty, key service attributes regarding the effect of service quality on tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty are illustrated using the regression models for which the service quality is measured with the SERVPERF approach, as shown in Table 3. The statistical results indicated that the service attributes of tangibles, reliability and responsiveness were significant for explaining the variance of tourist satisfaction, while the service attributes of tangibles and reliability were also significant for explaining the variance of tourist loyalty. Standardized regression coefficients indicated that the service attributes of reliability possessed the greatest weights for influencing the tourist satisfaction and loyalty. In terms of the prediction of tourist satisfaction, every unit increase in the tourists' perception of the winery's performance on the reliability attribute caused a 0.421 unit increase in the tourists' satisfaction, followed by the responsiveness and tangibles attributes whereby every unit increase in the tourists' perception of the performance of responsiveness caused a 0.219 unit increase to tourist satisfaction and every unit increase in that of tangibles caused a 0.173 unit increase in tourist satisfaction. In regard to the effect on tourist loyalty, every unit increase in the tourists' perception of the winery's performance on the reliability attribute caused a 0.575 unit increase in tourist loyalty, and every unit increase in that of the tangibles attribute caused a 0.150 unit increase in tourist loyalty.

The finding that the service attributes of reliability have the greatest impact to the tourists' satisfaction and loyalty indicates that professional staffs play an essential role in enabling wineries to succeed in wine tourism. Tasting wine, learning about wine and gaining more knowledge about wine are the main factors that motivate the tourists to visit wineries. All these motivations can be satisfied only when there are professional staffs available to teach the tourists knowing wine and tasting wine. From the aspects of customer satisfaction, the winery staffs should be professional enough that they need to be sophisticated in wine brewing, be confident regarding their skills in wine brewing, be able to provide good wines and deliver the service wanted by the tourists, what the service attributes of reliability refer to. The findings of many previous studies are supportive of this assumption. For example, with the data collected from the professionals in the fields of wine and tourism in Australia and the USA, Getz *et al.* (1999) pointed out that visitors visit wineries primarily for good wine, and meeting the owners and the winemakers is an essential part of the visitors' winery experience. They suggested that the professional staff were part of the winery appeal. Yuan *et al.* (2005) also found that tasting wine, experiencing local wineries and becoming familiar with wine were three of the top five reasons for visitors to attend wine festivals. In addition, data collected from the wine regions of Margaret River and Swan Valley in Australia indicated that different tourist clusters have different purposes and preferences for visiting wineries, but they have something in common in that they see the staff's competence and knowledge regarding wine or wine brewing as important for their winery experience (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). Carmichael (2005) studied the wine tourists' behavior within the wine region of Canada and found that tourists reveal very high expectations regarding the attribute of the staff's knowledge of the service quality of wineries. The wine visitors in the PB valley winery in Thailand also tend to seek information to know more about wines on their visits to wineries (Batra, 2008). Apparently, personnel with professional knowledge in wine are essential for satisfying these basic demands in wine tourism.

Service quality in regard to the attribute of tangibles was also a key to influencing the tourists' satisfaction with and loyalty toward wineries. Service attributes of tangibles refers to the quality criteria of updated equipment, appealing physical facilities, neat and well-dressed employees, and the physical facilities that appear to match the architecture of the wineries. All these attributes mainly concern the appearance of equipment, facilities and employees, which is very likely to influence the visitors' tour experience of the wineries. Due to this being highly related to tourist's winery experience, it is reasonable to see that the service quality in relation to tangibles is significantly related to tourist satisfaction with and tourist loyalty toward the wineries, as explored in this study. As service products have the characteristics of being highly intangible, heterogeneous and inseparable (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985), tourists may thus see the tangible attributes, such as the appearance of the equipment, facilities, employees, etc., as a reflection of the quality of some intangible service context.

Besides the service attributes of reliability and tangibles, the results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that the tourists' satisfaction with the wineries was significantly influenced by the service attributes of responsiveness as well. This was probably due to the fact that most of the wineries in wine tourism face the stresses of guest flow fluctuation, such as large numbers of visitors at peak times, large coach tours that arrive suddenly without making a reservation in advance, or the effect of seasonality (Carmichael, 2005). Therefore, prompt and accurate services, which are the service attributes emphasized in responsiveness, become critical for the tourists' satisfaction with the wineries. However, the service attributes of responsiveness were not found to have any significant effect on tourist loyalty.

The findings of this study have several valuable implications for the service quality management of wineries in wine tourism. For example, the significant effects of the attributes of reliability and responsiveness on the tourists' satisfaction and loyalty imply the importance of staff training in regard to knowledge about wine and service quality for being successful in wine tourism, since all these service attributes are essential to satisfying the tourists' need to find good wine, learn something about wine, as well as to deepen their experience of wineries and wine regions. Getz *et al.* (1999) suggested that a friendly and knowledgeable staff is essential when it comes to satisfying the tourists in wine tourism. If we look at the core function of wine tourism, namely, serving as a channel of direct sales of wine to customers, educating consumers to know wine and taste wine, and thus, in turn, helping extend brands to consumers and gaining income from wine tourism, etc., there is no doubt that the personnel who are professional in the wine field are essential in enabling the wineries to perform these core functions. Only when there are professional personnel available to educate the tourist to taste wine and know wine, can the wineries then exactly satisfy the tourists' demand in wine tourism, and thereby influence the tourists' intentions to purchase wine from the cellar door. In particular, recommendations from friends or relatives and wine tasting are the important factors that drive tourists to purchase wine, and meanwhile tourists in wine tourism tend to seek information on wine, such as information on the harmony of wine and food, which was found to be the most important reason for drinking wine from the point view of the tourists (Batra 2008). Therefore, Batra (2008) suggested that wine marketers should tap into their apparent desire

TABLE 3
THE STATISTICAL RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Dependent variables	Tourist satisfaction (mean=3.83)		Tourist loyalty (mean=4.02)	
	SERVQUAL	SERVPERF	SERVQUAL	SERVPERF
Measurement approach				
Service attributes				
Tangibles	0.127	0.173*	0.117	0.150*
Reliability	0.474*	0.421*	0.396*	0.575*
Responsiveness	-0.078	0.219*	-0.299*	-0.145
Assurance	-0.152	0.043	-0.087	-0.079
Empathy	0.079	-0.132	0.202*	0.110
Coefficient of determination (R²)	R ² =0.192	R ² =0.433	R ² =0.135	R ² =0.348
Adjusted coefficient of determination (Adj-R²)	Adj-R ² =0.176	Adj-R ² =0.423	Adj-R ² =0.118	Adj-R ² =0.336

*significant at $\alpha=0.05$

for further knowledge about wine, and in the meantime guidelines should be developed and provided to staff for handling the different wine consumer issues so that experienced and knowledgeable staff are involved in the tasting process. Personnel job training can usually improve the consumer's perception of the service quality performance of the tourism industry. As Garavan (1997) who studied the personnel interpersonal skills training for the improvements of service quality in the tourism and hospitality sectors pointed out, receptionists in an experimental hotel received instructions in social skills in the areas of appearance, job knowledge and customer relations, and the study's results showed that during the intervention stage, the receptionists' skill in greeting customers, the speed of service, personal recognition and appreciation were significantly improved.

CONCLUSIONS

The results from this study benefit the development of wine tourism by helping the winery managers define which conceptualization for the measure of service quality is more appropriate to use when thinking about the prediction of tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. This study also helps winery managers to define the key service attributes related to tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, and thus implements guidance in areas of weakness that allow the winery managers to employ essential improvements with a focus on service quality.

Regarding the measurement of service quality in wine tourism, this study provides two considerable concerns. First, the measures with the approaches of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF end up with different conclusions in relation to the wineries' service quality in wine tourism. It is recommended that practitioners of wineries choose the appropriate measurement approach based on the strategic goal of their service quality management. For example, if the goal is to boost tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, the perception-based SERVPERF approach will be more appropriate since it has stronger prediction power regarding tourist satisfaction and loyalty in wine tourism. Secondly, there seems to be a "saturation point" that exists regarding the relationship between the service quality and tourist satisfaction/loyalty for the wineries. Therefore, even though the tourists' expectations are not satisfied, the measure of tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty still exhibits a positive trend. As to what actually constitutes the saturation point for wine tourists is an issue that deserves further research in the future. It will be a valuable guideline for the winery managers to manage their service quality while still making a profit, since it will help the winery managers to get over unnecessary inputs while trying to enhance their service quality.

According to the statistical results, tangibles, reliability and responsiveness are the key service attributes influencing the tourists' satisfaction, while tangible and reliability also serve as the key service attributes for tourist loyalty. These service attributes either reflect the motivation or influence the experience of the winery tourists. It may be the reason why these service attributes are highly regarded by the winery tourists and have become the key to influencing tourists' satisfaction and loyalty.

Among those attributes, reliability has the largest weight in terms of influencing both tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. As regards the efficiency of service quality management, especially in circumstances where there are limited resources, winery managers can set up different priorities in relation to these service attributes according to their importance for subsequent synergy. Generally speaking, service attributes associated with personnel share almost the largest portion in terms of influencing tourist satisfaction and loyalty for wineries, and thus it is assumed that providing job training to personnel will be very important for the management of wineries in order to enhance service quality. The job training should focus on the professional knowledge in relation to wine, the personnel's enthusiastic attitude toward providing service both promptly and accurately, and the outward appearance of the personnel.

Besides the personnel elements, several tangible factors also need to be emphasized regarding the service quality of wineries. For instance, the equipment in the wineries should be up-to-date, appealing, and should blend in with the architecture of the winery. Meanwhile the employees should be well dressed and should appear neat, etc. All these tangible factors are related to the appearance of the wineries, and are thus very likely to influence the winery experience for tourists, so as to play an important role in terms

of tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

There are some limitations in the application of the study results. First of all, the respondents were sampled from the domestic tourists of Taiwan, and thus the conclusions derived from this study may be limited regarding the population variable, in so far as the possible impact of nationality on the study's results is concerned. In addition, wine tourism is still an infant industry for Taiwan. For the countries that are more advanced in the wine tourism business, such a study may reveal different results. However, there are still many important issues regarding service quality in wine tourism that deserve further study, such as what are the related benefits for service quality in wine tourism and what are the moderating variables that impact the relationship between service quality and its related benefits in wine tourism. Answers to these questions will help the practitioners in wine tourism find the best service quality strategies.

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