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Happiness perception in wine tourism destinations and its impact on tourists' satisfaction and loyalty

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Abstract

This study examines the mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between happiness and loyalty in wine tourism destinations. Using structural equation modelling, results indicate that happiness significantly influences satisfaction in wine tourism, subsequently impacting visitor loyalty. However, the direct effect of happiness on loyalty appears to be weaker, which emphasises the crucial role of satisfaction. The unique characteristics of wine tourism, which promote personalised and emotionally engaging experiences, underline its importance in the study of tourist happiness. The findings on happiness in wine destinations emphasise the need for tailored management and marketing strategies. The findings highlight the importance of satisfaction in enhancing loyalty and suggest strategies to optimise visitor experiences, improve destination competitiveness and foster long-term tourist loyalty in the highly competitive wine tourism market.

Keywords: Happiness, wine tourism, SEM-PLS, loyalty, satisfaction.

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1. Introduction

To date, many studies in tourism have focused on loyalty perception (e.g., Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zeithaml *et al*., 1996; Zhou, 2022), as securing a loyal visitor helps destinations in a highly competitive market (Mendes *et al*., 2010). Therefore, efforts have been made to identify factors that can lead to tourist loyalty (Chen *et al*., 2015), such as satisfaction (Štumpf *et al*., 2020), political stability (Zhang *et al*., 2018), emotional (Campo-Martinez *et al*., 2010) and place attachment (Scarpi *et al*., 2019), service attitude (Lv *et al*., 2021), destination image (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Kusdibyo, 2022; Su *et al*., 2020), experience (Chi *et al*., 2020; Pestana *et al*., 2020), motivation (Huang & Liu, 2017), well-being potential of a destination (Tsai, 2020), or destination uniqueness (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011).

However, the specific effects of emotions and feelings, especially happiness, on satisfaction and loyalty in the tourism context are seldom described in detail. Therefore, there are only a few studies that focus on happiness in the tourism context (e.g. Filep *et al*., 2016; Gillet *et al*., 2013; Nawijn *et al*., 2013; Vada *et al*., 2019). Based on these previous studies, it can be concluded that the perception of happiness varies depending on the type of destination. According to Pelegrín *et al*. (2019), wine tourism and its various activities lead to stronger and more lasting emotional ties, compared to other types of destinations. Furthermore, promoting happiness leads to a higher likelihood of visiting the destination (Vada *et al*., 2019), and emotions as such have a significant impact on tourists' behaviour before, during and after visiting the destination in question (Walters & Li, 2017). Nevertheless, only a few wine tourism studies focus on happiness (Králiková *et al*., 2021; Leri & Theodoridis, 2019).

Therefore, this study focuses on happiness as an antecedent of satisfaction and loyalty in wine tourism destinations. Assessing the mediating role of satisfaction on the relationship between happiness and loyalty is therefore the main objective of this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Happiness in Tourism

Lyubomirsky *et al*. (2005) perceive happiness as the frequent occurrence of positive feelings and the less frequent occurrence of negative ones. With this in mind, happiness can be defined as a subjective state that is unique and specific to each individual, but at the same time determined by a variety of social, cultural, psychological, and economic factors (Sharpley, 2018).

In the tourism context, happiness is perceived as an essential part of the overall tourist experience (Filep, 2012a). Tourist happiness is therefore described as experienced well-being in the pre-travel, on-site and post-travel phase (Filep, 2012b). Since happiness perception also depends on the activity an individual is engaged in, happiness can frequently fluctuate (Layard, 2005). This fluctuation of happiness could also be caused by vacation, as studies such as de Bloom *et al*. (2013), Nawijn (2010) or Nawijn *et al*. (2013) confirm the influence of travel and vacation on happiness. This is in line with positive psychology theory (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and more recently, with other studies on positive tourism (e.g. Filep *et al*., 2016). Even though there are slight nuances in happiness perception based on the traveller's personal characteristics (Capecchi, 2017), after taking the holiday, happiness tends to increase, regardless of personal characteristics, such as age, gender, country of origin, or money spent at the destination (Nawijn, 2010).

Nevertheless, happiness perception depends to a large extent on the type of destination and the activities that destination offers. For instance, Bimonte and Faralla (2012) concluded that park visitors are happier than beach visitors, while according to Frash *et al*. (2016), visiting a park increases happiness regardless of the circumstances and wellness tourists experience more positive than negative emotions (Voigt *et al*., 2010). The same applies to scuba diving (Kler & Tribe, 2012) and rock-climbing vacations (Tsaur *et al*., 2013). Furthermore, in the context of sports tourism, Bosnjak *et al*. (2016) concluded that

the higher the personal identification with the activity in question, the higher the happiness perception. With that being said, compared to other types of tourism, the link between the physical environment and tourists may be stronger in wine tourism (Croce & Perri, 2017).

The interpretation of the term wine tourism is constantly changing. It is usually related to the tourists' motivation and experience (Yadav & Dixit, 2023). Wine (its quality, consumption, or purchase), as the core product of wine tourism (Byrd *et al.*, 2016), is considered to be the main reason for visiting a particular wine producing region (Bruwer & Alant, 2009). Therefore, wine could be highlighted as a critical element of visitors' experiences. A wine tourism definition therefore outlines categories of such elements, which may include a variety of activities such as participation in vineyard and winery tours, wine festivals and exhibitions, wine tasting, and even meetings with the winemaker (Hall *et al.*, 2000).

Wine tourism therefore comprise of activities that are directly related to wine and deliver a dynamic and diverse experience that incorporates wine culture and heritage, generates emotions, feelings, and affection through a wine destination visit (Santos *et al.*, 2019). As of now, previous studies have listed several relevant aspects associated with wine tourism experience from the consumers perspective (Correia *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it is inevitable to offer a variety of experiences beyond wine tasting and purchasing in wine tourism destinations (Brochado *et al.*, 2014).

Positive emotions in wine tourism and enhanced satisfaction with the wine destination can be fostered through multiple channels. These include sensory engagement with the wine and its surrounding aesthetic ambiance, as highlighted by Bruwer and Alant (2009), interacting directly with wine producers (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012), or connecting wine with culinary experiences, the natural landscape, and diverse cultural activities (Kubát & Kerma, 2022). These examples can therefore further elevate the overall enjoyment and fulfilment of wine tourism experiences. Wine tourism is thus more about hedonistic and emotional experiences created by wine than solely about wine as a (liquid) product (Batat, 2023). In addition, a strong emotional ties enhancement might help a particular destination to distinguish itself (Marzano & Scott, 2009), and tourists with such strong emotional ties are more likely to recommend the destination to others (Lee *et al.*, 2005). In the context of wine tourism, destination emotions have an impact on tourists' travel behaviour in wine destinations (Santos *et al.*, 2017). Hence, the more detailed focus on happiness perception in wine tourism destinations is crucial for understanding the overall tourist experience and behaviour.

2.2. Hypotheses Development

Happiness, tourist satisfaction (Štumpf *et al.*, 2020) and a number of other factors (e.g. place attachment, destination image, destination experience, motivation, or destination uniqueness) have a major impact on tourist loyalty. Although destination loyalty is a widely researched topic, happiness as an antecedent of tourists' satisfaction and loyalty was scarcely described. Within the realm of tourism, Hultman *et al.* (2015) characterise destination loyalty as the degree of attachment or commitment to a particular destination. Building on this notion, Khan and Hussain (2013) found that organizations capable of maintaining a consistent level of happiness among their customers are better positioned to cultivate long-term loyalty. Furthermore, Vada *et al.* (2019) assert that tourists show a stronger inclination towards destinations that actively foster happiness. Therefore, the hypothesis about the relationship between happiness and tourists' loyalty was developed.

H1: Happiness has a positive impact on tourists' loyalty.

Furthermore, Bang & Hai (2019) conceptualise tourist satisfaction as the interplay between pre-visit expectations and post-visit experiences at a specific destination. Previous research by Glatzer (2000), Han and Back (2007), Lee *et al.* (2018), Li and Petrick (2010), and Wu *et al.* (2017), suggests that tourists'

satisfaction, and consequently their behaviour (Pappas *et al*., 2013; Prayag *et al*., 2013) is shaped by the happiness they experienced. Accordingly, this study focuses on the impact of happiness on satisfaction.

H2: Happiness has a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction.

In addition, Su *et al*. (2020) emphasise the significance of positive recommendations from satisfied tourists as a cost-effective marketing strategy. According to Han and Hyun (2018), it is five times more profitable for a destination to attract repeat visitors than to attract new ones. Additionally, Cossío-Silva *et al*. (2019) emphasise that the expenses associated with attracting returning tourists are considerably lower than those for attracting new ones. Moreover, loyal visitors can assist in mitigating seasonality challenges (Meleddu *et al*., 2015), exhibit higher expenditure levels at the destination (Moore *et al*., 2017), and engage more actively in the wide range of activities offered by the destination (Lehto *et al*., 2004). Consequently, previous studies have confirmed the influence of tourists' satisfaction on their loyalty (e. g. Leri and Theodoridis, 2019; Štumpf *et al*., 2020).

H3: Tourists' satisfaction has a positive impact on tourists' loyalty.

Given the absence of studies substantiating the relationships between happiness perception in wine tourism context and tourist behaviour, this study aims to assess the mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between happiness and loyalty. Consequently, happiness is posited as a precursor to both satisfaction and loyalty (e.g. Prayag *et al*., 2013; Wu *et al*., 2017), leading to the formulation of three hypotheses, as depicted in Figure 1.

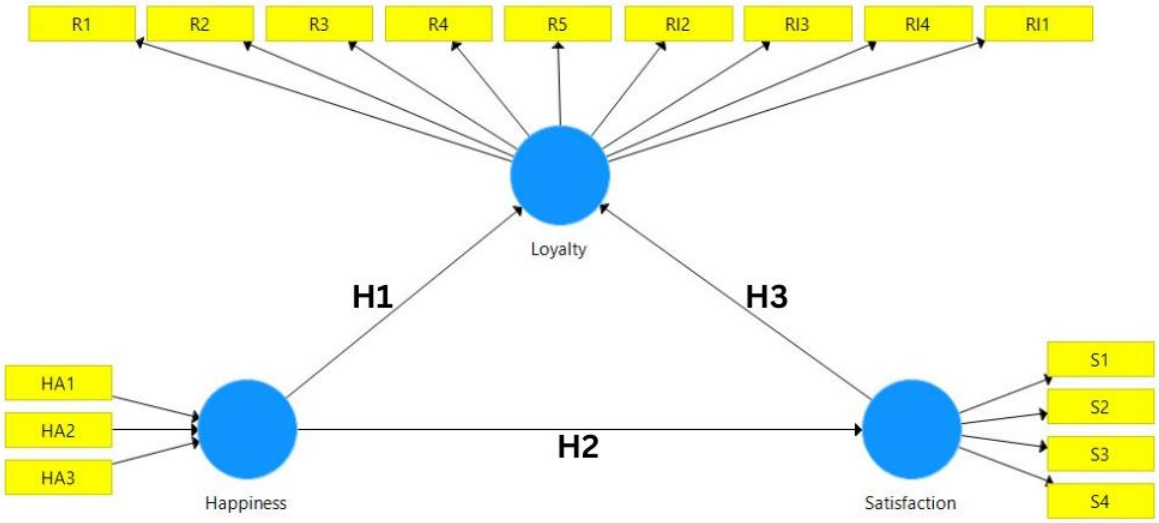


Figure 1. *Mediating Effect of Satisfaction.*

3. Methodology

Based on previous studies (Table 1), 16 variables were identified to determine the impact of happiness (HA) on tourist satisfaction (S) and loyalty, measured by recommendations (R) and revisit intention (RI), in the context of wine tourism destinations. Each variable was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with the number one representing complete disagreement and the number five complete agreement with a particular statement.

Table 1. *Surveyed variables.*

Item	Description	Mean	St. dev.	Author
HA1	The experience of the destination has made me happy.	4.447	0.854	Leri & Theodoridis (2019), Tassawa & Banjongprasert (2019),
HA2	Staying at that destination contributed to my happiness.	4.259	0.914	De Keyser & Lariviere (2014), Theodorakis *et al.* (2014)
HA3	The thought of staying at this destination makes me happy.	4.126	0.963	De Keyser & Lariviere (2014), Theodorakis *et al.* (2014)
S1	Overall, I was very satisfied with the wine destination.	4.401	0.830	Hasan *et al.* (2019)
S2	The expectations I had before visiting the destination were met.	4.224	0.870	Forgas-Coll *et al.* (2012), Hasan *et al.* (2019)
S3[r]	Compared to other wine destinations I have visited, I was more satisfied.	3.688	0.961	Sato *et al.* (2018)
S4	I am satisfied with my decision to visit the wine destination.	4.436	0.852	Nguyen (2019), Tassawa & Banjongprasert (2019)
R1	I would recommend the wine destination I visited to friends and family as a place to visit.	4.474	0.790	Tasci (2017), Tassawa & Banjongprasert (2019)
R2[r]	I would recommend the wine destination visited on social media and other online channels.	3.871	1.156	Thomas *et al.* (2018), Viana (2016)
R3	I will only speak positively about the wine destination I visited.	4.258	0.862	Bonn *et al.* (2007), Tassawa & Banjongprasert (2019)
R4	I will share positive testimonials (experiences/feelings) about this destination with other people.	4.296	0.914	Hasan *et al.* (2019), Su *et al.* (2011)
R5	I would recommend the destination to everyone around me.	4.101	0.942	Kim *et al.* (2012), Nguyen (2019)
RI1[r]	The wine destination I visited is my first choice among other wine destinations.	3.607	1.188	Fu (2019), Nguyen (2019)
RI2	I plan to visit the wine destination again in the future.	4.371	0.863	Campón-Cerro *et al.* (2017), Nguyen (2019)
RI3	I am happy to encourage my family/friends to visit this destination.	4.274	0.907	Bonn *et al.* (2007), Tassawa & Banjongprasert (2019)
RI4[r]	I like this destination better than other destinations I have visited.	3.637	1.115	Fu (2019), Tasci (2017)

Note: [r]=removed variable

3.1. Data Collection

In order to clarify the relationship between happiness, satisfaction and loyalty of tourists, primary data was collected by means of an online questionnaire survey of domestic visitors to the Bohemian and Moravian wine regions in the period from April to May 2021. A quota selection was made based on the gender of the respondents. The total number of respondents was 248, of which 127 were students and 121 were economically active. The detailed structure of the respondents can be seen in Table 2. In addition, the majority of respondents visited the largest wine-growing region in the Czech Republic, the Moravian Wine Region, in particular the Mikulov sub-region (38.52%) and the Veľké Pavlovice sub-region (32.51%).

Table 2. *Respondents' characteristics.*

N = 248	**Sample**	**Sample %**	**% in population**
Economically active	121		
Men	58	47.93	49.29
Women	63	52.07	50.71
Students	127		
Men	48	37.80	34.56
Women	79	62.20	65.44

Source: CZSO, 2021a, 2021b, 2022

It is essential to note that in several studies on wine tourism, there is often a preponderance of economically active people and students among the respondents (e.g. Getz & Carlsen, 2008; Marković *et al*., 2019), who could be described uniformly as adult wine consumers. Furthermore, as evidenced by Bruwer & Alan (2009), most research on wine tourism/tourists focuses on winery visitors rather than wine consumers overall. Wine consumption is typically prevalent among individuals of middle to higher socioeconomic status, those with higher education and predominantly among middle-aged demographics. Approximately 70% of wine consumers in the Czech Republic fall within the age range of 18 to 60 years old (Focus, 2016, 2020). Consequently, this study concentrates solely on this demographic segment. Therefore, the respondents were specifically selected as domestic visitors, categorised as economically active (employed) individuals and students (from universities and higher vocational schools) within the age range 18 to 60 years old.

3.2. Data Analysis

To assess the mediating effect, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used. SEM is widely used in the social sciences (Wong, 2013) and is gaining large popularity in tourism research (e.g. do Valle & Assaker 2016; Eusébio & Vieira, 2011; Latan, 2018; Lavandoski *et al*., 2016; Santos *et al*., 2023). Given the exploratory nature of this study, the Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) approach of SEM was applied (Hair *et al*., 2019). Furthermore, other recent studies in tourism have also adopted the PLS-SEM approach (e.g. Gómez *et al*., 2015; Lee *et al*., 2020; Wu & Liang, 2020). In this study, the SmartPLS 4 software was used.

4. Results

To ensure sufficient model specification, four variables (R2, RI1, RI4, S3) have to be removed from the final model. The results were evaluated after the removal of each observed variable, as suggested by Benitez *et al*. (2020), and none of the removals affected the overall results (the results were qualitatively identical).

4.1. Reflective Model Assessment

Firstly, the reliability and validity of the reflective measurement model had to be assessed. The reliability of each indicator was evaluated based on the outer loadings, as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2019). The proposed threshold value of 0.7 indicates a greater variance between the proposed construct and its indicators than the measurement error variance (ibid.). Every outer loading in the proposed model exceeds the given threshold and the specific values can be seen in Figure 2. In addition, the values of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (all constructs reached the recommended threshold of 0.7) indicate good internal consistency (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The specific values of the reliability measurements can be found in Table A.1 (in the Appendix).

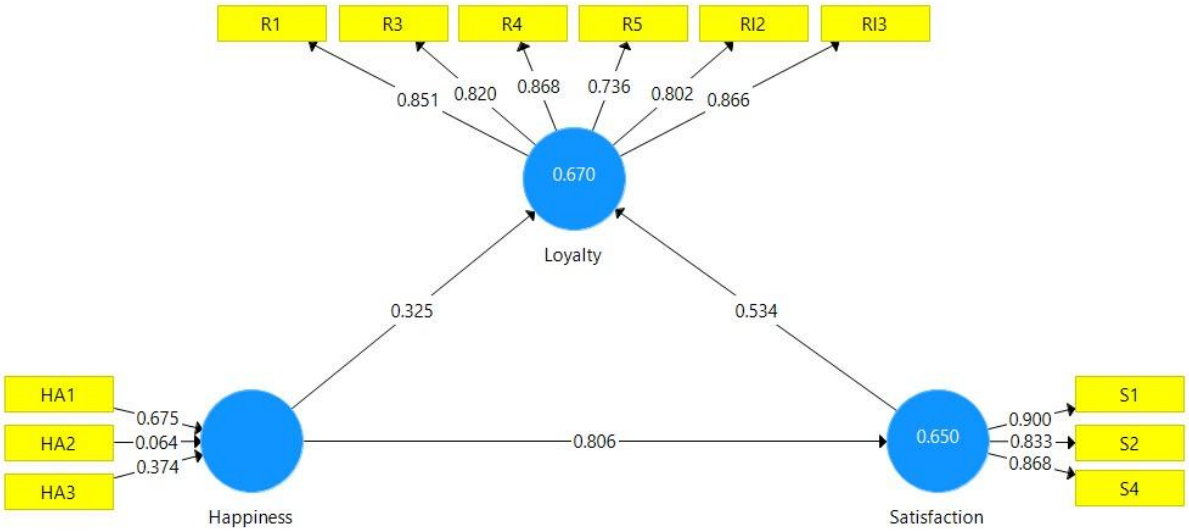


Figure 2. *Measurement model with outer loadings/weights and path coefficients.*

To determine the convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was evaluated. All constructs are above the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Garson, 2016), which indicates that the constructs explain more than half of their indicator's variance (Table A.1).

As suggested by Henseler *et al.* (2014), discriminant validity can be assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings and the bootstrapped Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). To compute the Fornell-Larcker criterion the square root of the AVE was used (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The correlation coefficients are depicted in Table A.2 (in the Appendix), revealing that the correlation coefficients are lower than the estimated values on the diagonal, which indicates no problems with discriminant validity. This also confirms the results of the cross-loadings and the bootstrapped HTMT evaluation.

4.2. Formative Model Assessment

To evaluate the formative model, the collinearity as well as the significance and relevance of the outer weights were assessed (Hair *et al.*, 2021). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used as an indicator of collinearity. As shown in Table A.3 (in the Appendix), all outer VIF values fall below the proposed critical value for collinearity of 5 (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, collinearity is not an issue in this proposed model.

To test the significance and relevance of the formatively measured indicators, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was used (Hair *et al.*, 2021). As shown in Table A.4 (in the Appendix), the outer weight for indicator HA2 is not statistically significant. Therefore, formative indicator outer loading was also analysed. The outer loading (0.781) is above the suggested value of 0.5 and is statistically significant (ibid.). Therefore, the HA2 indicator was kept in the model, even though it is not significant.

4.3. Structural Model Assessment

To evaluate the structural model, the collinearity, significance, and relevance of the path coefficients as well as the predictive power need to be assessed (Diaz-Ruiz *et al.*, 2018). When assessing collinearity within the structural model, the VIF was utilized, with the criterion set to a threshold below 5 to ensure an insignificant level of collinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2019). In this study, all inner VIF values were found to be less than 5. To assess the significance and relevance of the path coefficients, the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was used (Fami *et al.*, 2019). The findings, as presented in Table 3, reveal that all hypothesised relationships were statistically significant with a 95% confidence interval. Therefore, all three hypotheses were supported.

Table 3. *Path coefficients of the structural model.*

Hypotheses	Path	Path Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value
H1	Happiness → Loyalty	0.325	4.483	0.000
H2	Happiness → Satisfaction	0.806	20.590	0.000
H3	Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.534	7.492	0.000

The analysis indicates that happiness exerts a stronger influence on satisfaction (0.806) compared to its impact on loyalty (0.325). However, when considering the total effect (as presented in Table A.5 in the Appendix), the effect of happiness on loyalty (0.755) emerges as more substantial than the effect of satisfaction on loyalty (0.534). Consequently, the mediating effect of satisfaction is affirmed. Furthermore, these findings underscore the significance of happiness as a pivotal factor influencing not only visitors' satisfaction but also their loyalty to the destination.

The overall explanatory power of loyalty perception stands at 66.8% (R^2 = 0.668), while satisfaction's explanatory power is 64.9% (R^2 = 0.649). These values are in the range of other wine tourism studies (Chen *et al.*, 2015; Gómez *et al.*, 2015; Haverila *et al.*, 2020; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). To evaluate the strength of the contribution of the exogenous constructs to the explanation of the respective endogenous construct in terms of R^2, the effect size f^2 was evaluated. According to the guidelines proposed by Hair *et al.* (2021), the effect sizes for the target construct, loyalty, exhibit a weak effect (0.112 for Happiness) and a moderate effect (0.303 for Satisfaction).

To assess the predictive relevance of the structural model, the blindfolding procedure was conducted (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The Q^2 value for both satisfaction (0.479) and loyalty (0.442) exceeds zero, indicating strong predictive power as suggested by Diaz-Ruiz *et al.* (2018). Furthermore, the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value (0.051) falls below the proposed threshold of 0.080 (Henseler *et al.*, 2014), indicating an acceptable model fit. Similarly, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value (0.901) slightly surpasses the recommended threshold of 0.9 (Hair *et al.*, 2021), further affirming the model's adequacy.

5. Discussion

Amidst escalating competition among wine tourism destinations, merely ensuring visitor satisfaction is no longer sufficient. However, the well-documented influence of satisfaction on loyalty in wine tourism (Chen *et al.*, 2015; Gómez & Kelley, 2013; Leri & Theodoridis, 2019) underscores its significance. This

study further confirms the positive impact of tourists' satisfaction on their loyalty (H3) in the form of recommendations and intention to revisit a specific wine destination. Although satisfaction is not the only determinant of tourist loyalty, it deserves increased attention due to its numerous benefits. Notably, satisfaction significantly influences destination choice (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), mitigates the incidence of complaints (Baker, 2017), and renders tourists less sensitive to price increases (Sun *et al.*, 2013).

As previously mentioned, tourists' loyalty isn't solely contingent on their satisfaction with a specific destination; other factors such as previous experiences, the perceived well-being potential, or destination image also play crucial roles. Despite this understanding, the connection between tourists' happiness, satisfaction, and subsequently their loyalty to wine destinations has been relatively underexplored. In a study by Leri & Theodoridis (2019), they explored the influence of emotions on satisfaction and loyalty across eight winery visits in Greece involving international and domestic tourists. Using a path analysis, they confirmed the positive relationship between experienced emotions and satisfaction, as well as revisit and recommendation intentions. However, it is important to note that happiness was only one aspect of the emotions analysed and not the sole focus of the study. Therefore, in this study, a comprehensive analysis of satisfaction's mediating effect on the relationship between happiness and loyalty was undertaken.

The measurement model (Figure 2) reveals a robust positive influence of happiness on tourist satisfaction (H2), aligning with the findings of Wu *et al.* (2017). Furthermore, as emphasized by Smith & Bolton (2002), emotions are integral components of satisfaction, further supporting this relationship. Similarly, there is a substantial positive impact of happiness on tourist loyalty (H1), consistent with the recent research by Peng *et al.* (2023).

In contrast to satisfaction, the direct effect of happiness on loyalty appears to be weaker than that on satisfaction. However, the overall effect of happiness on loyalty closely mirrors that of satisfaction. The mediating effect of satisfaction is therefore confirmed. These findings provide valuable insights into the impact of happiness on wine tourists behaviour, underscoring its significance in shaping both satisfaction and loyalty.

Happiness serves as a pivotal factor not only in shaping visitor satisfaction, but also in influencing their intentions to revisit and recommend the wine destination. As evidenced by Leri & Theodoridis (2019), visitors' emotions, including happiness, play a crucial role in fostering satisfaction, which in turn foresees their likelihood to return to the destination.

The loyalty of tourists towards a wine destination is deeply intertwined with the experiences they encounter. Wine tourism offers distinctive and authentic experiences, characterized by its personalized and diverse nature (Santos *et al.*, 2019), which positively impact visitor loyalty. Emotional connections formed during past experiences significantly influence intentions to revisit (Campo-Martinez *et al.*, 2010), underscoring the enduring impact of emotions in the realm of tourism. Emotions are inherent components of the tourism experience (Horner & Swarbrook, 2020), emphasizing the importance of prioritizing visitor happiness for wine destinations, wineries, and regional Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). To enhance visitor happiness, these entities can integrate happiness appeals into their marketing strategies, leveraging the sensory allure of wine and its surroundings (Bruwer & Alant, 2009), or by emphasising the synergy between food and wine (Croce & Perri, 2017; Kubát & Kerma, 2022). By doing so, they can elevate the wine tourists experience, enhance satisfaction, and ultimately foster loyalty.

Considering that happiness is the most commonly experienced positive emotion in tourism contexts (Sharpley, 2018), it deserves special consideration in strategies aimed at improving visitor experiences and cultivating loyalty to wine destinations. With satisfaction confirmed as a mediator of happiness and loyalty relationship, prioritising happiness has the potential to further bolster recommendation and revisit intentions among wine tourists. Therefore, strategies that focus on enhancing visitor happiness can effectively contribute to the overall success of wine tourism destinations.

Wine destinations can for example incorporate messages that emphasise the happiness and positive emotions associated with visiting their region. For instance, promotional materials such as advertisements, social media posts, or email newsletters can highlight the joyful experiences visitors can expect, whether it's the pleasure of savouring fine wines, the delight of exploring picturesque vineyards, or the excitement of engaging in cultural activities unique to the destination.

Overall, integrating happiness-centred strategies into destination marketing, experience design, and customer feedback processes can help wine tourism destinations create more fulfilling and enjoyable experiences for visitors, ultimately leading to greater loyalty and long-term success.

6. Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between happiness and loyalty in the context of wine tourism destinations. Based on previous research and the findings from PLS-SEM analysis, it can be deduced that happiness significantly influences satisfaction in the specific context of wine tourism. Moreover, happiness also exerts a substantial impact on loyalty. However, when considering only the direct effect, the impact of happiness on loyalty appears to be relatively weaker. Therefore, in assessing the influence of happiness in wine tourism, it becomes imperative to acknowledge the role of satisfaction and its subsequent impact on loyalty. Consequently, the mediating effect of satisfaction was duly confirmed. This underscores the importance of considering the interplay of happiness, satisfaction, and loyalty in understanding and enhancing the tourism experience in wine tourism destinations.

The unique characteristics of wine tourism, coupled with the high degree of personal involvement inherent in this type of tourism, render wine destinations particularly vital for studying tourists' happiness. Such a high level of personal engagement can lead to a stronger emotional tie to the destination under consideration. This study offers valuable insights into perceptions of happiness specific to wine destinations, as tourists' happiness is known to vary depending on the type of destination.

Expanding upon this research, similar studies focusing on other types of destinations would be highly beneficial. Such studies could provide valuable insights into how happiness perceptions differ across various types of destinations, offering a nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to tourists' happiness in different contexts. By examining happiness perceptions across diverse destination types, researchers can uncover valuable insights that can inform destination management strategies and enhance the overall tourist experience.

This study has a notable limitation regarding the inability to assess the convergent validity of the formative model. Due to the lack of a single global item for happiness in the questionnaire, no redundancy analysis could be conducted. Furthermore, the study focused exclusively on students and economically active individuals, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other segments of wine tourism (e.g. wine enthusiasts, relaxation seekers, adventurers, or older visitors). Future research should therefore aim to include a broader range of participants to capture diverse perspectives on happiness in wine tourism destinations.

Additionally, this study was confined to wine regions in the Czech Republic, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to wine tourism destinations in other countries. Therefore, further research should investigate similar aspects in wine-producing regions in other countries. Exploring the attributes of wine regions as addressed in current research on the winescape concept could serve as a valuable framework for such investigations (Kubát & Kerma, 2022; Thomas *et al.*, 2018). Considering the similarities of winescape attributes between different European wine destinations, these results could offer relevant insights applicable to a broader range of wine tourism destinations.

In addition, this study contributes to the field by presenting a theoretical framework that elucidates the interconnections between tourists' satisfaction, loyalty, and happiness, while confirming the mediating role of satisfaction. As a result, the study holds substantial implications for improving the quality of wine tourism experiences and fostering greater tourist loyalty. Moreover, by recognizing the mediating role of satisfaction, stakeholders can prioritize efforts to ensure high levels of visitor satisfaction, thereby indirectly influence loyalty outcomes. This underscores the importance of consistently delivering exceptional experiences that meet or exceed visitor expectations.

Overall, the insights gleaned from this study offer actionable recommendations for stakeholders in the wine tourism industry to optimise visitor experiences, enhance destination competitiveness, and ultimately cultivate long-term loyalty among wine tourists.

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Appendix

Table A.1 *Measurements of reliability and convergent validity.*

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Loyalty	0.905	0.927	0.681
Satisfaction	0.835	0.901	0.753

Table A.2 *Fornell-Larcker test of discriminant validity.*

	Loyalty	Satisfaction
Loyalty	**0.825**	
Satisfaction	0.796	**0.868**

Note: Square root of AVE is marked bold

Table A.3 *Outer VIF.*

Indicator	Outer VIF
HA1	2.137
HA2	2.334
HA3	1.897
R1	2.519
R3	2.214
R4	2.818
R5	1.778
RI2	2.233
RI3	2.749
S1	2.335
S2	1.763
S4	1.997

Table A.4 *Outer weight significance testing.*

Path	Outer Weights	t-statistic	p-value
HA1 → Happiness	0.675	8.427	0.000
HA2 → Happiness	0.064	0.734	0.463
HA3 → Happiness	0.374	5.141	0.000

Table A.5 *Indirect and total effect.*

Path	Indirect/total effect	t-statistic	p-value
Happiness → Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.431	6.646	0.000
Happiness → Loyalty	0.755	16.061	0.000
Happiness → Satisfaction	0.806	20.440	0.000
Satisfaction → Loyalty	0.534	7.480	0.000

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