CREATING MEMORABLE TASTING ROOM EXPERIENCE:
SERVICE PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES

by

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Abstract

Wine tours and wine tastings are important components of the Okanagan tourism industry. For wineries to survive in today's increasingly competitive market, they need to satisfy not only the basic needs of consumers but also provide memorable experiences that "engage [consumers] on an emotional, physical, intellectual or even spiritual level" (Pine and Gilmore, 1998, p. 99). Providing the right type of experience with products, services, and accompanying marketing programs has become acutely important (Kotler, Bowen, and Makens, 2014).

Despite the widespread focus on and acknowledgment of the importance of memorable experiences, there is limited research on what exactly makes certain experiences special, extraordinary, and memorable. Furthermore, most consumer experience-related research has been conducted using quantitative approaches. In contrast, this study used a qualitative approach (Belk, 2006) to enhance previous findings on the factors required to facilitate memorable tourism experiences by exploring memorable consumption experiences in the wine context. Unpacking memorable consumer experiences in the wine context is critical to the success of wineries. Moreover, this process enables researchers and industry professionals to identify the various components of experiences and how they serve to transform consumers (Joy and Sherry, 2003). There are many wine consumer-related studies that focus on understanding visitors as wine buyers (Bruwer, 2004); however, the aim of this thesis is to provide a qualitative measure of the wine tasting experience from the service provider's perspective to examine critical success factors for the development and management of consumer tasting experiences.

In order to reach this goal, ethnographic data was collected using a combination of twelve in-depth expert interviews and participant observations at several wineries that focused on planning, delivery, and continued innovation of memorable experiences from the service provider's perspectives. These findings suggest that 'people' and 'process' are the most important marketing mix elements that contribute to memorable tasting room experiences for the general public. In addition, the study found that consumption experience is co-produced by customers and service providers. Together, service providers and customers were found to play a critical role in providing memorable tasting room experiences through the process of customization.

Lay Summary

Wine tourism is a key component of the Okanagan tourism industry. The Okanagan wine industry has grown significantly over the past fifteen years and attracts a broad range of tourists, who visit wineries and participate in wine related activities. The current study explores what wineries in the Okanagan valley (specifically those in the Kelowna area) do to create memorable customer experiences, satisfy customers' needs, encourage return visits, and increase customer loyalty. Study data was gathered from several sources, including from observations and interviews with wine industry professionals from five different wineries. The study focuses on the different types of customer experiences that wineries provide to differentiate themselves and their service offerings. The findings of this study will contribute to and fill specific gaps in the current knowledge of memorable experience creation in the context of wine tourism to benefit both wineries and consumers.

Preface

This thesis is an original work written in its entirety by the author, Seyee Yoon. Ethical approval to conduct this study was provided by the University of British Columbia Okanagan Behavioral Research Ethics Board under Project Title: Creating Memorable Consumption Experiences: Okanagan Winery Perspectives. Ethics Certificate #: H16-00631.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
who believe in my ability to achieve my goals.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Study Context

This thesis explores how wineries in the Okanagan valley are striving to provide memorable tasting experiences to consumers, specifically through tasting activities performed inside the tasting room. Offering memorable consumer experience is key to standing out from the competition and succeeding in today's experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), where studies show that people are willing to pay more for a better customer experience (Martins, 2012). In the face of rising customer expectations, traditional marketing strategies are no longer effective (Schmitt, 1999a). Consumers form "desired thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, perceptions, opinions, and experiences" (Keller, 2013, p. 14) with the company brand when the right type of experience is provided through the ideal mixture of quality products, excellent service, and accompanying marketing programs. Survival in today's economic climate and competitive retail environment requires more than just low prices and innovative products (Grewal, Levy, and Kumar, 2009). Customer experience also encompasses the pre-, during-, and post- consumption phases, and can occur both online and offline (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros, and Schlesinger, 2009). Further, different customers want different experiences, necessitating variety in experience offerings. As a result, the shifts towards an experience-based economy, and the intricacies that experience offerings include, mean that quality product and simplistic experience offerings are not necessarily enough to satisfy today's customers. Instead, wineries must provide a combination of quality products (tangibles), quality service, and ambience (intangibles) to create a better customer experience. Examples of such combinations include not only focusing on producing good quality wines but also offering different types of activities such

as wine tastings, tours, and other events (i.e. food and wine, yoga in the vineyard, sommelier led tastings, and so on) to meet customer expectations. Such a variety of activities helps to satisfy different customers' needs and wants, and attracts new visitors (both wine consumers and non-wine drinking tourists) to the winery. Of all winery activities, tasting wine has always the cynosure of the standard operations of a winery (Lesschaeve, 2007). The tasting room experience is particularly significant in wine tourism (Dodd, 2000) because the tasting room is where critical service encounters occur and where service providers get the chance to connect with their customers and create brand loyalty (Charters, Fountain, and Fish, 2009). This is especially true for small wineries that have limited resources for promotional activities and wineries that have more remote locations. Thus, for this study, the research focus is narrowed to practices observed in tasting room settings.

Several studies have emphasized key characteristics of wine tastings, although they have largely been focused on experiences from the consumer's perspective. Dodd (1995) proposes that attributes such as the friendliness, courteousness, overall service, and knowledge of the winery personnel are crucial elements in the tasting room experience. Additionally, O'Neill, Palmer, and Charters (2002) suggest that intangibles such as service, ambience of the tasting room, and experience matter more than tangibles such as wine quality. Moreover, Roberts and Sparks (2006) indicate that opportunities to interact with staff and learn about wine are crucial parts of the tasting room experience. Similarly, Ali-Knight and Charters (2001) assert that education is an important part of the experience for some visitors. This study attempts to fill the gap in these findings by focusing on wine tasting experiences from the perspective of the service providers. According to Schau, Muniz, and Arnould (2009), winery practices are linked to implicit ways of understanding, saying, and

doing things. Thus, exploring how wineries provide memorable tasting room experiences necessitates understanding the background of the wine industry within Canada and, specifically wine tourism and the Okanagan region.

1.2   Wine Tourism

According to the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (2012), tourism is one of the "most remarkable growth industries" (p. 2) and is a meaningful contributor to the provincial and national economy of Canada. With the global popularity of wine tourism, the industry has "increased, particularly in areas outside of traditional old world wine regions" (Carmichael and Senese, 2012, p. 159). Furthermore, visiting regions where actual production takes place (Dawson, Holmes, Jacobs, and Wade, 2011) is a growing motivator for many wine tourists. According to the Canadian Tourism Commission (2011), the tourism sector contributed approximately 2.1 percent of the national GDP in 2011. Tourism is also a primary economic driver throughout the Okanagan valley and the region attracts 3.5 million visitors per year (Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, 2016). Wine tourism includes tastings, tours, and wine festival events (Baldwin and Mellows, 2013). The annual Fall Okanagan Wine Festival alone attracts over 30,000 visitors to 100 events held at different wineries throughout the valley (Okanagan Wine Festivals, 2016). Many interested wine tourists engage in activities both indoors (i.e. wine tastings inside the wine shop) and outdoors (i.e. winery tours). While all activities are interconnected and contribute to the overall tourist experience, this study focuses on understanding what happens in tasting rooms to explore how memorable wine tasting experiences can be created.

1.3   The Wine Industry

The wine industry is one of the fastest growing industries in Canada and wine tours

and wine tastings are important components of the Canadian tourism industry (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2016; Getz and Brown, 2006b). The economic impact of the Canadian wine industry went from $6.8 billion in 2011 to $9 billion in 2015, representing an increase of 33 percent. Almost a third of the $9 billion comes from British Columbia's wine sector (Emmerik, 2017). Canada is not a major wine producing country by global standards, but the Canadian wine industry has grown significantly over the past decade (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2016). Between 2004 and 2012, sales of goods manufactured by the Canadian wine industry grew from $800 million to over $1 billion (representing a 31.2% increase) and direct employment in the Canadian wine industry inflated from 2,828 employees to 3,719 employees (see Figure 1).
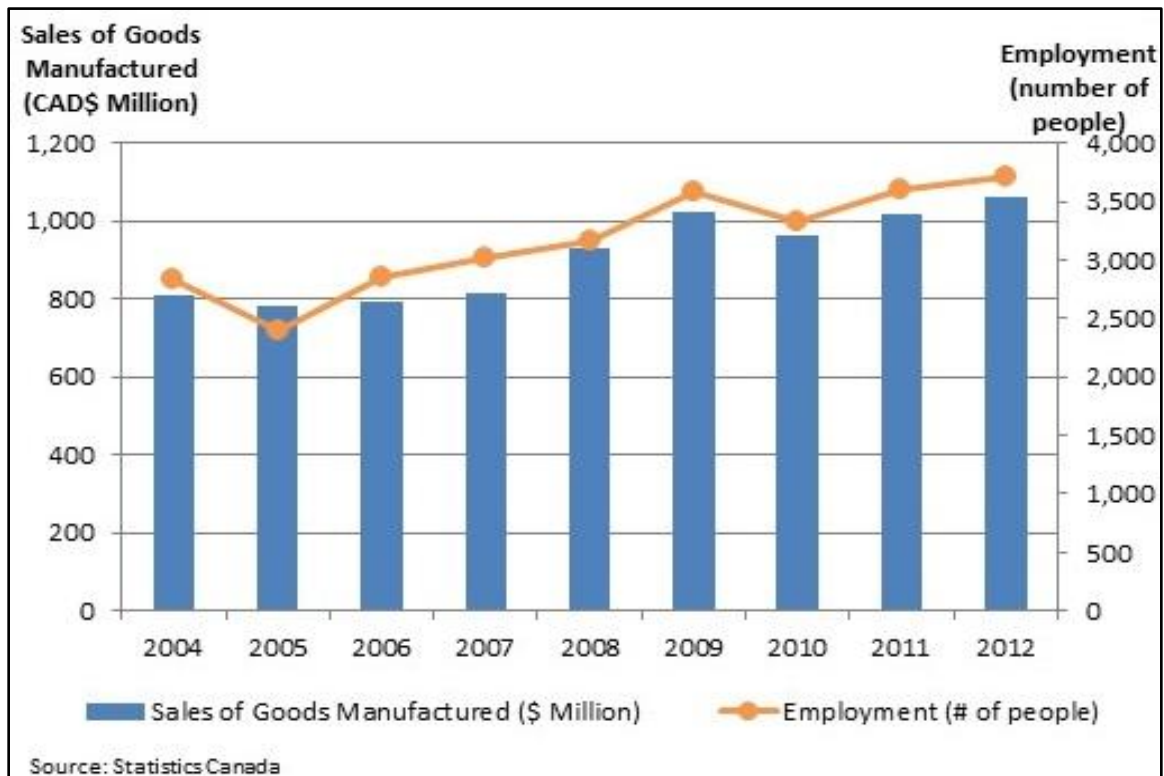
Figure 1 Canadian Wine Industry Sales (2004 - 2012)
Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2016).

The two largest wine producing regions in Canada are the Okanagan valley of British

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Columbia and the Niagara Peninsula region of Ontario. These regions have employed successful strategies to increase the number of first time and repeat visitors and the number of wineries have grown as a result (Tourism British Columbia Canada, 2009). According to Wines of British Columbia (2017b), there were only 17 wineries in British Columbia in 1990, but now there are about 344 licensed wineries in the province which, together, attract 800,000 visitors each year. The Okanagan valley contains 172 of these licensed wineries and Kelowna/Lake Country/West Kelowna area has 44 licensed wineries (Wines of British Columbia, 2017b).

1.4   The Okanagan Wine Region

The Okanagan valley stretches from Lake Country in the North to Osoyoos in the South (which lies near the United States border). Situated in the south-central interior of British Columbia, the Okanagan wine region is divided into six sections: Kelowna, Naramata, Okanagan Falls, Oliver, Golden Mile, and Osoyoos (Figure 2). Tucked between two mountain ranges, the Okanagan valley enjoys a rural character, dramatic vistas, and abundant outdoor adventures (Vancity Buzz Staff, 2014). As a tourist destination, the Okanagan has unique characteristics such as beautiful scenery, sunny and dry summers, and unique geography. The region's wine industry has led to significant economic growth in the Okanagan's tourism sector (Carmichael and Senese, 2012). The Okanagan wine industry is mainly composed of small and medium sized wineries. The five wineries chosen for the study are from the Kelowna area (Kelowna, Lake Country, and West Kelowna), which is shown in the map below (Figure 2).

Figure 2 The Okanagan Wine Region
Source: Wines of British Columbia (2017b).

1.5   Study Objectives and Research Questions

Despite the clear importance of customer experience, there is limited research on the

creation of memorable consumer experiences in the context of wineries and tasting rooms.

Although contemporary research has made considerable contributions to the study of wine

tourism and wineries, it has failed to answer key questions that would help producers to

assess the state of their wine experiences and modify accordingly: How do different elements

impact consumers' experience memorability in the context of the wine industry? How much does the person presenting the wine tasting influence the memorability of that experience? How does the ambience and atmospherics of the winery effect experience? The answers to these questions are key to determining how service providers can encourage the formation of memorable experiences (Saayman and van der Merwe, 2015).

According to Hemmington (2007), "customers do not buy service delivery, they buy experiences; they do not buy service quality, they buy memories" (p. 749). Gilmore and Pine (2002) argue companies need to provide experiences that are "engaging, robust, compelling and memorable" (p. 10). Exploring the practices that wineries use to provide memorable tasting room experiences can help enhance our understanding of memorable consumer experiences and help wineries to develop and sustain their competitive advantage. Practices encompass company procedures that include explicit rules, know-how, and staff understandings of what to say and do (Schau, Muniz, and Arnould, 2009). This thesis explores what key elements constitute memorable tasting room experiences and how wineries provide such experiences for consumers. Previous research concerning wine tasting room experiences is largely quantitative in nature (Nowak and Newton, 2006; Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013); further, studies designed with qualitative approaches primarily look at the phenomenon from a customer perspective (e.g. Charters et al., 2009). As a result, there are few qualitative studies that address tasting room experiences, and even fewer that do so from the winery's point of view. This study hopes to address this gap by contributing to a holistic understanding of wine tasting experiences and examining the phenomenon from the service providers' point of view.

The research questions guiding this study include the following: How is a memorable

wine tasting experience made possible? What are the key elements constituting such experiences? What are the differences in experience management between small and medium wineries? How do wineries provide consistent memorable tasting experiences for consumers?

The focus of this study is on answering these questions through studying how tasting room experiences are created for the public (referred to as 'random visitors') at both smaller and larger wineries. As a result, for heuristic purposes, small and medium sized wineries have been separated by the tasting room experiences they provide. Therefore, it is important to note that it is likely that the study's results would be different if the focus was on repeat customers/wine club members/wine experts. In this context, a wine expert is someone who has knowledge and extensive experience in wines (ASTM, 2005). While the study result does not represent the wine club member or repeat customer experience, key elements presented in this study provide a basic framework for future studies to determine memorable wine tasting experience creation.

1.6   Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into five major sections. Chapter One introduces the project and provides an overview of the study's context and research questions. Chapter Two reviews the literature around experience economy and memorable experiences in the context of wineries. Chapter Three outlines the methodology, data analysis, and the limitations of the study. Chapter Four provides study findings as per the research question: What are the key elements that constitute a memorable tasting experience? Chapter Five is the conclusion and provides a summary of the research findings, the managerial implications of these findings, and a discussion around suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1   Customer Experience

In this section, current knowledge of the customer experience is reviewed to provide context. The Oxford English Dictionary (2017) defines the term "experience" as "an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone" (n.p.). According to the holistic experiential view, marketers must offer stimuli that can trigger customers' experiences (Keller, 1993). Pine and Gilmore (1998), who were among the first researchers to present the concept of customer experience, defined an experience as a subjective engagement of an individual with an event on an emotional, physical, spiritual, and/or intellectual level. Customer experiences are thus a culmination of the customers' affective, emotional, social, and physical responses to the retailer (Verhoef et al., 2009). As a result, customer experiences are also influenced by the ways that consumers process information on experiential stimuli (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Customer experience is an internal and subjective episode that customers undergo when they interact directly or indirectly with a business, product, or service (Grewal, Levy, and Kumar, 2009; Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Beverland, 2009; Meyer and Schwager, 2007). Customer experiences consist of a "set of interactions between a customer and product, company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction" (Gentile, Spiller, and Noci, 2007, p. 397). These experiences occur when "a customer has any sensation or knowledge acquisition resulting from some level of interaction with different elements of a context created by the service provider" (Gupta and Vajic, 2000, p. 34). Consumer experiences take place not only in the interactions between customers and employees but also in those between customers and physical environments (Bateson, 1985; Kerin, Jain, and Howard, 1992).

2.2 Experience Economy

Today, our economy has become experience-oriented and experience is now a crucial differentiator and success factor for many companies. Pine and Gilmore (1999) introduced the concept of "experience economy," which they describe as a "new, emerging economy… based on a distinct kind of economic output" where "goods and services are no longer enough" (p. 11). Service providers thus need to adapt to engage a diverse range of consumers constructively with the world around them (Sherry, Kozinets, and Borghini, 2007). It is important for companies to understand what the offering means to consumers and how it can help fulfill consumers' interests and desires (Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Beverland, 2009). The idea of experience within a consumption context was first introduced by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and later by Pine and Gilmore (1999), who suggested that experience is a new type of company offering alongside product and service. Pine and Gilmore (1998) state, companies "intentionally use services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event" (p. 98). Abbott (1955 as cited in Holbrook, 2006, p. 715) notes,

> What people really desire are *not products* but *satisfying experiences*. Experiences are attained through activities. In order that activities may be carried out, physical objects for the services of human beings are usually needed. Here lies the connecting link between man's inner world and the outer world of economic activity. People want products because they want the *experience-bringing services* which they hope the products will render. (p. 40)

Pine and Gilmore (1998) further discuss the shift from an economy that sells products and services to an experience economy that sells memorable experiences. Companies have transitioned from an explicit focus on selling tangible goods and transaction services to a more holistic process that includes value-creating processes, intangible resources, specialized skills

and knowledge, and relationships. This new outlook privileges "interactivity, integration, customization, and co-production" (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, p. 11). Such a service-centered view emphasizes the importance of recognizing that the customer is always a co-producer and that value for customers is created through the relationships and interactions between customers and service providers (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Customers create value through their participation in different consumption settings (Schau, Muniz, and Arnould, 2009). Figure 3 shows how the economic focus has evolved over time.
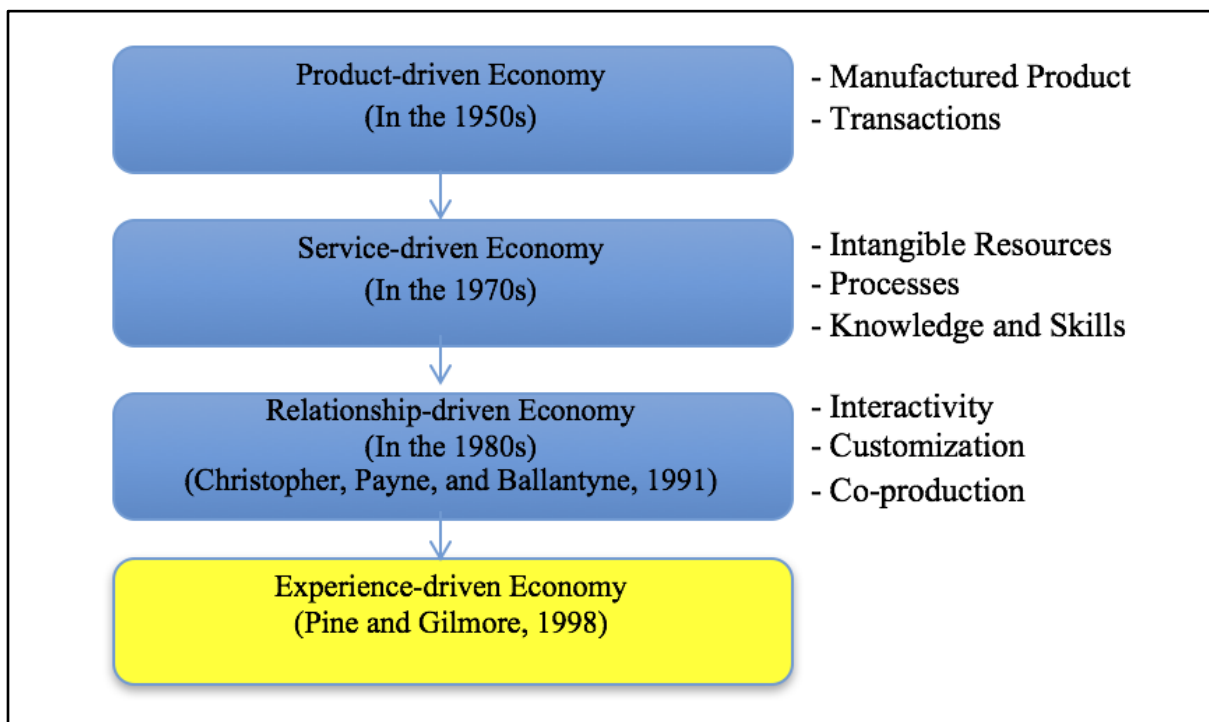
Figure 3 Evolution of the Economic Focus
Source: Adapted from Palmer, A. (2010, p. 197) and Christopher et al. (1991).

Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne (1991) argue that the focus for marketing-based competitive advantage has undergone some major shifts: from products, to services, to relationships. Palmer (2010) extended on Christopher et al.'s model. They argue that experience has become a particularly innovative and crucial differentiator for companies in

competitive markets, in which multiple companies provide similar products and services, target similar groups of customers, and/or have similar patterns of relationship (Palmer, 2010).

2.3   Memorable Experiences

A number of studies have investigated how consumer experience is connected to memory. For example, a store's ambient scent can result in emotion-based and somatic connections with memories and increase recall and recognition for a brand (Bosmans, 2006; Morin and Ratneshwar, 2003). Krishna, Lwin, and Morrin (2010) argue that product scent can help enhance memory for product information. Similarly, ambient sounds, such as music playing in the wine shop can influence consumer moods and increase memory for associated information (Krishna, 2012). Emotion influences memory (Riegel, Wierzbu, Grabowska, Jednorog, and Marchewka, 2016) and sensory marketing, which engages consumer senses, can help create subconscious triggers that, in turn, affect a consumer's "perception, judgment and behavior" (Krishna, 2012, p. 332). Tollington (1998) suggests that a consumer's perception of a particular environment is formed by information received by the consumer's senses. These findings suggest that different senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell) play crucial roles in creating an emotional association with a winery and forming positive memories of a winery and/or wine product. Consumer researchers have found that a winery's atmosphere, scenery, product quality, uniqueness, experiences offered, educational offerings, ability to foster social interactions, child-friendly features, amenity qualities, and entertainment options are important factors in determining tourist wine experiences (Saayman and van der Merwe, 2015). Schmitt (2003) suggests that people (service providers a.k.a. tasting bar staff), place (including décor, staging, and multi-sensory stimulation), and

product (including the quality of the wines and availability) are the keys to creating memorable tasting room experiences. Thus, this thesis defines memorable consumer experiences in the context of wine tourism as the result of a set of interactions with people, place, and product that leave an impression on the customer's mind (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

Recent research on memorable experiences and wine tourism has established the importance of the experience-focused economy to the success of the wine tourism industry. For example, Mitchell, Hall, and McIntosh (2000) claim that providing memorable customer experiences is central to success in wine tourism marketing. Furthermore, Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Beverland (2009) argue that superior customer experience is proportional to retaining a loyal client base. These findings suggest that wineries may benefit from including distinctive activities in addition to standard wine tastings, as providing higher quality customer service and offering higher quality products alone does not lead to a memorable experience.

Despite the reported importance of memorable customer experience to the success of the wine industry, relatively little is known about how memorable customer experiences are created in the context of wineries. Kruger, Viljoen, and Saayman (2013) define memorable experience as "one that the visitor not only remembers but also treasures long after the trip is over" (p. 148). This definition implies that experiences have mental and physiological outcomes. Joy and Sherry (2003) suggest that "intertwining mind and body is crucial for creating an unforgettable consumer experience" (p. 259). Poulsson and Kale (2004) argue that experience should be engaging, have personal relevance for the customer, and offer an element of surprise. This "wow factor" (p. 227) informs memorable experiences and is

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derived from the tangible and intangible attributes of a place (Pizam, 2010).

Contemporary research has identified that is essential for tourism companies to build positive memorable experiences, as they are linked to success factors such as revisiting intention and positive word of mouth (Woodside, Caldwell, and Albers-Miller, 2004), and competitiveness and sustainability (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Correspondingly, Pine and Gilmore (1998), who studied the emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of customer engagement, argue that distinctive customer experiences can help individual companies distinguish themselves in the marketplace. Thus, an increasing amount of scholarship has started to focus on the elements that comprise of memorable experiences (Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick, 2012). For example, Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) examine memorability as it relates to brand experience and further expand the dimensions of conceptualizing brand experience as "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (p. 52). Fournier (1998) argues brands need to provide meaning in consumers' lives. Additionally, Oliver (1997) suggests that memorable brand experience affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Further, Mitchell, Hall, and McIntosh (2000) argue that the attributes, themes, and activities of the winery are what make winery visits memorable. More recently, Saayman and van der Merwe (2015) introduce novelty as a factor for memorable experience, implying that customers' decision-making processes are based on enterprises that are unique and distinct. Moreover, Pikkemaat, Peters, Boksberger, and Secco (2009), and Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012) argue that education plays a role in memorable visitor experiences. Similarly, Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012), and Kozinets, Sherry, Storm, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit, and Deberry-

Spence (2004) emphasize that visitors want to be part of the process (customer involvement/co-production), and learning facts about the winery (Ali-Knight and Charters, 2001; Charters and Ali-Knight, 2000) can enhance the memorability of the experience. In other respects, Arnould and Price (1993) describe how emotions contribute to long lasting memories. Further, Charters et al. (2009) suggest that memorable tasting room experiences take place when customers have a genuine encounter with winery staff who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and able to offer personalized service. This combined research suggests that memorable experiences at wineries are constitutive of a variety of factors including the following: attributes, themes, activities offered, novelty of available services, education, emotional experience, and personalized service.

2.4   Memorable Experience Management

Experience management, departing from traditional marketing, stresses customer holistic experiences (where companies provide goods or services that provide a full customer experience) (Schmitt, 1999b). Many companies that focus on customer experience management try to build a competitive advantage through the experiences they offer. Tynan and McKechnie (2009) argue that successful experiences can be achieved by providing enjoyment, entertainment, and education. Schmitt (2003) defines customer experience management as "the process of strategically managing a customer's entire experience with a product or company" (p. 17) in such a way as to create value for the customer and the service provider. He describes that the experience management process consists of analyzing the experiential world of the customer, building the experiential platform, designing the brand experience, structuring the customer interface, and engaging in continuous innovation. Pine and Gilmore (1998) suggest that staging is at the core of extraordinary experiences. They

argue that designing the stage can vary according to different styles of experience, whether it is for entertainment, education, aesthetics, or providing a form of escape from everyday life. They draw specific attention to the importance of theming the experience, harmonizing impressions with positive cues, eliminating negative cues, mixing in memorabilia, and engaging all five senses. To achieve such a customer experience, Schmitt (1999a) proposes the use of Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), which centralize the creation of holistic experiences for customers and encourage customer experiences focused on sensing, feeling, thinking, acting, and relating to a company and its brands. Further, Prahalad and Ramswamy (2004) argue that "value creation is defined by the experience of the specific customer, at a specific point in time and location, in the context of a specific event" (p. 14). As a result, developing and managing customer experiences is challenging, given that experience is conditioned by differences between individuals, variations in an individual's emotional state, and situation specific factors (Palmer, 2010). Companies can try to mitigate these challenges by creating a stage or experiential context through working on their retail atmosphere and environmental design (Caru and Cova, 2007b); however, it is important to keep in mind that there are some elements that companies cannot control such as the presence of other consumers, the effect of crowds, and the customers' purpose for visiting (Verhoef et al., 2009).

2.5   Wine Tourism Experience

The tourist experience has become a focal point for contemporary tourism research and management (Tung and Ritchie, 2011); however, there's still a limited understanding of business practices that make certain experiences special, exceptional, and memorable (Grewal, Levy, and Kumar, 2009). Larsen (2007) described the tourist's experience as an

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individual's subjective, accumulated evaluation of events related to their activities, which include pre-event, event, and post-event. Verhoef et al. (2009) noted that the post-event timeframe is a significant determinant of customer experience in the tourism context. Wang (1999) stated that tourist experiences are not based on objects but rather on the personal feelings invoked by activities. Otto and Ritchie (1996) also add that tourist experiences can depend on the "subjective mental state felt by [customers]" (p. 166), wherein customer satisfaction is achieved through provoking positive subjective, emotional, and highly personal responses to various aspects of service delivery. In their research of white water rafting experiences, Arnould and Price (1993) find various significant themes in assessing overall satisfaction with a particular experience: communion with nature; communitas with friends, family, and strangers; personal growth; and renewal of the self.

Increased visitations to wineries have created a new tourism niche market in Canada known as wine tourism (Dawson, Fountain, and Cohen, 2011). Wine tourism has become a rapidly growing segment of the tourism sector within wine producing regions (Cambourne et al., 2000; Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall and Mitchell, 2007). Contemporary consumers expect not only good wines but also a greater overall wine experience. Wine tourism has been defined by visiting vineyards and wineries and attending wine festivals, where tasting wine and experiencing the attributes of the wine region are the focuses (Hall, Johnson, Cambourne, Macionis, Mitchell, and Sharples, 2000; Hall and Macionis, 1998). In the words of Getz, Dowling, Carlsen, and Andersen (1999), wine tourism is "a form of consumer behavior based on the appeal of wine and wine regions, and a development and marketing strategy for the wine industry and destinations in which wineries and wine-related experiences are the dominant attractions" (p. 21). Wine tourism experiences take various

forms, including "festivals, cultural heritage, dining, hospitality, education, tasting and cellar door sales, and winery tours" (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002, p. 312). Wine tourism allows consumers to go to the site of production and get information about how wine is made and what to look for when tasting, among other things (Carmichael, 2005). The growing interest in wine-related activities and the desire to visit wine-producing areas has contributed the strong emergence of wine tourism (Marzo-Navarro and Pedraja-Iglesias, 2010). With the growth of wine tourism, understanding the behaviors and characteristics of wine tourists has never been more important (Bruwer, Lesschaeve, and Campbell, 2012).

According to Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012), existing wine tourism research focuses on the motivations and satisfaction of tourists (Carmichael, 2005; Getz and Brown, 2006a); visiting winery tasting rooms; market segmentation (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002; Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, and Macionis, 2000); demographic or psychographic profiles of wine tourists (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu, and Haydam, 2004); marketing to tourists through wine routes (Bruwer, 2003); and festivals and events. Studies mostly centre on understanding visitors as wine buyers and their behaviors (Bruwer, 2004; Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002), measuring involvement and attachment to wine destinations as critical success factors to wine tourism destinations and events (Brown and Getz, 2005). Although considerable amounts of research on wine tourism has been conducted, research concerning memorable wine tourism experiences is still lacking (Orsolini and Boksberger, 2009; Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2012). Understanding what consumers want from a wine tasting experience is crucial (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002) to increasing wine sales, "visitor numbers, loyalty, and spending in the region" (Saayman and van der Merwe, 2015, p. 373). When wine consumers "receive the benefits they desire", their experience can influence their consumption and

purchasing behavior (Axelsen and Swan, 2009, p. 438).

2.6   Wine Consumers

Wineries attract a diverse mix of consumers that seek different experiences. Thus, it is important for wineries to understand who the visitors are, what they expect, and how their expectations can be more effectively met (Saayman and van der Merwe, 2015). Arnold and Reynolds (2003) note that consumer goals such as entertainment and social interaction play an important role in determining how consumers perceive the retail environment and various marketing mix elements. Similarly, Bruwer and Alant (2009) discuss how consumers search for enjoyment and pleasure in their wine tourism experience.

Wine consumers are often defined by different demographic characteristics such as age, gender, psychographic characteristics, values, attitudes, and lifestyle (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). For example, Bruwer, Li, and Reid (2001) note that wine consumers can be "demographically similar" but significantly different in terms of "behavior", "attitude", and "lifestyle" (p. 221). Further, Alant and Bruwer (2004) suggest that tourists visiting wineries are likely to be wine consumers in their everyday life and to engage in wine related activities in search of lifestyle product-related experiences. In some cases, though, consumer behavior may not necessarily be goal-directed as much as it is based on abstract concepts such as fantasies, feelings, and fun (Frow and Payne, 2007). Frow and Payne suggest that customer experience needs to be considered in terms of the "whole interaction over the lifecycle of the customer relationship, rather than limited to sales and service activities" (2007, p. 93).

2.7   Key Literature on Consumer Experiences

This section outlines key articles on customer experiences (Table 1).

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Table 1   A Summary of Key Articles on Customer Experience

Authors	Key Findings
Pine and Gilmore 1998, 1999	- "Experience Economy" and its Dimensions - Experiences are staged to engage customers in a personal way.
Csikszentmihalyi 1988, 1990	- Individual experiences are "unified, flowing from one moment to the next, in which he is in control of actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment, between stimulus and response, or between past, present, and future" (Cskikszentmihalyi and Cskikszentmihalyi, 1988, p. 95). - Flow is a state of experience which is characterized by an experience of intense concentration and enjoyment (1990)
Arnould and Price 1993	- "Extraordinary experience" is characterized by a high level of emotional intensity, triggered by an unusual event, and co-created by experts and consumers.
Vargo and Lusch 2004	- Service Dominant Logic - Emphasize the Importance of Co-Creation
Berthon et al. 2009	- "Experiential appreciation matures with time and experience – it has a developmental aspect" (p. 50). - Differentiation between the novice and the expert. (i.e. one develops a palate for fine wine)
Hirschman and Holbrook 1982	- "Hedonic Consumption" - Consumers seek pleasure and enjoyment that activates the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspect of experience.
Joy and Sherry 2003	- Skills acquisition over time and experience. - Flow experience and unconscious consumption. - Embodied self and imagination.
Schmitt 1999	- Strategic Experiential Marketing (SEMs) - Sense, feel, think, act, relate
Charters et al. Examples: - O'Neill and Charters, 2000 - Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002 - Charter, Fountain, and Fish, 2009	- Importance of quality service in wine tourism - Expectations of wine tourists - Affective characteristics of the winery experience

Pine and Gilmore (1998) introduced the concept of experience economy, which foregrounded

the idea that the focus of marketing has shifted away from products or services and towards

the customer's experiences. Pine and Gilmore (1999) explain how crucial it is to stage an

experience in line with customers' needs and demands. They further highlight that is

important for companies to differentiate themselves from competitors and argued that the

experience economy is the final stage of the economic progression, which is depicted in

Figure 4.
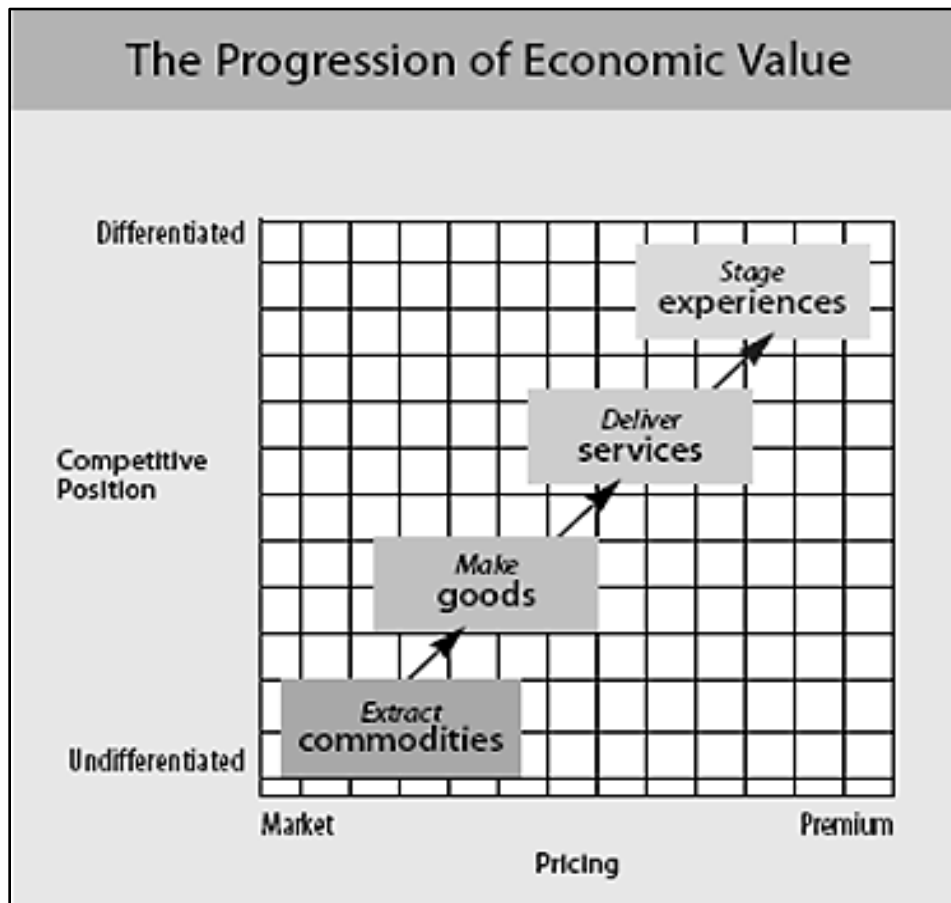
Figure 4 The Progression of Economic Value
Source: Pine and Gilmore (1998); (1999, p. 22).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) further suggest that consumer experiences occur "whenever a

company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props to engage an individual.

While commodities are fungible, goods tangible, and services intangible, experiences are

memorable" (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 11-12). In emphasizing the importance of staging

experiences, they argue that, while other economic offerings (products and services) can be

produced external to the consumer, "experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level. Thus, no two people can have the same experience because each experience derives from the interaction between the staged event and the individual's state of mind". (1998, p. 97). Pine and Gilmore (1999) present four realms of an experience namely, entertainment, educational, escapist and esthetic (Figure 5). These experiences are based on two axes: the level of customer participation (Passive and Active Participation) and the customer's connection with the event (Absorption and Immersion).
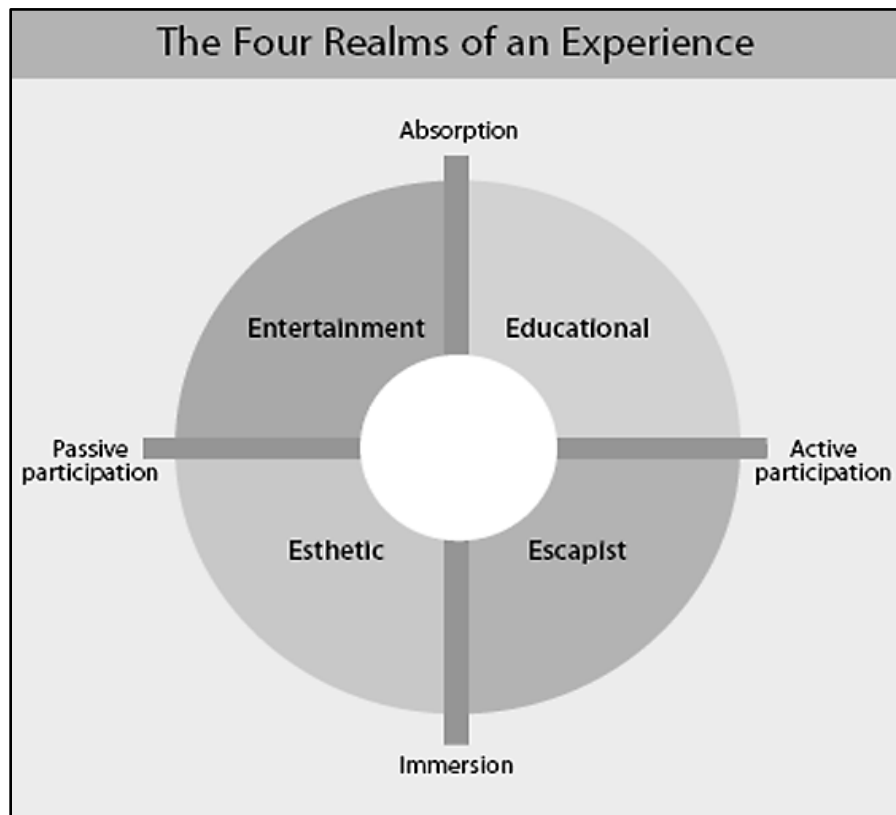
Figure 5 The Four Realms of an Experience
Source: Pine and Gilmore (1998); (1999, p. 30).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) contend that customer experiences can be divided into four types of experience listed above. These four experiences vary based on the customer's active or

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passive participation ("level of customer involvement") and on absorption ("occupying customer's attention by bringing the experience into the mind") or immersion ("becoming physically or virtually a part of the experience itself") in the experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 30-31). Furthermore, they argue that engaging customers physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, or spiritually in their interactions is key to creating a memorable consumption experience. Types of experiences related to the concept of memorable customer experience include optimal experience ("flow experience") (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 4) and "extraordinary experience" (Arnould and Price, 1993, p. 25). In his book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990), Csikszentmihalyi describes optimal experience as "a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like" (p. 4). He argues that a state of consciousness, called flow, is what makes an experience genuinely satisfying. Arnould and Price (1993) contrast this "flow experience" with what they call "extraordinary experience," where "extraordinary experience is triggered by unusual events and is characterized by high levels of emotional intensity and experience" (p. 25). They focus on key elements in delivering extraordinary experiences representing different participant perspectives in the service encounter. Arnould and Price (1993) also show that extraordinary experiences can also transform individuals. Their findings suggest that service providers (guide) play an important role in facilitating the customer experience and providing emotional content (including personal challenges, harmony with nature, and feelings of community). They contend that these two criteria are what make an event memorable for years after. Vargo and Lusch (2004) endorse service dominant logic and argue that customers are active participants in relational exchanges and the co-creation of value. They also assert that operant resources

(including knowledge, skills, and organizational processes) are the fundamental source of competitive advantage. Berthon, Pitt, Parent, and Berthon (2009) explains that the consumption of luxury brands are made up of functional (physical objects), experiential (thoughts, emotions and perceptions), and symbolic (social collective and language) values. Experiential value, in particular, highlights the personal and hedonic nature of luxury brands. They added that "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses" are evoked by brand-related stimuli and they form a brand experience (p. 48). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) define hedonic experience as "those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of product usage experience" (1982, p. 92). They emphasize that experience is the product of an interaction between the service providers and consumers. Joy and Sherry (2003) also argue that affect plays a central role in memorable consumer experiences. They assert that unforgettable experiences are created when both mind (including the unconscious mind and feelings) and body is involved. Joy and Sherry (2003) discuss embodiment as a means to understanding the consumer's response to an aesthetic experience. They contend that experience should engage all of the senses, reasoning, "if you use only one of the senses, you acquire one-fifth of the aesthetic experience" (p. 277). Schmitt (1999a) argues that companies need customers to sense, feel, think, act, and relate with the company and brands. They also assert that experiences are a result of service encounters that focus on the interaction between service provider and consumer and that, consequently, no two experiences can be the same. Schmitt (1999a) distinguished between the different types of experience that marketers can create for customers: sensory experiences, affective experiences, cognitive experiences, physical behaviors, lifestyles, interactions, social-identity (such as being part of a subculture, or a

brand community). They suggest that individual types of experiences need to be integrated

into customer experiences to create holistic experiences (represented in Figure 6).
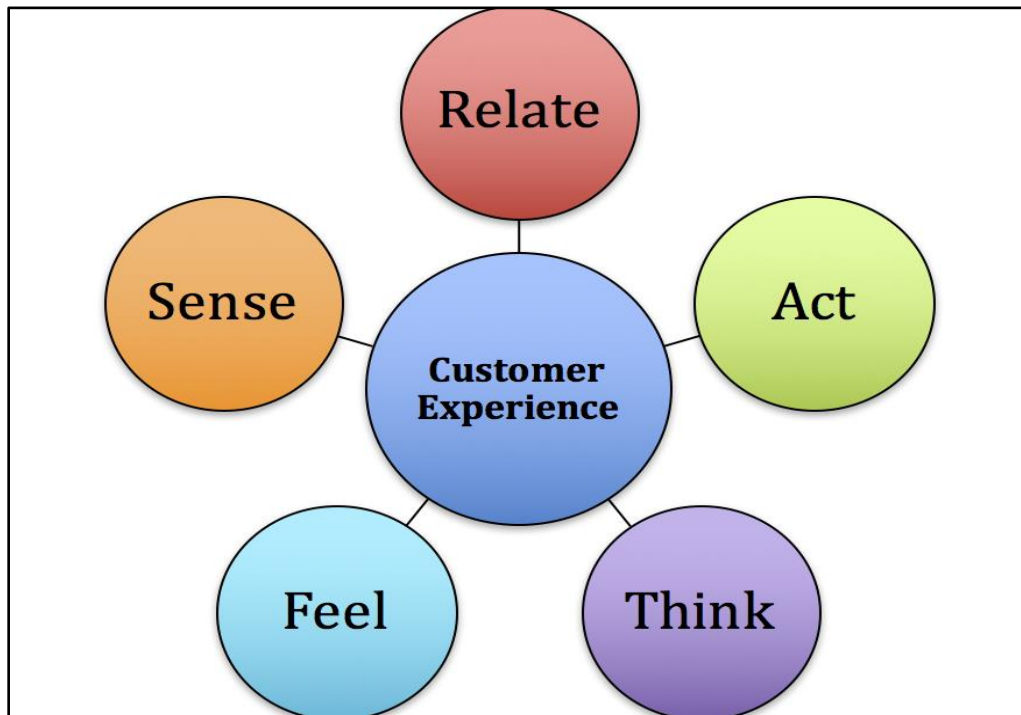
Figure 6 Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs)
Source: Adapted from Schmitt (1999, p. 60).

Charters' extensive research on wine tourism and wine marketing research provides

important insights on what is being studied in relation to consumer experience in the context

of wine tourism. Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) discuss the needs and expectations of wine

tourists. O'Neill and Charters (2000) argue that wineries have to provide "added value" to

attract customers (p. 115) and understanding the service quality is essential. Service quality

affects consumer satisfaction and influences behavioral intentions (Cronin, Brady, and Hult,

2000). Further, Charters and O'Neill (2000) emphasize that interactions with staff have the

most impact on customer experience and Carlsen (2011) asserts that "[t]he personality,

appearance, presentation skills, winery knowledge, rapport with customers and sales skills of

staff members are critical" (p. 286). Ali-Knight and Charters (2001) additionally emphasize

the importance of including an educational component in the service process. In addition, Charters and Pettigrew (2005) discuss the aesthetic dimensions of wine consumption. Charters et al. (2009) were among the first to study affective characteristics of the winery experience. They, in their qualitative research of visitor's experience in the tasting room, find that factors such as "friendliness, the welcome, and demonstrating a knowledge and passion for the wine and winery enhance the visitor experience in the tasting room" (2009, p. 131).

2.7.1   Gaps in the Literature

While these key studies provide important insights to the facilitation of consumer experiences in retail and wine tourism settings, there are a number of shortcomings. Pine and Gilmore (1998) emphasized the importance of staging experiences. They argue that companies make customer experiences memorable by intentionally using products and services to engage individual customers. Although the four dimensions of experience discussed by Pine and Gilmore (entertainment, education, escapism, and esthetics) are useful to understanding the experience economy, these four dimensions are not sufficient to comprehending what constitutes memorable consumption experience in the context of wine tourism. The focus of this thesis, therefore, is to expose other experiential dimensions present in the context of wine tasting experience.

Berthon et al. (2009) argue that experiential value and appreciation comes with experience and matures with time. Their study provides important insights into the developmental aspect of the experience and into how customers with different experiences (and knowledge) are likely to perceive similar experiences differently. However, the experiential dimensions they discuss are more suitable for the marketing of luxury brands than wine tastings for the general public. Thus, to fill this gap, this study investigates the

components that constitute memorable experiences for the general public so that the findings can be readily applied both in future research and in practice.

Arnould and Price's (1993) study indicates that, aside from product and place, service providers also play a vital role in the constitution of memorable consumer experiences. They found that the skills (in particular, social skills) that service providers possess have the most significant impact on the quality of an experience. However, river rafting, an example Arnould and Price use to conceptualize extraordinary experiences, is quite different from that of wine tasting room experience in terms of the intensity of experience. They also pointed out the risk of generalizing their findings beyond the River Rafting context. This study thus investigates possible interactions (touch points) that can result in memorable customer experiences and how wineries can create extraordinary experience in the wine tourism context.

Schmitt (1999a) argues that companies should move away from traditional marketing (which focuses on features and benefits) and move towards experiential marketing (which focuses on creating experiences for customers). Schmitt's strategic experience module suggests companies should engage customers by appealing to all of their senses on a personal level. Although Schmitt provides important insights into how customer experiences should be managed, his studies view customers as "consumers" rather than "co-creators" of the experience. Schmitt's view of customers departs from more recent studies, which have shifted to viewing consumers as the latter. Examples of these more contemporary viewpoints include that of Vargo and Lusch's (2004) study of service-centered marketing, which emphasizes the importance of intangibility, processes, and relationships in interactions with consumers. This thesis examines how different experiential dimensions presented by Schmitt

are applied in the context of wine tourism. However, this thesis diverges from Schmitt's studies by positioning consumers as co-creators in its study of the practices wineries use to include customers in the experience creation process.

Joy and Sherry (2003) highlight the centrality of a holistic understanding of embodiment in shaping aesthetic experiences over time. While other studies have been implicit in their description of the inseparability of mind and body in experiences, inspired by Merleau-Ponty (1962), Joy and Sherry (2003) focus on culture and experience as affected by place, time, and affect based on a bodily being-in-the world. Yet, the major focus of their study was on how sensations of "taste" (palate) are transformed into cultures of "Taste" (culture capital) within an art museum context. In regard to wine tasting, findings suggest that a fuller understanding of the contours of tasting experiences involve identifying the various aromas and flavors (sensory processes) of the wines that are consumed.

Much of the consumer research in the context of wine tourism focuses on the characteristics of winery visitors, consumer behaviors, satisfaction, and service quality at the winery. Charter, Fountain, and Fish (2009) suggest that there is growing research on consumer experiences in wine tourism; however, there is still limited research on how consumer experiences can become memorable. O'Neill and Charters (2000) suggest that quality service is a crucial aspect of the wine tourism experience. However, quality service alone cannot make customer experiences memorable. Further, most of studies on wine tourism focus on customer perspectives and do not discuss how service providers stage and facilitate experience creation for customers. Therefore, this study aims to address the gap in the literature by investigating the consumer experience management strategies at a diverse set of wineries in the Okanagan to see how they help consumers create memorable experiences

in tasting rooms. As a result, this study further contributes to our understanding of the various dimensions that constitute memorable consumer experience in the context of wine tourism. Finally, much of the consumer research in the area of wine tourism takes a quantitative approach to studying consumer experiences. Consumer experience is a complex matter that is unique to each situation (Walls, Okumus, Wang, and Kwun, 2011). Thus, using a quantitative approach may not provide enough nuances to answering the question of how memorable consumer experiences are created in the tasting room context. As a result, this study's use of qualitative methodology (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) helps to uncover unknown themes in the creation of memorable experiences. Furthermore, it will enable a deeper understanding of how memorable consumer experiences are created in wine tasting rooms and what experiential dimensions contribute to memorability. In particular, this study draws on in-depth interviews to provide a rich awareness of the experiences of wine industry professionals (a.k.a. service providers), who play a significant role in creating memorable consumer experiences in their interactions with winery visitors. The following chapter discusses the methodology used in the study more in detail.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Methodology

This section details the study's research methodology. The project focuses on the management of experiences in the wine industry; that is, what service providers do and how memorable tasting room experiences are created for consumers. The concept of co-creation is important when discussing consumption experiences (Vargo and Lusch, 2004); however, for heuristic purposes, this thesis focused on service provider (employee and manager) perspectives of memorable consumer experiences. Furthermore, the study was designed to explore the current practices of wine industry professionals facilitating experience creation at various local wineries in Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

Focusing on people in wineries carrying out the activities of planning, experience development, and delivery (Arnould and Price, 1993) helps researchers, and, in turn, service providers, understand how experience creation is facilitated by wineries. There is a marked absence of research on memorable experiences, although the existing literature identifies its importance to both researchers and service providers (O'Neill, Palmer, and Charters, 2002; Schmitt, 1999a). This study adopts a qualitative, inductive approach to analyzing the systems behind wine tasting room experience creation (Belk, 2006; Belk, Fischer, and Kozinets, 2013). Qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews allow researchers to stimulate deeper thoughts in participants that are not easily accessible through experiments or surveys (Sherry, 1991). In general, quantitative researchers can view interviews as subjective and unreliable; however, with careful design and appropriate questions, it can "provide a useful way for researchers to learn about the world of others" (Qu and Dumay, 2011, p. 239). In this research, it helped to examine how wine industry professionals see, feel, and attribute

meaning to their service delivery, prompting them to provide detailed descriptions of their service practice (Geertz, 1973). The central themes of this research emerged from this data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and the literature review was conducted according to its emerging interpretations (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Wine tasting experience needs more constructive processes because it is intangible in nature (Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Beverland, 2009). Therefore, ethnography (Arnould, Price, and Otnes, 1999; Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) was employed to develop a holistic understanding of experience creation from the perspective of wine industry professionals (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). The use of a qualitative approach in this study enhanced previous findings, enabling the research to explore the hidden dimensions of wine consumption experience creation (Belk, Fischer, and Kozinets, 2013). This project was designed to enlarge our understanding of effective wine and tourism experience management strategies, and benefit wine industry professionals, wineries, and consumers. Participant observation (Bernard, 2002; Jorgensen, 1989) and in-depth interviews with wine industry professionals helped to bolster the integrity of the study's findings (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). In depth interviews with wine industry professionals provided insight into the production side of the wine tasting experience. Interview participants included both tasting bar staff ("Employees") and the winery owners/managers ("Managers"). Some of the questions that guided this study include:

- How is memorable consumer experience creation possible in the wine context?
- How do wine industry professionals help create memorable tasting room experiences?
- What are the key elements that contribute to memorable wine tasting experiences?

3.2 The Data Collection Process

This research was conducted in the Kelowna area of the Okanagan valley from October to December of 2016 (Interviews); September 2014 to September of 2016 (Observations – in which the researcher went to different wineries and participated in wine tours and tasting activities as a consumer and interacted with other consumers). The Okanagan, and the Kelowna area in particular, was chosen to study the creation of memorable wine tasting experiences because it is a booming wine tourism region that has enjoyed rapid growth over the past fifteen years (Hira and Bwenge, 2011; Senese, Wilson, and Momer, 2012). Kelowna is the largest city in the Okanagan valley. Out of 163 wineries (three large, thirty-two medium, and hundred twenty-eight small wineries) that belong to BC wine institute, twenty-five of them are located in Kelowna/Lake Country/West Kelowna area (two large, nine medium, and fourteen small wineries) (Wines of British Columbia, 2017a). This study defines small and medium-sized wineries based on the annual wine sales in litre and number of employees they have. Small wineries sell less than 60,000 liters of wine a year (Wines of British Columbia, 2017a) and have between four and eight employees working in the summer. In the winter months, they reduce the total number of employees to around three. Medium sized wineries on the other hand, sell between 60,000 liters and 700,000 liters of wine per year (Wines of British Columbia, 2017a). They have between twenty and thirty-five employees (to work in the tasting room), and fifty and one hundred fifty employees (winery-wide) on payroll during the summer months (June to September). Five wineries were selected in the study because their different size (small and medium) and style (traditional and unconventional) represent a diverse range of winery and wine tourism operations (see Table 2).

Table 2   Winery Characteristics

Name of the Winery	Size Age	Brand Descriptors	Brand Positioning
Farm Brothers Cellars	Small 12 years	Farm gate, hippy, easy going, friendly, casual, rustic, backstage in front, no music (noisy ceiling fan)	Rustic Farm Gate Personal Attention
Flying Rock Wines	Small 2 years	Hippy, cool, fun, easy going, casual, rustic, rebellious, 90's hip hop	Entertainment Unconventional
Sunny Side Winery	Small 24 years	Farm gate, welcoming, friendly, jazz or mainstream music	Farm Gate Middle of the road
Audrey Family Estate Winery	Medium 28 years	Family, history, communal place, warm, cozy, comfortable, welcoming, classical music	Heritage Family History Homey
Scarlett Estate Winery	Medium 30 years	Well maintained landscape and view, classy, friendly, quality product, mainly classical music	Aesthetic Education

Five wineries that are included in the study are unique in their own way. Descriptions of the

winery are generated from the author's observations of the winery and the information

gathered on their respective websites. Large wineries are excluded in the study as the

Okanagan wine industry is mainly composed of small and medium sized wineries. Out of

forty-four wineries, there are only two large wineries in the area and they were not interested

in participating in the study. The sample of wineries are purposefully selected to investigate

how different wineries create memorable experiences for the customer. The purposive

sampling is used to obtain rich information (Patton, 2002). The study includes two medium

sized wineries, where one has a more rustic and classic feel (Audrey Family Estate, which

has a winery building made of wood and rocks and plays classical music in the wine shop)

and one has a more urban classic feel (Scarlett Estate winery, which has a simple yet

sophisticated winery design and plays classical music in the wine shop). Each of the small

wineries in the study have a rustic ambience but are distinct in their style. Flying Rock

Wines, for example, provides an unconventional winery experience by playing loud music (rock and roll) in the rustic-looking wine shop (which features antique farming tools) and uses vibrant art work in their wine labels. Farm Brothers provides an unrefined working winery experience, in which there is no distinction between the cellar and tasting room. Finally, Sunny Side Winery is included in the study as it provides a happy medium between the larger wineries (which are more structured and traditional in their approach) and the smaller wineries in this study (which provide a distinctly unique, unconventional winery experience).

The data collection process consisted of individual interviews, participant observation, and photography. The in-depth interviews function as the primary data collection methods used in this research. Interviews and extensive participant observations were employed to observe customer interactions (specifically, tasting room activities) and gain insight from wine industry professionals on wine tasting experience creation. Participant observations helped develop a trusting relationship with the wineries so that the participants felt secure in sharing their experience working at the winery. In addition, observations were made at the five selected wineries, at which times the researcher took photographs (Schroeder, 2006) and field notes (Clifford, 1990; Johnson and Johnson, 1990) to supplement the interview data (Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf, 1988). Prior to beginning the study, the researcher contacted several local wineries in the area for permission to conduct research with their employees and managers. The researcher explained the purpose and process of the study to potential participants and asked them to get back to the researcher if they were interested in participating. The twelve wine industry professionals that agreed to participate in the interview were recruited from the five selected wineries. Then, researcher scheduled

interview times and decide on interview location with interested parties. Each of the

participants were notified of the study purpose, encouraged to ask questions, and asked to

sign a consent form (see Appendix B). The researcher ensured participants were happy to

continue with the study and informed participants that they could withdraw from the study at

any point during the interview. Major challenges in recruiting study participants included

finding people who were willing to spare 90 to 120 minutes of their time with no

compensation. At some wineries, gatekeepers blocked access to potential participants.

Participant observations over a lengthy period of time at wineries also helped the author to

become familiar with the research context and get to know key people who later participated

in the interview process. The author's personal network (personal contacts) was also used to

recommend people who fit the criteria of prospective interviewees (i.e. people who work at

wineries in the Kelowna area).

3.3   Methods

This section outlines the different methods used in this study and highlights how each

method was incorporated into the overall study design. Since the research focus is not on

consumer experiences but the way wineries create tasting room experiences for consumers,

the empirical study is based on industry professional interviews and researcher observations

in wineries. The use of semi-structured in-depth interviews (McCracken, 1988) and

participant observation in examining the process of experience creation provided a

comprehensive understanding of memorable tasting room experiences from the service

provider's perspective. To achieve the aims of this study, the researcher picked three small

wineries and two medium-sized wineries that offered different styles of tasting room

experiences. While the interview data is drawn from a limited number of participants within

a specific period, the participant observations are not limited to them alone.

3.3.1   Participant Observation

This study necessitated the use of ethnography (Elliott and Jankel-Elliott, 2003) and participant observation to answer its key research questions. Observations took place over a two-year period (September 2014-September 2016). According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), observation is defined as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p. 79). The researcher visited all five wineries several times for observations (visiting alone and with friends and family, in different seasons, and at different times of the day). The researcher's observations of interactions between winery employees and customers formed the basis for the interviews. Typical observations lasted for two and three hours. Moderate participation (Kawulich, 2005) was employed to grasp both insider (participating in activities, interacting with people) and outsider views (observing without participating) to maintain a balance between distancing (de-familiarizing the familiar) and immersing (de Jong, Kamsteeg, and Ybema, 2013). According to Joy, Sherry, Troilo, and Deschenes (2006), a researcher's self-reflection is an essential part of qualitative research and the researcher must take their pre-understanding into consideration when planning and analyzing research data to minimize any researcher bias. They state, "reflexivity is the act of turning backward, the act of mirroring the self" and it "allows for the revelation and contemplation of one's own biases" (p. 345). This requires addressing my own subjectivity as the primary researcher in this study. Prior to beginning this study, I was a wine novice and had a lack of knowledge of wine culture beyond what is communicated through general media channels. To become familiarized with the context of this study, I participated in wine-related activities and attended wine festival events held at

various wineries (Arnould, 1998; Celsi, Rose, and Leigh, 1993). Field notes were taken to keep researcher's own thoughts and opinions separated from what was actually observed. According to Sherry (1995), ethnographers use their bodies as research tools to both participate in and observe cultural phenomena. I visited numerous local wineries in the region to observe the setting, process, and people; more detailed observations were made in five chosen wineries at various times during the research phase (Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf, 1988). Observations included how the service space is organized (i.e. wine shop layout) and what people do (both service providers and customers). Being in the tasting room setting allowed me to learn about the activities of the service providers (how activities performed by service providers shape the practice) in the natural setting (Kawulich, 2005). Such naturalistic observations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) allowed me to capture interactions between service providers and customers, and amongst customers, and better understand how winery employees are helping to create memorable tasting experiences for consumers. In participant observations, memorable consumer experience creation was measured by observing (1) the emotional responses of customers (i.e. whether they laugh), (2) the level of interaction between customers and service providers and amongst customers (i.e. providing eye contact and nodding, asking questions, and guiding/promoting consumer to consumer conversations) (3) whether customers tell personal stories (4) the practice of buying winery merchandise as a souvenir and (5) whether customers sign up for a winery newsletter and/or wine club membership. Observing interactions between winery staff and customers helped the researchers to explore employee attitudes and behaviour toward customers (Babin and Boles, 1996).

According to Arnould and Wallendorf (1994), observational data itself does not

provide direct access to people's perceptions, thoughts, and internal states. To overcome this limitation, researchers conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with wine industry professionals and casually conversed with people (employees and managers) present during the participant observation. When the researcher got to talk to people (winery staff and customers) and ask them questions about their experience during the participant observations, the researcher informed them about the study and explained how their responses would be used and that their anonymity would be preserved. Various themes emerged naturally during interactions with staff and other customers and this helped the researcher to frame the interview questions (see Appendix A). The research sample is made up of twelve wine industry professionals (four wine shop employees, seven managers, and one owner) working at the five wineries chosen for the study. Each of the interviewees was working at a local winery in Kelowna area during the time of the study (see Table 3 for details).

Table 3   Participants Characteristics

Name (Gender)	Age	Job Level	Years of Experience at the Winery	Background	Winery Name	Winery Size
Mary (F)	In 40s	Staff	<1 year	Teacher	Scarlett	M
Holly (F)	In 40s	Manager	4 years	Hospitality	Scarlett	M
James (M)	In 30s	Manager	>1 year	Sommelier	Flying Rock	S
Graham (M)	In 20s	Manager	<1 year	Sales	Flying Rock	S
Bob (M)	In 30s	Manager	2 years	Sommelier	Farm Brothers	S
Dora (F)	In 50s	Staff	2 years	Business	Scarlett	M
Jordan (M)	In 20s	Staff	1 year	Hospitality	Flying Rock	S
Beatrice (F)	In 60s	Staff	<1 year	Sales	Scarlett	M
Lorraine (F)	In 30s	Manager	>1 year	Sommelier	Audrey	M
Gary (M)	In 50s	Manager	>1 year	Sales	Farm Brothers	S
Amy (F)	In 30s	Manager	6 years	Hospitality	Scarlett	M
Angela (F)	In 50s	Owner	>7 years	Business	Sunny Side	S

As shown in Table 3, the participants in this study were twelve wine industry professionals (four employees, seven managers, and one owner) currently working at small or medium-sized wineries in the Okanagan valley. There were seven female and five male participants. Their job positions varied from tasting bar staff, to associate wine maker, to wine shop manager.

3.3.2   In-Depth Interviews

To understand how wineries design and implement customer experience management strategies, twelve in-depth interviews were conducted at five local wineries of different sizes, with key members of each winery, including the winery owner, general manager, associate winemaker, hospitality manager, marketing manager, wine shop manager, and tasting room staff. Expert interviews helped the study to achieve a better understanding of the experiences of individual wine industry professionals and practices employed by different wineries. Participants who participated in the interview had different job positions, levels of interaction with customers, and years of experience working in the wine industry. A summary of participant characteristics is provided in Table 3, including the name, age, job level, and years of work experience. To preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of participants in the interview (Crow and Wiles, 2008), pseudonyms are used in this study for the names of the wineries and their owners, managers, and employees. The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions to elicit detailed discussions of memorable winery experience creation. The semi-structured interviews were designed to guide the conversation towards different topics, rather than asking directed questions in a specific order. This process allowed the researcher to uncover themes that extend beyond responses to specific questions (Patton, 2002). This open-ended dialogue allowed the researcher to discover how wine industry professionals view and think of memorable wine tasting experiences (McCracken, 1988).

A list of questions was formulated in advance to guide the interviews (See Appendix A). Interview questions included participants' personal backgrounds, their experiences working in the wine industry, their definition of memorable wine consumption experiences,

and their points of view on current practices of experience management. These interviews were approximately 90 to 120 minutes in length and conducted in a quiet, private space to provide a comfortable, thought provoking environment such as wineries, university focus group rooms, and the Okanagan regional library. Each interview was audio-taped (or videotaped) with the consent of the participants (McCracken, 1988; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio, 1989) and transcribed for analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Phenomenological interviewing (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio, 1990) was used to provide a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the lived experience of the service providers in the context of wine tourism. In the study, participants were asked to share opinions on what they believe is a memorable tasting room experience and how they create such experiences for consumers. Given that employees are central to service delivery, their responses were useful to understanding the current practices of experience delivery, and contributed to a larger exploration of the dimensions of the wine tasting experience. Each interview session began with general questions, known as "grand tour" questions (McCracken, 1988), about participants' personal backgrounds. Questions then focused on the individuals' experiences working in the wine industry. Letting research participants talk about their stories enabled a deeper level of understanding with interviewee points of view. During the interview, participants were encouraged to provide responses in their own terms. Through the use of open-ended questions and probes, the researcher was also able to explore the meaning behind the words participants used.

3.3.3 Photographs

Visual methods in data collection have increased in popularity within the social sciences, where photographs are now being used to supplement textual data or as a tool for

eliciting data in interviews (Holm, 2008). In this study, photographs were not used to elicit

information in interviews but to help document space, layout, and people at the winery

(Flick, 2002). Wallendorf and Belk (1989) emphasize the importance of keeping records of

the process in the form of memos, journals, and other documents that can facilitate analysis.

Photographs taken included those of encounters with staff, interactions in the wine shop,

vineyard layout, wines, and so on to best capture the winery setting (Hill, 1991; Schouten and

McAlexander, 1995). Photographs were used in the research to record and help convey the

sense of the place of the wineries being studied (Crow, 2000). Photographs were also used

during the data analysis process; they helped illustrate various themes and catch elements

that were not noticed by the researcher earlier in the process (Flick, 2002). Some of the

photographs were translated into text to assist in this analysis.

3.4   Analysis

The themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews were constantly compared

with other data sources (such as participant observations (Becker and Geer, 1960) to develop

a holistic understanding of the consumer experience creation in the Kelowna wineries (Glaser

and Strauss, 1967). The researcher also examined the literature on wine experience as a basis

to evaluate the interview data. Hermeneutic analysis (Arnold and Fischer, 1994; Gadamer,

1976; Thompson, 1991) was used to guide the generation and analysis of the original data

(Thompson, Polio, and Locander, 1994), which was gathered in twelve in-depth interviews

with wine industry professionals from five different wineries chosen for the study. Each

interview was analyzed at an individual level to identify emergent themes for the next

interview and then compared with the entire set of interview data (Thompson, 1997;

Thompson, Polio, and Locander, 1994). Interpretations were continuously revised as the

research continued (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio, 1989). In the process of comparing the

individual interview with the collection of interview data, specific themes emerged and

previous ideas were revised (McCracken, 1988; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The interview

data was also supplemented by information available on the wineries' websites, in news

media, and on external reviewing websites such as Yelp and TripAdvisor.

Each interview was reviewed and translated in verbatim transcription by the researcher.

Interviews were listened to and read at various times, as well as grouped into categories

based on their attributes. The researcher attempted to grasp the experiences of wine industry

professionals working in tasting room settings by translating and comparing their interview

texts (Geertz, 1983). When analyzing multiple interview texts, some patterns were observed

and then categorized into themes. The essence of categorization, according to Spiggle (1994),

is identifying a unit of data as representing, or being an example of some themes. The data

was coded and compared to form themes and categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The

interpretation of qualitative data (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Russell, 2002) aims to capture

the holistic meanings that consumers attach to their experiences. Arriving at an interpretation

is a result of garnering an emergent, holistic understanding of a matter, which is attained after

the interpreter translates abstract and unfamiliar notions into concrete and more familiar

terms (Spiggle, 1994).

To ensure the research findings were credible (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Sanjek, 1990),

the researcher employed some of the techniques suggested by Wallendorf and Belk (1989).

First, participant observation was employed in addition to in-depth phenomenological

interviews to check that interview data was congruent with wine tasting room events.

Triangulation across different methods confirmed that the main observational findings were

generally in line with the interview data. However, there were some times at which observations did not match interview data. For example, service providers did not provide excellent customer service at all times. Second, to further triangulate the data, the research team for this study analyzed data independently and then came together to arrive at a consensus on the themes that emerged. Third, this study employed member checks to enhance the trustworthiness of the data and interpretation (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). According to Guba (1981), member checks mean that the "data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences and groups from which data are solicited" (p. 85) and member checks are important to ensuring the inclusion of respondents' voices in the analysis and interpretation of the data and elimination of researcher bias (Anney, 2014). Given the limited time frame, this study was only able to gather this stage of feedback from one participant; however, that participant's feedback did help to validate research findings (specifically, the themes raised in the analysis process). The research findings were discussed with this participant, who was asked to provide responses to these findings. In this step, the participant agreed that people (genuine, friendly, and humorous staff) and processes (i.e. individualizing scripts) can help make customers feel valued (through providing a personalized experience) and entertained (through providing an entertaining experience). Thus, the participant supported the finding that these elements play a key role in making a consumer experience memorable. Further, the participant argued that product experience depends on the consumer's individual palate. The participant further suggested that, although they were sensitive towards wine prices, the tasting fee itself does not affect much of the customer experience because most wineries offer complimentary tastings, or tasting fees are waived with a wine purchase.

3.5   Limitations

The findings of this research have been restricted to the wine consumption experiences (tasting room experiences) provided in the Okanagan valley and limited itself to participants working in the wine industry in the Kelowna area. In addition, the study follows the interpretive method, meaning its results may not be generalizable to all industry professionals (wineries) or to all situations (Polit and Beck, 2010). Shortcomings associated with the interview method include its small study sample (which can impact the generalizability of the study) and the interviewer effect (in which participants attempt to present themselves in a good light, affecting the accuracy of answers). Spiggle (1994) argues that interpretations of others' experiences is subjective and no two researchers have the same store of experience. Triangulating across different methods, working with a research team, doing a member check, and participating in extensive reviews of the literature were methods employed to overcome some of these limitations. Furthermore, in regards to the generalizability of this study, it should be noted that the focus of the study is on experience creation for the general public (a.k.a. random visitors). As a result, study results would likely vary if the focus was on experience creation for wine club members (a.k.a. repeat visitors).

Chapter 4: Findings

Creating memorable consumer experiences in the context of wine tourism has not been clearly conceptualized in consumer research. This study shows that, from the service provider's perspective, memorable tasting room experiences take place when customers actively engage in unique experiences (which include elements of surprise and fun) and relevant activities/interactions that provide value to customers and evoke feelings, thoughts, and/or bodily sensations. Consumer researchers have discussed the importance of providing a sense of novelty (Poulsson and Kale, 2004; Saayman and van der Merwe, 2015), personal relevance (Poulsson and Kale, 2004), and engagement (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) and sensing, feeling, thinking, and acting (Schmitt, 1999a) to consumer experiences. The findings of the current study suggest that wineries can create memorable tasting room experiences by customizing the experiences (making them relevant to each individual customer) through the use of individualizing scripting and employee-customer matching. Service providers are trained to foster personal connections through genuine interactions, make interactions feel comfortable in the environment, and customize interactions according to customer needs. The following interview passage, in which Beatrice of Scarlett Estate Winery shares her most memorable tasting experience, summarizes the importance of uniqueness, personal relevance, active engagement, emotion, and thought provocation to winery interactions:

> Out of all my tasting experience and in my history *I've never had a barrel sample. I never been beside the barrel…* [The] staff was knowledgeable, they made me feel welcome. The friend that I was supposed to go with had a problem and so couldn't come and I ended up going on my own, which is sometimes little awkward when you go into a winery. It is unusual for single people to show up. But I was made to feel welcomed. People didn't assume I was waiting for people to join me; they engaged right away. They included me in a tasting that was going on. [I felt] *recognized*,

included and . . . respect[ed]. [They gave] us all information about nitty gritty details about where the grapes were, dates they were picked, brix and acidity and all that technical stuff most people don't care about. *I was like 'tell me more'* [laughs]. I don't remember all of that but *I want to hear about it.* [For the] Cabernet Franc, I wasn't impressed with the current sample but the barrel sample was awesome. *I thought isn't that interesting* because I would've thought it would be the other way around.

Exploring memorable consumer experience creation, the current study focuses on understanding how small and medium-sized wineries create memorable tasting room experiences and if there's any differences and/or similarities in what they do. The following sub-sections outline how small and medium wineries mix different marketing elements to create memorable tasting room experiences for consumers.

4.1 Small and Medium-Sized Wineries

In this study, small and medium-sized wineries are defined by the annual wine sale volume. According to Wines of British Columbia (2017a), wineries are classified as medium when annual wine sales come between 60,000 liters and 700,000 liters. Small wineries are those that sell less than 60,000 liters of wine annually. Small and medium-sized wineries are also distinguished by the number of employees they have working in their tasting room(s). For example, Sunny Side Winery is considered small. As Angela explains, "In the summer, we have four staff in the wine shop and three [in the winter]." Farm Brothers Cellars also has a minimum number of staff in their tasting room. Gary states,

There are two managers, myself, who run[s] the wine shop and the cellar, and there's Bob, who runs vineyard and he's an associate wine maker. After that, there would be one seasonal full-time person, and then they would work [in the] vineyard and cellar. And then there are four part-time casual people who work in the wine shop.

On the other hand, medium-sized wineries have more than quadruple the number of tasting room staff of smaller wineries. Scarlett Estate Winery, for example, has fifty-eight part-time employees between May and September. Most of these employees are seasonal. As a result,

in the winter (October – April), Scarlett Estate winery keeps only eighteen full-time

employees. Similarly, Audrey Family Estate hires thirty-five tasting room employees for the

peak summer season. Lorraine from Audrey explains,

> We hire probably about thirty to thirty-five in the wine shop for the summer. And, in
> the winter, we have probably a team of ten that we go down to. They rotate as we
> open 7 days a week.

Charters et al. (2009), in their study examining several themes relating to the visitors'

experiences of tasting rooms, found that the size of the winery and the nature of the service

encounter are critical to visitor experiences. Furthermore, they suggest that wineries shape

experiences according to the specific image they want to create and no winery experience is

ever the same. Despite these differences, however, there are also key points of consistency

between different wineries and their tasting room experiences. Some of the key similarities

and differences in how small and medium-sized wineries create and manage tasting room

experiences are described below in Figure 7.
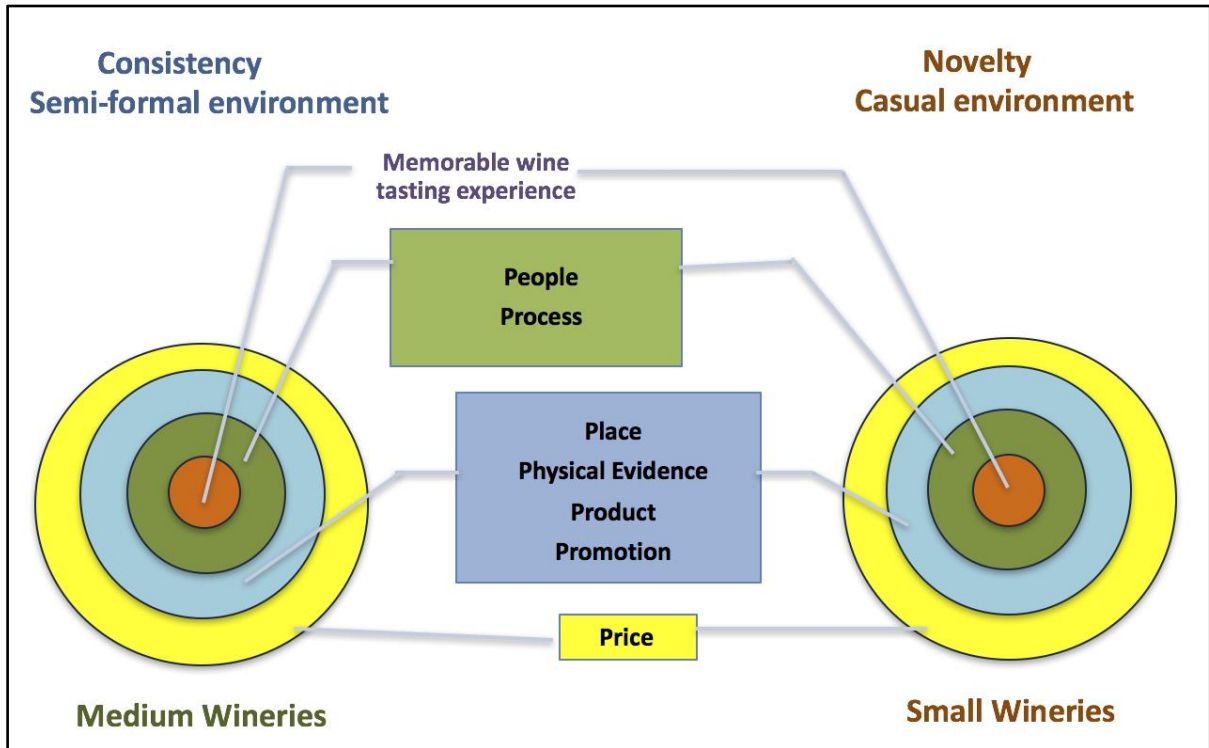
Figure 7 Similarities and Differences between Small and Medium Wineries

4.1.1   Similarities

Figure 7 ranks key marketing mix elements in creating memorable tasting room experiences. Among the marketing mix elements, the "people" and "processes" have the highest priority in experience creation for many wineries, regardless of the size. "Place," "physical evidence," "product," and "promotion" come as secondary priorities and "price" comes as a tertiary priority. While some marketing elements are ranked as more important than others, each marketing element is crucial to customer experience creation. Focusing on one element over the others may detract from the other elements, so companies should make relative priority of each marketing mix element to satisfy the needs of their target market (Khodaparasti, Aboulfazli, and Isakhajelou, 2015).

Interviewees from both small and medium wineries provided examples of how they

use different marketing mix elements in their practice, and some similarities were observed

in terms of how different marketing elements are used when providing memorable tasting

room experiences to the general public. The findings show that small and medium wineries

tend to focus most on "people" and "processes." For example, they include an emphasis on

storytelling and co-production. Industry professionals from both small and medium-sized

wineries also emphasize the importance of the human element in experience creation. This

was particularly clear through their staff hiring and training processes. They also described

similar service blueprint processes, which includes the following steps: First, when

customers walk into a tasting room, service providers greet and invite them to do a tasting;

Second, when customers come up to the tasting bar, employees explain the tasting process to

them and any fees associated with the tasting process; Third, they then invite visitors to do

the actual tasting, explaining the differences between each wine. In the third step, service

providers also talk about the winery and winery history, and communicate technical

information on wine making (which is known as storytelling). Based on who the customer is,

service providers customize the talk and tasting. Once the tasting is done, they ask if

customers want to take a bottle home and help them at the till with the purchase. When they

leave, employees thank the customers for coming in and invite them back. A basic

illustration of the tasting room procedure can be found below (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Service Blueprint in the Tasting Room

The fundamental services provided were similar at each of the wineries in this study. Despite these similarities, however, the winery experience can be either good or bad, depending on how well wineries manage other elements of the experience, such as the greeting, tasting, storytelling, and thanking processes.

4.1.2 Differences

In today's increasingly competitive marketplace, companies differentiate themselves to stand out from the crowd. Differences between small and medium-sized wineries are mainly characterized by the level of formality of the winery in question (formal versus casual) and the focus they have on experience management practices (consistency versus

novelty).

4.1.2.1 Formal versus Casual

Traditional winery experiences are often described as formal and classy. Traditional

wineries tend to play classical music, feature well maintained facilities, and have staff

uniforms. The setting (atmospherics), staff appearance (uniforms), and staff behaviors (the

way in which service providers interact with customers- what they do and say) are queues to

a winery's level of formality. Medium sized wineries, for instance, train their employees to

be polite and gentle in their interactions with customers. Lorraine from Audrey Family

Estate, for example, asks customer "Would you like me to grab you a bottle?" at the end of

the tasting. Small wineries such as Farm Brothers and Flying Rock Wines are taking a very

different approach. Straying from the traditional, they instead offer experiences that are

casual, fun, and out of the ordinary. One example of a less formal approach is outlined by

Bob, from Farm Brothers Cellars, who describes how he interacts with customers using more

casual language:

> Generally, I would say "Are you feeling thirsty?" instead of saying "Excuse me
> would you like a tasting today? Here is our menu." It's like "Come on out, let's have
> some drink" because it makes the mood light right away. I will give them an idea that
> we are a little bit more relaxed… we want people to be relaxed and try what they
> want.

Gary, from Farm Brothers, also talked about the casual approach he uses in customer

interactions to make customers feel comfortable:

> One thing we all do is [say] "Okay we are going to pour you some wines. If there's
> any you don't like, there's a drain on the floor right behind you. Toss it in there, you
> are not going to insult us. There's a lot of wine out there. If you don't like ours, we
> are not going to hold it against you. We hope you like our wines but you may not, it
> may not fit to your taste. There's lots of wines out there, lots of taste buds so keep
> tasting. We make it memorable because we are not that stuffy white shirt, black vest
> winery. We are not a classic winery. We are just a bunch of people who enjoy our
> wines and want to see if other people will enjoy it as well.

The examples above show that some wineries have attempted to respond to competitiveness in the winery market through augmenting the tasting experience by changing it to a more casual and laid-back event.

4.1.2.2   Consistency versus Novelty

Another difference between the small and medium sized wineries is their emphasis on creating experiences for customers. Medium-sized wineries are focused on providing consistent quality products and services. Having consistent quality service is a foundation for a successful brand (Nowak and Newton, 2006) and important to avoiding consumer frustration and disappointment. Consistency is important for medium- sized wineries because their brands are often built on the reputation of the consistent quality of their products and services. As Mary from Scarlett points out,

> I just did two nights pouring at [a] WestJet tasting. It was busy as usual and you know you meet lots of people. I had a few people come up to me and they said "Ah Scarlett!" and it was like "going home." With Scarlett, they know they are going to get consistency, so instead of going to the unknowns… you are my go to, you are the brand I always drink. It is something that they know and are familiar with. They know it's going to be good quality.

On the other hand, small wineries differentiate themselves by being unique and offering distinctive experiences to consumers rather than focusing on providing consistent products and services. Sometimes, what sets wineries apart from others is how much access customers get to the behind the scenes processes of wine making and how transparent their processes are. Farm Brothers Cellars, with their unique tasting room setting, offers different kinds of experiences by having customers taste their wines inside of their cellar, a practice that Gary expands upon:

> Most wineries are separated from the cellar and there's no access to any of that. And you don't see how they make their wines and where they make the wines. People

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think wine making is a really mysterious process. Although it is complex, it's not mysterious. It's nice to have a wine shop inside the cellar. We can only do that because of our size. You can't have a wine shop in the cellar when you get too much equipment running around and it becomes hazard. It's complicated, but it is nice that we are able to do that.

Thus, as both Mary and Gary point out, differentiation in wine experiences is key to catering to different individuals and to standing out from other wineries.

4.2   Different Styles of Winery Experiences

To help readers grasp a better understanding of how each winery chosen for the study is unique and represent different styles of experiences in the context of wine production, brief descriptions of each winery are provided below. As shown in Figure 9, wineries are distinguished mainly by their size (small versus medium) and the types of experience each of them focuses on providing. Winery descriptors are provided based on observations to explain how each winery chosen for the study is unique in their own way.

| Farm Brothers (Small)	Flying Rock (Small)	Sunny Side (Small)	Audrey Family (Medium)	Scarlett Estate (Medium)
Personal Rustic	Unconventional Cool	Middle of the Road	Family Traditional	Classic Elegant
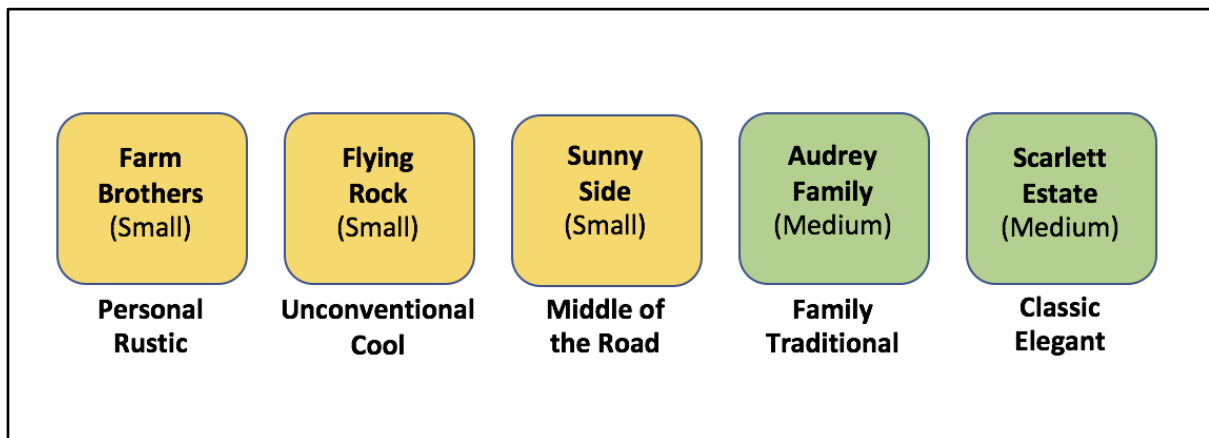
Figure 9 Winery Descriptors

4.2.1   Farm Brothers Cellars

Farm Brothers Cellars is a small, family-owned winery. They produce 3,000 cases a year and have only a minimum number of employees (two managers, one seasonal full-time employee, four part-time casual employees working in the summer, and two employees in

the winter). Based on the author's observations, this winery is provided with 'personal' and 'rustic' descriptors. The word personal is used because it is a very welcoming and relaxing place and their staff are very personable and friendly. Yet, they are in a very rustic environment where there is no distinction between the cellar and tasting room—their tasting bar is located inside the cellar, where they keep barrels and tanks. Gary, their manager, elaborates on the importance of differentiation to other wineries,

> We are different. We do try making experiences as entertaining as possible. None of us are trained comedians but we try keeping it light hearted as much as possible. People often tell us "this is the best winery we've been to all day." That's because we give them personal attention… [keeping it] casual, friendly, and informative. We try to treat everybody like our best friends. We want everybody to feel welcomed. We want them to feel they can ask questions. We want them not to feel rushed. We try to work at the customers' pace. The busier we are, the harder it is, but we try to work at the customers' pace.

Bob adds that part of the experience that differentiates Farm Brothers from other wineries is that they offer tastings of the juice used to make the wine:

> When you walk in the front door, you are literally in the winery and will see me put my head in the tank or doing something winery wise so that's kind of different dynamic than most other wineries because it's often more hidden compared to running at your face. So, customers are all very interested in what you are doing because they never get to see that. . . when you walk in the door, you get an idea of what's actually happening. . .you are meeting the owner, myself, or Gary, who works in the field, so the people that actually have hands on these grapes can give you real answers. Even right now, if you walk into the shop, there's yeast converting into alcohol and it's fermented for a month. It smells unreal—like a bakery in there—so that's an experience. [In] no other winery . . . [can you] smell those flavors and taste the actual wine. Most of the time, if it's juice, I will offer people to try [it]: "Here's some Pinot Gris juice, try it, give it a shot." People come back for that: "I tasted it as juice so now I have to taste the wine" … We want them to have a good time, good overall experience. We want them to be happy when they come here. Also, when you walk in here, you will see we are actually enjoying our jobs, enjoying what we are doing and I feel sometimes you don't get that at other places. Customers can tell if you enjoy your job or not and that makes a big difference. If somebody is happy to show off a product that they are proud of, then they are going to receive it a bit differently than "Here's our gewürztraminer." The way we all feel is we are part-owners of the whole experience too.

Thus, from the service provider's perspective, Farm Brothers Cellars uses a number of methods to differentiate themselves from other wineries and offer truly unique experiences.

4.2.2   Flying Rock Wines

Flying Rock is a small and rustic winery. In the year of 2015 (when they first opened), they produced 4,000 cases of wine and had eight people (three part-time, five full-time) working in the tasting room throughout the summer and two to three people in the winter. Based on the author's observations, this winery is classified as 'unconventional' and 'cool'. The winery has a cool hipster vibe with a rustic feel and features unique artwork on the wine bottles. Also, the type of music they are playing over the speakers (high energy rock and roll music and 90's hip-hop) gives off an informal and modern feel. They are further distinguished as unconventional because of their unique décor, vibrant wine labels, and rural decor (such as antique farming tools displayed inside and outside the tasting room). In their very relaxed, informal setting, they focus on telling interesting stories about the wines, referring to the images on the wine label, etc. Bob describes Flying Rock as having a

> very laid back and welcoming experience. They are confident, hipster, downtown, chic, new, cool kind.

Jordan, a staff member at Flying Rock, states,

> This is who we are, we listen to funk rock on the radio and pour really good wines. I think it is very much of the attitude and persona. Attitude is the biggest thing. I mean, there are rustic wineries in the Okanagan with kind of, like, the same vibe. But I really think that it's the people. As soon as you walk in there, you feel something different that I can't still put it into words, but we all feel it… People often say "Wow this is the coolest place we've been all day." We hear that a lot and that's validating. It's [feedback that we are] different, [the] funniest, [that our customers have] learnt the most [at our winery], [and that we are] less pretentiousness.

James, manager at Flying Rock, explains how their winery generates its family friendly atmosphere, stating,

First and foremost, [at the centre is our] a sense of humor. Obviously, the labels get people's attention. In terms of experience, here, we play hip hop and fun and more upbeat energy… One of the rules is no violin music [classical music] at Flying Rock. We want people to come in here and feel comfortable. As I said earlier, so many people are intimidated by wine, and, if you go into this really fancy winery, it makes it even more intimidating. So, the biggest thing that is so distinct from many wineries is obviously the décor, music, and atmosphere. It's different than a lot of other wineries… We really want to create it like a family friendly place. We have things for kids cause kids easily get bored at wineries. We have juice boxes for kids and do a juice box wine tasting or something like that to engage the kids. We also let dogs in. Unless it's totally busy, don't tie up your dogs, just bring them in. It's a dirty, rustic winery; it's not going to ruin everything (laughs). The main thing is, [we provide] something that is very comfortable [and] casual, and we want you to hang out.

Graham further describes their unique aesthetic, stating,

We differentiate ourselves from other wineries by having unique merchandise that is focused on the visuals of Flying Rock, which are unique and unconventional . . . Just based on the kind of aesthetic definition, we've done a lot of things that just physically differentiate ourselves from other wineries… Everything from the artwork to the building . . . differentiates us right out of the gate. After the aesthetics, it would be telling the story of the Flying Rock and education. Entertainment is absolutely a huge part of it, and also the wine.

As a result, from the service provider's perspective at Flying Rock, differentiation can come in the form of supplying a pet-friendly, family-friendly, and aesthetically focused wine experience.

4.2.3   Sunny Side Winery

Sunny Side Winery is a small family-owned winery with a very relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. They produce 3,000 cases of wine a year and have one full time year-round employee (wine shop manager), one seasonal vineyard worker (six months in summer), three seasonal wine shop sales staff (working thirty to thirty-five hours/week from May to September/ mid-October), one seasonal cellar hand (working three to five days per week from October to January). Here, the winery owner is also the winemaker. The 'middle of the road' descriptor is provided because they are not really formal or super casual—they are

structured in between. They play the radio in their tasting room, set to mainstream stations

(not playing classical or rock and roll music). The rural and agricultural process is

emphasized at their winery and Sunny Side offers self-guided tours for customers to explore

and wander around the vineyard themselves. Angela, the owner of Sunny Side explains,

> We offer a self-guided tour and it takes about fifteen to twenty minutes. We allow
> people to walk down the vineyard and see the different grapes. . . We run out of tour
> guide sheets all the time, so people must like it. They are doing it. It gives them
> something to do. They don't have to pay for it. They don't have to wait to go on a
> tour.

Their picnic area is also very popular. Angela describes,

> A lot of people spend some time in our picnic area… we are a farm with a nice and
> big front yard. You can't see it now but we normally have picnic tables and chairs
> and place for people to sit and we encourage people to bring their own food and enjoy
> the view with a bottle of wine. It's a beautiful environment out in the country, close to
> the city.

Angela explains further,

> [This is a] friendly place, but not classy. What we want to portray is [that] we are a
> working family farm winery that is family friendly and we are what we are. We are
> not trying to be some big fancy winery. We are a… true farm gate winery. A working
> winery. They [(customers)] can come in and see it.

Smaller wineries, like Sunny Side, thus, differentiate themselves through self-guided tours,

picnic areas, their farm gate theme, and their family-friendly atmosphere.

4.2.4 Audrey Family Estate

Audrey Family Estate is a medium-sized winery with a long history in the Okanagan

valley and is known as a year-round winery destination. They produce about 55,000 cases of

wine a year (Schreiner, 2016) and have thirty-five people working in the wine shop during

the summer months and ten people in the winter. Observations show that seven to nine

employees are present in the tasting room at any given time of the day in the summer. The

total number of people, including those working in the different departments of the winery

(i.e. the wine shop, restaurant, administration, vineyard management, and wine making team), is around one hundred fifty (most of the employees working in the wine shop and restaurant are seasonal casual employees). They play classical music in the wine shop and employees all wear uniforms that create a unified image of the winery. They are also deeply rooted in their history and tell stories around family history and heritage. Lorraine, the manager of Audrey Family Estate Winery, describes,

> We try to create that elevated experience that has a communal feeling. So, when people are here, we want them to feel like family. Because we are a family-owned and operated winery, it always has been, it always will be, and we really just want to welcome them [so that they] feel welcome when they come in the door. We want them to walk in and just feel like they are home and have that relaxed environment. We don't want to seem impersonal. It has to be inviting. . . It all starts with the family. Family is sort of everywhere, it all stems top down from them: history and family members, as I said. Always being a good host, always being welcoming, always being inviting, and . . . being innovators [is key]. We probably wouldn't [be here] this long if we didn't really continually evolve and [be] willing to change and test new things.

In summary, Audrey establishes itself from other wineries through creating a relaxed environment that is focused on history and sense of place in the Okanagan.

4.2.5 Scarlett Estate Winery

Scarlett is a medium-sized estate winery and they are one of the pioneer wineries in the valley. They produce around 44,000 cases of wine per year and have eighteen full-time (October – April) and fifty-eight part-time employees (May – September). The winery is situated on a beautiful property and everything is maintained in pristine condition. The winery building has a sophisticated, modern look with nice clean lines. They are classic and elegant; the architecture of the building is refined and they play classical music. They also pay particular attention to maintaining their facilities. Dora, staff member at Scarlett, expands,

I think we are elegant. We dress in uniforms, we have a certain way we try to act professional, we treat everybody with a professional attitude, [and] we are friendly. We are seen as open and honest. Most of us are fairly talkative; we like to learn about our customers . . . [and we are] very approachable and honest. . . It is out of our control but I think the company does a good job looking after the property. I think right now what really separates us from the pack or some of the pack is [that] we have beautiful aesthetics.

Manager of Scarlett, Holly, describes what draws visitors to Scarlett specifically,

Scarlett is known for a few different things. For being one of the few wineries to open their doors many many years ago. Knowing that we've been here for that long that usually means we've got quality product because things that aren't quality don't tend to stick around that long…we are known for being innovative, [our] quality, and having great wine makers over the years. . . I think we are known for [being] an approachable winery and we are friendly. You are able to not know something about wine but still come here and [be] made to feel special and important. . . It's made up of all people that are passionate about and love wine. Our wines are good quality. . . Scarlett is very approachable, very real, everyday wine and [wine for] special occasions.

Scarlett, therefore, differentiates through providing tasting sheets, more formal uniforms, and their beautiful aesthetics.

4.2.6   Summary of the Wineries

Five local wineries were chosen for the study and were distinguished from each other, mainly by level of formality and focus on experiences (consistency vs. novelty). Regardless of their size, however, wineries have similar processes, with a focus on storytelling and co-production. The most important elements to creating memorable tasting room experiences for the general public are found to be "people" and "processes." They all emphasized the importance of empowering staff to customize experiences and provide emotional and personal experiences for consumers.

4.3   Customer Segments

Understanding the needs and wants of consumers is essential to providing great tasting room experiences (Wright, 2006). Visitors to wineries have different interests and a

range of knowledge and expertise on wine (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne, and Macionis, 2000) and depending on the consumer's goals, the "same retail environment may produce very different outcomes and feelings" (Puccinelli, Goodstein, Grewal, Price, Raghubir, and Stewart, 2009, p. 16). Thus, it is imperative for wineries to understand who their customers are and what types of experiences they seek during their visits. Wine tourists have been often represented by an "aging, educated and affluent baby boomer generation" (Carmichael and Senese, 2012). According to Bruwer, Li, and Reid (2002), consumer segmentation in the wine industry takes on many forms, including demographics (age, gender, social class, etc.), geographies, behaviors (occasions, usage rate, etc.), and psychographics (based on the personality and lifestyle of consumers). In terms of wine tourism, more women are visiting wineries (Mitchell and Hall, 2001) and are seeking more information from winery employees than men (Atkin, Nowak, and Garcia, 2007). James, the manager at Flying Rock Wines, states,

> One demographic we are very skewed towards is women. I am thinking that's because I hired really good-looking guys behind the bar (laughs). I don't know, but when you come in on Saturday, it will be 85% women.

Thach (2012) found that women between the ages of forty-five and fifty-four are the largest category of wine consumers and this is also found to be true in Okanagan wineries. Dora, employee at Scarlett, explains,

> I would say still the largest group of people are demographics between forty-five and sixty-five. I would say that they are either employed or just newly retired. I would say [most] are coming from [the] Vancouver area or coming from Alberta or Saskatchewan. Both of those regions, particularly the Albertans and Saskatchewans, they love Kelowna because they love our climate . . . For Vancouver, I think they are just looking for weekend getaways. Looking for some place where they can go that is close and they can get the experience that they could be anywhere in the world once they arrive in this valley; it's quite different than the coast.

Young consumers, although they are not the largest spenders on wine products, are

increasingly becoming an important consumer group in the wine tourism industry (Thach and

Olsen, 2006). Dora continues,

> There were many younger people, I don't know how many younger people are
> starting to drink wine, but I probably saw a little bit more this year. [More] sort of
> thirtysomethings [are] coming in and drinking wine. . . I was surprised by how many
> thirtysomething year olds took an interest in wine, liked wine, [and] knew what they
> liked in wine.

It is interesting to note that wine consumers can be demographically similar but significantly

different in terms of their attitudes, consumption behavior, and lifestyle in the context of

wine (Bruwer, Li, and Reid, 2001). Wine industry professionals who participated in the

interview said they categorize consumers by their level of wine knowledge (and past wine

experiences) when it comes to providing a memorable tasting room experience. Dora

describes,

> I think there is a distinct difference between somebody who knows a lot about wine
> vs. somebody who doesn't know a lot about wine. Someone who knows a lot about
> wine, they want more information. They really have curiosity about what is in this
> wine? How did you make this wine? So, I think their expectation is to walk away
> with more information. Whereas someone who just likes drinking wine enjoys it just
> a little bit. I think they are quite happy just let you run the show and give them the
> experience. . . So, the first two questions I ask them are "Have you been to Scarlett
> before?" If [they answer] yes, [I] look at their age [and] look at how they are thinking
> about what wines to try. I can tell when someone just look at the wine list and they
> look somewhat confused because there are so many choices and they don't know
> where to start.

Based on the previous experience and wine knowledge of consumers, service providers tailor

the experiences to each customer's needs. In that sense, it would be appropriate to categorize

winery visitors in terms of their level of wine knowledge and background as a wine

consumer.

4.3.1   Novices versus Experts

It is found that what a consumer wants can be dependent upon their wine knowledge

level. Novices (most of the general public), in comparison to wine experts, want more personal experiences in their winery visit. While the general public wants the opportunity to engage and interact with what's around them, wine experts want information about the wine (the product) and the wine making process in their tasting room experience. Dora clarifies,

> Experts want information about where the grapes grow, dates they were picked, brix and acidity and all that technical stuff most novices don't care about… most people, I think, unless they are wine connoisseurs, they come in for that personal experience. They want that connection. They want to feel important when they come. They want to feel like you care about them and then the bonus is, of course, if you've got lots of great wines.

These findings suggest that understanding the level of education of wine consumers can be crucial to modifying the wine experience to give consumers what they want out of the tasting.

4.3.2   Random Visitors versus Repeat Customers

Another classification is based on consumers' previous winery experience and engagement. Repeat customers are more likely to be recognized by winery staff and get extra personal attention compared to random visitors who happen to be there for the first time. Angela, owner of Sunny Side, states,

> Our wine shop manager, she's been here for long so she knows all the regulars. She knows them. She might not always remember their names but she knows they are regulars and she will often remember what their favorite wines are, which makes them feel special.

The general public (mostly random individual visitors) are often treated differently by winery personnel than, for example, wine club members or customers that come in with a private tour company. Through observation, the study found that private tour guides often have good relationships with winery staff. As a result, the customers that they brought in were largely found to be treated differently than the customers visiting without a private wine touring

business. Oftentimes, tour company personnel would introduce their customers to the wine

shop staff (as if they were introducing the wine shop staff to a friend of theirs) and the

customer would receive preferential treatment as a result (i.e. wines and storytelling offered).

Wine club members are a type of repeat customer. Most wineries have wine club

membership programs designed to encourage repeat business. Wine club members are

typically treated differently than random visitors (the general public) and often served by

more experienced staff members. Scarlett employee, Beatrice, states,

> I would say there are different categories of customers. Wine club members, that's a
> huge percentage of people coming through and they tend to be knowledgeable
> because they have repeated experiences with the winery, regular experiences of
> tasting wine at home, and [have the] opportunity to participate in winery events and
> all. So, that is one group of customers and, in my experience with Scarlett, those
> customers tend to be dealt with by more experienced staff members.

Wine club members receive different, and often higher quality, experiences. Lorraine, from

Audrey, explains that the

> wine club itself is another level of experience and they are our best ambassadors.
> They are the ones keep coming back again and again. Sales we get from them is huge
> but they also expect a higher level of experience, [a] higher level of being catered to.

Some wineries also give special benefits to members. For example, Sunny Side Winery

provides its wine club members with access to look at the inside of the winery on a tour

offered by the winery owner/wine maker. Angela, owner of Sunny Side, describes,

> Wine club members will get a different experience. They always get wine before it's
> released in the wine shop. They get vintage comparison, so I will hold back some
> wines and send them last year's Pinot Gris and this year's Pinot Gris together so they
> can try them right beside each other. They also get things that we may not sell in our
> wine shop. Every once in a while, I bottle up a barrel of Syrah for myself personally
> and I will send that out to the wine club members as well, so that will never be
> available in the wine shop. So, yes, they get different things and they get treated
> differently when they come. If we know that they are coming, then they can have a
> tour with me, which nobody ever gets to. So, the wine club members can bring their
> friends in [and] I will take them to inside the winery, where anybody else never gets
> [to go]. So. there are a number of special things.

Other wineries offer special treatment to members (such as discounts on wines and special

tasting events) as well, like Flying Rock. Jordan expands,

> Wine club members get 15% off of everything. When they ever come to do wine
> tasting with their friends we will usually do something little special with them. Open
> better wines rather than our regular tasting flight. We won't pour them five wines, we
> will pour them eight and spend some time with them, ask them how their kids are
> doing and like just be very attentive to them. Wine club members are practically the
> family so give them a hug.

As a result, multiple wineries seek to encourage differentiation through examining the

knowledge level of their clientele and offering incentivized memberships.

4.3.3 Fun Seekers versus Knowledge Seekers

While understanding wine knowledge and the past experiences of consumers is

important, wineries can customize tasting room experiences according to the intention of the

customers' visit. Mary, employee at Scarlett, states,

> If it's a couple coming into the winery and they are very open to gaining the full
> experience, then I am going to give them the full experience. If it's very busy in the
> summer time and let's say I have a group of eight women who are there for a stagette
> party or whatever, I am not going to go into as much detail as I would with [them]
> because I just don't feel that their purpose for being there is probably a bit different.

As a result, experiences can be tailored to suit different purposes, and also vary with the

season and the business of the winery itself.

4.3.4 Summary

This sub-section outlined how wineries categorize their customers in terms of wine

knowledge, previous winery experience, and visit intention. Different groups of customers

are likely to have different tasting room experiences. For example, repeat customers,

customers that come in with private tour guides, and/or wine club members get special

treatment such as elevated levels of tasting room experiences. While the consumer level of

wine knowledge can vary, a majority of winery visitors in the Okanagan valley are assumed to be wine novices. Thus, this thesis is focused on exploring how wineries provide memorable tasting room experiences to the general public, who do not necessarily have the wine knowledge or previous winery experience and are not wine club members. Future research could focus on special tasting room experiences provided to wine club members and wine experts and identify how their experiences are similar or different from those of the general public. The customer categorization presented here provides a basic guideline for what service providers look for when preparing experiences for different groups of customers, but it is not carved in stone—wine experts can also be fun seekers under different situations and contexts, depends on who they are with, what the intention of the visit is, and so on.

4.4   Good and Bad Winery Experiences

Both good and bad experiences can become memorable. Despite the popularity of studying customer experience, there is no single agreed upon definition of a good customer experience (Hwang and Seo, 2016). A good customer experience leads to higher customer satisfaction (Meyer and Schwager, 2007) and it is important to understand what constitutes a good customer experience in the wine context.

When asked to describe a good wine tasting room experience, wine industry professionals shared something in common: a welcoming atmosphere, no pretentiousness, good wines, interesting stories, an aesthetically pleasing environment, and friendly, personable, and knowledgeable staff who are happy to be there. The notion of staff capability in reading customers and being able to answer customers' questions is found to be crucial in a good and memorable experience. Dora expands:

Good experience from the customers' perspective is being treated like they want you there. Being treated like, even though they are busy, they will give you as much time as they possibly can, not ignoring you. They are happy to be there, that's a huge thing…I want them to want me there and I want them to be able to answer my questions. (staff capability) I want them to be excited about where they work because it's infectious. If the person behind the counter is excited about what they are doing, I get excited about it. If they are interested in their product, I am interested in knowing about it. So, I want the full experience. I want to be able to taste really good wines. I want to have a good personal experience. I want to walk out with a feeling that I know the person in front of the counter well. If I don't learn a little bit about that person behind the counter when I am sipping wine, it's not as good for me. I don't want them to be just following a set number of things they've been told to do.

Graham, the manager of Flying Rock, describes what constitutes a good experience,

Good experience is when it's not [a] really geeky or pretentious wine experience. It's just them telling you their story of how they became the winery, how these wines are made… and [their] beautiful wines.

Jordan, an employee at Flying Rock, reflects, the

manager took time out of his day to pour me a really nice wine. It's really nice when they go out of their way to really show you what they got. It is very much so they are excited about the cool wines they have to show you.

Although wine industry professionals shared similar ideas on good tasting room experiences, what is considered an exceptional tasting room experience varies. People with different backgrounds, intentions, and personalities can have different preferences as to what they want in their experience. Sunny Side's owner, Angela, expands,

I think that exceptional experience is different for everyone. What we try to be is very friendly but also provide a true farm experience. Not everybody wants to see [a] true farm experience. Some people just like that […] paved all the way up to the door and walk with […] high heels kind of experience.

Dora, from Scarlett, describes her preferences for her ideal wine experience in reaction to a negative experience she had:

This winery was a bit too rustic, a bit too farm house for me. I found it interesting but it would not be a place I would go back. I am sure a lot of people love that but you know I grew up in a farm, I don't need to see pigs. I mean, I don't need to go to a petting zoo to have my wine and seeing the owner show up with the muddy boots full

of pig poops, to me, that's not a good wine experience… I want to see more about the wine making.

While it is clear from the above quotations that exceptional experiences are different for each person, and that good experiences are a result of excellent customer service, there is one element that seems to negatively affect wine tasting experiences for consumers: bad customer service.

When questioned about the impact of bad experiences at wineries, interviewees cited the attitude and behavior of employees as having a huge impact on consumer experience. When staff appear to be ignorant and pretentious, consumers do not feel they are valued and it can ruin the overall experience. Graham from Flying Rock states,

> If you go around during the slower season, any of the core staff who've been there are burned out and tired from the season and they just don't want to talk to you; they don't want to ask you any questions [and] they don't really want to tell you anything about the wines. So, that's happened to me twice. I will never go back to either winery. In both situations, the wine wasn't really good either. Again, there's these three things, place, people, and wine.

While each different marketing mix element is important, staff attitude sets the tone in a tasting room experience. Gary from Farm Brothers argues that

> When they give you an impression that they are doing you a favor—very snooty and very standoffish, not friendly, not inviting—it is more of their mannerism, their body language—you have to approach them to be served—that give[s] you this impression that they are too important for you. I didn't think their wines were anywhere near their price point. I found them all very acidic and I didn't think it was worth it.

Beatrice, staff member at Scarlett, speaks of an encounter she had with a particular winery assistant that coloured her experience of that winery, stating,

> Her personality was not warm and friendly. Her personality was very direct and abrupt... unspoken thing was "you wasted my time."

Beatrice also shared her experience with a particular winery employee, stating that,

> When somebody tells you what [you are] getting is not right, what [you]

experience[e] is not right— "no it doesn't taste like that it tastes like this"—that always rubs me the wrong way… I had this experience with this wine maker years ago who thinks that their wines are better than everybody else's and you must love their wines. I understand you are passionate about your wine, but I have a different opinion. I know there are many good wineries and every winery produces a good wine. Most wineries produce many good wines. But, again, good wine is the one you like. I mean, we have VQA program. If the wines are VQA, then we have quality wine. It doesn't mean you are going to like them, but they are quality.

Jordan also confided about his experience at another winery, stating,

In taking tours there, you always feel they would prefer you to not be there. They see you walking through the door with four people and they are busy. I know what it's like to be busy, but you accept that you are busy and you deal with it. You don't just stand there and wish it wasn't busy. So, it really rubbed me the wrong way. It's like, "what are you in business for if you don't want to serve people? You shouldn't have that look on your face." That was a negative experience that occurred over and over again to a point that I stopped taking my tours there.

These examples show how pretentious employee attitudes can drastically effect both consumer wine experience, and the opinions of other wineries.

Other elements that can influence consumer experience, including atmosphere, the educational component (or lack of), and the appearance that staff behaviours are scripted. Regarding the winery atmosphere, one of the participants mentioned the importance of having good lighting in the tasting room. Speaking about one winery specifically, Dora notes,

I love the architecture. I love love love the location. I love everything about how it feels and how the ground feels, but once I am in the wine shop, I don't like it so much. You know why? Cause it's dark. I don't like going into a winery or places like that [when they] are dark. . . I am not a fan of going into buildings to shop and spend my money or have experiences that are dark in [where] no day light coming in. For me, that's important.

The educational component is an important part of the tasting room experience and consumers have certain expectations as to what they think should be included in a service package. For instance, if the tasting bar staff does not provide customers enough guidance or information about the winery, wines, or wine making process, customers are likely to be

disappointed. A random customer I casually conversed with while I was at one of the local wineries (the name of the winery is not mentioned here to protect its identity) described what constitutes a bad experience:

> I found myself having to personally go up to her and ask her questions about the production process and pairing of each wine. While she did provide adequate answers, I was upset with the fact that I had to personally go up and ask her, information [that was] not provided with the tasting. I also did not enjoy how quick it was. Because the tasting bar staff did not give us an in-depth explanation and knowledge about the winery, the tasting was quite quick.

However, even when everything seems perfect, some people do not like seeing staff performing what are perceived as scripted behaviors. As Amy recounts of one winery,

> [We had] great service, great tastings but I felt that it was more like [they were] recit[ing] from a book. Everybody had the same point, said the same point when I was there, their little personality was not there. I would've liked to see because wine tasting is a whole experience: it's the wine, it's the vineyard, it's the view, sums for the person who pours the wine.

In summary, from the service provider's perspective, experiences can become negative when staff seem disinterested, when behaviours seem scripted, when the décor or lighting is off, when the wine quality is poor, and when winery employees seem self-important.

4.4.1   Summary of Experience Types

Both good and bad tasting room experiences can become memorable, and wineries need to understand how these experiences are constructed to encourage good practices and discourage bad ones. The findings suggest that people are the most important factor, among others (place, physical elements, stories, product), in creating a good tasting room experiences, as employees play such a crucial role in creating consumer experiences.

4.5   Experience Management

Wine tourism experience is a process that involves three stages: pre-visit, visit, and post-visit. Service providers engage in different activities to make sure consumers are

accessing experiences that suit their needs, wants, and preferences. From the service

provider's perspective, pre-visit activities involve ensuring tasting rooms are available,

securing enough space for customers (for example, setting up tables outside if not enough

room is available), preparing glasses (including checking for cleanliness), and confirming

wines are ready for consumption (i.e. checking for any defects and decanting specific wines

for a full sensory experience). Outside of the tasting room setting, marketing managers craft

the winery website to set certain expectations for customers prior to their visit. One of the

interviewees in this study, Amy from Scarlett Estate Winery, mentions the importance of

making sure all of their marketing provides consistent messages to customers. Post-visit

activities include cleaning up, preparing to serve the next customer, responding to customer

comments on review sites such as TripAdvisor, and coaching staff members on best practices

to improve future customer encounters. This study focuses most heavily on the during-visit

stage to showcase the tasting room experience from the service provider's perspective.

Wineries use different resources to ensure consumers are getting the right stimuli at different

touch points. In the order of importance, the main elements that form memorable tasting

experience are found to be people, process, place, physical evidence, products, promotions,

and pricing. This section looks at each of the marketing mix element to see how they create

memorable tasting room experiences for consumers.

4.5.1   People

Experience is co-produced when both staff and customers are present (Prahalad and

Ramaswamy, 2004). People are a defining factor in an experience creation process, thus

hiring and training the right people becomes important. It takes people to make an experience

personal and memorable, especially when it is face to face (Arnould and Price, 1993). The

human element of interactions cannot be underestimated. Front line staff who get the most face time with customers play a crucial role as the representatives of the winery (Lusch, Vargo, and O'Brien, 2007). Human interactions between winery staff, other customers, and the physical environment produce sensorial, emotional, social, and relational value for customers (Schmitt, 1999a). The role of employees has been emphasized in creating successful experiences (Hwang and Seo, 2016). Dora, staff member at Scarlett Winery, expands on the importance of human connection when providing tasting room experience,

> Human connection is probably number one. Making someone feel like you want them to be there. Having them get as enthusiastic about wine as you are, whether it's just engaging them in the process of tasting and smelling it.

Holly also emphasizes the importance of customer service to the staff at Scarlett and how it influences consumers,

> Our staff that are cheerful, friendly and passionate . . . and knowledgeable about our wine, I think that those are the two biggest factors for the success of employees: that they are passionate and knowledgeable about our wines in particular. That's what guests walk away [with].

The service quality, therefore, largely depends on the person who is serving when other things, including the wine and atmospherics, remain constant. Graham, manager at Flying Rock, speaks to the importance of education and approachability in customer service:

> I love it if you are really knowledgeable and you can be really knowledgeable but the most important thing for me is never feel like being talked down to.

Personality behind the bar can also make customer experience informative, entertaining, and/or personal. Bob, manager of Farm Brothers, emphasizes that, in his winery,

> nothing's standardized. Everything is off the cuff with us and that's kind of the excitement of it too because every single day is different. From yesterday, if you walked in today, it's different just dependent on who [is behind the bar]. The personalities behind the bar [and] who they are meeting [is] going to tailor that experience. So, with Pattie, she's been around the town for years. She knows the valley very well, knows the product very well, and she will help you do what you

want to do. She will tell you other great places to go, [and to] see this person and that person. Whereas, if you are stuck with me at the bar, I am going to probably make you try something from one of the barrels or tanks just to get your personal experience, like "How does it taste?" And if you are talking to Gary, he wants you to literally look at the equipment and what we are doing today and how we make this and make it taste better blah blah blah—he's more science driven.

These findings point to the profound impact that employees have on customer service.

The amount of staff a winery can support, such as the ability to support greeters or hostesses, also effects consumer experiences. Medium-sized wineries have greeters (hostesses) at the entrance and this is an essential part of their tasting room experience. Having a concierge or two helps wineries better understand their customers' needs beforehand so that customer traffic is directed efficiently and effectively. Lorraine, the manager at Audrey, reflects,

> Concierges provide directions to people who are looking for the restaurant and, perhaps with the tour group, she can direct them where to go. She can also talk to them about different experiences. So, if it's massively busy there, she can suggest different tour[s] and they have the headset to know how much space we have on the two o'clock tour and if we still have space for the reserved tasting experience. . . so that's generally the first point of contact. She can start asking questions, find out what they want to do, what they are looking to get out of it, where they are from, what they like, what they don't like, what kind of experiences they are looking for today. Depending on their answers, we can then recommend an experience for them, whether it's reserved tastings, whether they are looking to do a quick in and out. Perhaps it's just the tasting bar and out, perhaps they are looking for reserved tastings while they wait for a table at the restaurant. So, we can tailor it based on the questions that we ask them. So, I think concierges are a key piece for us.

This first human contact is customers' first impressions of the winery. Depending on what the first impression is, whether it is positive or negative, can affect everything that follows. This is one of the reasons why medium-sized wineries have concierges with a special focus on initial customer touch points. When things go wrong in the first place, it is very hard to fix. Angela from Sunny Side Winery shared her recent visit to a winery to discuss the importance of first human contact in winery experience:

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> We felt completely unwelcomed, completely almost ignored. The guy didn't even acknowledge us when we walked in…We had to shuffle over to a corner and then another staff came over. She was very helpful and friendly. But the experience at that point was already completely ruined.

This suggests that wine experiences, and negative wine experiences in particular, have a large impact on tasting room experiences for consumers.

4.5.1.1 Staff Management

The experiential intelligence (the ability to interpret the needs of consumers and personalize consumer experience accordingly (Bharwani and Jauhari, 2013) and emotional intelligence (the ability to communicate authentic emotions) (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, and Sideman, 2005) displayed by employees are suggested to be crucial factors to creating positive customer experiences. Frow and Payne (2007) recognize the importance of staff in delivering the customer experience and argue that motivating them can help create the perfect consumer experience. This section will discuss hiring and training practices at wineries, and how they, in turn, shape customer experiences.

4.5.1.1.1 Staff Hiring

There is no doubt that staff play an important role in helping consumers create memorable tasting room experiences. To build a loyal customer base and increase repeat business, wineries hire staff with the right attitude and train them to display brand-adequate behavior. Hiring the right people, with attributes including a positive and willing attitude, is an essential process in building a highly functional team (Thiel, 2009). As a result, interviewees were questioned on their hiring practices and how they affect consumer experiences. Angela from Sunny Side expressed the importance of hiring people who fit the company's culture and style.

> We hire people that have good customer experience already or just because of their

personality it might just work for us. . . We've learned over the years what kind of staff work for us and what kind don't. Some people should be at Chandelier or Scarlett Estate Winery because that's the kind of trait they have. They are a bit more formal and a bit more serious, I would say, about the tasting experience. That's not what we want to portray. [One] guy didn't fit in here because he wanted to be in a place where it is a bit classier, a bit more about wine education. . . and that's not who we are. The image that we are trying to create, the experience we are trying to generate, didn't match with what he felt or wanted to generate from a wine tasting shop. I think it was the whole combination, not just speaking of what he was saying but also how he was reacting to somebody. You can be made to feel welcomed in a place or not. If you want to come across as being classy, you don't always reach out warmly. And we want people to reach out warmly. Classy is not us. And he couldn't adapt to our style. He just wasn't comfortable after a number of times we pointed out "you need to do this." He could not do it or was not willing to do it. I am not quite sure which one.

Flying Rock wines hire their staff based on their personality, not their wine knowledge. They understand that the personality behind the bar is crucial in building connections with customers. James from Flying Rock emphasizes the importance of the personalities of new hires:

> We have some people who are very wine savvy but we hire based on your personality not your wine resume. We teach about the wines. It's much more like, can you make people laugh? Can you make people feel comfortable? Do you have your own unique story to tell? We've got a woman here who was an ex mechanic and decided to change pace, and we have a woman here who is a yoga teacher and just wanted to supplement her life experience with something a bit different. We had a kindergarten teacher [who] worked this summer. So, it's definitely not [that] I don't want to hire any sommeliers. I am all the wine nerd you need, you know. I don't want to have any sort of pretentions whatsoever. I'd much rather to have somebody with shining personality. That's far more important than knowing a lot about wine.

Just as James emphasized the importance of diversity and unique backstories in their hires, larger wineries encourage diversity in personality and education between roles within the winery. As Holly points out, Scarlett Estate Winery's employees are made up of people with different levels of wine knowledge:

> I try to make sure my teams are made up of different levels of wine knowledge as well because I think that, when you hear somebody who's new to wine, talking about it behind the wine bar, you know what [the] new to wine person is kind of looking

for. And then we have sommelier and WSET level I, II, III and that sort of thing, so they have more information to pass along.

It is found that wineries look for specific personal traits in potential hires. Tasting bar employees are the faces of the winery, thus it is important to hire people who are passionate and able to engage and educate consumers. Lorrain describes their hiring process at Audrey Estate Family Winery:

> At the hiring fair, [you are] basically making sure that you have people who are engaged, people who are passionate, people who want to learn, and who also want to educate people. For those who are up in the wine shop, have to have someone personal. And someone who can handle the amount of traffic that we get. It's a lot. When you are just standing there doing hundreds of tastings a day, saying and saying the same thing over and over again, that takes a special kind of person to stay up and be through that and just constantly have a smile on their face.

These responses suggest that, from a wine practitioner's perspective, a lot of focus is placed on hiring and, in particular, hiring someone with a service-oriented personality.

4.5.1.1.2 Staff Training

Staff training is an essential part of creating memorable tasting room experiences for consumers. Lashley (2008) stated that well trained employees are key to good customer experiences. As Andrews and Turner highlight (2017), staff training should focus on establishing "the bond between an employer and an employee, where the benefits can include improved levels of employee contribution, commitment and loyalty" (p. 596). During the training process, staff are encouraged to take the time to learn about the winery and wines. Appropriate behaviors are also taught in the training process to make sure consistent quality service is delivered at all times. It is observed that employees working in small wineries receive more of informal and hands-on training, whereas mid-sized wineries take a more serious approach to their training, which is more structured and formal. Beatrice, from Scarlett Estate Winery, described her first few weeks of training at the winery:

Their orientation and training process was very thorough, very clear. We had a big orientation process where we got to meet everybody, all the managers, all the roles, what the mission was, how to have energetic postures in terms of welcoming people, [and] having the right attitudes and the right words as we go about our work. And, then, the actual hands-on training in the wine shop was to shadow somebody who's been there for several years, listen to their script and their spills. The wine course that they offered was exceptional. Because, I mean, I know a lot already but I don't know everything and I don't know the details of their production and details of how they do things there, so that was very helpful.

The staff training process is largely divided into three parts consisting of the following: (1) Building Personal Relationships, (2) Wine Tasting and Knowledge Acquisition, and (3) Appearance and Behavior Training. The next sections will address each of these processes in detail.

4.5.1.1.2.1 Training: Building Personal Relationships

Staff training begins as staff members build a relationship with the winery (and brand) themselves. In this stage, staff learn about the winery brand and get a sense of what it is about. Audrey's Lorraine reflects,

They do a great onboarding program with our HR manager and he will go through, show the video of Audrey Family Estate. So, you get at least a feeling of the family, a sense of what Audrey is about, and you get a talk from a family member as well so they can ask questions about some of the stories and learn some things first hand.

Encouraging staff to build personal relationships with the winery they work for is a crucial step to providing authentic tasting room experiences for consumers. This process allows staff to have more authentic communication, which, in turn, results in a great customer experience. Flying Rock manager, James, states,

We try to take orientation really seriously, make it up a whole week. Some people know a lot about wine and some don't. So, we do a basic sort of sommelier training and teaching people about France and Italy and the kind of benchmark places in the world. We will have a bunch of days set up so one day we might tour all the vineyards so they have a personal identification [with] the vineyards that we are using… I am very adamant that the people that work here form their own relationship to the wines. I don't want you to just say some verbatim scripts like "it tastes like

this" or "it smells like this," or whatever. It should be more like "I drank this wine with crab legs last night. I thought it went really well."

Both small and medium wineries mentioned in this study encouraged their staff to build relationships with the wines and wineries themselves first. This notion of the staff building their own personal experiences with wines was more obvious in small wineries. Farm Brothers' manager Gary describes their process:

> Basically, we teach people about our wines, how we make them, [and] why we make them the way we do. We want them to use their impressions of the flavors, and their impressions of the wines, because it's a personal thing. We are teaching people that it's personal to them when they do tastings, we want it to be personal to the wine shop employees as well, but we will train them on how to show it, how to pour, how to describe it, how to describe what they are tasting, [and] what they are feeling about the wines.

Farm Brothers Cellars' staff training diverges slightly from that of other wineries. Part of the training includes staff training days in the field to experience the grape farming. Bob, the manager, states,

> We do go through some training with the seasonal staff. I mean, they will stay a day with me in the field first, training inside on the second day, they will feel like they are involved too. If they do eight hours in the fields working on these grapes, they are into it, they are part of it all of a sudden… they get the experience too. It's real hands on.

As a result, the training of winery employees varies from winery to winery, but tends to focus on shaping the personality of the trainee to fit image they are trying to foster, be it history, farm to table, or emphasizing an individualistic wine tasting experience that does not depend on scripts.

4.5.1.1.2.2 Training: Wine Tastings and Knowledge Acquisition

The second stage of the training includes wine knowledge training, whether it is taught casually working in the tasting room, through insights shared by more senior staff, or through a more structurally built wine knowledge course. All the technical knowledge and

skills are taught during this process. This is to make sure employees are familiar with the

products and services they will be selling. Also, it is important for wineries to have

knowledgeable staff to meet customers' educational needs. Lorraine from Audrey Family

Estate discussed the importance of updating wine knowledge through ongoing training while

working in the wine industry:

> You can't ever know too much about wine and wineries. Even our wine maker will
> go and do tastings with other wine makers. Each block of fruit is so different,
> everything that you are working with is so different and [the] style you are making is
> so different. You are always learning form somebody no matter what level you are at.

Medium-sized wineries offer more structured training at the beginning of the season to make

sure all employees within the winery are getting standardized training. Lorraine expands on

this practice at Audrey:

> We do one for the restaurant staff and one for the wine shop staff when they start.
> [We] separate training just because of the timing of the start, but [the] training is very
> similar in terms of what they do.

Scarlett Estate Winery also offers the wine course "Wineology 101" as a part of their staff

orientation package. They also make sure staff have access to information about their wines

and wine making processes. Holly describes that their training helps to build employees that

are

> cheerful, friendly and passionate about our wine and knowledgeable about our wine. I
> think the two biggest factors for success for employees is that you are passionate and
> knowledgeable about our wines in particular.

Knowledge acquisition training also includes the handling of the wine, such as checking for

wine faults, before the day begins.

4.5.1.1.2.3 Training: Appearance and Behaviour

Staff appearance and behaviour training is the third element of staff management that

has an effect on consumer experience. Grandey et al. (2005) suggests companies use training,

monitoring, and rewards to control service employees' display, as impression management is

a critical part of the service provider's role. Medium-sized wineries have their staff wear

uniforms. Some of the reasons for wearing uniforms are to have a consistent look, where

neatly and professionally dressed staff ensure customers can easily find staff among a crowd

of people. Holly expands,

> Having a consistent uniform makes it easy to identify who works here and who doesn't…The uniform looks professional and clean, and a little bit stylish… Keeping somewhat modern and keeping everyone the same as far as uniformity, [gives] everybody… the same kind of look. That way you don't have to worry about over-dressing or under-dressing.

Holly, from Scarlett Estate Winery, also discusses that uniforms play into the overall

ambiance of the place:

> [The] color choice came from the owner. Part of it is trying to stick with [the] classy [theme]. We are not trying to out-do the guests by any means. . . We are part of a décor. So, the color we have chosen for the wine shop is grey.

Small wineries, on the other hand, often do not use uniforms and this is often intentional, as

Farm Brothers manager, Gary, points out,

> It is a conscious decision not to wear uniforms with people's names or the winery's name on it. We want to be different. We want people to have a different experience. We treat customers like a part of the family. We are not standing out from them. We look like them. We are dressing like them. Although, a lot of ladies coming in dress a lot more formal than we are. But, yeah, we don't want to be that stuffy winery. Wine is for everybody, it's not for the rich and we don't want to convey that impression here.

Similarly, James, manager of Flying Rock, described their decision not to wear uniforms as

one that was a matter of style:

> I really dislike the thought of everybody having a same uniform, dress the same. Everybody's got own style so why would you suppress that?

Although staff working at small wineries do not wear uniforms, certain rules apply to what

they can and cannot wear in the work setting, as Farm Brothers manager Gary elaborates,

I mean the typical "your dress code" is casual, but you want to avoid tank tops and, you know, even for the vineyard staff, they want to dress so that they could come in and work in the wine shop if they needed to.

Encouraging good staff behaviors is an essential part of training to ensure positive experience outcomes. Behavior management training also makes sure that staff stay away from bad behaviors that negatively affect the company. Some of the ideal staff behaviors encouraged by wineries are summarized as (1) being genuine and sincere, (2) encouraging a low-key approach, (3) making consumers comfortable, (4) including everybody (5) making the wine tasting experience enjoyable for everybody, (6) making the experience non-commercial in tone, (7) customizing the experience, and (8) making it relatable. This process is more implicit—employees learn from other people by observing them.

4.5.1.1.2.3.1 Being Genuine and Sincere

Consumers like cozy, friendly and welcoming wineries (Charters et al., 2009). Having genuinely interested and sincere tasting bar staff is key to providing a personal and authentic customer experience (Wang, 1999). When staff members appear to be genuine and passionate about what they are doing, consumers can form positive impressions of the winery and leave having had a much better experience. In service encounters, positive displays and the friendliness of service providers enhance the overall service quality (Grandey et al., 2005). Greeting is said to be the most important thing in a good tasting room experience. Staff's welcoming and acknowledging customers immediately upon entrance to the wine shop, walking up to talk to them, and inviting them to the tasting bar is all included in the greeting process. Eye contact, friendly gestures, and engaging interactions are all important steps to make consumers feel like they are an active part of the winery experience. Such intentional behaviors, like talking to and engaging with visitors to figure out their needs can

make them feel included and welcomed. Flying Rock staff member Jordan elaborates on the

importance of sincerity in customer service to overall wine experience and customer

satisfaction:

> Every time we have people that walk out of here, we hear them say "oh my god, this was the best time" and they walk out with a case of wine. We didn't do anything crazy special. We didn't fake anything or put on an accent or this and that. We just genuinely take an interest and listen to them, talk to them, have a laugh, [and] tell some jokes… just being ourselves.

James elaborates on the steps he uses to greet customers at Flying Rock,

> As soon as somebody walks in the door, greet them and say hello. Explain a little bit about how it works. When people leave, say thank you. Help wine to the car if that needs to happen. But the big thing is recognizing people immediately. If I go anywhere and nobody talks to me like I am in Toys R Us, nobody talks to me for 20 minutes, I am like "I hate this place." It's human nature. As a potential customer, you want to be acknowledged and feel like your business is important. So, that's a big part of it.

Manager at Scarlett, Amy, expands further on the importance of greeting,

> I think . . . the greeting has to be included [in staff training]. You must smile at someone that's 15 feet away from you, make eye contact, at least say hello at 5 feet. So, the greeting has to be there. I can't possibly stress enough how important it is. It's a small fraction but it's really tough when you are not greeted.

From service providers' perspectives, therefore, there is a large focus concentrated on

encouraging employees to use service techniques, such as eye contact and friendly gestures

that help to foster a relationship built on sincerity.

4.5.1.1.2.3.2 Encouraging a Low-Key Approach

It is observed that both small and mid-sized wineries try to stay humble in their

customers' eyes, as Graham emphasizes:

> Honestly our awards are all kept in an antique bedpan behind the bar. We don't show them. We don't really talk about them. One day, we won a whole bunch of gold medals. All of us, in traditional Flying Rock fashion, wore bronze medals even though we won a bunch of gold. We just wore bronze because it seemed more Flying Rock appropriate. When people ask about the awards, we will tell the story, but we

rather take pride in wine because at the end of the day, it's still about the wine itself as is.

Amy, from Scarlett, also emphasizes the importance of humility in creating good consumer experiences:

We make amazing wines but we still are approachable and we are humble. I think that's what brings people here.

Humility, therefore, represents an important step in employee training both at Flying Rock and at Scarlett and can augment consumer experiences and make wine tasting seem more approachable in the eyes of service providers.

4.5.1.1.2.3.3 Making Consumers Comfortable

Both the medium and small wineries chosen for the study focused on making their consumers feel relaxed and comfortable in the setting. Staff are trained to make consumers comfortable by greeting, welcoming, and offering customers what they want by customizing their experience. Amy elaborates on the importance of making customers feel comfortable,

When I go into the wine shop, it's really important that they recognize that potential business has walked in, value it, look at me, [and] smile and greet [me]. If they are busy, I can understand as long as they make eye contact. If they are not busy, then I expect them to immediately welcome [me], let me know what my options are, let me know what I can do there, what's allowed, [and] what's not allowed... Going back to being a good customer service person, you will read your consumer, understand what they are looking for, what's their knowledge level, and how much information do they want? Some novices want to come in and want to hear everything. Some novices feel overwhelmed if you tell them everything. So, your job is not only to figure out if someone is [a] novice or not but also [to] figure out what makes them the most comfortable.

The notion of comfortable experience is described as homelike, inviting, and cozy. Charters et al. (2009) state that a personal connection and friendship built with service providers can contribute to creating a memorable consumer experience. A random customer the researcher encountered while visiting Audrey Family Estate Winery described her experience with a

winery employee as follows:

> His friendliness and approachability made me feel comfortable in the space. This was similar to when someone says "my home is your home". I appreciated the feeling of welcome.

It is observed that both small and mid-sized wineries focus on trying to make their customers feel comfortable and relaxed in the setting. Their staff are trained to welcome customers in a genuine and friendly manner, treat them like family, and use humor to make them feel comfortable.

4.5.1.1.2.3.4 Including Everybody

Wineries nowadays are becoming more family friendly to even include children in tasting activities. Employees are increasingly trained to include everybody in their service encounters. Dora explains the importance of including children in Scarlett's tastings:

> We started to offer a sparkling fruit juice to people that have children. Sometimes you have to be creative, sometimes you give the babies the corks to chew on. Cause when children are happy, parents are happy. We don't have a lot to amuse children but you do the best you can.

James expands on how children figure into wine tastings at Flying Rock:

> We all have kids. So, we want parents to come and taste wine at the bar while watching [their] kids play over here. I know, myself as a parent, if somebody is entertaining the kids, I am definitely willing to spend more money… If you go to Europe, wine is all about family and sharing and all that kind of stuff. We want a sort of similar thing to be here. We just did our anniversary party and had kids stomping grapes themselves, making own wines.

Lorraine from Audrey Family Estate also mentions how they offer different activities for a more inclusive winery experience:

> We offer very different experiences. If you want that super elevated winery experience, you can have a reserved tasting experience. If you just want to come with family, we offer a family tour that kids can come on. We've got little stuffy [animals] up in the shop. We've got a coloring table. So, we offer a variety of experiences, trying to make it approachable for everybody as well. We don't want to alienate anybody. If somebody is interested in learning about wine, we are interested in telling

them about wine.

Often, a group of people come in with a designated driver so they don't have to worry about driving. The designated driver can be a friend of theirs who volunteered to be there for that day, or a guide from a tour company. Thus, wineries expressed the importance of acknowledging designated drivers, welcoming them, and including them in interactions. Mary from Scarlett states,

> I offer designated drivers a glass of water or a glass of juice. Including everyone. That's very important.

Jordan from Flying Rock discusses how they entertain different age groups of customers with a help of stimulating environmental clues:

> I think the winery reminds [some people] of their grandparents' place. It [also] reminds their grandparents of their childhood, so you see people 65+ walk in here with wide eyes like children. . . they are looking at all this stuff like a museum almost, all the time. All these railroad ties and I think it attracts everyone equally. There's something for everybody. Because your grandpa can be looking at the old railway light and be like "oh wow" but the beats that we are playing are super loud and the grandkids get to drink some wine, so there's little bit of everything for everyone.

He also mentions the importance of customizing experiences to make people feel included and welcomed:

> People, for example the bachelorette groups that are here, they don't care a bit about wine. They want a show. They want the story and they want to get drunk. So, we will give them whatever they want. If people want to talk about barrel-fermented Chardonnay, then we will talk about barrel-fermented Chardonnay. We are happy to engage but we are never going to bring those up, which can make you feel out of place and uncomfortable. We let that come organically through our conversations.

From each of the winery workers' perspectives, therefore, it is important to make consumers feel comfortable by catering to their specific needs or desires and being aware of demographic differences between consumers (such as designated drivers, wine experts, and so on).

4.5.1.1.2.3.5 Making Wine Tasting Experiences Less Intimidating

Many people are still intimidated by wine and wine-related activities, and only a

small percentage of consumers possess sufficient competencies to fully appreciate the wine

tasting experience (Hughson and Boakes, 2002). To help consumers feel at ease in the setting

and encourage them to participate in more wine-related activities, wineries employ friendly

and personable staff who are very easy to approach, market their product and services in a

consumer friendly manner, and open up access to the vineyard and production facilities (back

stage). These initiatives send the message that everyone is welcome here and that consumers

do not have to be wine experts to enjoy the experience. Jordan elaborates,

> Being a tour guide, I had the opportunity to visit about 150 to 170 different wineries
> in the Okanagan and they all kind of had one thing in common. They all had a certain
> prevailing . . . kind of serious attitude. . . Catering to certain crowds… being still
> relatively new to wine and being kind of intimidated by wine still, I felt it (Flying
> Rock) is like a fostering environment. They always take the time to explain
> something to you…it's very much what we want to be—a comfortable thing and very
> inviting place, it's a great place to learn. Wine doesn't have to be intimidating. You
> can read as much into it or little into it, who cares? At the end of the day, all you have
> to know is whether you liked it or not.

Bob describes Farm Brothers' approach to wineries,

> [We] don't want that snooty up in your nose, but we want to be friendly and fun.
> Snootiness and pretentiousness is that it can be intimidating. That's why a lot of
> people don't like going to wineries because they get told blah blah blah and they
> don't understand. We don't want to be that. If you don't know, ask me. And we gotta
> take that perception out, you can know nothing about wine… It's the snootiness down
> and the fun up.

People are often intimidated by wine because of the perception that wine is only for the upper

class, or that people who take part in wine tastings need a high level of wine. In her

approach, Dora tries to break that perception by communicating to consumers that they are

not alone and that most people who visit wineries are not necessarily wine knowledgeable:

> I love the fact that wine should be approachable and everyone should love it. You

don't have to be an expert and there's no such thing as a right or wrong answer. I love when people ask what seems to be silly questions in their mind because it gives me an opportunity to give them information. I love saying to people "that's a really good question" and don't feel silly for saying because most people think the same way. When people come in and say, "Oh, you know, I am not a wine connoisseur" I say, "You know what? 99% of people aren't. If you like wine and you drink wine, then you are in the right place." So, for me, it's a personal challenge. I love making people feel like they know as much as they need to know. If they want to know more, they can ask questions and they are going to walk out maybe knowing a little bit more, but be proud of the fact that they love wine, not feel intimidated that they don't know more.

James from Flying Rock Wines discussed the importance of using appropriate environmental clues (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, and Voss, 2002) to make people, including novices, feel comfortable:

> Wineries can get a little bit boring, classical music and the same story. . . Wine is very intimidating for many. . . all different kinds of demographics enjoy drinking wine—not just prestigious [ones]. Pretentious things are everywhere you go, so . . . you take that pretention out of the wine and make people feel comfortable. . . The easiest way to do that is educating them a little bit, showing that farming grapes and making wine doesn't have to be this intimidating thing. Nobody knows everything about wine. Nobody ever will.

As a result, ensuring that the general public do not feel intimidated by wine tasting is critical to ensuring memorable experiences from the service providers' perspectives. This level of comfort is accomplished through key conversations between winery visitors and winery staff.

4.5.1.1.2.3.6 Making the Experience Non-Commercial in Tone

Practices focused on transactional services can make customers feel they are not valued. Gopaldas (2011) suggested that the six emotional currents shaping responsible consumer culture are "anger and disgust at irresponsibility in mainstream consumer culture, fear of mainstream production practices and consumption consequences, joy and pride in performing responsible consumer practices, and guilt about discontinuing responsible consumer practices" (p. 2). We often see consumers resist the market or struggle against

commercialization (Penaloza and Price, 1993). Kozinets's (2002) example of anti-

commercial experiences provide reasons for why setting up a business with a non-

commercial in tone is important. Staff are trained to respond to customer demands without

rushing the customer, and share their own personal experience with the brand rather than the

traditional sales talk. The more staff share their own experiences with the brand, the less the

talk will be perceived like a commercial exchange. Angela, owner of Sunny Side, explains,

> I think they need to not feel it as a sales experience, but as an experiential experience. So, the whole thing about doing a wine tasting is it's not just in order to buy something but it's an experience in itself, it's an event of itself.

Asking to pay for a tasting fee prior to having interactions can put consumers off. To avoid

any negativity, many wineries either offer free tastings or charge for tastings at the end of the

interaction. Mary elaborates on this practice at Scarlett:

> I think it's important we don't overwhelm customers with "okay I need your $5 upfront for your tasting fee." The $5 tasting fee is on the side. At least 80%, if not more probably 90%, of our customers buy wine. So, the $5 for tasting fee is not important at all. . . For some wineries, that seems to be important to them, so they are charging customers right away before they even have interaction with them. That, to me, completely puts customers off—make it feel less of a transactional experience.

From the service perspective, therefore, ensuring that the experience comes across not as a

commercial venture, but one centered around education or relationship building, is critically

important to experience creation.

4.5.1.1.2.3.7 Customizing Experiences

Every customer is unique and they have different needs and wants when it comes to

experiences. Charters et al. (2009) find that not all consumers want the same experience, thus

customizing experiences to meet individual needs is essential. As Vargo and Lusch (2004)

elaborate, consumer desires can be better met when their involvement is encouraged in the

customization process. When asked how she encourages good wine experiences, Dora from

Scarlett says,

> I don't have a kind of experience for everybody. Because I think everybody has slightly different needs.

Amy, a manager at Scarlett, speaks about how she customizes her experiences,

> If it's someone who is a total wine geek wants to get information, information, information, then we will make that portion a bit heavier. And if we find someone wanting a bit more fun, little less detail, then we make that a portion of it. What I mean by fun here is entertaining and easy going. We are going to talk about different smells and taste in wines, not going into pH and acidity.

Holly, another manager from Scarlett, states,

> We try to be very flexible. That is very important because, if you are working with so many different groups and sizes and again different knowledge and stuff, you have to be flexible even to wing it.

Understanding consumer needs is fundamental to the success of experience management. In the training process, staff are encouraged to spend time with customers to get to know them, their needs, and their preferences. Beatrice, staff member at Scarlett, comments on the amount of time staff can spend with customers:

> So, at the winery, you have permission to spend almost always as much time as you can with the customer. I mean, not when it gets busy. When it does, you need to tighten up your presentation so that people come through. But you have permission to engage with them, to ask questions, to find out what they like. . . So, that information I would get about whether they liked the wine, what they liked about it, what they disliked about it, would help guide me in directing them to a wine that might suit their palate.

It is observed that service providers often customize experiences based on customer's wine knowledge. Wine experts have a superior ability to recognize, distinguish, and describe different wines (Hughson and Boakes, 2002), while the general public does not have such skill and knowledge. Gary from Farm Brothers describes,

> Depending on their knowledge level, they gotta appreciate what you are doing for them. If they don't have the knowledge to appreciate what you are doing for them, then it's a waste of their time and yours. So, first of all, we want to provide them

some knowledge.

To provide a customized experience, staff are trained to read people. Personalized

experiences can only be offered when staff are able to read customers and guide them to the

right product (wine) and service (activities). Jordan, from Flying Rock, states,

> We read people. As soon as I realize somebody's not liking the wine, I can get a clue
> as to what they like and pour something up they will like right away.

Staff need active listening skills to engage customers in the process and offer good,

customized experiences. Holly emphasizes the importance of listening at Scarlett:

> Listening to what the customer, guest, is asking, what kind of questions they are
> asking and making sure you can answer those questions and then having different
> styles of tasting.

Amy, also from Scarlett Estate Winery, emphasized the importance of communicating with

customers when providing tailored experiences.

> Another poor experience I can talk about is when a customer service person doesn't
> read you [and] doesn't customize the tasting, or whatever it is, to your likes to
> dislikes. You don't have to sit there and scan the person or judge them. Sometimes,
> it's as simple as asking some questions. You can communicate, just ask them. Would
> you like some more info? Would you like to taste first and read about it yourself? We
> are human beings and man is a social being. So, communication helps. People never
> get offended when you are trying to figure something out. They get offended when
> you think you know.

These interviews suggest that, for each of the wineries, there was a sustained focus on

training staff members to customize experiences for different consumers depending on their

different needs, which were in part determined by demographics and initial conversations

with winery visitors. It is also crucial to highlight the differences between how service

providers customize individual and group experiences. On observation in the winery,

consumers that came in as couples or individuals (between two and five people) were often

more serious wine drinkers than people that came in as groups (more than five people). They

seem to care more about the educational and sensory experiences than the entertainment experience. They ask multiple questions about wines and take notes during wine tastings to remember what the wine was like. Furthermore, it was observed that they tend to buy a larger number of wines than groups of customers coming in. It was also witnessed that individual consumers tend to get more personal attention than groups do and their conversation is more reciprocal. On the other hand, groups of consumers often get a more standardized experience. Tasting bar staff would pour wine in each of their glasses and talk to them about the winery, wine rituals, and wine making process as a group. Questions were found to be answered with larger groups, but personal conversations were not likely to occur. For example, bachelorette groups that came in were less interested in the educational experience, instead coming for the entertainment and social experiences. Such groups focused on laughing and talking to each other more than tasting wines. It was also observed that specific employees are assigned to deal with a larger group to satisfy their entertainment needs.

4.5.1.1.2.3.8 Making it Relatable

Relatable experiences involve one's social context or relationships with others (Schmitt, 1999b). When tasting bar staff shares something the customer can relate to, the tasting event is more likely to become unique and memorable. Staff are encouraged to be interactive and share their personal stories with customers to make personal connections happen. Angela from Sunny Side emphasizes the importance of creating connections and allowing conversation to arise naturally:

> There's a script for sure but you can't swallow the script because people will know right away you are on a script. You have to get natural and some people will take you off the script because you are getting into a kind of conversation, some connection, right? Maybe they own horses and you ride horses. Maybe they are from a city in Alberta and you grew up in that city in Alberta. Often, there will be a connection you can find. They are there. Let them encourage that connection to happen.

Amy from Scarlett also outlines the importance of relatability in memorable experience

creation:

> [The] memorable experience is always the one that you can relate to. People always say unique experience is memorable. I think that unique experience can be unique but if you cannot relate to it, it's not memorable. So, I always go back to saying stop thinking about what's a unique experience. Because, again, it could be unique, but it's not going to be memorable if our customers cannot relate to it. Let's say you see a funny joke on FB sometimes and it's about how kids make faces when they eat lemon for the first time. Well, as a mother of a young child, I laugh my heart out of it. Then I show it to someone who doesn't have a child, she goes "Yeah, okay, I see it's funny but I don't see what's super funny about it…" It's only memorable when you actually feel that the person is on your level. Something that you can relate to that you share.

In summary, employee training processes and behaviours contribute significantly to creating

memorable and, as Amy would put it, relatable experiences. The following sections will

build upon this dialogue by discussing the different roles played by employees and managers

in creating memorable experiences.

4.5.1.2   Employee Roles

Employees work in a setting where they interact with different parties including

employers, other employees, and customers (Babin and Boles, 1996). Carlsen and

Boksberger (2005) suggest that employee roles should include "telling the story of the

winery by way of introduction, engaging visitors in conversation to identify their needs,

making sales suggestions, and establishing meaningful relationship based on trust" (p. 134).

Employees play multiple roles to satisfy different customer demands, mentor other

employees, represent the brand, and enhance the consumer experience (Weiler and Walker,

2014). It is important to ensure that employees are aware of what roles they are supposed to

play in the work setting. Frow and Payne (2007) emphasized the importance of training staff

to understand how every person plays a vital role in experience delivery. Wine industry

professionals in the interview described their role as an educator, mentor, brand

representative, and experience guide.

4.5.1.2.1 Educators

Service providers play a role as an educator when consumers do not have the

adequate knowledge and skills to fully appreciate the product and tasting experience. Scarlett

Estate Winery has a strong focus on educational experiences and their employees are trained

to play an active role as an educator. Mary from Scarlett states, "I think my job is very

important because I am educating consumers…I have to be able to give them all the

answers." Beatrice adds,

> My personal focus is on education and I also see that as the winery's focus. A big part
> of what we are expected to deliver is education, so that's a big thing. I have the
> opportunity to engage with customers to find out what they want and an opportunity
> to educate them. [The e]ducational part gives me my jolly. I love doing it.

As a result, education can form a considerable part of winery experiences and, therefore,

employee training practices.

4.5.1.2.2 Mentors

Experienced senior staff members are expected to act as mentors to train new staff

and provide support as needed. Dora from Scarlett states,

> I think my role is [to support] the younger people (new staff) coming in to start [who]
> probably need mentorship, 'cause I've been in sales for a long time and you know
> there's certain sales protocol that you learn to follow: being polite, not talking too
> much but talking enough. So, I think I bring a little bit of that experience and
> hopefully the company believes that it will help train new people just by virtue of
> being close to somebody who has more experience.

Mentors, within the context of experience creation at wineries can help to impart knowledge

of a winery's culture and way of doing things to staff members so that there is consistency in

the wine experience.

4.5.1.2.3 Brand Representatives

Tasting room employees are the faces of the winery. Wineries portray their brand personality through frontline employees. Mary explains how her role as a brand representative effects the experience of consumers at Scarlett,

> We are representing the brand. . . If we don't provide good service, then that's not going to bode well with the Scarlett name. So, we have to make sure that we are proving all this excellent service so that people want to come back and tell others about us. We are the faces of Scarlett. They don't see the winemaker. They don't see the upper management. They see us. So, it's really important that we make the best experience possible for the people who come in.

Holly, manager of Scarlett, clarifies,

> Staff need to know what the goal is to be able to provide memorable experiences. Hiring the right crew [and] giving them the right tools [is critical]. I can't see 500 people in a day so the staff have to be the extension of what we are trying to do.

Brand representatives thus play a role in ensuring that a winery's personality and values are communicated to customers. When employees go beyond their traditional job roles by actively promoting winery values and missions through word of mouth, they become brand ambassadors. Amy explains how the brand ambassador position functions at Scarlett,

> We try to tell people who we are, what makes who we are. They have to be ambassadors to pass along that feeling and we also provide them with tools and ideas of how to pass along that feeling.

Dora, a brand ambassador at Scarlett, states,

> I am proud of Scarlett, I wouldn't work there if I was not proud of it. If a day comes that I am no longer proud of it, I wouldn't be able to work there anymore. Because that's a part of who I am, too. You have to love it. You cannot fake it. If you don't have a genuine enthusiasm, it's not going to come across as enthusiastic to the customer.

In summary, being a brand ambassador includes going above and beyond to help spread a positive brand message to potential new customers.

4.5.1.2.4 Experience Guides (Facilitator)

Chandralal and Valenzuela (2013) suggested that the central role of service providers

at tourism destinations is to "facilitate the development of an environment that enhances the

likelihood that tourists can create their own memorable tourism experiences" (p. 177). The

role of a guide is to engage consumers in an experiential context and offer flexibility to allow

consumers to make self-discoveries. Guide's performance in establishing a "space of

pleasure, enjoyment, and entertainment" (Hansen and Mossberg, 2016, p. 260) and

facilitating consumer immersion (Mossberg, Hanefors, and Hansen, 2014) is crucial to a

consumer's level of satisfaction. Beatrice from Scarlett expands on the role of experience

guides in creating connections at wineries

> Our surroundings are beautiful. We encourage people to enjoy the natural beauty that
> is there. . . When I say we can actually walk in the gewürztraminer vineyard, people
> are really pleased that they could do that because some other wineries don't allow you
> to cross the line.

Experience guides also adjust their level of guidance based on consumer preferences. Dora

provides her method of working with customers on an individualized basis:

> Some customers are shy and some are not. I found that it's up to us to pull it out of
> them because there are a lot of people that want the wine experience but they don't
> understand that they are part of it. If somebody comes in and they are really shy and
> introverted, they might still want the wine experience [but] want you to direct it.

Mary, from Scarlett, emphasizes the importance of guidance in wine selection: "some people

like to choose immediately, some people want some guidance, so understanding what their

preferences are [becomes important]." Staff are also trained to offer customers different

options, recommend them to try things, and provide information on what activities are going

on. Jordan provides information on how he interacts with customers:

> Sometimes, we get people com[ing] in say[ing], "Do you have sweet wines?" I say
> "No, but we have something that is very fruity that might fool you into thinking it is

sweet, so you should give it a try." I always try to force people to come out of their comfort zones. When people say "Oh I don't like Chardonnay," I will still pour and say "No, no you are wine tasting, you are just trying new things," and more often than not they will be like, "Oh this is actually pretty good" See? Surprise! So, I try to break people out of their comfort zone… that's why we are here. We want to show you all the cool stuff we do.

Amy, a manager at Scarlett, states that part of interacting with customers is upgrading the visit:

To upgrade the visit, you say, "It's 11:00 am now and the tour is just about to leave, I wanted to let you know about this just in case you are interested."

These findings are in line with Lashley's (2008) suggestion that the overall consumer experience and the quality of service delivery is impacted by employees who play active role(s) in creating memorable customer experiences.

4.5.1.3   Management Roles

Lusch and Serpkenci (1990) demonstrate that store manager performance also impacts the success of the retail store. It is suggested that the degree of manager support and encouragement affect employees' performance and satisfaction (Babin and Boles, 1996). Creating a positive work environment where managers support employees' work efforts (Moos, 1981) can improve workplace productivity (Day and Bedeian, 1991) by building more motivated and empowered employees (Babin and Boles, 1996). Manager roles include leading by example through their own actions, and passing knowledge and skills they possess down to their employees while keeping everybody involved in the process (Bass, 1997). They also make sure employee roles are well understood and clarify the roles when necessary (Arnold, Palmatier, Grewal, and Sharma, 2009). Mary, Scarlett staff member, states,

Everybody worked really well together this season. We fed off each other, we learned from each other, [and] we helped each other and that was really good. You know, the management has been fantastic. The wine shop manager has so much knowledge herself. That is great. Any questions I may have I can ask her. The hospitality

manager, you know, she's so fair and always hands on. She has a wealth of knowledge herself as well. You know if you have questions when it's busy, they are there. They are jumping in. they are hands on. That, to me, is really important.

These findings suggest that, from the service providers' perspectives, management should have knowledge and a willingness to step in and help during busy periods.

4.5.1.4   Employee Empowerment

Motivated employees are willing to do more than just come to work (Babin and Boles, 1996; James, James, and Ashe, 1990). When employees are empowered to go above and beyond the traditional job roles, they become motivated and dedicated, which leads to outstanding job performance (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996; Hoskins, 2014). One of the manager roles includes empowering front line employees. Managers encourage employees to build personal experiences with customers by going above and beyond the verbatim scripted greetings and talking points. It is observed that both small and medium-sized wineries in the study let their employees go off-script and empower them to provide the experience in their own style. Holly, from Scarlett, comments on this practice: "I give people the authority to make decisions and I always tell my staff I am going to back them up no matter what." Managers can also facilitate employee performance by providing key resources such as information and training (Babin and Boles, 1996; Guzzo and Gannett, 1988). Empowering employees can motivate them to be better employees. Such relationships build trust between managers and employees, as Flying Rock staff member Jordan reflects,

> They trust that I can see what needs to be done. I don't feel like anyone is hovering over my shoulder. There is a great level of autonomy, which I am really thankful for and that kind of makes you want to do well, so you keep that trust and it's a positive cycle. We take ownership of this place like if it was money out of my [sic] own pocket, so that is paramount.

Dora from Scarlett Estate Winery also discusses the importance of managers sharing

information with employees. She argues that well-informed and knowledge-equipped

employees are key to providing great customer experiences:

> Knowing what information should come to staff, trusting the staff, I've always
> thought if you don't trust your staff with the information, then you hired the wrong
> staff. Hire people that you can trust and give everybody the benefit of the doubt until
> they prove themselves wrong. . . In any store, whether it's Robinson lighting or
> whatever, if that staff has a lot of information, I will go back again and again and
> again. I dislike going into places and talking to sales people who have no idea what
> their products are or no information.

Consumer experience creation processes involve not only employees and managers but also

consumers, as they play important roles as co-creators. Thus, exploring customer roles in

experience creation is crucial to obtaining a holistic understanding of memorable

consumption experience creation.

4.5.1.5   Customer Co-Creation

Consumers play an active role in the process of experiential consumption and they

seek to co-create value in the consumption process (Caru and Cova, 2015; LaSalle and

Britton, 2003). Value is created through interactions between the customer, service provider,

product, and store atmospherics (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), and wineries can help

produce memorable consumer experiences by encouraging consumers to actively participate

in the process. Gary, manager at Farm Brothers, recounts how they create such relationships:

> We had a list of newsletter sign ups on the desk and people were using it as a
> comment book. So, I thought, let's put out a guest book and let people put their
> comments down and let them have some fun. I was just flipping it through the other
> day, [and] I noticed in one page where a bunch of ladies who . . . put their comments
> and their lipsticks on the page. That was really funny and that's what it's there for.
> They can say whatever they want to say. People like to leave a record of being in
> places and that's what the guest book is for. We are little, we are personable, [and] we
> try to keep it personal.

Evidently, ensuring that customers have a part in co-creation (Etgar, 2008; Gummesson,

1998) can be fundamental to fostering an environment that caters to winery visitors. Service-

dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) suggest customers are co-creators of value and

companies need to support them in co-creation activities. Outside of the tasting room,

wineries co-create value with customers through the use of social media and review sites

such as TripAdvisor. Wineries respond to the consumer-generated content to create pre- and

post-visit experiences for customers. Schau, Muniz, and Arnould (2009) suggest that

customers "create value through their participation in the brand communities" (p. 39). Such

social media sites promote ongoing communication between the company and customer, and

between customers. Figure 10 shows that the wineries in the study are actively engaged in

social media, promoting their brand via their winery websites, Facebook pages, Instagram

accounts, and Twitter feeds.

	Farm Brothers	Flying Rock Wines	Sunny Side	Audrey Family	Scarlett Estate
Facebook	1,036 followers	1,854 followers	1,098 followers	5,286 followers	11,140 followers
Instagram	1,462 followers	5,752 followers	-	6,618 followers	3,015 followers
Twitter	5,608 followers	1,514 followers	240 followers	11.2k followers	8,978 followers
TripAdvisor	49 reviews Rating: 4.5	79 reviews Rating: 4.5	85 reviews Rating: 4.5	734 reviews Rating: 4.5	200 reviews Rating: 4.5
Winery Website	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Figure 10 Co-Creating Customer Experiences in the Pre- and Post-Visit Stages

Through different social media platforms, consumers participate in the service

process in the pre- and post- visit stages, continuing to create value through the interactions

between the company and other customers. Kao, Yang, Wu, and Cheng (2016) emphasized

the importance of enabling consumers to co-create experiences with companies on social

media. They assert that social media promotes multiple methods of communication and

allows customers to co-create content, thereby "enhancing information exchange and increasing the power and collective wisdom" (p. 142). Vargo and Lusch (2004) described customer as an operant resource (p. 7) through which happy customers can become brand ambassadors. Customers become brand ambassadors when extraordinary customer experience is provided. Essential steps to extending the brand relationship further include having customers rate the winery 5 out of 5 on TripAdvisor, garnering new followers on social media sites who are potential brand ambassadors, and responding to and thanking visitors for their comments. Amy from Scarlett Estate winery explains,

> [My assistant] and I, we look at all our notifications, all our messages, [and] anybody who checks in on FB, TripAdvisor, Yelp, [or] Google. When they leave reviews, we thank them. If it is retweeted or something, we like it.

Creating contents and responding to customer comments on social media websites during the pre-visit and post-visit stages are especially important when customers are from out of town. When effectively used, social media can help bring out positive memories of the experience they will have/had during their visit and enhance value creation by encouraging customers to share their personal stories with other customers (including potential customers) and service providers. These interactions help form another level of customer experience: shared experiences within the brand community (Schau, Muniz, and Arnould, 2009).

4.5.1.6 Letting Customers Have Control Over Their Own Experiences

Giving customers control is paramount to experience memorability. Wineries can help but cannot control the whole aspect of customer experiences (Caru and Cova, 2007b; Verhoef et al., 2009). It is crucial that wineries focus on customers and encourage them to design their own consumption experiences (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). For example, how wine tasting is offered, and whether they let customers pick their own wines or offer an already

selected set of wines, can have a huge impact on overall tasting room experience. Bob from

Farm Brothers elaborates on the importance of giving consumers control over the wine

experience:

> A good experience is when you taste something, you are not told something. It is what you get, how you tasted it. Personally, I like this [aspect] so I want customers to have their personal experience not "Here is your experience." Asking, "What do you guys think?" [is important]. I think that, when a customer walks into a store . . . they decide how their experience goes, at least, if it is presented in a friendly and comfortable way, they are going to have good experience because they feel they have control out of the gate. Control is important because, like I said, wine is intimidating. If they can control at least what they taste (like it or not like it), they will have a good experience. They might find something they don't like. Well, then, let's try something else. There's freedom and options.

Giving control to winery visitors comes in various forms that extend beyond asking how

consumers are experiencing the wine. Other examples of imparting control to winery visitors

include Sunny Side Winery's self-guided tours, where consumers can tour the vineyard

themselves on any day of the week without having to pay or wait for a tour to start.

Consumers can also be invited to control their own tasting experiences by picking whichever

wines they want to try from the list in any order they prefer, like at Scarlett Estate Winery.

4.5.1.7   Summary

The importance of the human element in experience creation cannot be

overemphasized. The findings of the interviews indicate that wine industry professionals give

considerable attention to staff hiring and training processes in all employee roles, which were

described as Educator, Mentor, Brand Representative/Ambassadors, and Experience

Facilitator. Empowering employees and giving them the right skills are only a few of the

manager roles this section has touched on. Other functions include facilitating co-creation,

encouraging consumers to play an active role in the process of experiential consumption.

4.5.2 Process

As established above, employee and manager roles are central to the co-creation of consumer experience. Equally important to facilitating co-creation include the steps wine industry professionals take in their service processes. This section explores the key factors included in winery processes that enable service providers to encourage memorable experience creation.

4.5.2.1 The Tasting Room Process

Wine industry professionals are trained to act in a certain way and expected to repeat behaviors over time. Practice theory is applied to understand the performance of wine industry professionals: *Why do they do what they do*? and *How do they do those things in the way that they do*? Warde (2005) stated that practice theory emphasizes processes like habituation, routine, practical consciousness, tacit knowledge, and tradition. "Practice," in this context, is defined as "a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). According to Reckwitz, wine tasting bar staff can be described as "a carrier of patterns of bodily behavior, but also of certain routinized ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring" (Warde, 2005, p. 134-135). Practice theory is less focused on individual choices and more concentrated on the development of modes of appropriate conduct. Employees are provided with different scripts and trained to behave and speak in certain ways through the use of "explicit rules, principles, and instructions" (Warde, 2005, p. 134). The aim of this training, in part, is to encourage both consistency and flexibility in tasting room processes. Expanding upon these aspects, the following sections discuss consistency and flexibility in experience management.

4.5.2.2 Consistency

Consistent service delivery is crucial to brand recognition and building a loyal customer base (Westwood, 2015). Mary, from Scarlett Winery, emphasizes the importance of consistency in experience creation: "I can say that consistency of the team, consistency of the service, consistency of quality. It's all about consistency." One customer who visited Scarlett described an experience where quality and consistency in staff members impacted experience:

> The tasting bar staff who assisted me the other day, she was really good. I am sure any of the staff members at Scarlett winery would have been just as good. They attract, recruit, train, and motivate their employees to consistently deliver the kind of experience I had. Their focus on quality in all they create and do and it's embedded in their culture.

To build consistent customer experience and service delivery processes, wineries use service blueprints and scripts to guide staff in their interactions. Achieving consistency in the customer experience occurs when employees are engaged and committed (Andrews and Turner, 2017). Dora, from Scarlett Estate Winery, points out the importance of having cohesiveness in experience delivery:

> We employ people that are good at giving customers a good personal experience, but I think it is really important that we, all of us, have a little bit of methodology on how to approach customers and be a little bit more similar 'cause I don't think it's right that if a customer came in and spoke to one person one day, that's going to be a one quality experience, and this person is going to give them different quality. We should have all the same quality [and] be able to offer the same quality of experience. I know we are not the same people but I think we should . . . communicate a little bit better and management should spend more time with us in terms of having group meetings, having seminars, talking exactly what we are talking about [referring to experience creation and the work of this study]. Asking us as a group, "What do you guys think customers want?" Sometimes, just talking amongst ourselves in the group, we will start to be more cohesive in the way that we deliver our service. I think cohesiveness is important.

It is possible that staff have different understandings of what a good wine tasting experience

is. Thus, effective communication processes between front line staff and managers should enable staff to provide a better, more consistent experience. Dora further emphasizes the importance of communication between staff and the effect that it has on customer experience:

> I think it's really important to have sales meetings periodically and share information because we are the connection between customers and the winery, so we need to know a lot of information. We also should know what information we should impart and what we shouldn't. I think it's really important that managers feed us as much information as possible and tell us these are the things we should be sharing with the customers and these are the things that are a bit more private. So, you know, the big picture. I think the more knowledge you have as a sales associate, the more information and the better experience you can give to your customers and you can tailor it a certain way.

These interviews suggest that, from the service providers' perspectives, effective customer service skills, communication between employees at a winery, and consistency are key factors in creating memorable customer experiences.

4.5.2.3 Flexibility

While consistency is important in managing customer expectations and brand image, flexibility is required to overcome any unforeseen challenges and service failures. Lovelock (1995) underscores the importance of flexibility in a service context. Service-dominant logic, argue Vargo and Lusch (2004), also implies the relevancy of provider flexibility for customers' value creation. Because experiences are co-created with active customers, service providers must be flexible when responding to customer needs (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009). Researchers claim that the quality of service delivery (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996) and service recovery (Cunha, Rego, and Kamoche, 2009) depends on the flexibility of frontline employees (Brozovic, Nordin, and Kindstrom, 2016). Employee flexibility is required to deal with unexpected or difficult circumstances, for example, double bookings or large groups

arriving before announced or unannounced. Jordan, from Flying Rock, states,

> If people are waiting too long, they are going to get angry and they will walk out. So, we need to make sure the turnover is good enough. You are getting to everybody, no empty glasses, it's the place that is important, too. We give each other sections when it's super busy.

Gary from Farm Brothers emphasizes the importance of keeping calm and being attenuated to visitor needs in forming memorable experiences when under a time crunch:

> Sometimes, you are running between the two tables with twelve people at each table. You do your best. You make sure you give them as much attention as you can. You try to shorten your speech up a little bit but still be personable.

These findings suggest that flexibility in both frontline employees and managers is critical to wine experience creation.

4.5.2.4   The Physical Aspect of the Blueprint: Customer Touch Points

Consumer experiences are composed of a number of touch points and interactions, and managing these key moments is paramount to creating memorable experiences. Berry, Carbone, and Haeckel (2002) emphasized the importance of gaining an understanding of the customer's journey. Understanding customer touch points at every step of the process is crucial to experience management. Amy from Scarlett Estate winery describes customer touch points:

> Before they come in, there will be signage. We worked really hard with City of Kelowna to get good signage down on the main roads for people to know where Scarlett is. So, the signage is what brings people here…When they come to the winery . . . [the] first thing they are looking for is parking. They try to figure out where to park, so good accurate signage tell[ing] them where to park can be helpful. So that's the first touch point once they come here. I think [the] second is the view, a lot of people get out of their car [and] they just pause there for a second to look at the view of the lake and vineyards, so I think that . . . landscaping, maintaining the cleanliness, and maintaining the look of [the winery grounds] is really important because that's their touch point before they get to speak to you. Now, they are just soaking it in. After that, I think the next touch point is the wine shop because people immediately see the wine shop signs and that's where they want to go whether they are in for a tour, tasting, or special event, they still want to come to the wine shop

first. There, the big critical part is either the person at the tasting bar, at the till, or, when it's summer, we have hostess at the door. That person is the first human contact with the winery beside signage and the view. That's the first contact, first human contact where you are greeted by a person and she tells you what you can do there today…and, of course, there is the telephone. A lot of people will call us before they come here, which means we still have to have good signage, parking, [and set up for customers to experience the beautiful] the view.

To assist with experience, the medium-sized wineries in this study have concierges to greet and direct customers to appropriate service personnel or area. Lorraine from Audrey Family Estate Winery mentions the importance of that first human contact point:

We have two winery concierges. If you don't hit one down there, we hope you at least hit one up here. So, you [have] somebody to engage with you as soon as you walk onto the property. Maybe you don't want to engage them; It may be just "Hi, how's your day? Wine shop's this way, restaurant's that way." Having that personal experience there [and] just having someone greet them there is key. Inside the wine shop, the till is only about 6 feet from the door and there's always somebody standing at the till, so [we have] that person there to greet them as well. And, if they don't know where they are going, if they want to go to the bar, or if they are looking for a personal experience, [we are] able to direct them that way.

As a result, greeting at the door, using adequate signage, and maintaining cleanliness, is viewed by service providers as a necessary step to ensuring positive customer experiences.

4.5.2.5   The Service Blueprint

The service blueprint is used to guide wine industry professionals in providing consistent quality experiences to consumers (Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan, 2008). The following sections present the stages that are generally included in the service blueprint of wine tasting room experiences. However, they are not exclusive and may not necessarily occur in this order.

4.5.2.5.1   Preparing for the Customer's Visit

The first stage of the service blueprint describes the activities wineries engage in prior to the actual customer visit. One of the examples is using scheduling systems to manage

customer traffic for the day. Gary emphasizes the importance of booking schedules when

working with tour buses:

> One of the big things we do is we have a schedule for tour buses. Tour operators can book specific time, once its booked, nobody else can book it. So, at the beginning of everyday, we have the schedule for tours that are coming in, they give us how many people they are bringing in and what time. They don't always come in [at] that time, but we know approximately how busy we are going to be for cars coming in based on the past history.

When a large group of consumers comes in without any prior notice, it is likely that

customers will get a diluted and poor experience. Wineries try to avoid these undesirable

circumstances through open communication with tour companies. Jordan expands on the

importance of maintaining a mutual understanding with tour companies:

> We got really strict with the tour companies. From the onset of the season, we said to them, "You can't just drop in here because not only can we not help you but we are not able to provide the full Flying Rock experience for your guests. If you are going to come here, we want to be able to properly handle everything about serving you. Whether it's getting you in right away and answering your questions or giving you enough attentions and telling you everything you need to know about the wines."

Preparation, especially with regard to large groups, also includes wineries paying attention to

basic hygiene factors and setting up clean glasses to get ready for tastings. Mary states that

the general practice at Scarlett includes

> mak[ing] sure there are two clean glasses, or however many glasses, in front of them. Cleanliness is extremely important to the whole overall experience. If I set a glass down and I see that it has not been polished enough, I take it down and replace it with another right away.

Setting up customer expectations through promotional activities is an important part of the

preparation process. Managing expectation is particularly crucial to smaller wineries that are

more unique in what they offer, like Sunny Side. Angela, the owner of Sunny Side,

elaborates:

> Managing consumer expectation is important too. People who like going to places

like Scarlett all the time, as soon as they drive up here, they will be disappointed because I am a farm and my driveway is not paved. Sometimes, I see these young women getting out of the car with their high heels on and walking across my gravel driveway. I am like "woo" I wonder how that's affecting her… experience.

These findings suggest that managing customer expectations means fostering lines of communication with tour bus and travel companies and having branding that fits the particular winery's aesthetic.

4.5.2.5.2 Greeting Customers

Once the customer is on site, the greeting stage becomes important. Staff engagement with customers must include a warm welcome with eye contact and a sense of sincerity (Charters et al., 2009). Both the small and mid-sized wineries, regardless of their style, had similar greeting process consisting of staff members greeting customers, saying "Hi, how are you doing today?"; "Have you been here before?"; "Where are you from?"; and "What kind of wine do you like?" Amy, from Scarlett, comments on the importance of greeting to consumer experience:

> Being greeted is big. Someone lifts up their head and looks at you. Even if they are busy, they make eye contact… [and] you feel like they know you are there, [and] they will work on getting to you.

Recognizing the importance of greeting to consumer experience at Sunny Side, the small winery owner, Angela, states,

> People have to be greeted when they come into the wine shop. I think they need to feel recognized and special or you appreciate that they are there.

Scarlett staff member, Mary, also emphasizes the importance of acknowledgement to their customer experience:

> It's extremely important for all of us to greet everybody as they come in... If they are roaming for a while, go up to them personally and invite them up to the tasting bar, so they could have a tasting. So, acknowledging your customer is probably the number one thing. Acknowledging whom I am talking to and asking them about how they are

and, you know, if they've been to other wineries that day, what was the experience like, etc.

These points thus suggest that greeting, and particularly asking key questions of consumers, is critical to fostering experiences that are positive and memorable.

4.5.2.5.3 Informing Customers

In this step, service providers let customers know about their offerings, both in terms of products and services. They also inform customers of how the tasting works and the fee associated with it (if any) to help avoid any negative surprises. The goal is to make the process as transparent as possible and help customers decide if they want to participate in the activity or not. Jordan from Flying Rock emphasizes the importance of transparency in the wine tasting process:

> When they come in, I show them the menu and tell them "This is what we are serving today and this is the price of it." Nobody wants a surprise when it comes to money, so that's very important. If you leave it till the end of the tasting and say, "Oh that will be $5" and they had no idea, that might get a little bit awkward. So, just avoid any problems.

Informing customers about what is happening in the wine shop, for example, how long they have to wait to get the service, is crucial to avoiding any consumer frustration. Graham from Flying Rock wineries emphasizes the importance of updating consumers on winery processes and timing:

> It's important for us to have somebody in the position that can quickly relate information to people [such as] "Okay, you are going to have to wait a little bit" or "We are really busy, maybe if you want to try to go to another winery and come back in half an hour, we will hold you a spot." So, managing expectations and making sure consumers understand what the situation is… [Although] we can only manage with the best of our abilities.

From a service providers' perspective, therefore, it is crucial that experience providers keep consumers informed not only through branding or signage but also through conversations

with consumers to ensure that consumers expectations are managed.

4.5.2.5.4 Scanning and Reading Customers

In the scanning and reading step, service providers ask questions such as "Have you been here before?" and "What brought you here today?" to find out who they are and what their intention of the visit is. Sometimes, this process can be as subtle as observing consumer behaviors. Jordan, from Flying Rock, states,

> It's very hard to explain. It is very intuitive, I guess. But you get clues, right? It can be something as subtle as how they hold the glass. If they are holding a glass of wine by the cup like this, I can tell they are not wine connoisseurs and I am looking at things like mannerisms, their technique, how they are tasting their first wines, the first questions they ask, [and so on] … [From this] I can get a clue of how much and how little they know about wine. It's very kind of subtle clues.

These interviews suggest that the answers to initial questions asked of consumers can help service providers read into what customers expect from their visit to the winery and tailor their experience as necessary.

4.5.2.5.5 Providing Customers with Options

This step, providing customers with options, encourages co-production. Tasting room staff present customers with different ways to approach wine tasting and let customers modify their experiences. Scarlett Estate Winery and Farm Brothers Cellars have the most flexible wine tastings, where customers are given options to customize their tasting experience. Mary, from Scarlett, expands on their process,

> [You] explain[n] how the tasting works and then you pour them the first sip. It's important to explain about wine, not just pour…You know it's four selections for five dollars. I often go to five if they are interested perhaps in trying something else. I want them to get a personal experience, so, if it's a couple, I might suggest, "Why don't we pour two different ones?" [or] "If you don't mind trying each other's, you can then try eight or nine different wines all together instead of four."

Gary, from Farm Brothers Cellars, describes their process for encouraging the co-production

of experience:

> When a tour group comes in, I tell them they can either choose to taste four wines and [an] ice wine or I can pour them less of each wine and pour more: one of everything. They will get the same amount of wine by the time they are done. They are going to drink the same amount of wine they would anywhere else but now they get to try virtually everything that we have except for the ice wines.

Providing customers with options, from the service providers' perspective, therefore, can come in many forms. Allowing the customer to coproduce the experience through giving them more control over the wines selected, or the amount of wine tasted, is considered a further way to personalize consumer experience and maximize the memorability of the experience.

4.5.2.5.6 Providing Personalized Experiences through Interactions

Providing personal experience through interactions is crucial to making consumer tasting room experiences memorable. It is the personal connection that consumers value and the event is likely to be remembered fondly when meaningful interactions are provided. Flying Rock manager, James, expands on the importance of personal connection, stating,

> You [the winery visitor] should be made to feel special always and the way to do that to somebody is very easy. You just have to give them time, ask them how they are doing, [and] ask them where they are from. . . Personal connection is what people really crave in what they want.

Mary, from Scarlett, further emphasizes the importance of creating rapport with winery visitors:

> Start getting into conversations with your customer because you want them to remember the interactions that they had. Not just pour, pour, pour, pour, "Okay see you good bye." You should be able to relate to them on some personal level. So, the first question usually is "Oh are you from the valley?"; "Where are you from?"; "How long are you visiting?" You know? That is a starting point. And then, maybe, "Oh you drove through Banff and Lake Louise, isn't it beautiful there? Hope you had good weather!" You know, it's a rapport. And then you get into something deeper. I've had several customers who were so impressed with the Okanagan valley that they wanted to relocate. So, then they asked me for my experience of relocating. And

then we get into conversation around real estate prices, good areas in Kelowna, and all of that. And, you know, that's when you are not busy, when it's not July or August. Then, those are nice conversations to have. So, you know, they spent a good half an hour there. I think a good experience is when you as a consumer come into a winery [that is] not so busy, be able to really take time with your samples, [and] you are able to have a good conversation with the person who's pouring you the wine. You gain knowledge about the winery, about the wines that are produced, and you are gaining that from your experience.

From the producer's perspective, therefore, winery experience become further personalized through achieving personal connection, asking questions, spending time with customers, building rapport, educating customers on the history of the winery, and providing information about the region.

4.5.2.6   Individualizing Scripts

Scripting is often used to provide the consistency in what service providers say (by providing a storyline). However, when the focus relies heavily on scripting, it can make the interactions somewhat bland. Research suggests that wineries provide employees with basic scripts that communicate a core message; however, at the same time, wineries were found to encourage experience providers to go off script and focus on building meaningful interactions with customers. Holly from Scarlett expresses the importance of personalizing customer experience:

> Standardizing the experience is hard because everyone's got personality as well. . . so, you know, setting the service standard. We also let people [have] their own personality. We try to balance that out by letting you say things the way you like to say it by having an idea of what we want you to say. So, you don't necessarily need to use my words, but this is what you need to get across. . . We are trying to be a little bit casual that way; show [our] approachable nature and people's personalities.

The interviewees suggested that, when scripts are used, they should be communicated with passion and based on the staff's own personal experience and relationship with the brand. Lorraine from Audrey states,

You can basically say the script, but, if you don't believe in it and you are not passionate about it, people are not going to understand what you are saying. . . If you are really passionate, really engaged with people, and really want to know what they want as well through two-way dialogue and two-way engagement, that creates so much [of a] better experience overall.

When there is no formal script to be utilized; however, managers coach employees on what to say and what not to say to customers. Gary from Farm Brothers Cellars comments on their approach to coaching employees when there is no script:

There's no script. We will ask new people to watch us, learn how and what we say, and we will correct it as we go. So, a person will start throwing in things that maybe shouldn't be said—maybe an exaggeration or misunderstanding—[and] we will correct those. Other than that, they can use their own style, absolutely. They can read our tasting notes. We will let them watch us. We will watch them and make sure [the] message delivered is consistent. There are certain things we want them to tell people, so we make sure [that that happens], but how they tell [the customer] is up to them.

At some wineries, employee scripts are constantly reviewed and revised when necessary. For example, at the time of the interviews, Audrey Family Estate was in the process of changing their script to include more personalized messages of the unique and authentic Audrey story. Lorraine expands on this process,

We give them a full script, give them all the talking points we need to cover… We are in the process of changing the script because it is getting way too technical for people doing the family tour. . . So, getting more personalized messaging in there instead of technical information [like] "This tank is fermented at this many degrees," "This is for this long," etc. . . . Everybody does that so you need to differentiate yourself by telling your unique, authentic story.

From the provider's perspective, individualizing scripts is considered important to consumer experiences. While some scripts are fully configured, as at Audrey, and others are more informal, as at Farm Brothers Cellars, different wineries were found to have various ways to personalize scripts: through changing scripts to suit clientele, focusing on conversations that promote two-way engagement, and encouraging staff to bring in their own stories.

4.5.2.7 Storytelling

Stories told by front line employees affect the winery's overall brand (Hollenbeck, Peters, and Zinkham, 2008). Vargo and Lusch (2008) emphasized the co-creation of value with their customers and suggest that storytelling can be used to enhance value creation through education and/or entertainment. Providing customers with stories that are worthy of remembering is key to building memorable tasting room experiences. Wineries communicate their core messages to customers through stories (Rosile, Boje, Carlon, Downs, and Saylors, 2013). Wineries can also deepen customer relationships (personal connections) and make interactions seem more authentic when personal stories are shared with customers. Charters et al. (2009) postulate that brand loyalty may be achieved if the consumer is told interesting stories about the winery and wines available. The interviews suggest that medium sized wineries with long histories emphasize the family background and history of the establishment, while small wineries provide stories around vineyard practices, wine labels, and connections to the local community. Beatrice from Scarlett (a medium sized winery) states, "people like people stories. They like seeing the owner[s] pictures on the wall right off when they come in." Graham from Flying Rock shared how they use wine tasting sheets to strategically tell winery stories to customers:

> A huge part of what we do is selecting a specific tasting flight. It could be five wines for five dollars, [and] could be any of our brands, but picking the right wines so that it is [an] appropriate segway into each story, making sure that the wine that is selected will help us tell the story of the artist. . . [and] to help us tell the story of the wine maker. So, all these subtle things we do behind the scenes. It looks like we just picked these five wines and we tell you about it but it's . . . really intentional and focused.

Jordan, Flying Rock staff member, emphasizes that staff members are encouraged to say their own stories when serving the tasting selection, stating that the "flight of wines we actually serve; we get to tell our story through those." Mirroring Jordan's sentiments, James

from Flying Rock also underscores the importance of storytelling in tasting room experiences:

> Wine is story telling. I think it's the best marketing you can possibly have. . . He is making really good wine here, he's making really good wine there, she's making really good wine here. They are all great wines. Most customers are not educated enough and even the sommeliers wouldn't say this is number 1, this is number 2, this is number 3. How people are going to react to those wines is how they personally identify with them. So, for us, maybe it's identifying with the labels, identifying with the region, [or] identifying with [a] certain style or [a] certain food they prefer. I think that's far more important than just saying "My wine is the best." There's a million wines I love. Some of them cost two euros a bottle, some of them cost five hundred euros a bottle. So, it's just [a matter of] how… you convey your story to that customer in a way they will have a positive reaction to it.

Storytelling is a part of the script where basic content is provided, and how it is told depends on who the storyteller is. Amy from Scarlett states,

> We want [the staff] to have… their own version of Scarlett's story. We have the story but we also know that each individual is unique and I would never want someone to go away with a story that they recite as if they are reading out of a book. I want them to go away with a story that resembles what our story is, but it's their own version of it because, when they say it, listeners feel that it's an authentic story, [an] honest story, and listeners buy into that. [The staff member should be] telling me about this whole thing about Scarlett with [their] own passion. . . The storylines that we think are important [to share], besides the story, is the history, for sure. One of the biggest things is the history… [the fact that we have] some of the best vineyards in the valley, [what we did with the] agricultural knowledge we had at the time, the fact that our vines are much older than most of them in the valley, and some of our really great achievements, like being awarded Canada's winery of the year, twice.

Storytelling, therefore, was found to be critical to consumer experiences and, in particular, personalized stories were found to be important. Personalized stories consist of core messages or themes of the winery, while preserving the storyteller's voice. These personalized touches come in the form of sharing personal experiences both inside and outside of the vineyards, communicate knowledge of different wineries, provide information about the region, speak about their own preferred wine pairings with food, and communicate history on or information about the wines in concert with the different wines tasted.

4.5.2.8 Employee-Visitor Matching

Wineries have a team of employees from different backgrounds with various levels of wine knowledge, and with distinct personalities. Customers also come in with their own individualized needs, wants, and preferences. Thus, it is important to match customers to the employee who can best provide the type of experiences that the customers are looking for. This notion once again emphasizes the importance of the human element in memorable experience creation. Dora from Scarlett states, "I think, whether it's fun or educational, it entirely depends on the person they talk to at the wine bar." Dora further elaborates on the importance of matching wine expert/knowledge seeking consumers with employees with more knowledge and experience to avoid any frustration or disappointment. Making sure employees have the right skill set and knowledge is crucial to satisfying customer wants, as Lorraine from Audrey emphasizes, "we make sure we are offering the right experiences to the right people. . . we make sure that staff have the right skill set and right knowledge level [and] be able to convey that to the guests." Wine industry professionals from both small and medium wineries within the study also discussed how they work together as a team to provide memorable tasting room experiences to the highest number of customers possible. Jordan elaborates,

> If my colleagues can't answer certain questions, they will refer them to Graham or myself, and that's a way to make sure that everybody is getting what they want. So, if somebody comes in and they just want fun stories… we have that too. [It is our practice to] refer [customers] to whoever can better answer that question.

As a result, the study found that matching employees with winery visitors, and the ability for sommeliers to have access to managers, owners, or winemakers to find answers to visitor questions, are essential parts of experience management.

4.5.2.9 Summary

While consistency is important to experience management, flexibility is required to overcome any unforeseen and difficult situations. Understanding customer touch points and developing service blueprints based on crucial moments can help wineries facilitate consistent quality experiences for consumers. Unlike service management, employees are encouraged to go off script and provide experiences in their own style (permitted that they stay within basic guidelines). Medium-sized wineries, in comparison to smaller wineries, were found to have stricter guidelines as to staff appearance and behaviour.

4.5.3 Place

Since the wine tasting experience is co-produced when customers are present, the location of the winery becomes important. Wineries are often located in a rural setting, away from the rush and noise of the city. Gross and Brown (2006) suggest affective bond between consumers and a place is an important feature of tourism experiences. This section will discuss how wineries collaborate with the tourism industry within the region, work with the location and setting, and establish a sense of place.

4.5.3.1 Wine Routes and Creating Regional Experiences

According to Carmichael (2005), a consumer's experience at a particular attraction is greatly affected by their cumulative experience of the region as a whole. Getz and Brown (2006a) also added that wine region features, such as attractive scenery and other regional characteristics, are important to wine consumers. Establishing destination uniqueness (Blain, Levy, and Ritchie, 2005) is crucial in wine tourism. The Okanagan wine industry is composed of small and medium-sized wineries and wine tourism industries. Many of these wineries and businesses collaborate to create regional wine experiences that attract more

customers. Amy, from Scarlett, recounts their experiences working with Tourism Kelowna in

the creation of positive regional experiences:

> Wine routes [were] started by Tourism Kelowna a few years ago to give people a better understanding of what they can do because there are all these individual wineries with [their] individual marketing [campaigns] that people might drive by one without knowing you were there. So, it was a Tourism Kelowna project to create wine routes and [the] notion of the wine trails. So, as a visitor, if you are on a certain route anyway, at least you know what other wineries are on that trail… We do print ads together; we do online ads together; we do a couple of brochures together.

Holly, from Scarlett, also emphasizes the importance of working with other wineries in

creating a regional experience:

> On our route, there are four different wineries, so we do things as a wine route sometimes… sending each other business and recommending [each other]. It is a very friendly business that way. I am always telling people where I've been. You know, when I am doing tastings, I say "You gotta go see this place because they have a great Syrah." I think it's really important that Scarlett Estate does this because it shows good sportsmanship. Tourism Kelowna, South Okanagan tourism companies, and TOTA, they put a lot of effort in getting people to come to the Okanagan in general. Our part is when people are here, making sure that they are having a good time.

Lorraine emphasizes how they create regional experiences at Audrey:

> We refer to each other but also we are part of an association where we host group events together… We keep in touch with local wineries to see what's going on at different wineries and what experiences they are offering. And, as we are talking about the collaborative nature of the industry, I will contact [marketing managers at other wineries] to see what's working for them and what's not, and what kind of tourists they are seeing this year. . . We are competitors, but we are not. People are coming to this area; they are not just coming to Audrey Family Estate. They are planning a day and going to many different wineries and we want to make sure that we are offering sort of similar levels of experiences so that they are not being disappointed by anyone in the experience. You don't want to leave anyone with a bad taste in their mouth.

Winery collaboration, therefore, is considered by service providers to be crucial to

experience creation. Mary from Scarlett Estate winery explains,

> A lot of times, people would say "Oh I am heading down to Oliver and Osoyoos, what wineries would you recommend?" or "I am heading up to Lake Country what would you recommend?" . . . So, yeah it is really, really important to support each

other. We are all in the same business. There shouldn't be competition. It should be, you know, working together.

Negative experiences at other wineries were considered to result in negative experiences of other wineries in the region, or the region as a whole. As a result, service providers emphasized the importance of communication and collaboration with nearby wineries, and tourism companies to ensure wineries were meeting consumer expectations.

4.5.3.2 Location and Setting

Location is a key to success (Brown, 1989). In wine tourism settings, a good location does not always refer to a convenient location that shortens consumers' travel time, but rather where the winery is located in the setting and how it feels within the rural backdrop. Dora from Scarlett speaks to how their winery's lake view setting attracts customers:

> I think customers like our location. I think they like the fact that we seem somewhat small [and] cozy, and I think people like that. I think people like that personal feeling when they come in and see the beautiful manicured grounds [and] beautiful lake view. If we were just a little shop in one of the locations downtown, I don't think Scarlett will have the same reputation.

Lorraine from Audrey emphasizes the importance that they place on their location in the tasting room experience:

> [Our] view [and] location cannot be replicated anywhere in the world. This is something that is very unique to Audrey Family Estate. . . When people are tasting, they can just look out and have the nice view.

In terms of the winery setting, Angela from Sunny Side also cited the importance of the environment to their winery, and how their landscape contributes to their rustic aesthetic:

> We are a farm with a nice and big front yard. You can't see it now, but we normally have picnic tables and chairs out there for people to sit. We encourage people to bring their own food and enjoy the view with a bottle of wine. It's a beautiful environment. They are out in the country, close to the city.

Jordan expresses how Flying Rock uses décor to tie the winery into the surroundings:

I think the combination of the old wood makes you feel like you are in a kind of pioneer setting. The space itself really helps with the vibe. You walk in [and] it's not, like, a white wall and stainless steel [or an] austere thing [that] makes you think you are in a Doctor's office or makes you feel like you are in a church and you don't want to break anything. This is all old stuff that has stood the test of time. It's rusty, it's dirty… in terms of the setting, you can't ask for better setting. We are directly in the vineyard. When we are doing the tastings, we can say "This is our house red and it comes from the vines you are starring at right there." That's really special. It gives people [the feeling that] "Oh man, that's right there." . . . People are very visual and they want to see where it comes from.

Location, setting, landscaping, and décor are therefore important to attracting consumers and helping shape consumer experiences.

4.5.3.3 A Sense of Place

According to Relph (1997), a sense of place is the combination of the physical setting, the activities available, and the social processes rooted in the setting. Wineries allow customers to touch, pick, and sample the grapes on the vines and take customers to the production area (backstage) to provide more authentic experiences (Costa and Bamossy, 2001; Derbaix and Gombault, 2016) for customers who seek meaningful interactions and stimulation from the setting. Beatrice from Scarlett Estate Winery states,

You know, people can go out [and] enjoy the view. It's just that whole thing of the beauty of the natural area where we are. [The] ability to actually sit and have a glass of wine and enjoy the view.

Bob further illustrates how the scenery contributes to the experience of Farm Brothers Cellars visitors:

I think it truly helps us being right on the property. When the doors open, you can show them these wines you are drinking are from those grapes over there. [This] allow[s] customers to have a feel of the place, [a] sense of place. When they try the grapes right after the wines, [they might say] "Oh my god, they truly do taste similar." It's a bigger, better experience than "Here's this."

Amy from Scarlett also expands on how their tasting room experience establish a sense of place:

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I think it becomes a sense of place. People are more and more drawn out of the tasting bar into the vineyard. It used to be tasting the wine, that's it. Now, it is more of "How did the wine get into the bottle in first place?" We used to do a cellar tour and, up until now, our winery tours were mainly focused on [the] cellar, [. . . and] on how wine is made. Now, people are even stepping in further back. Over the last two years we [have included] vineyard tours, so, now, [on] Thursday[s] and Sunday[s], we do vineyard tours because they [the customers] want to be connected to the land where the vines are grown. So, it's gone backward. People used to be interested in the end product. Now, with all the information available, people want to know why and not what.

The interviews thus point to an increasing trend in winery experience creation that focuses more and more on the vineyards themselves and is rooted in a sense of place. This sense of place is achieved through tours of vineyards, grape tastings, and the placement of the winery itself (which emphasize a sense of place through views of the Okanagan and/or through being embedded within the vineyard).

4.5.3.4 Summary

Wine routes play a crucial role in promoting regional wine country experiences in the valley. The Okanagan valley is mainly composed of small and medium-sized wineries, so wineries that work together in a collaborative manner are more effective at promoting and attracting consumers to the region. The location, setting, and authenticity of the winery are also found to be important when establishing this sense of place.

4.5.4 Physical Evidence

Wineries incorporate certain tangible elements into their offerings to enhance customer experiences. The importance of carefully managing the physical environment of the place has been discussed in tourism and service research. Baker, Grewal, and Levy (1992) found that environmental elements such as store design and ambience can enhance consumer pleasure. Charters et al. (2009) added that tangible elements (e.g. winery building, signage, decor, and the cleanliness of the winery), along with intangible elements (e.g. staff

responsiveness), are important in determining the overall customer experience.

It was observed that wineries' well-maintained landscapes, unique interior designs, and displays enhance wine tasting experiences for customers and provided style clues for the type of experience wineries offer. For example, Scarlett Estate Winery included a simple, yet elegantly designed, tasting sheet to suggest what their tasting room experience was going to be like.

4.5.4.1 Vibe (a.k.a. Atmosphere)

Establishing the right vibe is important. Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994) discuss the effects of store atmosphere on consumer experience; namely, how it compliments customers' moods and helps create the right kind of energy in the setting. The atmosphere of the store can enhance customer perceptions of service quality (Bitner, 1990) and help immerse customers in the shopping experience (Kozinets, Sherry, Deberry-Spence, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit, and Storm, 2002). Foster and McLelland (2015) argue that, when it is well managed, the atmosphere can create a more differentiated, interactive, immersive, and branded shopping experience for customers. A winery's vibe includes sights (simple things from lighting to tasting sheet design) and sounds (wineries play classical music to rock and roll to cater to specific crowds). Atmospheric elements are used to attract the right customers. For example, Foster and McLelland (2015) discuss how many women's specialty stores tend to have bright lights, soft music, and lots of large windows. Such atmospherics are used to build a particular theme in the retail setting (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) and it can help translate the brand image into the retail environment (Kozinets et al., 2002). The different elements in one space help to create a certain vibe. Having the right vibe is important because the most memorable vibe can win customer affection and loyalty (Dodge, 2014). For example, Flying

Rock Wines created a casual, social, upbeat, and entertaining vibe using simple things such

as low lighting, tasting room layout, fixtures, and old antique chairs and tables. It almost has

a museum-feel with old antiques displayed inside and outside of the winery. Jordan

describes,

> They love the vibe. I hear the word a lot. So, the vibe is everything from the staff,
> attitude of the staff, the décor, [and] the space and setting. Even if you look outside
> the window, we are in the vineyard beside the lake so it's a combination of how the
> wine makes you feel, whether you like it or not, the music that's going on, . . . the
> people and their attitude, . . . and also the setting. Wine is an extremely sensory
> experience. It's a combination of all those things. So, we have to make sure all those
> are there… We are bombastic, we are smiling, we are dancing around, [and we have]
> high energy. . . I think it's infectious and people "live vibe" off of that. Another
> component of the good wine experience is you have to see that your person is happy
> to do what they are doing. That's huge for me. You want to go to a happy place.

Along with its visual elements, Flying Rock's music choice (up-beat 90's hip hop) and their

energetic wine shop staff help create the right vibe for the experience. This suggests that both

physical elements and employees play a huge role in creating a winery's vibe. Audrey

Family Estate, very different from Flying Rock Wines, provides a more traditional winery

experience that supports its warm, cozy, and homestead vibe through its wooden-structured

winery building and calm jazz and classical music. The size of the winery also contributes to

creating their specific vibe. Customers often associate small wineries with more warm,

welcoming, and personal experiences. Dora from Scarlett reflects,

> A lot of people come back again and again and bring family and friends because they
> feel like we are smaller (the wine shop is). So… we get more of the personal
> experience.

Mary also adds that the size of Scarlett winery helps to make the place feel more welcoming

and inviting:

> I think Scarlett is small enough that people don't feel overwhelmed by [our]
> appearance.

The winery environment and staff attitudes thus contribute to experiences through creating particular vibes that customers can associate with.

4.5.4.2 Winery Architecture/Building

The architecture of wineries and the atmosphere of tasting rooms are important components of consumer experiences creation (Charters et al., 2009). Although the medium-sized wineries in this study have similar marketing approaches and atmospheres, the architecture of Scarlett Estate Winery is quite different than that of Audrey Family Estate Winery. Scarlett Estate Winery is painted with lots of whites, and has a modern building (for a bright, clean, and almost minimalist aesthetic), while Audrey Family Estate has a building that is warmer in its design (for a rustic, vintage, and authentic aesthetic). Audrey's tasting room also has a "rustic feel," with a stone fireplace, darker wood, and low lighting, which embodies a "functioning… homely winery" (Charters et al., 2009, p. 126). Also encouraging a more rustic and homely feel, Flying Rock Wines decorated their wine shop with old antique farming tools, diverging from the traditional and encouraging a cozy and homey winery experience. Manager, James, states,

> For us, architecture is very important. We wanted something that is cozy, homey, and something everybody can identify with [by using] these old antiques. You know, these remind me of my grandfather. We had a drive shed back in Ontario. He was a farmer. Most people have some sort of part of that history so people can really identify with that even before they walk in the room.

Visual elements are built in to enhance the consumer experience in the setting (Charters and Pettigrew, 2005). Farm Brothers Cellars have the production facility and tasting bar inside a big stoned winery building that looks like a cave. They exemplify how it is possible to provide unique and memorable wine tasting experiences without spending a lot of money on architecture. Manager, Gary, states,

When you come down the road, you will see a sign saying "Farm Brothers Cellars." [We have] beautiful grapes out there and everything, but that is it. That's all you see. It is in a big stoned building, you know. And you come inside, you see insulation, and ceiling, and tanks everywhere. So, people are often pleasantly surprised. They cannot believe they can try as much as they do or have the extras that we try to throw in, time permitting.

Thus, the architecture at each winery was found to contribute to creating an atmosphere that complimented the wine experience offered at that particular winery.

4.5.4.3 Wine Shop Layout

Scarlett Estate's wine shop is neatly laid out in a way that customers can easily browse different products. All of their wines are presented in an eye-catching manner in their own section with product cards to describe their characteristics. Their wines and their product cards are organized neatly to provide clues to what types of experiences they offer. Amy, a manager at Scarlett, states,

We try to put all of our bottles in accessible manner. We have product cards that will give you technical information and tasting notes, a bit of story of the wine. Those are great because you can immediately pick up the card, can understand what wine it is, what the blend that's in there… [The] experience includes what people tell you, it includes what you see, [and it] includes all the information and how the information is passed along.

Farm Brothers offers a very different experience from other wineries, in that their wine shop is located inside the cellar. Unlike most wineries where their backstage is completely separate from the front stage, their production area is clearly visible and accessible to everybody walking into the wine shop. Gary states,

You think you are walking into a wine cave when you walk in. Right now, the barrels are down on the floor because we are just filling them with wine. But, when we stack the barrels up, adjacent to the bar three high, it looks like a wine cellar. There's tanks of wine; there's barrels of wine; there's often hoses on the floor away from the customers not actually in the way. We tell customers they can throw their wines in the drain on the floor if they want to, we can hose it away. It's a working wine cellar, it looks like that. People walk in and they say "Wow." They are right in the middle of the cellar. People just love wandering around and looking at things. When customers

ask "Can I have a tour?" I would say "Sure, there's a press, we press the grapes in there, we pump it into that tank, [it] ferments there and, then, if it is red, it will go into barrels." [For example, (motions to a barrel)] that is Marechal Foch. I can give them the whole wine tour right there without going anywhere.

James from Flying Rock explains how having stand-up bars instead of sit-down tables helps their winery to create fluid experiences in the tasting room:

In terms of how the room is laid out, we want people to be standing. We don't want people to sit down for too long. We want it to be kind of a fluid and live sort of place. So, we created these stand-up bars rather than sit-down areas and that kind of thing.

The wine shop layout is also very important because it can either make customers feel comfortable or overwhelmed. Graham from Flying Rock points out the reasons behind their unorthodox layout:

We have a very different layout. We have a little bar, a table, and this big table here. I would say this layout, out of all the wineries I've worked at, this is one of the most functional winery layouts ever. And I think people like that because it's really kind of casual and approachable. . . The bar is small and it can get busy, but these two tables are empty. It's not as overwhelming or intimidating because it immediately makes customers aware that there's going to be somewhere else they can taste wines. They don't have to wait for all these people at the main tasting bar.

Beatrice from Scarlett also explains the thought process behind the organization of their wines:

Coming into the wine shop, obviously, we have wine and you have to walk past the wines to get to the tasting bar. So, again, they can begin to get a sense of what wines there are. Some wineries have their wines behind the staff only [sign] so you don't actually get to examine the bottles or to read the descriptions of the wine at your own pace.

Establishing fluidity in wine tasting was thus viewed by service providers as an important contributor to wine experience. As the interviews suggest, fluidity can be established through allowing customers access to wine bottles, enabling customers to experience the winery for themselves by leaving points of interest open to them, and encouraging standing and walking through the use of stand-up bars and tastings, as opposed to sit-down areas.

4.5.4.4 Summary

Certain tangible elements such as the architecture, the wine shop interior, and the displays used can help create the right vibe and enhance the tasting room experience for consumers. Managing how these tangible elements mix into the setting is a critical step in building memorable tasting room experiences.

4.5.5 Product

Tasting good wine is a part of a great tasting room experience. While the basic quality of wine should be decent and fault free, O'Neil, Palmer, and Charters (2002) suggest that the wine itself might not be the most important signifier in memorable tasting room experiences. In other words, the product is the core offering that is used to satisfy customers' needs and wants, but experience goes beyond the definition of products and service.

4.5.5.1 Product Consistency

While wineries may have a variety of products, product consistency is what ensures brand recognition and helps consumers to develop trust with the brand. Medium-sized wineries, specifically Audrey and Scarlett Estate Winery, focus on providing consistent quality products and a set of the same varietals year after year. Mary, from Scarlett, states,

> when [people] see our signs [for] Scarlett, it's like, "You are my go-to. You are the brand I always drink" and it is something they know and are familiar with. They know it's going to be good quality. It's the trust.

This finding suggests that product consistency is important both to maximizing positive consumer experiences and retaining customers.

4.5.5.2 Product Innovation

Consistency is another key to effective service delivery and meeting customer expectations (Andrews and Turner, 2017). However, innovation (the ability to create new

products and services) is often what sets wineries apart from the crowd. Jones, Singh, and

Hsiung (2013) argue wineries need to evolve over time to satisfy consumer demands and

preferences. In promoting product innovation (Doloreux, Chamberlin, and Ben-Amor, 2013)

to create new styles of wine based on market conditions, the winemaker's expertise (wine

knowledge and experience) is used in medium sized wineries (Joy, Grohmann, and Pena,

2017). Mary states,

> You don't want to be stuck in old method[s]. Scarlett is willing to try things, so the
> ownership is willing to invest money in things like concrete fermenters and concrete
> eggs, which you know can produce a really exciting product.

While small wineries often have fewer resources than larger wineries, the findings suggest

that they have more freedom to be different and unique in what they offer. Bob from Farm

Brothers Cellars states, "small wineries are hands on. You have more opportunities to do and

different things at small wineries." In an effort to satisfy changing customer needs, Sunny

Side Winery includes focus groups that help to develop new wine styles, as Angela explains,

> We did a focus group with 85 people. They helped us create a blend of wine that they
> liked. We also had different graphic designers present label concepts and 85 women
> looked at the labels and they commented on labels, [signaling] which one was their
> favorite and what would they change and blah blah blah. We also used that
> opportunity to gather a variety of information on how much they would spend on a
> bottle [of] BC wine itself, how much they will spend for friends, and all that good
> stuff.

Innovation, therefore, is central to maximizing customer experience. The interviews

suggested that innovation was achieved through using winemakers, appealing to focus

groups, and encouraging visitor participation and feedback.

4.5.5.3 Product Offerings

Product offerings (such as the number of tasters and the variety and availability of the

wines) and product quality also have a huge impact on customer experience. A competitive

advantage can be gained when options are provided and varieties of wine are offered to taste.

Dora states,

> I think Scarlett is big enough that we offer a large selection of wines and I think that's
> a huge thing. If we offer only six wines, I don't think we will have the same
> consistent sort of people come in again and again. I think we have people come in
> again and again because they can only try four to five wines at a time. And, then, if
> [we] are offering thirty different wines… by the time [the customer has] made those
> trips, we are coming out with new vintages, so it's constantly changing. We always
> [have] something new for people to try. That's why I always ask people if they've
> been in here before and how long ago [it was]. Then I will say, "You know what, you
> haven't tried this one yet." I want people to think they can keep coming back and
> every time they come there's going to be something new and different. I think they
> like that.

Flying Rock Wines has a more structured and limited tasting experience, where customers

are only allowed to try the wines selected by the winery. Graham elaborates, "These are the

wines we selected, whether you like white wine or red wine, you should really just try what

we built." Alternatively, both Farm Bothers and Sunny Side Winery have all their wines

available for tasting. They also help customers create their own tasting experiences by letting

them pick wines from their tasting menu. Bob expands on Farm Brothers' decision to give

consumers more control in their tasting experiences:

> We are like, "We've got tons of wine options; you pick, what do you want?" Whereas
> I've been to places where I am told "Okay we are tasting Chard, Semion, Cab, and
> Malbec today." Those are not my favorites. I [would] rather choose the other 4 whites
> instead. Here at Farm Brothers, everything is open all the time. That's the point. Try
> everything. Whatever you want to try. If you like whites, I will let you try all whites.

Gary, also from Farm Brothers, elaborates further, "We are limited in the volume of alcohol

we can serve, but within the volume you can serve a lot of wine. A lot of different wines."

Angela also comments on Sunny Side's decision to include more wines in the tasting

selection: "In the summer, we have a wide variety of wines open so we will have about ten

wines open usually. Whether you are a dry, off dry, or sweet wine drinker, we have

something to offer you." As a result, there were different rationales for including different tasting experiences. While some wineries choose particular products to be tasted to encourage return visits, others (small wineries in particular) encourage visitors to coproduce their experiences by allowing them to pick the wines they taste.

4.5.5.4 Product Quality

Okumus, Okumus, and McKercher (2007) suggest that product quality, along with service quality, are significant determinants of customer experience. Product quality affects customer satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann, 1994) and can help building loyalty among consumers (Frow and Payne, 2007). Novices and wine experts assess wine quality differently, using a variety of cues such as their senses, price, awards, ratings, growing region, winery reputation, and recommendations from other wine drinkers (Nowak and Newton, 2006). Tasting expertise is needed in quality control and judging the faults in a wine (Peynaud and Blouin, 1996). Charters and Pettigrew (2007) found that the most notable determinant of wine quality is that it tastes good, as the main reason people drink wine is liking the taste of wine. There is no question that the wineries chosen for the study have good quality wines, as these wines are backed by a quality system called the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA).

Wine quality is an important factor in a winery's product experience, as wine tastings that offer poor wine will significantly impact a consumer's overall experience. Amy, from Scarlett, states,

> There is [the] product itself and then [there is the] experience. When the product is crappy, a good experience can somewhat help you but . . . eventually, you will be like "ah I still didn't like that wine."

Angela also asserts the supremacy of product versus service in wine tasting for Sunny Side:

"I think it's a combination of wine and service. I mean, you have to have good wine, otherwise customers won't come back." Jordan further emphasizes the importance of both wine and service:

> Wine has to be good. I mean, I've gone to wineries where the staff was great, the whole experience was fun, [and the] ambience was great but the wines weren't good. That takes away from the wine experience. At the end of the day, it is [a] wine experience.

Consumers expect all wines to be of satisfactory quality at the very minimum. Quality wine alone, however, is not likely to provide a memorable consumption experience, although it is still an essential element of the wine experience. As Lorraine points out,

> What stands out for us is the quality of the products and consistency of the quality products. We've always been known for having really great wines. I think people can always guarantee that either they like something here or, if they bring friends here, they will find something that they like. We have a vast range of products as well.

As a result, product quality was found to be a central factor to experience creation at wineries from the perspectives of service providers.

4.5.5.5 Summary

While product consistency is what ensures brand recognition, product innovation is often what sets wineries apart from the crowd. The study findings suggest that product quality and winery decisions around product offerings (the number of tasters and variety and availability of wines) has a significant impact on customer experience.

4.5.6 Promotion

Promotion includes all the marketing activities employed by wineries to differentiate a service offering in the mind of the consumer (Glynn and Lehtinen, 1995). Promotion plays an important role in attracting and retaining customers when consistent brand messages are communicated across different marketing channels. Amy, a manager at Scarlett, states,

We are at the end of Kelowna where there's nothing past us. So, [we are] unlike… most businesses (where they are located in areas where you have to pass by them on your way to school [or] on your way to work or something). If you are not living down here, you don't pass by Scarlett Estate. So, if you are coming here, that means you have looked us up before. And, if you do look us up, you end up having an expectation. So . . . simple things [like the] website can set the expectation for someone. And we are very active online with not just social media but all sorts of media [and] online ads. . . I do strongly think that people who actually do come to Scarlett Winery have some sort of expectations. And I think we have set the tone to what expectations they should have because we make sure our online ads, social media pages, and our website have the same tone, have the same branding to exactly set that expectation… My job is to make sure the events we are doing match our brand, fit into our brand, so somebody who comes in for [a] Scarlett event will not be shocked. [We] make sure [that], when people come here, they get exactly what they thought they [would] be getting. We want them to feel that we have been honest with our marketing for the experience. So, we will never show images of aerial photography if they are not going to see that when they come here… it's making sure that customers are getting the experience that they were promised.

Lorraine, manager at Audrey, states,

We make sure that experiences are being promoted in the right way as well… So, the radio has been a big part of what we do. We are with Bell Media locally so 99.9 Sun FM, EZ Rock and AM 1150 . . . We don't do as much targeted advertising in the summer, but in the fall we are doing very specific promotions, . . . trying to create more specific things, doing more contests, and really getting the word out to the locals. Social media is used all year around, but, at this time of the year, it is more focused on getting local people out.

Angela, owner of Sunny Side, discusses the importance of collaboration in promotional efforts for Sunny Side: "We meet every month and hold events together. We also do joint advertising together by having each winery on our wine route put in so much money in a collective manner." Product promotion is thus a central part of experience creation because it sets consumer expectations for the winery visit. Using mediums such as websites, social media, radio, and event advertising attract customers and manage consumer expectations to maximize positive consumer experiences.

4.5.6.1 Summary

Promotion, when it is well implemented, can help differentiate service offerings

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provided by wineries and attract desired consumer groups. Promotion plays an important role

when consumers are in pre- and/or post-visit stages.

4.5.7   Pricing

Studies suggest that customers are willing to pay a premium for quality memorable

experiences (Gupta and Vajic, 2000). Operating a tasting room is expensive and wineries

often charge consumers a tasting fee to offset operational costs (Charters et al., 2009).

Alternatively, Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that companies should charge customers an

admission fee if they are selling experiences. It is also suggested that charging a fee for

tasting can increase consumer spending (Kolyesnikova and Dodd, 2009). Setting the right

price for a tasting room experience is tricky, but often essential to making ends meet while

keeping customers happy. Holly, manager at Scarlett, explains the importance of setting the

right cost:

> We are also trying to be very price-conscious and that's the area that we go back and
> forth with. At every single level, accounting comes back and says, "Hey, are you
> charging enough? Are you covering your cost?" So, I can't just go "You know what?
> I am randomly going to pick this price!" There are lots of thoughts that go into why
> everything is the way it is… You have to be really aware of the costs and why you are
> doing things and be able to explain them.

Mary expresses the importance of not overwhelming consumers with tasting fees:

> We don't overwhelm customers with "Okay, I need your five dollars upfront for your
> tasting fee" and I think that's really important. Five dollars for a tasting fee is on the
> side. At least 80%, if not more, probably 90%, of our customers buy wine. So, the
> five dollars for the tasting fee is not important at all. . . For some wineries, that seems
> to be important to them so they are charging the customers right away before they
> even have interactions with them. That, to me, completely puts customers off.

People say that British Columbian wines are expensive compared to many international

wines. However, the pricing of the experiential product is not based on the utilitarian value of

an actual product (wine), but what customers receive in an intangible form (the experience

itself). Angela from Sunny Side elaborates,

> For Europeans, our wine prices are astronomically expensive in their eyes compared to what they pay in Europe. So, you know, it's more of that they are doing it as an experience than anything.

Wineries offer different levels of experiences with different price points to attract different groups of people. Amy from Scarlett states,

> Our biggest group of customers is still generation X and a little bit older. I think it's because of the price point of our wines. Millennials spend a little less on wine, although [the] millennial base of customers is growing because you see that age group of people come for certain types of events, like our seated tastings. But, when you look at who our members are, the people who spend the most time with us [and the people who] buy most of our wines, [are] definitely [from the] 45 plus age group. Because, firstly, if you look at the statistics, between 35 and 55 is the age where you spend the most money because you are kind of making a good wage by 35 and you still have a few more years of work, so you spend the most money then. When you come to 55, you are trying to start to save again. So, that is the age group that spends the most money.

Wineries have different pricings for different tiers of experience (i.e. regular wine tasting vs. premium wine tasting). James, from Flying Rock, announced that they are currently working on adding a high-end wine tasting experience for specific groups of customers:

> We would [begin] wine tasting by asking the question "are you interested in super premium wines $30 - $80 or are you more interested in $15 – 25?" So, we would have a sort of entry-level tasting and premium tastings for different prices.

Other pricing decisions include providing special treatment to wine club members. For example, some wineries provide discounts to wine club members. For example, Farm Brothers offers free tastings to wine club members in addition to fifteen percent off wine at their wine shop. Scarlett Wine Club members also get exclusive access to limited time offers and special pricings on online and offline purchases.

4.5.7.1 Summary

Setting the right price for tasting room experiences, and for wine club members, is an

important task. The interviews suggest that one way to diversify the wine tasting experience is to include specials where wine club members get reduced pricing on their wine purchases and at winery events.

4.6   Different Types of Experience

This section discusses nine different types of customer experience present in wine tasting room settings (Table 4). Pine and Gilmore (1999) classified four realms of experiences: entertainment, entertainment, escapist, and esthetic. In addition to that, five experience types, comprising personal experience, unique experience, emotional experience, sensory experience, and social experience are included to describe memorable tasting room experience creation.

Table 4   Nine Dimensions of the Tasting Room Experience

1. **Personal Experience**: connect at personal level, genuine interaction
2. **Unique Experience**: compose novelty factor, surprise
3. **Emotional Experience**: make customers feel happy
4. **Sensory Experience**: involve five senses
5. **Social Experience**: opportunity to interact with others
6. **Entertainment Experience** (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 31)
7. **Educational Experience** (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 32)
8. **Escapist Experience** (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 33)
9. **Esthetic Experience** (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 35)

4.6.1   Personal Experience

Pine and Gilmore (1999) emphasize the subjective character of customer experience and argue that experiences "occur within [a customer] who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level" (p. 12). Thus, it is important to understand that every customer is unique and the experience should, therefore, be individualized. Wineries put considerable effort into understanding individual customers by asking questions and getting to know the customer. In promoting personal experience,

service providers are trained to make customers feel special rather than treating them as numbers. The following passages provide examples of service providers engaging with consumers at personal levels and tailoring their experiences for specific consumers. For example, Dora explains the importance of caring, education, and engagement in consumer experiences:

> I think they have to have that personal experience. They have to feel connected, feel emotionally connected, to the staff, . . . maybe not specifically to one staff member, but I think they have to feel "Oh, I always have a good time there; They always take time to talk to me. They always have very interesting people working at the wine bar." They come away feeling like you care about them, you made them laugh, you made them smile, you made them think, you contacted all of their senses, you made eye contact, you told them some interesting things that they didn't know increased their knowledge, also you've given them something to taste…I want someone to engage me. I want someone to ask me questions. I want someone to look like they care who I am, and I also want them to be enthusiastic about what they are selling and figure out who I am as a customer and tailor the experience for me. I don't want to walk in feeling like somebody's saying the same things over and over again. I know, in the industry, there are certain things you have to say over and over again to everybody no matter what, but . . . [you have moments where you can] get off the script, figure out who your customer is, and make that rest of the time personal.

The findings suggest that service providers bring in different backgrounds and personalities to the experience as well. By being true to themselves, service providers can make service encounters more genuine and authentic. The use of individualized scripts and storytelling can also help create bonds between the service provider and the customer, and improve customer experiences (Engeset and Elvekrok, 2015). Personal experiences are created through consumers' interactions with service providers, wines, and wineries. Graham illustrates how their individualized approach affects consumer experiences at Flying Rock,

> At Flying Rock, every individual has an individualized Flying Rock experience. If you talk to myself or talk to Louise, all of us will tell you different stories and kind of different takes on the wines, but, at the end of the day, wine is the wine; grapes are not going to change. . . That personalized interaction with the wines [is what] we want. . . Having this personal connection with the wines and conveying that to the customers helps them create personal interaction[s] with the wine.

In addition to promoting personal connections between service providers and customers,

having consumers in the center of the tasting room experience is crucial, allowing customers

to play an active role in the process and have control over their own experience. James

elaborates on how Flying Rock attempts to create personal experiences through

individualizing customers' experiences with the wines:

> I really don't like when people say, "Here's Pinot Noir, it taste like raspberries, strawberries, blueberries and…" No. Everybody's palate is different. So, don't tell me what to taste. Let me form my own opinion. And I really encourage people (staff) to get people to ask questions. Some people don't want to talk about every wine for five minutes, some people do. But, I would say, the majority of people taste and hear a little bit about it and have their own experience. That's how I like to taste. I don't want to talk, talk, talk; I want to taste the wines and that's why I came to the winery.

Studies suggest that authenticity is also important in delivering customer experiences

(Hwang and Seo, 2016). Authenticity refers to something that is "believed or accepted to be

genuine or real" (Taylor, 1991, p. 17). Kolar and Zabkar (2010) argue that authenticity is a

"socially and individually constructed perception" (p. 653) that it is relative and dependent

on context. Charters et al. (2009) noted that staff ability to connect the consumer to the

winery through stories of the winery's history, environment, and wine making techniques is

essential to authenticating consumer experience. Authentic experiences are created when

winery employees really take time to educate and engage consumers. A customer whom I got

to speak with during my visit to the Scarlett Estate winery suggested how taking customers to

"the backstage" can help enhance the experience:

> He showed us around the property, really taught us what was going on behind the scenes, in terms of how they produce the wine and all of the secrets to success. We were able to go inside of the production facilities, and see the barrels and fermentation tanks that the wine goes into, and their chemistry room, where acidity and flavor tests are carried out. For me, this was a really neat experience and it makes you feel as though you paid a lot of money to really get that authentic, one of a kind, experience.

As a result, from the service provider's perspective, including service provider personality in wine tastings, engaging customers by asking their opinions on what the wine tastes like, and telling stories are important parts of the tasting room experience. A service provider's genuine personality, individualized attention, and ability to talk to and engage with customers on a personal level are found to be important to creating memorable experience. This ability can help wineries to distinguish themselves from the competition and increase customer satisfaction.

4.6.2   Unique Experience (Novelty)

Providing different and unique experiences is one way to stand out from the crowd. Saayman and van der Merwe (2015) assert that novelty is one of the factors that contributes to a memorable wine tasting experience; examples of novelty experience include "having the opportunity to taste new wines" and "visit lesser known wineries" (p. 377). Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Beverland (2009) also discuss the notion of novelty and the surprise factor, and how it can contribute to the memorability of consumption experiences. The environmental elements such as store layout, music, light, and scents can help differentiate one winery experience from another. Employee attitude and behavior (how they present and serve wines) can also play an important role in making customer experiences unique and memorable. Additionally, wineries offer events and activities that suit their style/theme and brand personality to further differentiate them. For example, Farm Brothers Cellars, in their casual approach, offers consumers the ability to try wine out of their tanks or barrels. Wineries that cater to families offer children fruit juice and/or activities such as grape stomping also benefit from these unique offerings. Beatrice, from Scarlett, expands on the importance of differentiation within the wine industry:

I enjoy the fact that every winery is different, but I am getting the feeling that things are getting way too similar. I am starting to feel the same wine experience everywhere. I want to hear less about the awards you won, but I want to know about the wine you are making.

It is suggested that memorable experiences happen when something new, something customers have never seen or heard before, is provided. Beatrice states, "out of all my tasting experience and in my history, I've never had a barrel sample. I've never been beside the barrel and see wine being taken out of the barrel and put into my glass with a special tool." Some wineries offer unique customer experiences in the tasting room by telling customers interesting stories about the winery and wines, and providing customers with an experiential setting, where they can participate in activities they have never done before (i.e. grape stomping). Jordan from Flying Rock states,

I think people . . . don't want to feel like they are being talked down to. They don't want to feel rushed. They want something completely different from the normal experience, "normal experience" meaning when you walk in [and] they say "Hi, here's the tasting menu, you get a complementary tasting of 4 wines. Here's the first one… You can pay at the door." We will tell you a bunch of stories about a bunch of crazy stuff, a bunch of guys crushing the vineyard and about the crazy dog. We will put on something, it's a show. They want a show, essentially, and here they are getting it.

Getting to speak to a winemaker and tasting special wines that are readily available are examples of unique experiences. Farm Brothers, for example, offers a very transparent wine tasting experience where customers can observe what is going on in the winemaking process while sipping their wines in the tasting room. Customers can see it is a real working winery with hoses and drains on the ground, and the tasting room experience becomes even more special when they are offered wine samples right out of the tanks or barrels present in the setting. As Gary illustrates,

When I first came here, Bob, who is an assistant winemaker, he took me over to the tanks and we sampled a couple of wines that were going to be bottled in the spring.

And they were incredible. I've never experienced anything like that before. It was just so interesting and exciting to be able to try something new that wasn't bottled yet. They know it will change again when it's bottled, but it's still amazing.

In conclusion, there are several avenues wineries can take to make their service more unique in a competitive environment. These include offering grape tastings, juice tastings for children, grape stomping activities, and tastings straight out of the barrel, and showing customers the wine production facilities.

4.6.3   Emotional Experience

Emotion is a crucial aspect of consumption (Richins, 1997) and understanding the emotional states of consumers is very important to the success of the customer experience (Price, Arnould, and Tierney, 1995). Gopaldas (2011) suggests that "emotions vary across a number of dimensions, such as their duration, intensity, and nature of embodiment" (p. 17). Feelings play a central role in consumer decision processes (Pham, Cohen, Pracejus, and Hughes, 2001) and emotional experiences take place when wineries focus on providing experiences that facilitate consumer emotions (Schmitt, 1999b). Nowak and Newton (2006) note that consumers are emotional beings who try to meet their emotional needs through their consumption choices; therefore, companies need to "provide sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational values that replace functional values" (Schmitt, 1999a, p. 26). Bitner (1992) discusses how the atmosphere (design elements of a space) is used to elicit certain emotions from customers. Desmet and Schifferstein (2008) further suggest different types of emotions occur in response to eating or tasting food. It is also argued that consumers' emotional bonding with a service provider is strongly linked to consumer satisfaction and future purchase intention (Arnould and Price, 1993). Thus, it is important for wineries to form a positive emotional bond with the consumer and connect with them on a

personal level (Day, 1989). Wineries create emotional experiences for consumers through

using staff in the experience delivery process, and through environmental clues. For example,

in promoting the feeling of comfort in the tasting room setting, wineries train their employees

to greet customers with a welcoming and warm smile, and feature clues in the tasting room

environment that engender a home-like feeling. Elements that stimulate laughter and fun can

also be infused in tasting room experiences to create a level of comfort. James, from Flying

Rock Wines, suggests that making customers laugh is key to creating memorable tasting

room experiences. He stresses the importance of using appropriate humor in their customer

interactions:

> Make people laugh… It sounds really simple, but making people laugh, it's an instantaneous connection. And if you are making someone laugh regularly, in my mind, I know we've got that customer for life.

Angela, from Sunny Side, further illustrates the importance of greeting and emotions in the

experience:

> [What] I want people to feel when they leave Sunny Side is "Wow, that was really fun. I had a really good time." That's what I want. So, give somebody a good time, [make them feel] welcomed, happy, and treated well, with respect. People will remember what they saw and felt. Emotion is what drives your consumers.

Farm Brothers Cellars also underline the importance of making consumers to feel at ease and

relaxed in the setting, opting for the use of casual language over polite, formal language. Bob

elaborates,

> I think it's at first meet and greet, you are going to learn what they want to do immediately. So, when they walk in, you say, "Hey folks are you feeling thirsty?" They will say "Sure we will have a taster" or "We are not sure yet." Those two [answers] will tell me something different. If they are not sure yet, give them some time, show them the menu, and let them walk around. When they are ready to taste: "How are you doing? My name is Bob blah blah where are you from?" Get the initial chat out of the way so they [feel] relaxed.

Making customers feel relaxed in the tasting room environment is considered crucial to both

small and mid-sized wineries. Holly illustrates how Scarlett has worked to become a

welcoming environment to keep consumers at ease:

> We are trying to be Okanagan-like as well, which is a little bit laid back. We are
> trying to [have] that "Hey, come on in, glad to see you. Thanks for coming out"
> [vibe] so that people are kind of getting that warm, fuzzy feeling when they see us…
> If your property is messy when you drive in or if you don't get greeted when you
> walk in the door, it will impact people's feelings. I rather when people get five hellos
> than no hello. [It is] super important that everyone goes "Hi, have you been helped?"

Lorraine also emphasizes the importance of relaxation and calm in winery experiences at

Audrey:

> When they enter, regardless of what kind of day they've had [or] where they've been
> before, we want them to feel relaxed and calm when they arrive. Trying to give them
> the most relaxing experience we can.

Wineries can form an emotional bond with customers when customers feel they are truly

cared for by winery employees (Nowak and Newton, 2006). Employees play a crucial role in

experience creation because consumers form an impression and have an emotional reaction

to employee's enthusiasm, passion, and humor. Beatrice from Scarlett recounts an experience

where she was made to feel comfortable at a winery:

> The friend that I was supposed to go with had a problem so she couldn't come. I
> ended up going on my own, which is sometimes a little awkward. When you go into a
> winery, it's unusual for single people to show up, but I was made to feel welcomed.
> People didn't assume I was waiting for people to join me; they engaged me right
> away. They included me in a tasting that was going on. . . Being recognized, included
> and asked… made me feel welcome and appreciated. [The] staff really communicated
> a warm and welcoming personality. [The] tasting staff was easy to talk to, very
> unpretentious, and treated me with the same respect as everybody else.

The physical elements such as atmosphere, wine shop design, music, and wine labels can

also reinforce emotional experiences for consumers. Another factor that informs consumers'

emotional experience, and helps consumers to relax, is humor. For example, Sunny Side uses

pop culture references on its collections that use humor to appeal to younger audiences.

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These findings suggest that producers use various tactics to ensure winery visitors are relaxed during their sessions. These tactics include using humor, informal language, and warm and engaging conversations to ensure customers feel at ease in the winery.

4.6.4 Sensory Experience

It is suggested that service ambiance and atmospherics can evoke certain emotions in consumers by stimulating the senses (Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Beverland, 2009). Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that sensory experience can "enable the individual to develop behavioral, emotional, cognitive, relational, or symbolic values towards the products or services offered" (p. 129). Wine tourism is, essentially, a sensory experience and the service setting should aim to please all human senses (Carlsen, 2011). Consumers react to "sensory stimuli such as color, flavor, texture, and appearance" (Lesschaeve, 2007, p. 255) and understand the world through the senses (Martens, 1999). Tanasca, Purcarea, and Popa (2014) define sensory experience as the "aesthetics and sensory perceptions about the shopping environment, atmosphere, products and service" (p. 77). Schmitt (1999a) discusses how sensory experiences concerning factors such as sight, touch, and smell can have a huge impact on customer experiences. Thach and Hanni (2008) note how different people use the senses to understand the world around them and that women, for example, have a better sense of smell and taste. Dora speaks to the importance of smell, taste, and sound to winery experiences:

> Between the smell . . . the taste, and all the senses, customers can have a good experience. Also, the sound (if it is too busy, too noisy, the music is too loud, or there isn't any music) it is part of the experience. We need some nice music along with sipping wine, smelling wine, listening and talking to somebody, and having that personal experience. And a nice bright light. You want to have a complete sensory experience when you come to the winery. You know, customers are not there just to taste and smell the wine. They have to see something beautiful; they have to hear something beautiful; they have to feel that they are liked and wanted. It's the feeling

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that comes with all of those senses.

Mary, from Scarlett, also emphasizes the importance of the senses on wine experiences and

tastings:

> [The] first thing people are engaged with is the sight. The beauty of it right? Smell is
> engaged right away, too. The different things that are growing on site and if we are
> going on a tour you know people can smell juniper, they can smell roses, lavender
> and whatever that's growing there, so smell is engaged. Listening, too, you can hear
> maybe the drip irrigation, and you can hear the birds signing and wind blowing. And,
> when you get to the vines, you know people can taste the grapes on vines. When we
> get to do an actual tasting, I make sure people are looking at the clarity and color of
> what's in the glass. Let them swirl the glass to release the aromatics. They can put
> their nose right in. I say smelling is important because you are going to taste a lot
> more if you can smell it. So, that ties right in. Once they smell it, they can taste it. I
> make sure they don't judge the wine from the first sip but take a couple sips to make
> sure their palate is clean when it's tasted.

Lesschaeve (2007) describes the generic requirements of tasting rooms as "quiet

environment[s]: free from noise, odor, visual disturbances" (p. 254). Holly from Scarlett

Estate Winery discusses how they use winery-wide rules to avoid any disruptions to

customer sensory experiences: "We have rules such as no perfume or even smoking. I

discourage our staff [from] smok[ing] so that it doesn't disturb guests' sensory experience."

The style of music playing inside the tasting room is also important. Furthermore, how the

tasting room looks and feels can have a huge impact on customer experience. Thus, it is

important for wineries to create an atmosphere that supports the brand style and positioning

of the winery (Charters et al., 2009). All five wineries chosen for this study are effectively

using music to set the tone of their brand personality and style of the winery. For instance,

medium sized wineries with a traditional tone tend to play soft jazz or classical music to help

create a calm and relaxed environment for customers. Lorraine from Audrey Family Estate

Winery comments on their music decisions: "In terms of music, [I] generally just like light

sort of soft jazz, something calming [but] not too stimulating just blends in a little bit to the

background but provides a little bit of ambience." As Scarlett Estate Winery manager Amy

states, "we listen to a little bit more classical. And, again, it goes back to who we are: honest

elegance. It's not going to be radio music where you can hear ads and stuff."

Dora, from Scarlett Estate Winery, also mentions the importance of picking the right music

to evoke certain feelings in consumers.

> I think it does make a big difference. I think it can't be sleepy elevator music but it
> shouldn't be rock and roll either. I think it has to be something that has some energy
> in it. Energizing music, but it has to be calm at the same time. So that's tricky. It has
> to be because it often gets very loud and, in a winery, you want some calming music .
> . . playing some music that evokes feelings might help them get [a] certain sensory
> experience. We are always trying to find music that we think will give the customers
> of what they want without putting them to sleep or without irritating them. . . Pick
> music that they enjoy and they can relate to.

Sunny Side Winery is a middle of the road type of winery. They choose music to set a

comfortable environment so that it does not offend anybody coming into the winery. Angela

elaborates,

> We usually play jazz or 114.5 kind of music. Mainstream or whatever, but not rock
> and roll because I don't want to offend anybody. So, it's easier to play middle of the
> road kind of music, then you are not going to offend anybody. They might not like the
> music but they are not going to hate the music. Rock and Roll and Country to me has
> a very strong like or hate, so why would I turn somebody off in my wine shop just
> because of the music playing?

Flying Rock takes a more unique approach to their music choice. They play loud, high

energy, 90's hip hop, which sets the tone that they are different from a traditional winery

experience. Graham comments on how this stylistic choice changes consumer experiences:

> Music is [a] super important part of things for us. All summer long, we changed it up
> a little bit. . . but basically the goal of the Flying Rock as far as the music goes is
> always 90's hip hop so all of a sudden you are listening to Dr. Dre, which
> immediately changes your perception of what the winery experience is going to be.
> We try to have higher energy.

Farm Brothers Cellars, because of their unique winery layout, their tasting bar location inside

the cellar, and their loud ceiling fan above the tasting bar, makes it impossible for them to have any musical background. Gary, manager at Farm Brothers, states,

> There's two big blowers above your head trying to keep the building cool enough for the wines in hot Okanagan summer. There's enough noise in there. Trying to create a musical background for a busy season would be impossible. The blowers are extremely noisy. It makes it difficult to hear talk[ing] when they are on and they are on all summer because it does get hot outside. The building is insulated, but it is still a tin building; it absorbs a lot of heat and keeps a lot of heat in. Once the weather gets hot, air conditioners run nonstop all day and they are noisy.

In summary, there are several factors that influence the style of music that wineries pick, or even if a winery has music at all. Such factors include the amount of ambient noise of the winery, the atmosphere of the winery, and the type of experience the winery is attempting to offer.

4.6.5 Social Experience

Customers come to wineries both to taste wine and to socializing with friends. Social elements are particularly important aspects of consumer experiences (Schmitt, 2010) and they are shared by participants. Macionis and Cambourne (1998) suggest that socializing is one of the key winery visitor motivations. Xing, Chalip, and Green (2014) add that consumers "are motivated to travel to the event, rather than to the site, to socialize with other players who shared similar identities" (p. 379). Consumer experiences are often enhanced when consumers interact with friends, family, service providers, and/or other customers in the setting. Lorraine, the manager from Audrey, describes their approach to enhancing the winery experience: "We are really trying to create that elevated experience that has a communal feeling. So when people are here, we want them to feel like family." Dora from Scarlett Estate Winery explains the role of tasting bar staff in promoting social experience for consumers,

> People like [the] social aspect of walking into a winery… This person will talk to this person and that person will talk to this person because sometimes it's fun when you are at a wine bar to talk to people next to you. It's a social thing, right? . . . What I enjoy at the wine bar is getting [to know] the two parties I am dealing with, [and] help[ing] them get to know each other. And then they start laughing, they start talking, and then that creates a fun experience for them, too. It's not just interacting with you behind the bar, you are now interacting with people. I think that's important, too.

Bob from Farm Brothers argues that one of the challenges to providing a social experience is not having enough staff for the number of customers that come in during the peak summer season, "when there are more staff, people can have more one on one interactions with staff." As a result, the findings suggested that service providers consider experience creation to be constituted not only of the quality of wines, education, or aesthetics but also the relationships facilitated through wine tastings and events. Such relationships, as documented above, are about spending more time with the customers and encouraging connections between the parties involved in wine tastings.

4.6.6   Entertainment Experiences

Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggest that entertainment occurs when customers passively absorb their experiences through their senses, either through viewing a performance or listening to music. Entertainment in the wine context is often associated with fun events and activities hosted by wineries, and interesting stories told by humorous service providers in the tasting room. The findings from the interviews suggest that service providers play an important role making the tasting room experience more interesting and fun, as Amy from Scarlett points out:

> It's [about] the information you are providing and how you are providing it. Very educational will be when you go to a wine course and do a tasting; we say this wine is from this many grapes, [spends] this many days in stainless steel, and so on. Entertaining is providing more information than just textbook information about wines. For example, if you are tasting Pinot Noir, people might ask "Why do you say

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Pinot Noir is a hard-growing grape?" It means a certain temperature has to be there and it doesn't like too much rain or too much sun. And we tell them it can actually mutate into Pinot Gris. . . People don't know the grapes can mutate. Pinot Noir is the only grape that can mutate to Pinot Gris. Grapes mutate when they don't like the environment around them. So that kind of becomes informative, yet entertaining because it's not so strict; it's more like, "ah I didn't know that." It becomes a cool fact.

The Audrey Family Estate Winery has a dominant family and communal feeling to their winery experiences. They provide space for social gatherings and interactions, encouraging customers to utilize the facilities and tools to create their own entertainment experiences. The tasting room has a classic rustic ambience and customers are encouraged to socialize with each other instead of strictly learning about wine. Audrey's Lorraine elaborates,

We are really trying to create that elevated experience that has a communal feeling. So, when people are here, we want them to feel like family.

In summary, entertainment at wineries is constitutive of a mix of education, community building, socializing, and storytelling.

4.6.7 Educational Experiences

The educational component cannot be ignored when discussing the wine tasting experience. Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggest that education involves inviting active participation from the customer and engaging the customer's mind (for intellectual education) and/or body (for physical training). Educational experiences include increasing the consumers' knowledge of wine and learning about the wine making process, winery history, wine rituals, and wine attributes. Most customers coming into wineries are novices and it is important for service providers to supply them with the knowledge and skills that they can use to fully enjoy the experience (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2000). Beatrice from Scarlett explains,

I go through tasting rituals with people and I don't know how many times people

didn't know why [the] tasting ritual is important. Why is it important to smell wines? Especially with white wines, if you don't smell you will miss out on 90% of the pleasure with the wine. . . I want them to appreciate the sensory experience that is magical. So, my goal with customer experience is to help them learn something, to have an interactive experience, where their experience is something that they are likely to remember and for them to feel good about what they experienced. So, they are not made to feel wrong [and] they are not made to feel intimidated [so] that they can feel wine is fun and friendly.

Mary from Scarlett emphasizes,

It's really important that, if you are working in the wine shop [or] tasting bar, you tell them about how this wine was made, how the grapes were grown, how many months [it] spen[t] in [the] barrel, [if we're] using French oak [etc.] . . . All of these factors, I think, are really important. Most people coming to the winery are not wine experts. So, anything you tell them is going to be a learning experience for them. I've been to wineries where they just pour you samples; they don't talk about the wines, they don't talk about the winery, and they don't talk about the vineyard or the viniculture. That, to me, feel[s] like you are in Walmart.

Mary, Scarlett staff member, further states how Scarlett Estate winery uses their tasting sheet

to enhance the educational experience of customers,

A lot of people like the fact that everything is put down on the tasting sheet so you know exactly what the alcohol level is on the wine, what the acidity is on the wine, [and] what the residual sugar is on the wine. Most of our wines are available too.

While midsized wineries foreground the importance of teaching customers the basic tasting

rituals, this is not the case at smaller wineries. Angela relates that teaching consumers the

tasting rituals is not a necessary part of a great tasting room experience at Sunny Side:

We don't teach them how to drink wine. We don't go into details at all. They get that enough at other places. We just don't feel it's necessary. If they ask, we will show you how but I don't consider that's a necessary part of the wine experience. . . Our education is how you live on a farm and make wine. Our experience is that . . . we have apricot trees on site so whomever happens be here when the apricots are ripe, they can pick them. I don't know how many people said to me they never picked a fruit from a tree. So, we want people to experience a farm, that's our education.

Gary, from Farm Brothers, suggests that the educational experience is often a two-way

process. Winery employees teach novice customers about the basics of tasting but they learn

from wine expert customers.

> Customers' knowledge level[s are] all over the map. Anybody from a trained
> sommelier down to somebody who it's their first wine tasting. Personally, if I have a
> knowledgeable wine consumer, I let them teach me. I provide wines but I let them
> teach me. I tell them as little as possible because they are going to tell me what they
> think. They are going to provide me with information about wine that I probably
> don't know. I learn from my customers as much as they learn from here. On the other
> hand, if the customer knows nothing but they want information, I will give them as
> much as they want.

As a result, educational experiences occur in the interactions between the customer and

service provider.

4.6.8   Escapist Experiences

The notion of escapist experiences is observed when wineries try to create a setting

for their customers to pause from the hustle of their everyday life. To sit back, relax, and sip

their wine. Exemplifying this type of experience, Dora expands on the contours of the

escapist experience in the Okanagan:

> I think [Vancouverites] are just looking for weekend getaways. Looking for some
> place where they can go that is close and they can get the experiences that they could
> be anywhere in the world once they arrive in the valley, it's quite different than the
> coast.

Other kinds of escapist experiences are based on active participation. Pine and Gilmore

(1999) noted that escapist experiences involve both active participation and immersion in the

experience. This suggests that escapist experiences can happen when customers take on an

active role as co-producers in the tasting room setting. Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2012) assert

that the escapist experience is "highly immersive wherein consumers are engrossed in a

different time or place. . . the greater the number of activities offered within the wine

destination, the greater the potential for consumers to fully realize the escapist dimension" (p.

9). Lorraine discusses how Audrey Family Estate comes up with new and different activities

every year to satisfy the experiential needs of consumers,

> We offer a variety of experiences trying to make it approachable for everybody… perhaps someone who's [an] authentic experiencer wants that true food and wine culinary experience, wine and food pairings, sommelier-led tastings where they get to do some older vintages and things like that. . . We are creating them in different ways and in different areas to give [customers] the best experience possible.

Catering to escapist experiences is critical to meeting customer needs. These interviews suggest that identifying the kind of escapist experience that visitors wish to have is critical to making the winery experience successful.

4.6.9   Aesthetic Experiences

Pine and Gilmore (1999) contend that an encompassing aesthetic experience allows customers to wholly immerse themselves into an environment. Joy and Sherry (2003) discuss the aesthetic appreciation of art museum experiences, specifically how consumers move, sense, touch, smell, and act within a space. The interviews suggest that the importance of place and setting have a clear impact on aesthetic experience. People often find winery experience beautiful when it is in a rural setting, surrounded by nature, specifically vines. Dora explains how the winery environment plays an important factor in experience management:

> For me, a large part of where I go whether it's a grocery store, whether it's a winery, whether it's a gym, it has to be aesthetically pleasing to me. If not, I don't have the same experience. And that's a big part of it. It has to be pleasing to the eye and it has to be pretty somehow. Both inside the building and outside the building. I want to drive up and get a sense of feeling. Like, for a winery, I want to feel like I am in a rural setting. I don't enjoy going to a winery so much if they are in urban settings. To me, that isn't the complete experience . . . My personal preference would be go somewhere where I feel like I am actually close to the vines. So, even if there's a small plot of land and there's vines around it, I still get that little bit of experience. It's a full experience.

Mary also elaborates on the importance of the beauty of the region to experience management in wineries:

> I think [Scarlett] is one of the most beautiful wineries in the Okanagan valley. I mean there are so many that have beautiful views. . . When I am doing a tour, I take customers up at a higher level so they can see more of the lake. It's almost heart-stopping in a way that they have to stop and they have to take pictures because it is so beautiful. . . When you stop and listen to all the birds, you know, singing around you or whatever… the beauty is a part of the experience. Everybody comes in says "Wow, I guess you will never get tired of that view."

Furthermore, James emphasizes how the luxurious views in the Okanagan help to shape consumer experiences at Flying Rock:

> In Okanagan, we have this luxury of the views. You just sit up there and have a bottle of wine [and] look at the lake. I mean, you are already doing pretty good. If you have a heartbeat, you will probably get that it's an exciting place to be hanging out.

From a service provider's perspective, therefore, both luxurious views, as well as access and proximity to vineyards, amplify visitors' aesthetic experiences.

4.6.10 Summary

Different types of experiences created in tasting room settings suggest that, although Pine and Gilmore's (1999) education, entertainment, escapist, and esthetic experience are critical components of the tasting room experience, they do not entirely encompass the full consumer experience in the context of wine tourism. Other dimensions of customer experience include personal, unique, emotional, sensory, and social experiences. This finding is in line with, and expands upon, those of Schmitt (1999a), who proposed the three dimensions of customer experience: sensory, emotional, and social.

The above examples illustrate wineries' strategies to creating memorable customer experiences. In a broader terms, winery strategies are related to (1) human resources management (hiring employees for a cultural fit and based on personality, and training staff to display adequate behavior), (2) process management (the development of a service blueprint and script to promote consistent levels of customer experience), (3) place

management (the maintenance of facilities, store layout, and ambience cues to create aesthetic and/or escapist experience), and (4) product management (including quality management, product design, and service offers that are tailored to different groups of customers). Wineries hire caring, customer-oriented staff to make sure genuine and authentic interactions are created between customers and service providers (which help to create personal experiences). In the training process, wineries teach employees to engage customers and encourage them to interact with each other (building a consumer's social experience). Employees also get knowledge acquisition training so that they can educate customers to satisfy customer's learning needs (which contributes to a consumer's educational experience).

Each of the wineries shape customer experiences by appealing to certain types of experiences to maximize memorability. For example, Flying Rock Wines hires people based on their personality. They gravitate towards individuals with a sense of humor so that the tasting experience can become fun (contributing to a consumer's entertainment experience) and make customers happy (contributing to their emotional experience). Scarlett Estate Winery was also found to manage their services by appealing to the five senses. They play calm and relaxing, but energizing classical music in their tasting room to make their customers feel comfortable in the setting and have a no-perfume policy to avoid disturbing customer's sensory experiences (in which a sensory experience is suggested to affect customers' emotions along with various cognitive processes such as memory) (Riegel et al., 2016). Scarlett Estate Winery also pays particular attention to property maintenance. The winery's beautiful location, which overlooks the Okanagan lake, and their facilities are maintained in pristine condition. This attention to detail provides customers with a specific

kind of aesthetic experience and, in some cases, an escapist experience. As another example, Farm Brothers utilizes their unique wine tasting room setting to shape consumer experiences. They offer tastings inside of their cellar, where the tanks and barrels are located, contributing to the uniqueness of the customers' experiences. Within the setting, customers can observe parts of wine making process and also sense the bakery-like smell of yeast fermenting. Such sensory experiences help customers remember the discussions they had with service providers and what they saw and tasted.

In terms of consumer experience quality, process and product management was found to be more linked to manager roles. Managers develop service blueprints, training manuals, and scripting to ensure consistent quality. The importance of having an effective communication system between employees and managers was discussed. Product management is related to what wineries do to produce quality wines (i.e. hiring an experienced wine maker), different varieties of wines that suit different customers' palates, and designing wine tasting menus (specifically, which wines are available to taste and whether customers can choose the wines they taste). Well conceived tasting menus and interesting wine labels were found to encourage some storytelling, which, in turn, makes customer interactions even more entertaining and personal. Quality wines that suit customers' palates were also found satisfy their senses and lead to positive memorable experiences.

4.7   Experience Outcomes: Transforming Consumers through Experiences

According to Caru and Cova (2007a), consumption experiences can be turned into a "series of extraordinary immersion for the consumer who could then engage in the unforgettable processes that constitute the experience or, even better, be transformed because of these experiences" (p. 9). Arnould and Price, in their River Magic article (1993), discuss

the notion of consumer transformation in which a single experience can "change them forever" (p. 25). Tynan and McKechnie (2009) suggest consumers become "evangelized" (Holbrook, 2000, p. 178) after an exceptional experience, to the point that they persuade other people in their network to engage with it too. Wineries hope to transform consumers into brand advocates (Smith and Wheeler, 2002), creating referral, retention, and profitable growth by providing the perfect customer experiences (Frow and Payne, 2007). Graham illustrates how experience outcomes relate to experience at Flying Rock:

> People fall in love with the experience. . . I think we do a really great job of building kind of brand advocates, brand angelus people who are so passionate about the Flying Rock brand [that] all they want to do is tell everybody they can to come to the hatch. It's the best marketing.

Lorraine, manager at Audrey, also reports having this shared aim:

> Our goal is to create brand ambassadors. Whoever comes on site, whether or not they are telling one person, whether or not they are telling 50 people, whether or not they are just supporting our wines in stores, they are ambassadors.

From the service providers' perspective, forming excellent experiences is central to increasing customers through both return visits and word of mouth.

4.8   Experience Evaluation

Processes do not stop when customers leave the setting. Wineries evaluate customer experiences to see if the current experience meets the customers' needs and wants (Bitner, Booms, and Tetrault, 1990). Lorraine explains how the event review process works at Audrey to get an idea of how they function in future experience creation,

> [We make] sure we have the right promotion[s] [for] the right audience . . . We go through the budget ROIs, fill it out, and then post event evaluations. We have a monthly marketing committee meeting that I lead, so it basically has all the department heads involved. [I will ask] "Alright how did that go? What was the evaluation? How many did we do last month?" If the event was successful, we make sure to document that so, when it comes to planning this year, whether it's me or whether it's someone else doing the planning, you have at least this to go back on and

you can see what worked and what didn't work instead of just throwing all the ideas out there and seeing what sticks. So, that's sort of how we create remarkable experiences.

Both small and medium-sized wineries regularly check social media and review sites to evaluate their experience delivery process. They read customer feedback and comments, and respond to customer complaints on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Google. Amy elaborates on this process at Scarlett, stating,

> We look at all our notifications, all our messages, [and] anybody who checks in on FB, TripAdvisor, Yelp, [or] Google… We also create the content for social media. So, every week we have a plan about what is happening. What do people like to do, know, and see? And then we do what's right for one channel. So, something we think is good for Snapchat may not actually work on FB. So, we will see if the same information can be shared on FB, if not we will do it a different way.

James also comments on this process at Flying Rock:

> We know the sales are good. We know feedback is really good. You know, we look at things like Yelp, and Instagram, and Facebook. Some people say negative things, [and] we try to respond saying "hey, this is our side of story here." Some people have valid points; some people are just complaining.

Angela describes why responding to comments is so important to Sunny Side's brand:

> We see what's put up on TripAdvisor [and] we respond to that, and we have good rating on TripAdvisor. . . We talk to people, listen to any kind of complaint, and respond to it. You know a lot of wineries don't and they just ignore it. If we hear that somebody was having problems with their wine or something like that, we respond right away. They are often surprised that we've responded. So, you know, we try to immediately deal with any negativity because we've learned and I know from all the studies and the work I've done, is that if you can turn a negative experience into a positive one, they will tell 100 people. Right? If you leave it as a negative experience, then they will probably tell 1,000 people. So, you want to turn it around as soon as you can.

These findings suggest that wineries both have internal feedback channels, as well as external feedback channels (through social media engines), and responding to comments is not only important to managing consumer expectations (pre-visit) but can also improve customer relationships (post-visit).

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**4.9	Challenges in Providing Experiences**

The interview findings largely matched what researchers observed in the tasting room setting; however, there were some instances in which the ideal staff behavior described by the managers in interviews was not practiced by winery employees. For example, winery managers who participated in the interviews said their employees were all very welcoming, friendly, and knowledgeable. However, some participant observations suggested differently. For example, in one participant observation session in September 2016, one employee presented unfriendly and unwelcoming behaviors. In this specific case, it was the morning and very quiet inside the tasting room. There were no people other than two employees stocking merchandise. When the researcher entered the wine shop, one of the employees looked at the researcher but did not say hello. The researcher approached the employee and said they were interested in a tasting. The employee handed the researcher a tasting menu to look at, but did not provide any information about each wine that the researcher was going to taste nor did they engage the researcher in personal conversation. This experience confirmed that experience quality is greatly impacted by the service provider that a customer encounters in the setting. This human element plays a crucial role in experience management and the unexpected behavior of an employee may come as a challenge. This example also suggests that managers may not always be sure of employee interactions with customers when they are not around and, thus, may not be aware of negative staff behaviours that impact customer experiences.

Other challenges the wine industry faces include seasonality, changing consumer demands, and service inseparability (Carmichael and Senese, 2012; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1985). Canada's wine tourism industry must contend with seasonality, and the

peak summer season brings the problems of high tourist traffic and staffing concerns. Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (2003) discussed service characteristics such as inseparability (the service cannot be separated from the service providers and the customer becomes part of the service), perishability (the service cannot be stored for sale in the future services), and variability to emphasize the importance of standardizing procedures while offering customized service to customers. As Beatrice, from Scarlett, asserts, when there is limited service space and time, it makes it harder for wineries to provide memorable tasting experiences for customers: "[customers] want to sit in a beautiful place enjoying a glass of wine. We didn't [offer] enough of that [seated tastings] because we didn't have space and time." As a result, space and time become critical to ensuring wineries can meet visitor expectations.

4.9.1   Space

According to Hudson (2017), retail space can have a significant impact on customer experience. He argues that a large space can make the store look empty and uninviting, while a small space can make the store look cluttered. When there are too many customers in the wine shop, the space can look crowded and it can limit a wineries' ability to provide a variety of experiences. Mary, from Scarlett, explains,

> When the winery was built, I don't think they ever realized that we would be as busy as we are now. You know, all of a sudden, the Okanagan valley was becoming the place to be and established wineries like Scarlett that have been around thirty years were becoming a real destination for people…The challenge is that we have a small wine shop and, when it gets busy in July and August, it can be very crowded.

Holly from Scarlett expands on Mary's point, stating,

> We have a really small wine tasting bar so it's really hard to create lots of different styles of tasting experiences. . . It's really hard in the summer because it's so busy if you don't have something privately booked. Most people are going to get the same experience, unfortunately, until we have more space.

Gary also asserts that limited parking space can be an issue, "We have this free event that is very popular but we have to take reservations for parking. Our limitation here is parking. We could serve a lot more people for those events if we didn't have limited parking." These interviews suggest that space is a critical component in ensuring positive and successful customer experiences.

4.9.2   Time

Winery employees are also encouraged to spend time with customers to build rapport, and get to know them more to be able to provide personal and customized experiences. Dora, from Scarlett, suggests that a good tasting room experience occurs when employees give customers as much time as they possibly can. However, when there are so many customers in the wine shop, it is impossible for employees to spend significant time with each customer. Service inseparability and perishability imply that both service providers and customers have to be physically present (Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert, and Zeithaml, 1997). Graham explains how much time service providers can spare so that each customer can have a larger impact on experience quality:

> People that come here want to hear about incredible stories… It gets tricky when we get really busy. As you know, stories aren't exactly short stories. They take a fair bit of time to tell, so you don't always have the time to tell the whole story. That's kind of a tricky part.

Time, therefore, in addition to space, is critical when delivering a positive wine tasting experience because it ensures customers do not feel rushed and enables staff to build rapport with the customers.

4.10   Recovery from Service Failures

Service failures happen, as "no service system is perfect" (Cranage, 2004, p. 210) and

customers are not predictable agents (Cunha, Rego, and Kamoche, 2009). When failures

happen, though, it is important for wineries to emphasize, relate to, and try to fix the problem

for customers right away. When lines are too long, the tasting room is too crowded, the

parking lot is messy or unorganized, services are not delivered on time, or visitors are not

acknowledged by staff members, customers are likely to walk away with a bad experience.

When customers communicate their dissatisfaction, wine industry professionals need to

empathize, try to fix the problem, and make customers feel valued. Standardizing service

processes not only helps wineries predict what might go wrong and plan to minimize the

effect but also help with a fast recovery when failures happen (Cunha, Rego, and Kamoche,

2009). Dora explains the importance of dealing with these situations in a timely manner and

keeping customers informed:

> All of a sudden, we are busy at the bar; Now there's another line of people behind
> them, waiting there; You don't want them to walk out the door; You don't want them
> to leave feeling like "Ah, it's just too busy here." For me, it's the eye contact. Make
> immediate eye contact with them and smile. . . Often, if I can tell they are getting
> frustrated, I will grab a menu, I will go around in front of the counter and say "It's
> just gonna be a minute. It won't take us as long as you think. Here's the menu. This is
> how it works. Take a look at it, have a bit of look and see." So, by the time you get up
> here you will have some idea. It sort of makes them feel somewhat engaged at that
> point. . . If you screw up something, say that you are sorry and try to fix it. Nothing
> always goes right. Things don't go right all the time.

James also emphasizes the importance of going above and beyond to please customers and

help ameliorate negative experiences:

> We had somebody trip and fall here and scrape their knees, and she was all dressed
> up and that affected her day. Immediately, I called my friend in the restaurant
> business and asked, "Can you give me a gift certificate to your restaurant? I will pay
> you back." I made sure she got a free meal on us. I'd much rather spend $200 on
> trying to improve someone's experience than just going "I'm really sorry." I'd rather
> spend money on making people happy than advertising in a newspaper. We really
> rely on word-of-mouth.

These findings suggest that service providers view planning ahead for unexpected large

rushes of customers, keeping customers informed about wait times, apologizing for mishaps, and ameliorating any mistakes made in service through offering complementary services as critical to navigating experience creation.

4.10.1 Summary

Through experience management, wineries hope to transform consumers into brand ambassadors and advocates. There are several challenges to providing consumer experiences and it is important for wineries to have systems in place to recover from service failures and evaluate their experience management on an ongoing basis. This study showed that, when dealing with customer complaints or difficult situations (such as overcrowding at the winery), good teamwork and supportive management is a must to maximize positive customer experiences.

Chapter 5: Discussion/Conclusion

5.1   Discussion

Consumers do not buy products or services, but the total experience of the product

and service (Cutler and Carmichael, 2010). They remember what is interesting, unique,

personally relevant, and surprising (Lindgreen, Vanhamme, and Beverland, 2009). The

findings of this study suggested that creating an experience is more important than providing

a standardized and flawless service operation for customers. Such experiences were found to

be key to the success of wineries in today's competitive market. This means that service

providers have to offer something spectacular, a "wow factor," to differentiate themselves.

As Lorraine explained,

> I think what people are looking for is that wow factor wherever they go. And that
> wow factor can be the place, [. . . the] person leading their tasting, [. . . or the] actual
> experience of tasting. In an ideal world, all of these come together to create this
> absolutely perfect experience for the guests and they are having the perfect match.

The necessity of a wow factor is also emphasized by Charters et al.'s finding (2009), which

underlines that customer experiences should be "memorable, personalized, and based on

sensations rather than merely being functional and utilitarian" (p. 123). The findings of this

study, mirroring the conclusions of previous research such as that of Charters et al. (2009),

Pine and Gilmore (1999), and Schmitt (1999), suggest that well-managed customer

experiences build a competitive advantage for companies.

Moreover, this thesis took these findings a step further by identifying how wineries

systematically manage their customer experiences and deliver value (both utilitarian and

hedonic) to customers. This thesis investigated how wine industry professionals at small and

medium-sized wineries create memorable tasting room experiences for customers in the

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Okanagan valley, British Columbia. Thus, the findings of this study have significance to the Okanagan, specifically the economy of the Okanagan, because the Okanagan valley is mainly composed of small and medium-sized wineries and wine tourism is a large contributor to the Okanagan regional economy. These findings are also meaningful to service providers and researchers alike because they document the practices wineries use to engage customers in experience creation processes and outline how wineries prioritize the use of different marketing mix elements in making customer experiences memorable.

The themes that emerged from this study include the following: the different styles of tasting room experiences, the use of marketing mix elements in consumer experience creation, the roles of employees and managers, and the different elements of memorable consumer experience creation. Wineries provide a context for customers to have meaningful interactions, acquire knowledge, be entertained, and become stimulated through the senses by engaging physically, mentally, and emotionally with an experience. The main contributors to a memorable wine tasting room experience include the following: hiring friendly and knowledgeable staff, and creating a friendly and welcoming environment with a unique atmosphere that suits the winery in question. The aesthetics and location of the winery, rural setting, visual display, scents, background music in the tasting room, prompt service, friendly and knowledgeable staff, people present in the setting, variety of wines offered, and price of the wine tasting all impact consumer experience. The study found that different marketing mix elements help to create memorable consumer experiences in the tasting room.

The five local wineries chosen for the study are distinguished from each other primarily by the level of formality and type of experience they provide in the tasting room setting. Similarities include how wineries prioritize the marketing mix elements in creating

memorable tasting room experiences. Out of seven marketing mix elements (people, process, place, physical evidence, product, promotion, and price), people are found to be the most important element in creating memorable tasting room experiences for the general public. This study is in line with the findings of Charters et al. (2009): staff responsiveness and contact are the most important factors in visitors' experiences—ahead of the tangibles such as the physical environment or the taste of the wine. Both small and medium-sized wineries put a predominant focus on people and process in their customer experience management in an effort to create memorable tasting room experiences for the general public (see Figure 7). The importance of the human element to experience creation was clear in this study, as wine industry professionals from both small and mid-sized wineries discussed how much focus they put on staff hiring and training processes. According to Frow and Payne (2007), delivering a perfect customer experience can only be achieved when all staff within an organization collaborate in a cross-functional manner. It is important to make sure employees understand their roles so that memorable customer experiences can be achieved. Clarifying these roles, this study described each staff position in creating customer experiences in wine tasting rooms. They are described as educator, mentor, brand representative, and experience guide/facilitator.

The study also showed that, during experience delivery, wineries categorize customers primarily based on their wine knowledge, previous winery experience, and visit intention. The findings also suggest that customizing experiences for these different customers is crucial to satisfying their needs and wants. The tasting room experience is co-produced in the interactions between the customer and service provider. Consumers play an active role in the process of experiential consumption and value is created in this co-

production. Who and what customers interact with also has a significant impact on experiences. Happy and motivated employees can make the customer experience more enjoyable and it is a manager's role to oversee the experiential context (i.e. enabling and presiding over the atmospherics of the tasting room), empowering staff, and giving staff the tools to provide great experiences to customers.

Knowing, and, particularly, understanding how a customer experiences a winery at every touch point, is critical to developing a plan to manage those encounters effectively. Wineries utilize service blueprints to identify customer touch points and failure points, and to provide consistent service experience. However, this study found that what really makes customer experiences memorable is not flawless service but engaging customers by deviating from the service script to provide a better personal experience for customers.

This study further found that the four experience types (education, entertainment, escapist, and aesthetic) discussed by Pine and Gilmore (1999) do not fully explain how memorable tasting room experiences are created. As a result, this study includes five additional experience types: personal experience, unique experience, emotional experience, sensory experience, and social experience. The study indicated that personal experience (where service providers genuinely interact with customers and individualize the experience), especially, was the most significant experience types in the wine tasting setting (Figure 11). The study also suggests the uniqueness (including elements of surprise and fun) is a crucial factor for making customer experiences memorable. The most desirable emotions wine industry professionals cultivate in consumers were found to be comfort, excitement, and happiness. The study also indicated that these emotions can be provoked when the right clues are placed at critical consumer touch points.

The findings further suggested that winery size may not be an issue in creating

memorable tasting room experiences for customers. Moreover, the study reaffirmed that

there are "factors that the retailer can control (e.g. service interface, retail atmosphere,

assortment, price), but also factors outside of the retailer's control (e.g., influence of others,

purpose of shopping)" (Verhoef et al. 2009, p. 32). In an attempt to make consumption

experiences memorable, wine industry professionals promote storytelling and co-production

in the experience creation process. Small and medium-sized wineries present themselves as

casual and approachable, rather than formal and strict.

Figure 11 (below) summarizes the findings of how memorable consumer experience

is created in wine tasting rooms.
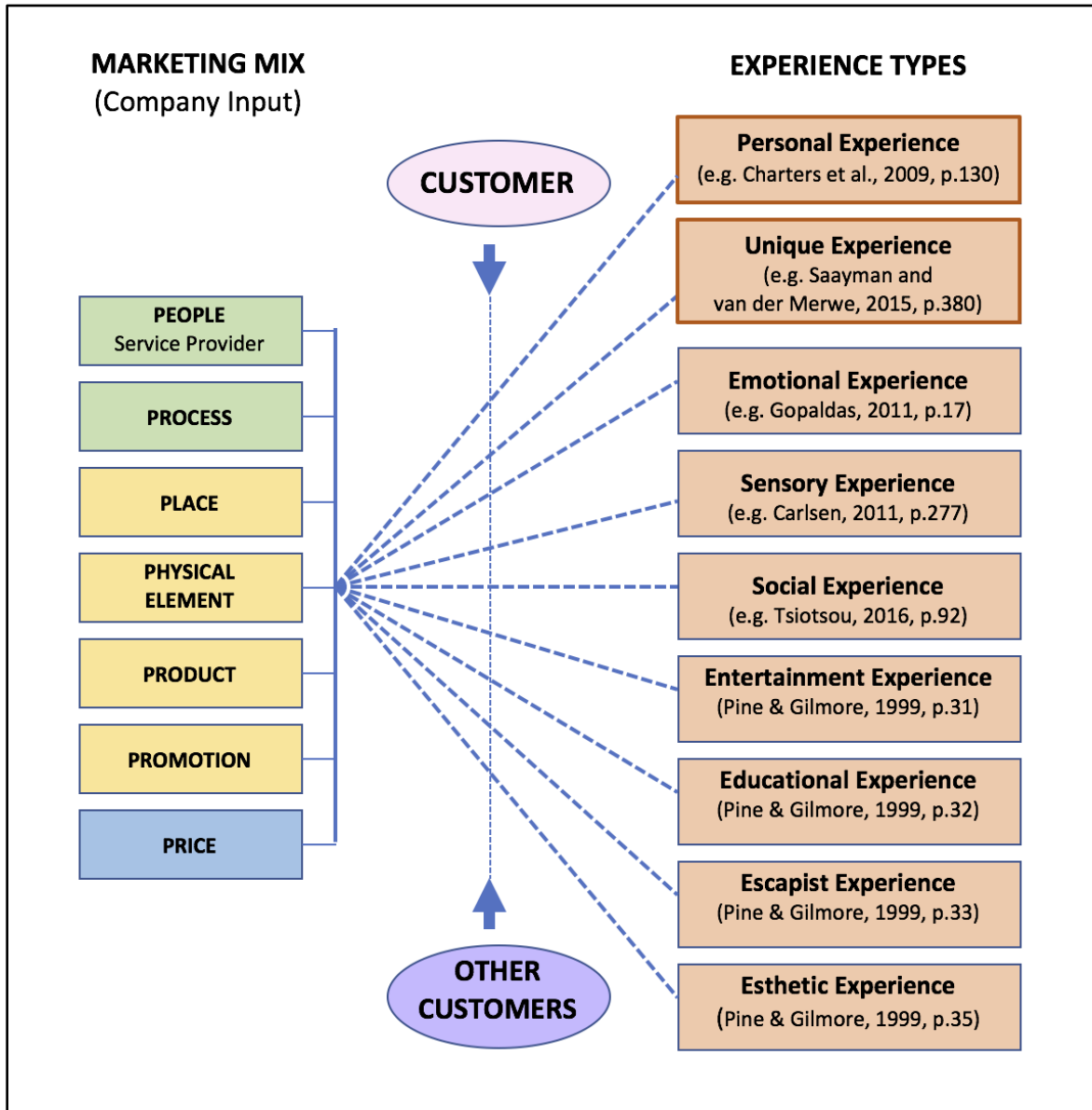
Figure 11 Co-Creation of Memorable Tasting Room Experience

Charters, Fountain, and Fish (2009), extended on the notion of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) personalized experience that genuine, or real, encounter (personal welcome and the possibility of friendship rather than a transactional relationship) with the winery and winery staff is what makes customer experience memorable. They argue that the "staff's ability to "connect" the visitor to the winery, through stories that "root" the winery to its history or

environment or production approach" (p. 130) is essential to making the interaction authentic and wineries need to individualize experiences based on customer's level of knowledge and interest. It is found that wineries put a particular emphasis on employee hiring and training processes (e.g. wineries hire employees based on their personalities rather than wine knowledge) to make sure customers are getting the genuine, personalized experiences.

Saayman and van der Merwe (2015) identified novelty as an important contributor to a memorable experience. They assert that offering customers something unique, for example, providing an opportunity to taste new wine, contributes to making customer experience memorable. This current study suggests that wineries create unique experience through the use of both tangible (e.g. tasting room décor and layout, music, and interesting wine labels) and intangible elements (e.g. service providers telling interesting stories).

Gopaldas (2011) argues that "customers are motivated to consume in order to regulate their own emotions and the emotions of others" (p. 17). He suggests that emotions vary in terms of their duration, intensity, and nature of embodiment. They further suggest that positive (e.g. excitement) and negative emotions (e.g. anger) tend to work differently. According to Richins (1997), emotion is "a valenced affective reaction to perceptions of situations" (p. 127). Understanding what factors (marketing stimuli) influence customer emotions and how certain emotional experiences are created is crucial to encouraging positive practices and discourage negative ones. The findings show that wineries use tangible clues and human elements to stimulate certain emotions (e.g. playing energetic, up-beat music to improve the moods of customers or hiring warm hearted employees to inspire happiness and comfort).

Carlsen (2011) asserts that wine tasting is a sensory experience and that tasting room

experiences should be pleasing to all five senses (sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch). In promoting sensory experiences, wineries make sure red wines are decanted and kept at the right temperature. Wineries such as Scarlett Estate winery have rules around perfume and smoking to avoid disturbing customers' sensory experiences. Further, a winery's choice of music, appearance, layout, and décor were found to influence sensory experience.

Tsiotsou (2016) focuses on the social aspects of consumption that not only affect consumer-service provider relationships but also affect consumer-consumer relationships and enhance service experience. In line with these conclusions, this study's findings suggest that value is co-created through social interactions (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) with service providers and that other customers also contribute to customer satisfaction (Arnould and Price, 1993). Tsiotsou argues that "consumption is no longer viewed as purely personal and subjective experience but as a shared and collective experience that takes place in the presence of other consumers" (2016, p. 92). Wineries train front-line employees to support and facilitate social experiences within the tasting room setting. Hiring someone with extrovert characteristics is one way that wineries can encourage positive social experiences for customers.

The four experience types, defined as entertainment, educational, escapist, and esthetic, are adopted from Pine and Gilmore's (1999) book *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage*. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), entertainment experiences occur when "customers participate passively" and "connect with the event through their senses" (p. 31). Flying Rock Wines, for example, create entertainment experiences through the music (rock 'n' roll and 90's hip-hop) they play. This study also found that wineries also hire employees with a good sense of humour and incorporate

storytelling in their interactions to make customer experiences entertaining. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), educational experiences enhance the customer's knowledge and skills through active participation in the experience. From the service provider's perspective, it was found that educational experiences happen when tasting bar staff teach customers about wines, wine rituals, and wine making processes. Escapist experiences were found to occur when customers were actively involved and immersed in the environment (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 33). Caru and Cova (2006) suggest immersion occurs when the distance between consumers and the context of experience is reduced. Wineries were also found to use the rural setting, unique architecture and décor of the wine shop to help customers become immersed in the service environment; thus, escaping from their routine life. Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggest that esthetic experiences occur when customers "immerse themselves in an event or environment but themselves have little or no effect on it" (p. 35). Landscape, vineyard maintenance, and building and product design can offer esthetic experiences and help customers enjoy the being in the setting.

For all nine experience types, customer co-creation was found to be crucial to the process. Further, experience dimensions were found to overlap and be experienced simultaneously. Wineries use employees (people) and other marketing mix elements (process, place, physical evidence, product, promotion, and price) to help create different experience types for customers. However, without the active engagement of customers, memorable experiences would not be achievable. Other customers present in the setting (whether they are friends, family members, or strangers doing tastings beside them) also affect customer experience.

5.2   Contributions

Consumer experience is co-created by service providers and customers. Understanding both perspectives is necessary to gaining a full understanding of experience creation. While there are many studies focused on wine consumer profiles and wine tasting experiences, these studies have generally approached these topics using quantitative approaches. They also primarily focus on customers when studying memorable experiences. Diverging from this trend, this study used qualitative methods to enhance previous findings by exploring important insights into current practices of wine tasting room experience creation. Employing a qualitative methodology, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the co-creation process in experience creation, going beyond what previous research using quantitative approaches have offered. This study explored key attributes of memorable consumer experiences from the service provider's perspective to outline what service providers do and the roles they play in facilitating memorable experiences in the tasting room setting. Pine and Gilmore (1999) argue that memorable experiences can be created when companies engage customers in a personal way and enhance emotional connections. They further suggest that consumers seek four kinds of experiences (entertainment, education, escapism, esthetic) in their consumption experiences. Although these are important components of memorable experiences in the context of wine tourism, these experiences are not enough to describe the full dimensions of memorable tasting room experiences. This study extended Pine and Gilmore's framework to include five additional experience types (personal, unique, emotional, social, and sensory). Adding these new experience types helps to explain how memorable consumer experience is constituted in the context of wine tourism as discussed in Figure 11.

This study also furthered arguments made by Joy and Sherry (2003), who focus on embodied understandings of aesthetic experiences. In particular, they explore the importance of the perceptions of the palate in favor of the transformation that occurs in the acquisition of culture capital. Furthering their findings, this study's conclusions suggest that, in the wine context, the identification of specific aromas and flavors of wine are central to the structure of the wine tasting experience.

This study also used Arnould and Price's (1993) river rafting example, which provides a framework for understanding extraordinary experiences and outlines how service providers help to facilitate unforgettable consumer experiences. This thesis focuses on the experience creation process, studying the tasting room experiences to understand how memorable consumer experience is created in the context of wine tourism. The study findings are in line with what Arnould and Price (1993) suggest: that service providers (guides) play a significant role in facilitating and engaging customers in the experience creation process. As shown in Figure 7, people (service providers) and processes (what service providers do and what stories they tell) contribute to the success of memorable consumer experience creation more than any other factors (such as place (i.e. beautiful scenery) and product (for example, good wine).

This thesis extends ideas presented by Schmitt (1999) and Arnould and Price (1993), which hold that front-line employees play a significant role in engaging customers as co-creators in their own experience creation processes. This research thus provides important insight into how service providers encourage active consumer participation in the experience co-creation process, and the skills and behaviors of front line employees that contribute to making customer experiences memorable.

In terms of the managerial implications of this thesis, wineries can use these findings to evaluate the current practices of consumer experience management and see how they can prioritize different marketing mix elements in their practices. This would help managers to answer the following questions: Is the company focusing too much on the product? If the focus was more on the staff training, then would making the place aesthetically appealing enhance customer experience? The findings of this study suggest that, in spite of the different winery size (small versus medium) and styles (traditional versus unconventional), wineries recognize the importance of (1) co-creating value with consumers and (2) encouraging front-line employees to make consumer experiences memorable. How service providers interact with customers and engage them in the process of experience co-creation is the key to success according to the wine industry professionals who were being interviewed. Service providers engage customers in the process by providing different types of experiences (i.e. education, emotional, sensory, unique, etc.) tailored to their needs. Flexibility is found to be the most important skill that front-line employees should possess to overcome challenges such as limited time and space. This thesis thus provided insight into the roles of service providers and how small and medium-sized wineries can create memorable tasting room experiences with few tangible resources, instead using intangible resources such as storytelling and humour. This thesis also discussed how memorable tasting room experience is created to enhance value for both wineries and customers. The findings of this thesis confirm that value is not only created by company efforts but also by consumers. Co-creation "involves encounters that influence the customer's ability, willingness and opportunities to co-create with the supplier" (Payne, Storbacka, Frow, and Knox, 2009, p. 383) and it's essential to create increased brand meaning for customers. Previous studies have not

elaborated on the co-creative nature of consumer experience or how service providers are trained to create memorable consumer experiences in tasting rooms. Therefore, the study suggests that, when designing service processes, companies need to think about how they can engage customers and increase their participation in the process. Engaging consumer feedback is critical to such designs, as is understanding that, because of the individualized nature of consumers, there is no standard set of attributes to memorable experience.

The findings provide insight into creating memorable wine tasting experiences for wineries and wine industry professionals. The findings in this study are beneficial to wine industry professionals and can be used to develop a competitive advantage by providing memorable, quality customer experiences. Providing a memorable consumption experience is necessary to surviving in today's highly competitive market. These findings further suggest that wineries focused on experiences lead to repeat sales and increased revenue. The findings of this study are also valuable because they provide the basis for wineries, consultants, and researchers to evaluate current experience management practices and identify room for improvement. Most importantly, this research has implications for both small and medium wineries hoping to create memorable tasting room experiences for consumers. Factors such as friendliness, personal interaction between customers and staff, and the demonstration of knowledge and passion for the wine and wineries enhance customer experience in the tasting room. In both academic and practical terms, this thesis contributes to additional understandings of the concept of memorable experience creation in wine tourism.

5.3   Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the potential applications of these findings, the findings of this study do have some limitations. Customer experiences occur in numerous contexts. Because this research

pertains to a single retailing context (what happens in the wine tasting room), the recommendation for future research is to further examine the topic in different contexts (i.e. the wine tour experience and the online experience). Another avenue for future studies includes topics around memorable online experiences, specifically on company websites, to explore how wineries engage customers in an online environment to enhance their experiences. The findings of this study show that memorable tasting room experiences include nine dimensions: personal experience, unique experience, emotional experience, sensory experience, social experience, educational experience, entertainment experience, escapist experience, and aesthetic experience. Further, research could test these experiential dimensions in different contexts.

Additionally, the focus for this paper was on small and medium-sized wineries; thus, the findings may not be applicable to the practices performed by larger wineries. Future studies should include larger wineries and explore the cluster effects of wineries in the Okanagan region. This thesis also did not touch heavily on the co-production aspect of consumer experience, as service providers were the main focus of this paper; however, the co-production aspect of the consumer experience should be an important focus in future research. Customers play an active role as co-producers and there is no one single type of wine consumer. It would be particularly interesting to see how different customers perceive different winery experiences. This study is limited to the service providers' perspective and findings do not take consumer perspective into consideration. Watson (2013) suggests that some consumers fail to access the experience, despite being physically placed in a spectacular and thematised setting. If this is the case, future research should focus on what factors block customers accessing such experiences. Despite its limitations, the study offers

insight into the role of service providers and how they can improve their practices to enhance the co-creation of the value.

Moreover, future research could focus on consumer practices to answer the following questions: How do consumers know what roles to play in a service encounter? What roles should they play in the tasting room setting to enhance their experience? and so on. Furthermore, finding out how different groups of consumers interact with service providers with different personalities is another avenue for future research. Later studies could also focus on tasting room experiences involving wine club members or wine connoisseurs, as this study mainly focused on services provided to the general public. It is likely that how wineries provide experiences for experts differs from the way they provide experiences for the general public.

Also, as the focus of this study is on service provider's perspectives working on site, this thesis mainly covers the "during-visit" stage. To understand the holistic experience, the sequential stages of experience of pre-, during, and post-process experiences should be explored. Further research could explore how wineries attempt to influence customer expectations/impressions pre-visit and post-visit.

A methodological limitation of the study comes from its small sample size. Small study samples indicate that findings may not be representative of a wider context with different participants. In the findings, interview data gathered from twelve participants were used to capture emerging themes and this small sample size restricts the generalization of the results. While the findings may not be completely generalizable, they do provide a basic framework for understanding memorable consumption experience creation in the context of wine tourism. Some of the findings of the current study are transferrable to other retail

contexts (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). For example, while banking/financial services are in a different product category, the following elements of wine tasting experience can be applied to them: (1) connection to the aesthetically pleasing setting and atmospherics (place and physical evidence), (2) service blueprint, store policies, and customer interactions, (process) and (3) hiring the right person and training him/her right (people). Also, as in the wine industry, the banking industry is tailored to customers' needs and different groups of customers get different levels of experience. For example, premium banking customers are given more personal attention and special offers than the lay public. Such similarities indicate that this study's findings could be used as a starting point for future research in different areas.

In conclusion, this thesis explored how wineries create memorable tasting room experiences for customers and, in particular, the general public. Studying memorable experiences and how they can be created in the wine tourism sector not only provides value to academic scholars but also helps industry practitioners retain loyal customers and build many new ones. Creating memorable tasting room experiences is a complex undertaking that requires significant input from service providers and customers (Andersson, 2007). Memorable experience creation is key to building a competitive advantage, especially where differentiation is needed. Small wineries, especially the ones with limited resources will need to find a way to stand out among the crowd. One more effective way to do so is to provide unique, memorable experiences to customers. Memorable experiences were considered by service providers to be created when customers were actively engaged in unique and relevant activities/interactions that evoke feelings, thoughts, and/or bodily sensations. There was no standard set of attributes that was found in service provider's conceptualizations of

memorable consumer experience creation; however, the ideas presented in this thesis including some key experience management strategies provide wineries with the tools to become better, experience-oriented organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Questions Used in Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews

Introduction: The research focus is on the management of experiences in wine industry, that is, what service providers do and how experience is created for customers. There are two groups that we have identified. The first include winery staff (we refer to them as employees) and the second include winery owners and managers.

Themes around which questions were asked:
- Brand Imagery, Brand Positioning, Regional Identity
- Strategies to Obtain More Customers
- Atmospherics, Service Environment
- Practices to Creating Memorable Customer Experience
- Employee Hiring and Training
- Service Processes (Service Blueprint, Script) used in Tasting Rooms

First part of the interview contained general questions
- Personal Background
- Experience Working in the Wine Industry
- Job Title and Responsibilities
-

Second part of the interview included more specific questions on experience management
- How would you describe your winery brand and its experience?
- Where does it stand among other wineries in the region?
- What do you think customers want in their winery experience?
- How do you make your customer's experience memorable?
- How would you describe experience management process step by step?
- How do you customize experience for different group of customers?

Specific Questions for Managers (in addition to the general set of questions)
- Please describe employee hiring and training process
- How do you make sure customers are getting the consistent quality of experience?
- In what ways can the winery experience be enhanced?

Additional follow-up questions were asked, as appropriate, with each participant. Used probes to get more in-depth answers and followed up on points of interest.
- What do you mean when you say _____?
- Can you elaborate more on _____?
- Can you describe the situation when you had ____?
- Can you give me an example of that?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Appendix B: Letter of Informed Consent

Principal Investigator: Dr. Annamma Joy, Professor of Marketing, Faculty of Management, UBC Okanagan campus; tel. 250-807-8606; email: annamma.joy@ubc.ca.

Co-Investigator: Seyee Yoon, Master's student under Dr. Annamma Joy's supervision, Professor of Marketing, Faculty of Management, UBC Okanagan campus.

Introduction: The University of British Columbia - Okanagan subscribes to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comforts, and safety of study subjects. The information provided here is being given to you for your own protection and understanding of the procedures, risks and benefits associated with this research. You must be 19 years of age or older to participate in this study.

Purpose: This is an academic program of research that aims to understand how local wineries in the Okanagan region are creating memorable consumption experiences for visitors. This research is for a graduate degree and it is part of Seyee Yoon's thesis which will be available to public on the Internet via cIRcle when completed. You are invited to take part in this research study because you are currently employed at one of our chosen 6 local wineries in the Okanagan region.

Study Procedures: As part of the research process, you will be invited to participate in an interview around the wine experience creation. The interview will last about 90 minutes and be conducted in a setting accepted to you and mutually agreed upon by you and the researcher. We propose to audiotape/videotape your interview, but only with your written consent and we will follow UBC research ethic's data storage procedure to ensure the confidentiality of the information collected. If you decline to be audio taped, we nonetheless value your participation in our research. We will ask you about your current practices of creating consumption experience for winery visitors and how each stage of this experience management process can be enhanced for value creation. As with all research there are no right or wrong answers. We are merely interested in learning about your opinions in these topics.

Potential Risks and Benefits: We do not anticipate that this interview process will pose any risks to you personally. You have the right to not answer any questions you might be asked. There are no personal benefits associated with participating in this study however as a participant in this study, you are an important contributor to our research. Potential benefits include improved business practice based on the results that you would receive as part of the

summary. If you are interested in receiving a report on our findings, we will send you a copy of the study results.

Compensation: There is no remuneration for participants in this study.

Confidentiality: Your participation and all information you provided will be confidential. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study, however for the purpose of the study, your identity will be included specifying the place of work. To ensure confidentiality in any written or verbal form of my research results, we will replace your name with a pseudonym, and will change or omit any information that could potentially allow any disclosure of your identity. If you decline to be either audio or video recorded, we nonetheless value your participation in our research. If the interview is audio/video taped, all the recordings and transcripts will be securely stored, and accessible only to us. The audio/video files will be destroyed once the study is completed.

Contact for information about study: If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Annamma Joy, at the telephone number or email address given above. If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 250-807-8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Participant Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).

Consent: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed permanently. Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this study and have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

I have read the above agreement in full and understand its terms.
Name of Interview Participant (please print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I consent to being audiotaped during the interview: Yes_____No_____

I consent to being videotaped during the interview: Yes_____No_____