



## Determinants of brand love in wine tourism

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**Abstract.** Wine tourism provides a multisensory experience through various wine tourism activities. It also adds value to the regions and their producers by enhancing the wine knowledge and sensory experience of the visitors. This study explores the determinants of brand love in wine tourism. Using survey data from wine tourists in Portugal, a structural equation modelling was performed to test the conceptual model. An Importance-performance matrix analysis was also used to obtain additional insights. The results show that the wine tourism enhances brand love. This implies that emotions (i.e., a sense of belonging) towards the overall location is associated with the satisfaction and the quality perception that the winery exhibits. Furthermore, although the consumer's active participation in wine tourism does not impact brand love directly, its influences occur through the mediating effect of the relation quality. From an interdisciplinary managerial perspective, the present study provides insights into tourism management (i.e., wine tourism) and marketing (i.e., brand management and consumer behaviour).

**Keywords:** active participation, place identity, place satisfaction, relation quality, wine tourism.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Wine tourism has evolved in recent decades due to several factors, such as the increasing competitiveness between wine-producing destinations [1].

Wine tourists undoubtedly seek appealing, exclusive, and memorable wine sensory impressions in the wine tourism settings. Wine potentiates a combination of multisensory experiences when tourists engaged in a wine tourism activity. In this context, brand love is a recent marketing construct and its influence in some relevant marketing variables such as word-of-mouth and purchase decision making has been demonstrated [2]. Existing literature suggests that consumers have a long-shared history with brands they love ([3,4]). The importance of a brand for the consumer is reflected through in the time spent (e.g. consumption), enhancing, and improving the brand satisfaction and loyalty of customers and groups [5]. According to Aro et al. [4], a positive service experience has been observed to have an extremely important impact on the formation of brand love, as it often results in a feeling thankfulness and companionship [6]. Thus, customer service has a direct role in the formation of brand love because the quality of the interaction between consumer and employee affects the formation of brand love. In the specific case of this research brand is a broader identity since the controlled denomination also act as global brands and providers of genuineness [7] together with the visited winery brands and the perceived “brand” can differ in relation with the tasting experience place (i.e., in a specific winery or is a controlled denomination global tasting room, a wine fair, etc.). Although the concept of place in wine regions, even from a stakeholder point of view is still a debatable concept [8] the concept of place here is viewed in the broader perspective of the wine region.

This study aims to examine and to understand the determinants of brand love in wine tourism (specific tourism contexts). A questionnaire was completed by wine tourism visitors to measuring the following constructs: place satisfaction, place identity, brand love, relation quality and active participation. A structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the research hypotheses. Hence, there is an emerging need for advancing novel insights that follows this research, due to the fact the brand love within the context of wine tourism and experiences has been little analysed [9]. In addition, according to the Statista Index [10] score, relating to the main world destinations of wine tourism, Portugal takes the second position in this world Top-10. Moreover, wine tourism being recognise as a priority product for the Portugal’s tourism economic development, projecting wine Tourism in Portugal positioned in the TOP-50 worldwide [11], strengthening the Portugal’s tourism strategy, as well as the future long-term growth of its potential. The paper is structured as follows: firstly, an introduction; secondly, a theoretical

background based on brand love; then the conceptual model and development of the hypotheses are proposed; this is followed by the methodology approach; then the results of the model assessment are given; and finally, the results, discussion and conclusions, including managerial implications, limitations, and future research directions, are presented.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Brand love

Brands have been extensively studied through measuring customer satisfaction (e.g., [12]) and brand loyalty (e.g., [13]). According to Aro et al. [4], brand love as a concept refers to the consumers’ strong emotional attachment toward a brand. Referring to emotional bonds and attachment may sound more natural than expressing love toward brands [14]. However, brand love has been categorized as one of the dimensions of attachment, although sometimes it is also acknowledged as a separate concept [15]. Therefore, brand love can be regarded as deep emotional brand connections.

Based on literature review, Aro et al. [4] (p. 73) proposed a new definition for brand love is used in the current study: “the emotional attachment of a satisfied consumer toward a brand, which can be formed and become apparent in different ways for different persons, but which typically includes identification with a brand to some degree”. Satisfaction and self-expression, referring to brands that do help shape consumers’ identity, are evident in many studies (e.g., [16,17]).

There are countless brands that can satisfy consumers’ needs and desires. However, few can create an emotional and unique connection with satisfied consumers, known as brand love or brand passion [18,19]. Product brand love is considered antecedent and outcome of place love, as both are considered interrelated. [18]. Love and passion are at the core of strong brand relationships. These feelings are developed out of a combination of love for the place and love for the values associated with it [20]. People may not explicitly state that they love a destination, but they do exhibit emotions that can be understood in that way [18,4], such as expression of extreme happiness when arriving at a destination [21]. This reflects the fact that people experience brand love differently in respect to the same destination, and their relationship can change over time [18,4]. Brand image also causes emotional responses. Indeed, research has shown that it positively affects brand attachment [22] and brand love [18,23]. This study will examine the determinants of brand love in wine tourism.

## 2.2. Conceptual model and hypotheses

### 2.2.1. The active participation in wine tourism

Wine tourism offers visitors experiences in the context of each wine region, which has various attributes such as wineries, vineyards, landscape, heritage, and people [24]. These experiences can be more enriching if they cover the four dimensions of the 4Es model by Pine and Gilmore [25], which balance active and passive participation, absorption, and immersion [26]. The winescape, the interaction with the region and its people, and the visitor's participation influence the quality of the wine tourist experience [27,28]. Visitors who are passionate and knowledgeable about wine culture are more emotionally engaged and enthusiastic about the winescape and its activities [29,1]. This engagement leads to positive outcomes for the destination brand [30;31] and its wines [32,33] and wine sustainability awareness [33]. Therefore, destinations should design satisfactory experiences that create customer attachment to place-based brands [26]. Co-creation is a process that involves collaboration between organizations and participants to generate mutual benefits, influenced by brand love, relation quality, and place identity [34,35]. Wine tourism experiences should stimulate interactions with the region, its people, and other visitors, to create value and memorable experiences [36]. To achieve a holistic experience and collect higher memorabilia, it is essential to have high involvement and active participation between the wine tourist, the region, its culture, and the interaction with inhabitants and other tourists [37]. Based on this background, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1a. Active participation is positively related to brand love
- H1b. Active participation is positively related to place satisfaction
- H1c. Active participation is positively related to relation quality
- H1d. Relation quality mediates the relationship between active participation and brand love
- H1e. Place satisfaction mediates the relationship between active participation and brand love

### 2.2.2. The role of the place identity

Place attachment or topophilia is the feeling of connection, commitment, and satisfaction that people or groups have with a certain place [38]. In tourism, place attachment has two dimensions: place dependence and place identity [9]. Place dependence is the function-

al bond between people and the places where they live and work [39]. Place identity is the symbolic and emotional bond that forms with a visited place [40,41]. This bond grows over time through the memories and emotions that people have about the place, and it requires at least one visit to start [42]. The experience (specific or general) can create emotions and sometimes a sense of belonging with a place, an experience, a region, a brand, or a local community [43]. Place identity in wine tourism has two aspects: physical and social [1]. People's and places' characteristics may affect how attached someone is to a place, which may lead to positive feelings and actions towards that place [44].

This research examines how brand love for a wine region is influenced by place attachment. Brand attachment is a key concept in the literature on consumer-brand relationships, and it assumes that wine consumers form emotional bonds with places and brands [45]. The strength of these bonds affects the wine consumer's commitment to the target of the relationship [46]. Place identity is the emotional bond that develops with a visited place, based on the memories and emotions that people have about the place [40,41]. This bond requires at least one visit to start, and it can create a sense of belonging with a place, an experience, a region, a brand, or a local community [42]. Place identity in wine tourism has two aspects: physical and social [1]. The physical aspect is the emotional connection with the landscape, the buildings, and the heritage [43]. The social aspect is the emotional connection that forms through social interaction with the local culture, the inhabitants, and other visitors [44].

Wine tourism is related to the concept of terroir, which defines the unique characteristics and combinations of the elements of each region (soil, topography, climate, methods of wine production and autochthones grape varieties) and its wines [8]. Countries and regions are perceived as brands, and appellations of origin are global brands that guarantee the authenticity and quality of the producing regions and their wines [9]. Some regions, their producers, and wines have achieved the status of loved brands because of their quality, winescape, culture, and history, and their position in the mind of the consumers [2]. Satisfaction and brand love are related concepts [2]. Consumers' positive experiences with services and products lead to satisfaction, which can lead to a long-term relationship of love for the brand [4]. Therefore, satisfaction with the regions, their wines, and their unique identity motivates wine lovers to visit them and reinforces their loyalty and love for the wine brands [34]. Wine Love brands/regions such as Bordeaux, Champagne or Douro have a strategic advantage, because their wines

and winescapes are of high quality and cannot be replicated elsewhere [42]. Thus, satisfaction with each wine characteristic is a powerful tool for creating wine brand love [8]. The hypotheses are as follows:

- H2a. Place Identity is positively related to brand love
- H2b. Place Identity is positively related to place satisfaction
- H2c. Place Identity is positively related to relation quality
- H2d. Relation quality mediates the relationship between place identity and brand love
- H2e. Place satisfaction mediates the relationship between place identity and brand love

### 2.2.3. Determinants of brand love in a wine context

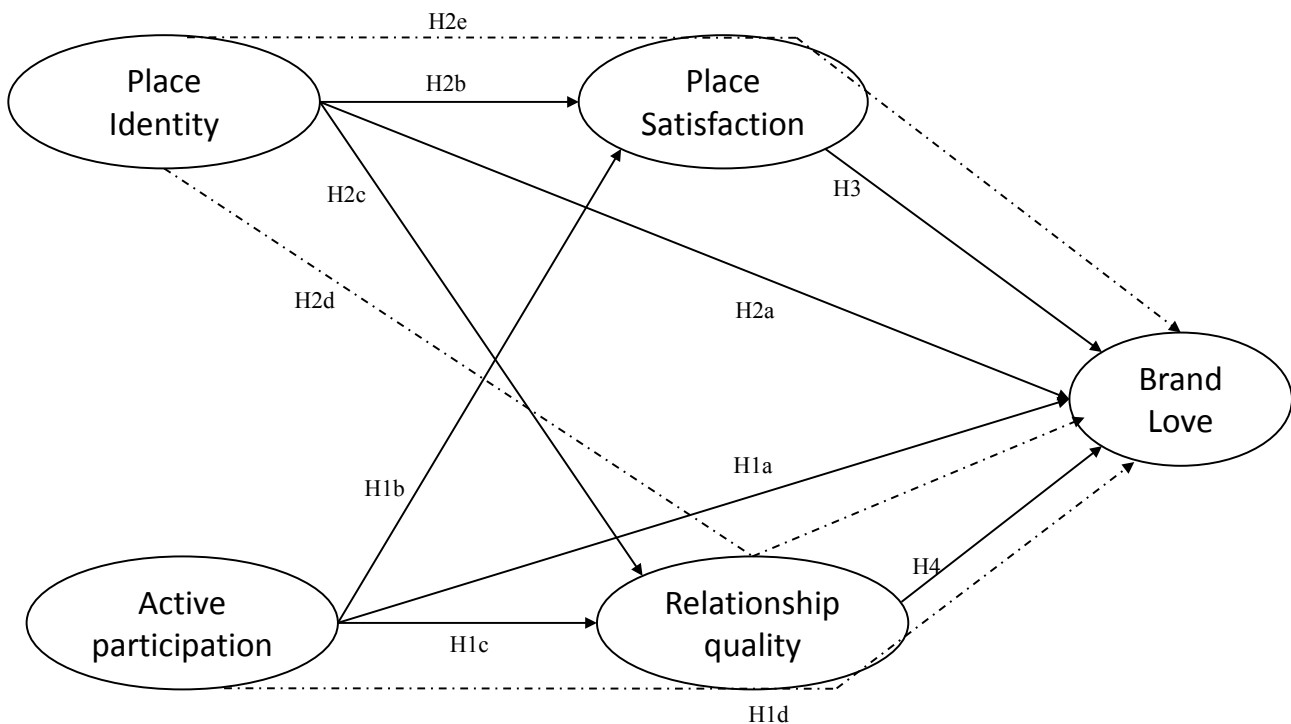
Wine is a product of culture and religion, revered by different civilizations and associated with deities like Dionysus (or Bacchus). It has also inspired writers, poets, and painters throughout history, giving it a status of a loved brand [34]. Consumers' positive feelings towards brands create emotional reactions that can give companies a strategic edge over their competitors [4].

Wine lovers visit wine-producing regions and countries around the world for their passion for wine cul-

ture. Regions that produce more valuable wines have more fame among consumers, which strengthens their regional brand identity. The quality of the wine region is also affected by the authenticity of its winescape and the experiences it offers [41]. A wine region acts as an umbrella brand, which benefits the producers and wineries that are linked to a strong place brand [2]. Satisfaction and brand love are related but different concepts [17]. Satisfaction is a cognitive evaluation of an experience, while brand love is an emotion that leads to a long-term relationship with the brand [24]. A positive consumption experience stimulates arousal and pleasure, which can lead to delight and brand loyalty [42]. Wine brand love is developed through higher levels of satisfaction that result from meeting expectations and experiences over time [2]. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H3. Place Satisfaction is positively related to brand love
- H4. Relation Quality is positively related to brand love

The hypothesized relationships are depicted in figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model. Note: Dashed lines represent the mediating effects.

### 3. METHOD

The target population was constituted by wine tourists who visited wine regions in Portugal during the last three years (at least on one occasion). The use of an extended time frame regarding the experience allows to expand the sample dimension. We used this procedure following previous research approaches (c.f., [42]). Since the determination of the sampling frame was difficult, to test the research hypotheses, we used a non-probability sampling, through a convenience sampling. The questionnaire was elaborated by initially consulting the relevant literature where the measurement scales were adopted, as described below. The initial version of the questionnaire content was assessed by four tourism academics and translated to Portuguese. The procedure was followed by a pilot test to a small sample of eight respondents. Wording was revised based on the results of this procedure. The final version was created online in Portuguese and in English and sent by email and disseminated in wine social media groups during January 2022. A total of 186 complete questionnaires were received.

Of the respondents, 61.5% were male, and 80% reported living in urban locations. Most of the respondents (65.9%) revealed to have an average income, 30.4% indicated a good income, and 3.7% declared to be in a difficult situation. In terms of age, 3.7% were less than 30 years old, 17.0% were between 31 and 40 years old, 39.3% were between 41 and 50 years old, 27.4% were between 51 and 60 years old, and the remaining were older than 61. 53% of the respondents were Portuguese, 19% Spanish, 9% English, 9% French, 7% Brazilian, and the other were from other European countries. Although this may suggest the use of control variables, they were not tested for two main reasons: (i) representativeness: Our aim was to capture a broad range of experiences and perceptions among wine tourists. Including a significant proportion of Portuguese respondents allowed us to gain insights from both local and international tourists, thereby enhancing the representativeness of our findings. (ii) gen-

eralizability: By not controlling for nationality, we were able to examine the relationship between brand love and visitor satisfaction across a diverse sample. This increases the generalizability of our findings to other contexts beyond Portuguese wine tourism.

The constructs used in this study were adopted from existing scales. As such, place satisfaction and place identity both with three items were adapted from the scales of Sabina del Castillo et al. [47]. Brand love measurement composed by eight items, was adapted from Carroll and Ahuvia [17]. The relation quality was measured using a five-item scale adapted from Fernandes and Pinto [48]. The three items used to measure the active participation were adapted from Campos et al. [49]. All the constructs were measured using five-point Likert-type scales anchored by one (strongly disagree) and five (strongly agree). The items are included in the appendix.

We used structural equation modelling (SEM) to assess the measurement and structural model. More specifically, we used a variance-based structural equation modelling technique based on partial least squares (PLS). For data processing we adopted SmartPLS 3 software [50] due to the sample size and the exploratory nature of the model. It presents greater flexibility when it is not possible to meet the hard assumptions of more strict structural equation modelling approaches [51]. The PLS algorithm creates loadings between the constructs and their indicators that allow to measure construct validity that will be presented [52]. As described below the analyses and interpretation of the results was first conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Second, the structural model was evaluated.

For the analyses and interpretation of the quality of the measurement model we followed Hair et al. [53] recommendations to assess the reliability of the individual indicators, convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity. The results are presented in table 1 and figure 2. First, the standardized factor loadings of all items were superior to 0.6 (all significant for  $p < 0.001$ ), showing that the individual indi-

**Table 1.** Composite reliability, average variance extracted, correlations, and discriminant validity checks.

Latent Variables	$\alpha$	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
(1) Active participation	0.932	0.957	0.881	<b>0.938</b>	0.469	0.604	0.601	0.685
(2) Brand Love	0.967	0.972	0.812	0.446	<b>0.901</b>	0.554	0.574	0.533
(3) Place Identity	0.932	0.957	0.881	0.567	0.528	<b>0.939</b>	0.762	0.518
(4) Place Satisfaction	0.898	0.936	0.830	0.551	0.539	0.697	<b>0.911</b>	0.686
(5) Relation Quality	0.967	0.974	0.883	0.650	0.518	0.493	0.640	<b>0.940</b>

**Note:**  $\alpha$  -Cronbach Alpha; CR -Composite reliability; AVE -Average variance extracted. Bolded numbers are the square roots of AVE. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. Above the diagonal elements are the HTMT ratios.

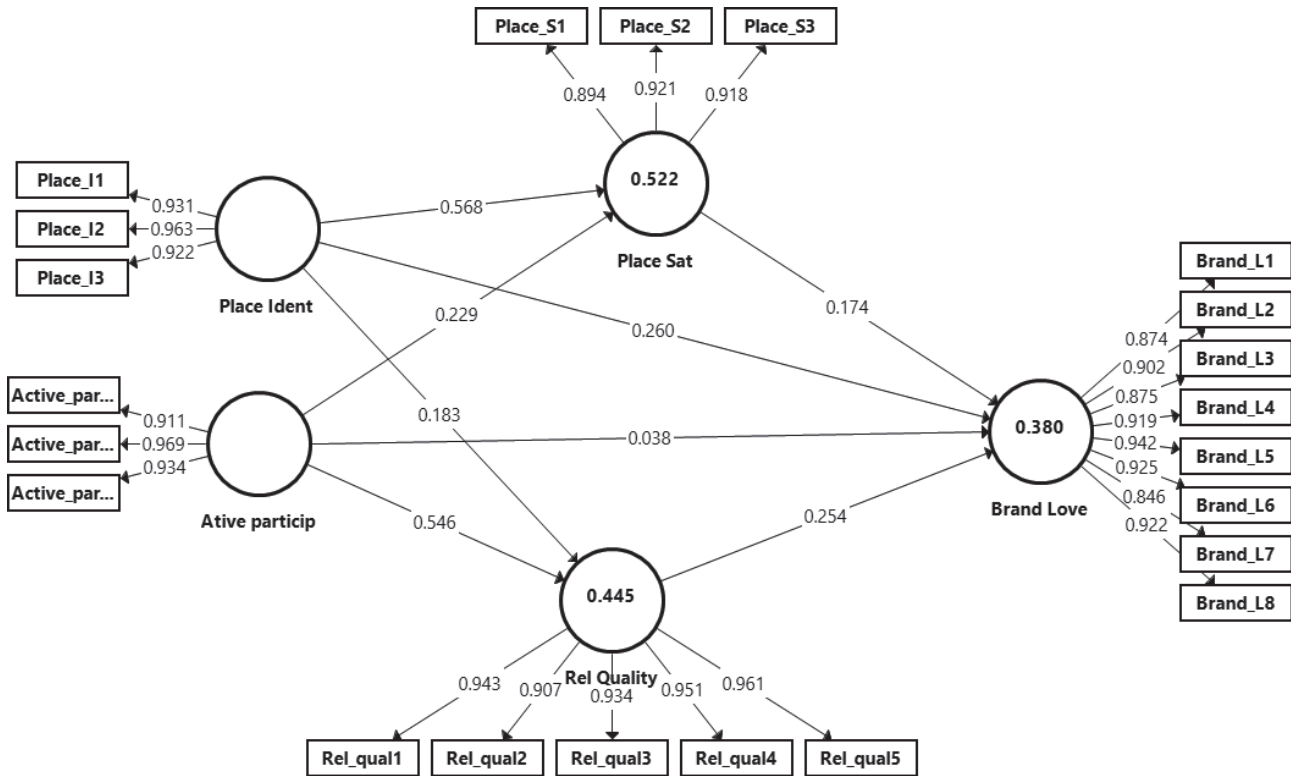


Figure 2. Path coefficient of the structural model.

cator are reliable [53]. Furthermore, since all the constructs' Cronbach alphas and composite reliability (CR) values were above 0.7, the internal consistency reliability was assured [53].

Convergent validity of all the constructs was upheld for three main reasons. The first reason is that all items loaded positively and significantly on their constructs. The second is related to the CR values which were superior to 0.70 for all constructs. Third, as Table 1 shows, the average variance extracted (AVE) values are all well above 0.50 (AVE) [54]. Discriminant validity was the next procedure. It was assessed by combining two approaches. First, we tested for the Fornell and Larcker criterion, which requires that the AVE square root of each construct of AVE is higher than its biggest correlation with any construct [55]. This criterion was confirmed for all constructs. Second, constructs exhibited discriminant validity also because all the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) were lower than 0.85 [53,56].

To assess the quality of the structural model we followed a three-step procedure. First, the absence of collinearity among all the constructs' indicators was determined by estimating the variance inflation factor (VIF) indicator which was inferior to 5 [53] evidencing no col-

linearity. Second, the  $R^2$  or the coefficient of the determination for the three endogenous variables of brand love, place satisfaction and relation quality were 38.0%, 52.2%, and 44.5%, respectively, meaning that they were higher than 10%. Third, the Stone-Geisser  $Q^2$  values obtained through the blindfolding procedures for all the endogenous variables (0.297, 0.425, and 0.382 respectively) were larger than zero, supporting the predictive relevance of the model.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We used bootstrapping procedures (considering 5.000 subsamples) to assess the significance of the parameter estimates [53]. The results in Table 2 show that active participation has a significantly positive effect on place satisfaction and relation quality ( $b = 0.229$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $b = 0.546$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively) but not on brand love ( $b = 0.038$ , n.s.). These results provide support for H1b and H1c, however, H1a is not supported by the results. Place Identity has a significantly positive relation with brand love ( $b = 0.260$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), place satisfaction ( $b = 0.568$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and relation quality ( $b = 0.183$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), which supports H2a, H2b and H2c, respectively.

**Table 2.** Structural model assessment.

Path	Path coefficient	Standard errors	<i>t</i> statistics	<i>p</i> values
Active participation → Brand Love	0.038	0.112	0.338	0.736
Active participation → Place Satisfaction	0.229	0.091	2.524	0.012
Active participation → Relation Quality	0.546	0.078	7.019	0.000
Place Identity → Brand Love	0.260	0.096	2.702	0.007
Place Identity → Place Satisfaction	0.568	0.071	8.000	0.000
Place Identity → Relation Quality	0.183	0.069	2.672	0.008
Place Satisfaction → Brand Love	0.174	0.124	1.397	0.163
Relation Quality → Brand Love	0.254	0.108	2.353	0.019

**Table 3.** Bootstrap results for indirect effects.

Indirect effect	Estimate	Standard errors	<i>t</i> statistics	<i>p</i> value
Active participation → Relation Quality * Brand Love	0.138	0.061	2.257	0.024
Active participation → Place Satisfaction * Brand Love	0.040	0.034	1.158	0.247
Place Identity → Relation Quality * Brand Love	0.047	0.030	1.538	0.125
Place Identity → Place Satisfaction * Brand Love	0.099	0.072	1.372	0.171

The relationship between place satisfaction and brand love ( $b = 0.174$ , n.s.) was not significant, as such H3 was not supported. Finally, the influence of relation quality and brand love was found to be positive and significant ( $b = 0.254$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), providing support for H4.

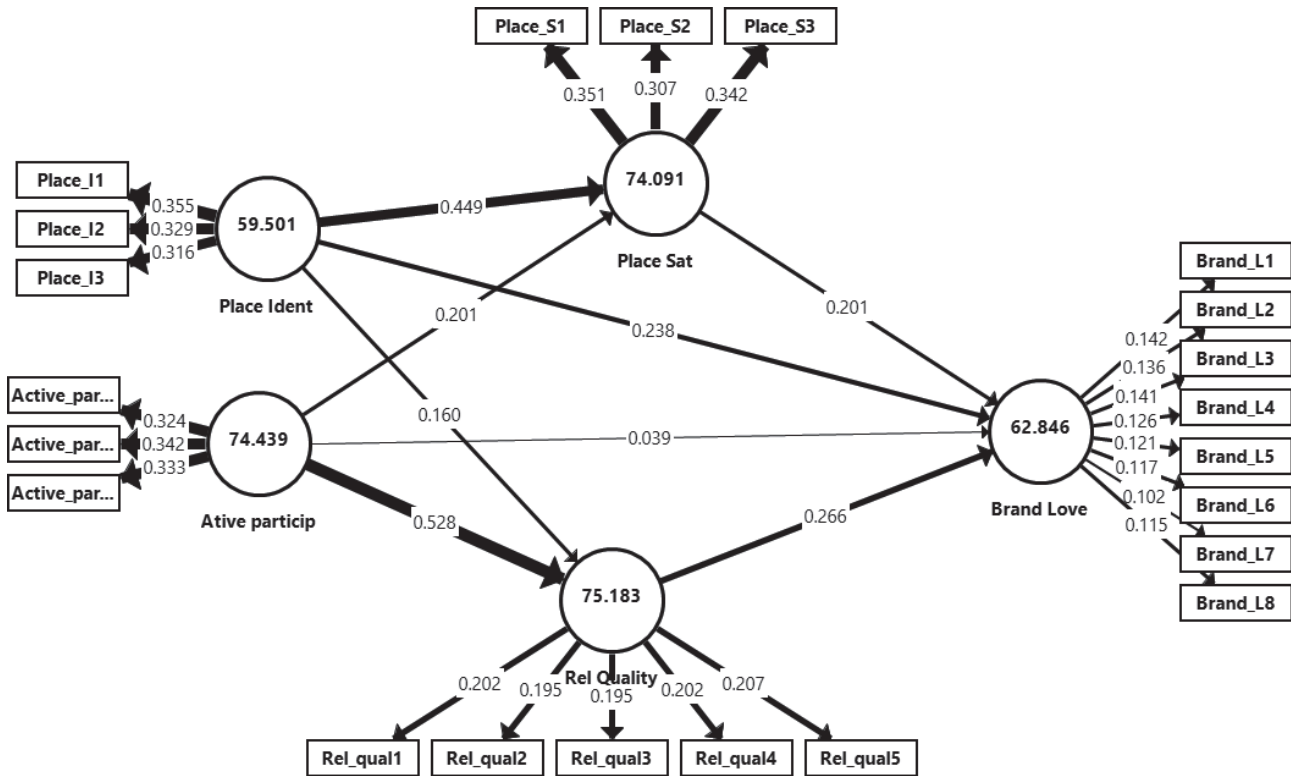
The mediating hypotheses were also test using bootstrapping procedures. Table 3 shows that the mediating effect of relation quality in the relationship between active participation and brand love is positive and significant ( $b = 0.138$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), providing support for H1d. Furthermore, since the direct effect was not significant, it is considered full mediation. The other indirect relationships were not significant, thus H1e, H2d and H2e were not supported.

To extend these results we also conducted an Important-Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA), to identify the relative importance and the performance of each construct by evaluating all the related paths in the structural model. IPMA is a tool for evaluating the performance of constructs in a PLS-SEM model. It is based on the idea that the importance of a construct is determined by its overall impact on the model, while its performance is determined by its ability to meet or exceed the expectations of stakeholders. The IPMA estimates are calculated using a two-step process. First, importance calculation of each construct is calculated by summing the absolute values of the path coefficients that connect it to other constructs in the model. This calculation

is performed for both the outer and inner models. Second, the performance calculation of each construct is calculated by comparing the importance weights (calculated in step 1) to the importance weights that would be expected based on the stakeholder expectations. This calculation is also performed for both the outer and inner models. IPMA provides important insights by identifying which construct is more important and better perform regarding the influence on the dependent variable [57], in this case, brand love. Figure 3 summarizes the evaluation of the importance and the performance of each construct.

Accordingly, to the IPMA analysis relation quality is the construct with the stronger relationship with brand love (performance = 0.266), followed by place identity (performance = 0.238), place satisfaction (performance = 0.201) and finally active participation (performance = 0.039). Relation quality is more influenced by active participation when compared with the influence of place identity. Regarding place satisfaction, the importance is the opposite, meaning that place identity shows a stronger influence than active participation.

The study findings indicate that a wine tourism experience, such as visiting a winery or participating in a wine tasting event, fosters a stronger brand love for both the wine region and its wineries in the line of the research of [6]. This suggests that wine tourism experiences enhance brand perception through the influence



**Figure 3.** Path coefficient of the IPMA model. Note: The numbers insider the circles represent the importance of each latent variable; the numbers between the arrows represent the rescaled outer weights (calculated by dividing the absolute values of the path coefficients by the total variance of the endogenous construct).

of place identity and relationship quality as stated by Kaufmann et al. [34] and Gharib et al. [35]. The path analysis, bootstrap and IPMA analysis demonstrated that place identity and relation quality are the most relevant antecedents of brand love.

It is also both positively related to place satisfaction [4]. This implies that emotions (i.e., a sense of belonging) towards the overall location is correlated with the satisfaction and the quality perception associated to the region. It was also found a full mediating effect of quality between in the relationship between active participation and brand love. Being brand love a very specific and strong feeling and a unique connection [18], it might be difficult to attain at a higher level just based on a single visit/tasting. Therefore, and for instance, some emerging studies on brand love have reported potential dissimilarities between different cultures in both the consequences of brand love and the terms used in relation to the concept [58]. However, and according to Aro et al. [4] several satisfied customers who also love the brand are more committed to repurchasing it [17]. It has also been suggested that consumers have a passionate desire for their loved brands (e.g. [16]) and a strong willingness to retain their affinity with them [4].

The direct relationship between brand love and satisfaction was not supported by the results. With the place possibly because this construct is based on subjective factors such as tranquillity, environment, and place development, that might not be perceived as relevant to build a brand love by the wine tourists. Visitors might have different expectations from their visit that are not necessarily tied to their love for the brand. These could include the desire for a unique experience, learning about wine production, or simply enjoying the scenery of the vineyard. Therefore, this result may derive from scale items limitations. The research of Strandberg and Styvén [59] also found some limitation in measuring place brand love suggesting that it was a result of the nature of the brand: evaluating a place instead of a physical product.

It was found that relation quality is also a key construct that also contributes greatly to brand love. This is a relevant finding of the research: the perceived quality of the winery/wine region is critical to the development of brand love and appears to be associated with the contribution of some authors, such as Sallam and Wahid [60]. It was also found significant relationships between



the antecedent/independent constructs of the wine visit/tourism experience: Active participation is both positively related to place satisfaction and to relation quality. The fact that relation quality is more influenced by active participation than place identity proves that activities do enhance relationships that, in its turn, can create brand love. Although H1a has been rejected (the direct relationship between active participation and to brand love) there's a link between them in the mediating effect provided by the relation quality in brand love.

The fact that the other hypothesis related with Brand Love (H1a., H1e., H2d., H3) were rejected may be due, as stated before, that brand love implies a very strong relationship with a very specific subject (brand). In a wine visit these feelings could be directed and dispersed toward different subjects such as the wine region, the winery specific brands, the visited site, or even the type of wine (i.e., in Douro for a fortified wine or in Provence for a Rosé). This explains why place identity plays such a relevant role in the development of brand love due to the referred previous emotional bond that can be established with the visited region or site [40,41].

The IPMA showed the hierarchy of the relationship of the wine tourism experience with the dependent variable: accordingly, relation quality is the construct with the stronger relationship with brand love, followed by place identity, and, finally, active participation. Relation quality is more influenced by active participation when compared with the influence of place identity. This makes sense as any activity inside the cellar our during the visit, would enhance the perception of the winery quality. Regarding the place satisfaction, the importance is the opposite, meaning that place identity shows a stronger influence than active participation, because the sense of identity and belonging, that sometimes, can be just a mere desire to idealistic live in such place, contributes to the overall satisfaction with the location. In these cases, it would be expected that regions with higher reputations will develop this relationship in a more effective way than others.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This research made significant contributions to our understanding of the impact of wine tourism experiences, particularly wine visits, on brand love and its underlying factors. It is crucial to understand how specific experiences, such as wine visits, can cultivate brand love, given its complexity and strength. The study also shed light on the connections between active participation in wine tourism and relationship quality, which mediates the link between active participation and brand love.

This research also identifies some specific determinants for wine tourism love brand. Brand love is a complex and strong emotion that can be enhanced by a specific experience, such as a wine visit. The study also explores the relations between active participation in the wine tourism, and the relation quality that mediates its impact on brand love. Place identity is a key factor for the formation of brand love, confirming the proposition of Fountain et al. [8] that satisfaction with the wine territory is a powerful tool for the development of wine brand love. Therefore, wine regions and wineries with a high level of perceived notoriety are more likely to achieve higher levels of brand love, in line with the findings of Drennan et al. [2] and Dias et al. [61]. This research also has some practical implications for tourism management and marketing, especially in the areas of wine tourism, brand management, and consumer behaviour. It is important to develop the relation quality perceptions of the winery by increasing its reputation and offering some activities that can strengthen the bond with the visitors. Besides tasting the wines and listening to the information about the region and the winery, other activities can be more engaging and interactive, such as wine quizzes, blending workshops, or harvesting experiences. The creation of a winery shop and an online delivery service can also reinforce the bond between the visitor and the brand, and encourage repeat purchases and referrals. Moreover, the practical implications should extend to the whole wine destination management, as the quality of the experience and the consequent satisfaction depend on all the components of a vacation, such as hotel, transportation, restaurants, and other attractions. Therefore, it is essential to coordinate and integrate the different stakeholders of the wine destination, and to ensure that they offer consistent and complementary services and products that meet the expectations and needs of the wine tourists. The wine destination should also communicate its unique identity and value proposition, and create a strong and distinctive place brand that can attract and retain loyal and passionate customers.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is mainly restricted by being a cross sectional study using a convenience online sample. The sample is limited in size, although it surpasses the recommended threshold for PLS-SEM analysis. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study's generalizability. Further research is needed to determine whether the findings of this study can be gener-

alized to other populations or contexts. The pandemic period, when wine visits were stopped or limited, may have affected the accuracy of the data collection, as some respondents may not have fresh memories of their experiences. Future research could explore how place identity influences brand love in different wine regions, depending on their perceived reputation by the visitors. It could also examine which activities can improve the perception of relation quality and enhance its effects on brand love and future behaviours, such as word of mouth and demand for the visited wine brand. Finally, we view the potential influence of nationality on the relationship between brand love and visitor satisfaction as an interesting avenue for future research. In this study, we provide a baseline understanding of this relationship in a diverse sample, which future studies could build upon by examining the moderating role of nationality.

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## APPENDIX

Construct and Items	Code	Standardized Factor loadings
<b>Active participation</b>		
During my stay in this wine region, I directly interact with local producers	Active_partic1	0.911
During my stay in this wine region, I participate actively in wine and gastronomy activities.	Active_partic2	0.969
My holiday experience is enriched with my participation in wine and gastronomy activities.	Active_partic3	0.934
<b>Brand Love</b> (Regarding the brand of this wine region...)		
This is a wonderful brand	Brand_L1	0.874
This brand is totally awesome	Brand_L2	0.902
I have positive feelings about this brand	Brand_L3	0.875
This brand makes me very happy	Brand_L4	0.919
I love this brand!	Brand_L5	0.942
This brand is a pure delight	Brand_L6	0.925
I'm very attached to this brand	Brand_L7	0.846
This brand makes me feel good	Brand_L8	0.922
<b>Place Identity</b>		
I feel that I belong here and that it's part of my identity.	Place_I1	0.931
I like living here and I feel connected to this place.	Place_I2	0.963
It's the best place to do the things I like.	Place_I3	0.922
<b>Place satisfaction</b>		
Satisfaction with local tranquillity	Place_S1	0.894
Satisfaction with the level of local development	Place_S2	0.921
Satisfaction with the local living environment	Place_S3	0.918
<b>Relationship Quality</b>		
I'm confident in the local personel expertise, they know what they are doing	Rel_qual1	0.943
The wine region keeps my best interests in mind	Rel_qual2	0.907
The wine region is a safe and reputable	Rel_qual3	0.934
Overall I am satisfied with this wine region and the service they provide	Rel_qual4	0.951
My feelings towards the wine region are very positive	Rel_qual5	0.961