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From Knowing to Returning: Reconsidering Cultural-Cognitive Value in Ningxia Wine Tourism

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose. Wine destinations increasingly invest in cultural interpretation and storytelling, on the assumption that cultural knowledge naturally builds the kind of attachment that brings visitors back. This paper reconsiders that assumption for cultural-cognitive value specifically, asking why it might show an unexpected relationship with post-visit behavioural intention in an emerging wine tourism destination, using four other value dimensions as an internal benchmark.

Design/Methodology/Approach. Survey data from 430 tourists who had visited a Ningxia winery within the previous year measured five value dimensions (functional, service, social, emotional and cultural-cognitive) against satisfaction and behavioural intention. The cultural-cognitive value scale was purpose-built for this study. Structural equation modelling was carried out in AMOS 29.0, with mediation tested through bootstrapping across 5,000 resamples.

Findings. Functional, service, social and emotional value showed the expected positive associations with satisfaction, whereas their direct effects on behavioural intention were not significant when accounting for satisfaction. Conversely, cultural-cognitive value showed no significant effect on satisfaction ($\beta=0.098$, $p=.141$) and a significant negative direct effect on intention ($\beta=-0.162$, $p=.030$), without indirect effects. This suggests cultural knowledge was insufficiently transformed into an emotionally meaningful experience.

Research Limitations/Implications. The cultural-cognitive value scale is new and untested elsewhere; the design is cross-sectional and the sample non-probability, drawn from a single region.

Practical Implications. Cultural content delivered as static display (architecture, exhibits, guided narration) does not appear to convert into satisfaction here. The paper argues for participatory alternatives that give cultural knowledge a chance to become meaningful: pairing tastings, hands-on activities, and stories told rather than explained.

Originality/Value. Most research treats cultural value as behaving like other value dimensions. This paper reconsiders that assumption using a meaning-making lens, and offers an explanation grounded in how cultural content is delivered, relevant beyond Ningxia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Wine tourism destinations, as a rule, have been leaning harder into cultural interpretation, wine education and regional storytelling over the past decade or so, and mostly for a reasonable-sounding reason: the assumption is that the more a visitor comes to understand a place (its history, its land, its people) the more likely they are to return and to tell others about it (Evren & Kőz, 2026). That assumption has a fairly long pedigree behind it, longer than wine tourism itself. Humanistic geographers were making roughly this argument decades before anyone thought to study wineries this way: Tuan (1974) and Relph (1976) both describe how a deeper cognitive hold on a place, its history and its land, tends to feed into something more emotional: attachment, identity, a sense of belonging there rather than just passing through. Tourism researchers later picked up much the same thread and pushed it toward actual behaviour: Baloglu and McCleary (1999) and Williams and Roggenbuck (1989) both treat this shift from knowing to feeling as the mechanism behind loyalty, showing up eventually as repeat visits and word of mouth.

Ningxia has taken that logic further than most. Bordeaux and Tuscany lean on product reputation built up over centuries; the Ningxia Wine Region, which has existed as a recognisable wine tourism destination for closer to a decade, leans instead on a story: the “Gobi Miracle,” vines planted into desert scrubland at the foot of the Helan Mountain, framed by the area’s minority cultural heritage and a cuisine built around Tan sheep and Goji berries that predates the wine industry by centuries. The region’s hot growing season and the mountain’s function as a barrier against cold currents are frequently cited as the physical explanation for the wine’s quality, but the tourism proposition sold to visitors leans as much on minority heritage, desert scenery and “wasteland reclaimed” narrative as it does on the wine itself. That makes Ningxia a useful place to ask a fairly specific question: does knowing more about a destination’s culture actually change how visitors feel about it, and what they do afterward, or is that link less automatic than tourism marketing tends to assume?

This paper is a focused re-analysis of one finding from a larger five-dimension study of customer perceived value in Ningxia wine tourism: four of the five value dimensions behaved exactly as a standard consumption-values model would predict, and cultural-cognitive value did not. The other four dimensions are reported here only as an internal benchmark, not as the object of study. Three objectives follow from that starting point.

RO1: to examine the relationship between cultural-cognitive value, customer satisfaction and post-visit behavioural intention in Ningxia wine tourism.

RO2: to reconsider the assumption that cultural knowledge necessarily translates into meaningful behaviour in emerging wine tourism destinations.

RO3: to identify ways in which wineries in Ningxia can integrate cultural interpretation with emotionally meaningful and participatory experiences. These translate into three research questions this paper tries to answer.

RQ1: how does cultural-cognitive value relate to customer satisfaction and post-visit behavioural intention in Ningxia wine tourism?

RQ2: what does this relationship reveal about the assumption that cultural knowledge translates into meaningful behaviour in emerging wine tourism destinations?

RQ3: how can wineries in Ningxia integrate cultural interpretation with emotional and participatory experiences to strengthen post-visit behavioural intention?

The argument developed across the rest of the paper does not try to prove that Ningxia’s cultural content is somehow lacking: the region has plenty of it, and it is genuinely distinctive. The findings are more consistent with a narrower interpretation: that static cultural delivery (architecture, exhibits, guided historical narration) may not be sufficient, on its own, to carry cultural knowledge through to meaning and, eventually, to the kind of behaviour that shows up as satisfaction and an intention to return. The discussion returns to this pattern after the empirical results are presented, including why it may be understood as a paradox rather than simply an unexpected coefficient.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Wine tourism as an experience

Wine tourism stopped being just a distribution channel for wine some time ago: most of the literature now treats a winery visit

as an experience in its own right, closer to what Pine and Gilmore (1999) call the experience economy than to a simple retail transaction. Their framework splits experience into four realms (education, entertainment, escapism and aesthetics) and the point that matters here is that these realms are not interchangeable: an experience can be rich in one and thin in another. A winery visit built mostly around the educational realm (learning about the region, the grape, the history) is not automatically also rich in escapism or entertainment, even though all four sit under the same broad label of “experience.”

Tung and Ritchie (2011) push this further by asking what actually makes a tourism experience memorable enough to influence what a visitor does afterward. Their answer involves affect, expectations, consequentiality and recollection, in particular, consequentiality, the idea that an experience has to matter in some way beyond the moment itself before it shapes future decisions. That distinction (between an experience that was informative and one that was consequential) turns out to be a useful lens for the rest of this paper, because it suggests that not every value a visitor picks up during a winery visit is equally likely to shape whether they come back.

2.2 Perceived value

The Theory of Consumption Values (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991) treats what a consumer gets from an experience as multi-dimensional: functional, social, emotional and other forms of value operating side by side, each capable of driving a decision on its own rather than reducing to a single utility score. In a wine tourism setting this typically means splitting perceived value into functional value (price, convenience, reliability), service value (staff attitude and competence), social value (status or belonging gained from the visit) and emotional value (pleasure, relaxation, the affective residue of the trip), four dimensions with a fairly long track record in the literature and, as the results show, four dimensions that behaved in this study exactly the way that track record would predict. A fifth dimension, cultural-cognitive value, is measured alongside these four, and is really the point of this paper: not because it is expected to work differently, but because whether it does is the open question.

2.3 Cultural-cognitive value

Wine tourism has always carried a cultural dimension alongside a commercial one (visitors are typically sold not just a bottle but a place, a history, a claimed connection between soil, climate and taste that the industry itself often calls “terroir” and that Trubek (2008) calls “taste of place,” a phrase this paper borrows because it captures something the more clinical word “terroir” tends to lose) that the connection being sold is sensory and experiential, not just geographic. Cultural-cognitive value, as used in this paper, follows Ma and Bao’s (2012) treatment of the construct in Chinese tourism research, where it is defined as the value derived from acquiring knowledge, awareness or a sense of heritage connection (what a visitor feels they have learned about a place’s terroir, minority history and culinary traditions) and, in Ma and Bao’s own work, is treated as sufficiently distinct from emotional or social value to warrant separate measurement rather than being absorbed into either.

Whether that knowledge actually lands with the visitor as something more than information is a separate question, and the authenticity literature suggests it does not always do so automatically. Du Cros et al. (2026) frame this as an ongoing tension between tourism and cultural or heritage management more broadly: the two fields want overlapping things (tourism wants content that draws visitors in, heritage management wants that content handled with some care) and a lot depends on which of those pulls wins out in how a site actually presents itself day to day. Cohen (1988) and MacCannell (1973) both describe a persistent risk in heritage and cultural tourism: content can be staged or commodified in a way that keeps it visually or informationally present without it registering as a genuinely felt experience for the visitor. Wang (1999) makes a related distinction that turns out to matter a great deal for what follows, between object-based authenticity, where the toured artefact or building is itself the point, and existential authenticity, where value comes from what the visitor personally does and feels in the moment, regardless of how “authentic” the object is in some objective sense. Food is where this argument has been made most concretely: Angelakis et al. (2023) find that gastronomic engagement shapes tourists’ behavioural intentions in its own right, alongside and sometimes ahead of the primary product on offer, which for a wine region means the food story is not a side detail but a second lever on the same outcome this paper is trying to explain.

Ningxia’s version of this cultural offer is unusually dense for such a young wine region, and this density is itself part of the region’s tourism strategy rather than an incidental by-product of it: Liu et al. (2017) describe Ningxia’s wine tourism development explicitly in territorial-branding terms, Zhang et al. (2021) document a deliberate policy push toward integrating culture and tourism along the Helan Mountain’s Eastern Foothills, and Yu (2023) traces much the same integration push from the industry planning side, treating wine and tourism as two halves of one intended offer rather than two separate sectors that happen to share a location. Several wineries lean visibly on this identity in their architecture, Yuanshi Vineyard’s cellars use

reclaimed stone and rattan decoration to evoke the harsh terroir of the mountain; Xige Estate has built a striking example of what the region calls “oriental aesthetics” applied to modern winery architecture. Alongside the wine sits a regional cuisine built on Tan sheep, prized for a distinctive flavour attributed to the local grazing land, and Goji berries with a long medicinal reputation in Chinese culture. On paper: this is exactly the kind of rich cultural resource that tourism research usually treats as an asset waiting to be monetised, though Cohen’s (1988) point about commoditization is a useful early caution against assuming that richness of content automatically converts into richness of experience.

2.4 From Cultural Knowledge to Meaningful Behaviour

There is a fairly comfortable assumption sitting underneath a lot of wine tourism writing on culture: that giving visitors more interpretation, more regional history, more of the story, simply adds up to a richer stay. Section 2.1’s distinction between an informative experience and a consequential one is really an argument against taking that for granted, and Schmitt (1999) gives it a sharper edge: his experiential marketing framework separates a “think” module (cognitive, problem-solving engagement) from “feel,” “act” and “relate” modules that are closer to affect, behaviour and social connection. Learning something and being moved by it draw on different modules in Schmitt’s account, which is one reason they should not be assumed to travel together automatically. Kim, Ritchie and McCormick’s (2012) scale for memorable tourism experiences points the same way empirically: their measure includes a knowledge-and-culture component, but that component sits alongside separate hedonic and meaningfulness components rather than standing in for them: knowing about a place’s culture is one ingredient in a memorable experience, not the whole recipe.

Applied to cultural-cognitive value specifically: historical exhibits, guided storytelling and architectural detail are stimuli in the S-O-R sense and nothing more on their own. Whether any of that reaches behavioural intention depends on whether it gets processed into something felt and, in Tung and Ritchie’s (2011) terms, consequential, rather than staying merely known. Information that stays at arm’s length (interesting, perhaps, but not personally lived through) can register as static knowledge without ever touching the affective state that seems to be doing most of the work elsewhere in this model. If that is right, cultural-cognitive value would not be expected to behave like the other four dimensions by default; it would only convert into loyalty if it is delivered in a way that lets the visitor do something with it, rather than simply observe it.

Put as a single claim, this is really what the rest of the paper is testing: cultural-cognitive value should behave differently from the other four dimensions precisely because it carries a heavier processing burden, knowledge has to become meaningful, in something close to Tung and Ritchie’s sense, before it can plausibly reshape a return visit or a recommendation, in a way that a pleasant service interaction or a moment of relaxation does not need converting quite so much.

Conceptual Proposition 1. Cultural-cognitive value is more likely to contribute to behavioural intention when cultural knowledge is processed into an affective and personally meaningful experience; where such processing is limited, its behavioural contribution may be weak or absent.

Section 5 comes back to this claim once the results are on the table, including why it is worth calling the specific pattern found here a paradox rather than simply an unexpected coefficient.

2.5 Theoretical framework

Three bodies of theory come together in this study, and the three questions they each answer line up fairly neatly with the argument above. The Theory of Consumption Values answers what value a visitor thinks they got, the knowledge side. Experiential-consumption and memorable-experience research (Pine and Gilmore (1999), Schmitt (1999), and Tung and Ritchie (2011)) answers whether and how that knowledge gets turned into something meaningful, which this paper treats as a meaning-making process sitting inside the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework’s organism stage (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Bitner, 1992). The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) provides a useful behavioural-intention perspective for understanding the final stage of the proposed chain. Chained together: knowledge feeds meaning, meaning feeds an affective, satisfaction-relevant state, and that state feeds behaviour; skip the middle step and the chain does not really hold. Figure 1 sets this chain out visually, including the alternative route this paper is really interested in, what happens to a value dimension’s effect on intention when meaning-making does not occur. Customer satisfaction is used as the measured affective evaluative state in the empirical model; the broader meaning-making and personally meaningful experience processes shown on the right are theoretical interpretations rather than equivalent measured constructs.

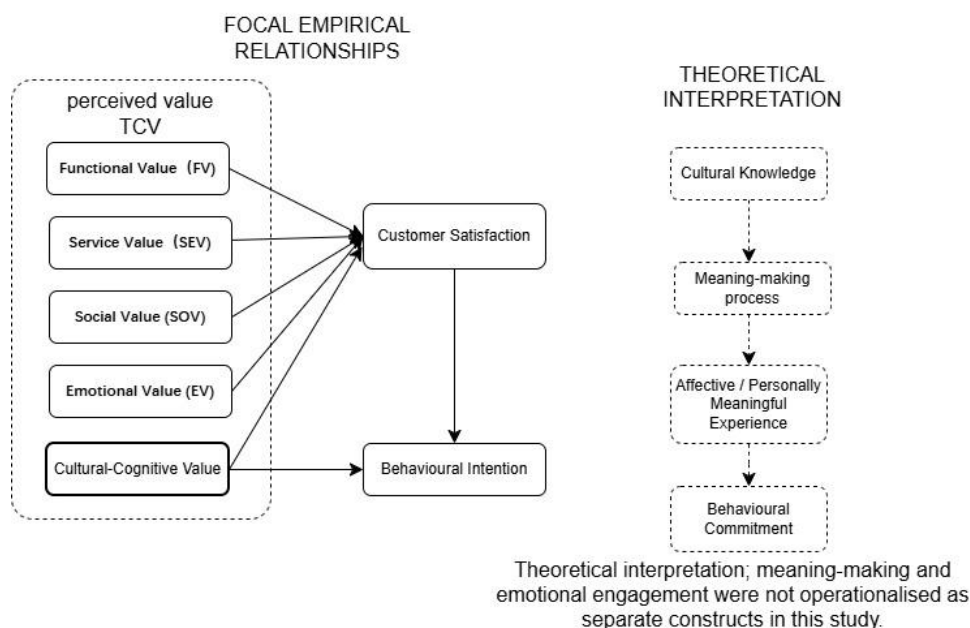


Figure 1. Conceptual interpretation of the knowing–meaning–acting pathway. The left panel presents the empirically tested relationships involving cultural-cognitive value, customer satisfaction and behavioural intention. The right panel presents a theoretical interpretation of these findings; meaning-making and affective/personal engagement were not measured as separate constructs in the present study.

Shapiro and Gómez (2014) apply essentially this logic directly to a wine tasting-room setting, showing that visitor satisfaction, not the service encounter itself, is what predicts downstream sales and return behaviour, which is the specific precedent this paper leans on rather than gesturing at the S-O-R literature in the abstract. The point that matters here is narrower still: a stimulus is only as good as its capacity to move the organism, and cultural content, on the evidence in section 4, may not be moving it much at all.

2.6 Hypotheses

Four benchmark hypotheses cover functional, service, social and emotional value: each is expected to positively influence satisfaction (H1a–d), and each is expected to influence behavioural intention only indirectly, through satisfaction, rather than directly (H3a–d, direct paths, expected non-significant). These four are not elaborated individually here, since they are not the paper’s focus; they exist to establish what standard, theory-consistent value-dimension behaviour looks like, against which the fifth dimension can be judged.

The hypotheses that matter for this paper concern cultural-cognitive value specifically, and follow directly from Ma and Bao’s (2012) argument that cultural-cognitive value operates through the same evaluative logic as other consumption values, even though its content (knowledge, heritage, identity) is qualitatively different from a functional or social benefit. H1e: cultural-cognitive value positively influences customer satisfaction. H3e: cultural-cognitive value positively influences behavioural intention directly. H4e: customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between cultural-cognitive value and behavioural intention. Framed this way: the interesting empirical question is not whether these three hypotheses are supported (on Ma and Bao’s account, and by analogy with the other four dimensions, they were written expecting they would be) but what it means if they are not.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and setting

The present article draws on the survey dataset originally collected as part of the author’s master’s research but reanalyzes the data around a narrower question concerning cultural-cognitive value. That study surveyed tourists aged 18 or above who had visited a winery in the Eastern Foothills of the Helan Mountain (the appellation at the centre of Ningxia’s wine industry and the site of most of the architectural and cultural investment referenced in section 2.3) within the previous year, using purposive

and convenience sampling across on-site and online channels; 450 responses were collected and 430 retained after screening for missing data and outliers, comfortably above the sample size conventionally required for structural equation modelling of a model this size. It was a quantitative, cross-sectional survey administered within a positivist paradigm.

The structural model reported in the parent dataset fit the data well (CMIN/DF=0.988, GFI=0.961, CFI=1.000, TLI=1.002, RMSEA=0.000, AGFI=0.948), and produced a fairly clean pattern across four of the five value dimensions: functional ($\beta=0.249$, $p<.001$), service ($\beta=0.292$, $p<.001$), social ($\beta=0.196$, $p=.005$) and emotional value ($\beta=0.285$, $p<.001$) each significantly predicted satisfaction, which in turn was the strongest predictor of behavioural intention anywhere in the model ($\beta=0.556$, $p<.001$), fully mediating each of these four dimensions' effect on intention. None of the four showed a significant direct effect on intention once satisfaction was accounted for. Cultural-cognitive value broke that pattern in three separate places at once, not just one: no significant effect on satisfaction, a small but significant direct effect on intention running the opposite direction from the other four dimensions, and no significant indirect effect through satisfaction either. Three converging results pointing the same way is a more solid basis for the argument in this paper than any single coefficient would be on its own, and unpacking that three-part pattern is what the rest of this paper does.

Treating the parent study's four-dimension results as an established benchmark, rather than re-deriving them here, is a deliberate choice. Repeating the full justification for why functional, service, social and emotional value should predict satisfaction would duplicate an argument already made and evidenced in full elsewhere; what this paper adds is everything that comes after that point, a literature-grounded account of why cultural-cognitive value alone breaks the pattern, and what that implies for how cultural content is delivered in emerging wine regions. What follows in the rest of this section is restricted to the parts of the design most relevant to cultural-cognitive value specifically, principally its measurement.

3.2 Developing the cultural cognitive value measure

No existing scale captured the particular combination this study needed (desert terroir, minority cultural heritage, and a regional cuisine built around Tan sheep and Goji berries) so a measure was developed specifically for this research in two stages, combining field exploration with expert review, rather than adapting an existing instrument wholesale. Cultural-cognitive value is defined here as a visitor's perceived value derived from acquiring destination-specific cultural knowledge during a winery visit.

The initial item pool came out of repeated site visits to wineries in the Eastern Foothills of the Helan Mountain and unstructured conversations with cellar-door staff and sommeliers, rather than from the literature alone. Those conversations kept surfacing the same point: visitors' sense of value extended well beyond the tasting itself into a broader engagement with local cultural identity and regional heritage. One observation from that fieldwork shaped the scale directly: during a tour at Yuanshi Vineyard, a standard tasting was paired with fairly neutral snacks, and it became clear that pairing the wine with something distinctly local instead would have added more to visitors' sense of a complete cultural experience. That is why regional cuisine was built into the scale as its own component, rather than folded into a single, generic culture item. Before the pool went to the wider expert panel, it was first reviewed by two wine tourism researchers and two winery managers for wording clarity and contextual relevance, a basic check that still caught a couple of items reading as too academic for a tourist-facing questionnaire.

The pool was then reviewed by a four-person expert panel comprising two senior wine-education practitioners, a Chinese university professor specialising in viticulture and enology, and a practising Ningxia viticulturist. The panel checked content and face validity and converged on four dimensions worth capturing separately: exposure to minority culture, awareness of local cuisine, recognition of the region's distinctive landscape, and knowledge of its wine culture and history. Four items (CCV1–CCV4) were finalised on that basis, asking about improved recognition of minority culture, awareness of Ningxia's unique cuisine, distinctive features of Ningxia's landscape, and knowledge of Ningxia's wine culture. The intent was not to build a comprehensive scale of destination culture in general, but something narrower: the specific kinds of cultural knowledge a visitor is actually likely to pick up during an ordinary winery visit. Taken together, the four items measure what a visitor believes they have come to know, rather than how emotionally moved they were by it, the distinction section 2.4 argues matters most. The items were translated into Chinese, back-translated by an independent translator, and piloted with 77 respondents before the main survey.

The measure was refined once more during confirmatory factor analysis, where one of the four items (CCV3, covering recognition of landscape features) was dropped on the basis of a weak loading, leaving three items with statistically significant factor loadings. The resulting construct showed preliminary internal consistency for an exploratory, context-specific measure, though its composite reliability and average variance extracted remained below conventional thresholds, discussed in full below.

Discriminant validity across all seven constructs, CCV included, was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion as part of the parent dataset and is not re-presented here; Table 1 instead focuses on the item- and construct-level detail specific to CCV.

Table 1. Psychometric properties of the cultural cognitive value (CCV) construct

Item	Description	EFA loading	CFA loading (λ)	p
CCV1	Enhanced understanding of minority cultures	0.775	0.763	< .001
CCV2	Improved awareness of unique cuisine	0.703	0.563	< .001
CCV4	Knowledge of Ningxia's wine culture	0.647	0.547	< .001
CCV3 (dropped)	Recognition of landscape features	0.672	excluded at CFA	–

Construct-level statistics for the retained three-item scale yielded Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.675$, Composite Reliability (CR) = 0.661, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = 0.400. The AVE falls below the conventional 0.50 threshold and is therefore treated as a measurement limitation rather than as evidence of strong convergent validity. This pattern is not unique to cultural-cognitive value: AVE values across the seven-construct measurement model fall within the 0.30–0.40 range, while CR exceeds 0.60 for five of the seven constructs. The results should also be considered in light of the highly context-specific and purpose-built nature of the CCV measure, which was developed to capture destination-specific cultural knowledge in Ningxia wine tourism. Although CCV's CR of 0.661 exceeds the 0.60 level sometimes used as a lower benchmark for exploratory measures, this should not be taken as evidence of an established measurement model. Given the construct's context-specific development and its relatively modest convergent validity, CCV is treated here as a preliminary operationalisation that requires further refinement and validation in other wine tourism settings.

Dropping CCV3 rather than weakens the construct in a way worth defending briefly, because it narrows CCV onto exactly the ground the fieldwork in this section originally pointed toward: the lived, social and culinary side of Ningxia's terroir (minority heritage, local gastronomy, the wine culture itself) rather than the physical landscape as scenery. Trubek (2008) makes essentially this point about terroir in general: a genuine “taste of place” is built as much through human practice, food and cultural tradition as through geology and topography. Keeping CCV1, CCV2 and CCV4 keeps the construct pointed at that human side of the offer, which is also where, as section 5 suggests, the gap between cultural knowledge and meaningful behaviour may actually sit.

It is worth stepping back and asking directly why these particular three items were treated as representing cultural-cognitive value in Ningxia specifically, rather than some other set. The answer is really that they map onto the same cultural assets identified independently in section 2.3: minority heritage, distinctive regional cuisine, and the region's own wine culture and history are precisely the three things Ningxia's wineries lean on in their branding and architecture, and the three things Liu et al. (2017), Zhang et al. (2021) and Yu (2023) point to when describing how the region has tried to fuse its wine industry with its cultural identity. The items were not drawn from a generic destination-culture inventory and then applied to Ningxia after the fact; they were built from what the fieldwork in this section found visitors were actually being offered on site, then checked against what the regional literature independently says the destination is trying to sell. That two-way fit is not proof the scale captures every relevant facet of cultural-cognitive value (a fuller, validated instrument would need testing well beyond this one study) but it is the basis for treating these three items as a reasonable, context-appropriate approximation rather than an arbitrary shortlist.

3.3 Sample and analysis

In the parent dataset, 450 responses were collected from tourists aged 18 or above who had visited a Ningxia winery within the past year, via on-site and online distribution between April and December 2025; 430 were retained after screening. Structural equation modelling was conducted in AMOS 29.0 following the two-step approach of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), and mediation was tested through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, generating bias-corrected 95 per cent confidence intervals for each indirect path, the same procedure was used to test the cultural-cognitive value paths reported below.

4. RESULTS

4.1 The benchmark: four dimensions behaving as expected

Before turning to cultural cognitive value, it is worth restating (following the parent dataset, where these results are reported and discussed in full) that the other four dimensions in this model behaved in a fairly unremarkable, theory-consistent way, which is precisely what makes the fifth dimension's different behaviour worth discussing rather than dismissing as noise. Functional, service, social and emotional value each significantly and positively predicted satisfaction, and none had a significant direct effect on behavioural intention once satisfaction was included in the model, as summarised in Table 2.

It is worth being transparent about one thing before these numbers are read too literally: the fit indices reported below describe the refined measurement model, not the first one estimated. The parent dataset documents an initial run that flagged several items with loadings below the conventional 0.50 threshold, and four were removed through an iterative, modification-index-guided purification process before the structural model was finalised. The strong fit that follows is, in that sense, partly a product of that refinement rather than a raw, unadjusted result, a fairly standard sequence in SEM work, but one that should be stated rather than left implicit.

Table 2. Benchmark value dimensions: effects on satisfaction and intention

Dimension	$\beta \rightarrow CS$	p	Direct $\beta \rightarrow BI$	p
Functional Value	0.249	<.001	−0.011	.882
Service Value	0.292	<.001	0.047	.615
Social Value	0.196	.005	0.089	.244
Emotional Value	0.285	<.001	0.065	.458

4.2 Cultural cognitive value: a different pattern

Cultural cognitive value's path to satisfaction was not significant ($\beta=0.098$, $p=.141$), H1e is not supported. Its direct path to behavioural intention, unlike the other four dimensions, was significant, but running the opposite direction ($\beta=-0.162$, $p=.030$), against what H3e predicted. The bootstrapped indirect effect through satisfaction was small and its confidence interval crossed zero (indirect effect=0.054, 95% CI [−0.020, 0.154]), H4e is not supported. Table 3 sets these three results alongside the benchmark dimensions for direct comparison, and Figure 2 maps the standardised structural paths, built on the cultural-cognitive construct's three retained items as described in section 3.2.

Table 3. Cultural cognitive value against the benchmark pattern

	Effect on CS	Direct effect on BI	Indirect effect (via CS)
Benchmark dimensions (FV, SEV, SOV, EV)	Significant, positive	Not significant	Significant, positive (full mediation)
Cultural Cognitive Value	Not significant ($p=.141$)	Significant, opposite direction ($\beta=-0.162$)	Not significant (CI crosses zero)

Table 4 unpacks the bootstrapped indirect effects behind that last column for all five dimensions together, since the mediation result is really the crux of the comparison: satisfaction carries the effect of four dimensions through to intention in full, and carries none of cultural cognitive value's effect at all.

Table 4. Bootstrapped indirect effects (5,000 resamples, bias-corrected 95% CI)

Dimension	Indirect effect	95% CI	Mediation outcome
Functional Value	0.138	[0.063, 0.247]	Full mediation
Service Value	0.162	[0.066, 0.320]	Full mediation
Social Value	0.109	[0.032, 0.219]	Full mediation
Emotional Value	0.158	[0.071, 0.281]	Full mediation

Dimension	Indirect effect	95% CI	Mediation outcome
Cultural Cognitive Value	0.054	[-0.020, 0.154]	Not significant

Reading across the indirect-effect column gives a sense of scale as well as significance: the four benchmark dimensions cluster between 0.109 and 0.162, all with confidence intervals comfortably clear of zero. The indirect effect for cultural-cognitive value was smaller in magnitude than those observed for the four benchmark dimensions, but its 95% confidence interval crossed zero. A confidence interval crossing zero indicates that the path is not statistically distinguishable from no effect. Thus, the indirect effect of cultural-cognitive value was not statistically distinguishable from zero and was smaller in magnitude than the corresponding effects of the four benchmark dimensions.

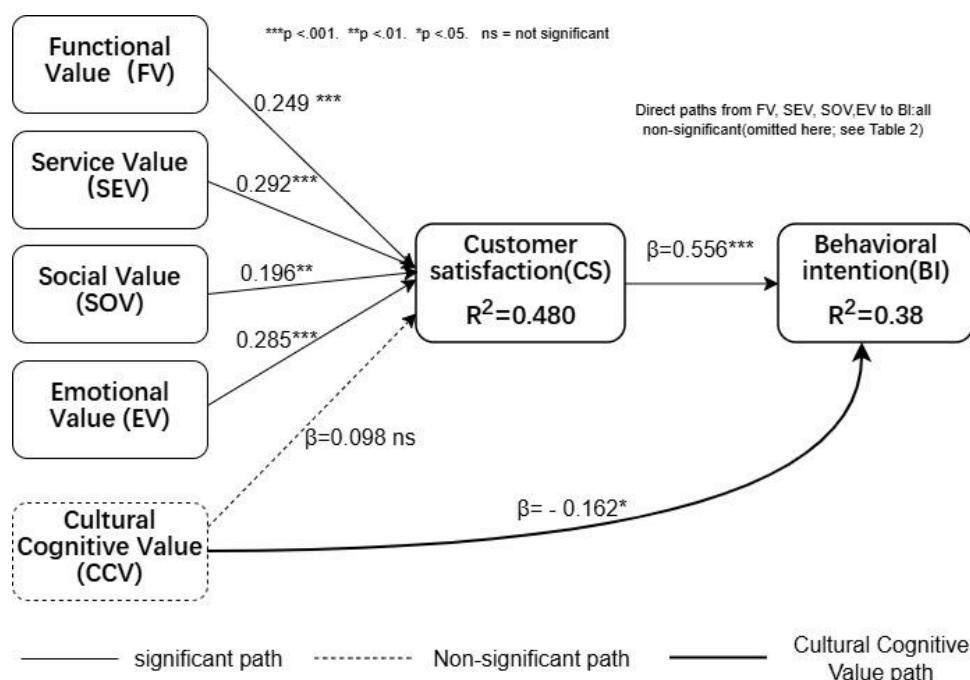


Figure 2. Standardised path coefficients for the estimated structural model. Solid black arrows are significant paths to satisfaction; the black dashed arrow and solid bold line traces cultural cognitive value’s distinct pattern, a non-significant path to satisfaction alongside a significant, opposite-direction direct path to behavioural intention. Non-significant direct paths from the four benchmark dimensions to BI are omitted from the diagram for readability and reported in full in Table 2.

The refined structural model produced very high fit indices (CMIN/DF = 0.988, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.002, RMSEA = 0.000, AGFI = 0.948). These values should be read in light of the prior measurement refinement described above rather than as evidence that the model is uniquely well specified.

5. DISCUSSION: WHY CULTURE MAY NOT BE CONVERTING

What follows is an attempt to make sense of the pattern in Table 3, not a claim to have settled it. Three explanations are offered below, each grounded in an existing literature, but each is best read as one plausible interpretation rather than a demonstrated mechanism, the data show what happened, not why, and the “why” here is necessarily somewhat inferential.

5.1 Cultural Knowledge Without Experiential Engagement

Section 2.4 already sets out the underlying argument: cultural-cognitive value should behave differently from the other four dimensions because turning cultural knowledge into something that shapes behaviour takes more than simply encountering it. What follows works through what that might look like in practice at a Ningxia winery, without claiming to have tested any single mechanism directly, the data show what happened, not why, and the readings offered below are plausible rather than demonstrated. The core issue can be stated plainly: visitors may encounter culture at a winery without actually participating in it. Yuanshi Vineyard’s stone-and-rattan cellar design and Xige Estate’s oriental-aesthetic architecture are, by most accounts, genuinely impressive, the kind of buildings that photograph well and that feature prominently in the region’s own promotional material. Ningxia’s food culture works much the same way: Tan sheep and Goji berries are positioned as distinctive regional

assets, and the region's minority heritage and wine history are told mainly through guided narration and exhibits. All of this is culture on display. Whether it becomes culture a visitor actually does something with (tastes, touches, takes part in) is a separate question, and this study's results suggest it should not be assumed to follow automatically. Wang's (1999) distinction between object-based and existential authenticity captures the difference: a visitor can register that a building or a dish is authentic, or striking, or well made, without that registering as anything they personally lived through. Left unconnected to something the visitor does or feels, cultural content risks staying, in effect, staged for viewing (MacCannell, 1973) rather than experienced.

5.2 When Cultural Content Remains Informational

One specific way this plays out is through the sheer volume and format of cultural information a visit delivers. The Gobi landscape is a distinctive backdrop, but if a winery visit leans heavily on educational content about the harshness of the growing environment and the history of reclaiming wasteland for viticulture, without much emotional or service-based counterweight, the result may tip into something closer to what this paper (following language already used in the parent thesis) calls "Gobi fatigue": a state closer to overload than to enrichment. Falk and Dierking's (1992) contextual model of museum learning describes something similar in heritage and exhibit settings: visitors bring limited attentional and emotional capacity to an experience, and content that is purely informational, without variation or personal relevance, may produce fatigue rather than the deeper engagement it was meant to encourage. Guided narration and static exhibits are, in this sense, efficient at transferring facts and not obviously built to produce much beyond that. Knowledge acquisition does not necessarily produce personal meaning, and a visitor who leaves a winery informed but not moved by what they learned may simply have picked up facts rather than an experience.

5.3 When Cultural Expectations Exceed the Delivered Experience

A second, related possibility works through expectation rather than information load. Oliver's (1980) expectation-disconfirmation theory frames satisfaction as a comparison between what was expected and what was actually delivered, rather than a direct response to the stimulus itself. Ningxia's marketing leans heavily on Tan sheep and Goji berries as distinctive regional ingredients, and mature wine regions such as Bordeaux have spent decades deliberately harmonising food and wine into something closer to a single experience, arguably the clearest real-world expression of Trubek's (2008) "taste of place." Zhang and Cai's (2018) comparison of Old and New World branding suggests Ningxia's wine tourism development has drawn on branding practices associated with established wine regions, although the integration of wine and regional gastronomy may not yet be equally developed. Boulanger (2022) documents a strikingly similar fragmentation in Alsace, so the pattern would not be unique to Ningxia. A visitor arriving with an expectation of a Bordeaux-style integrated food-and-wine experience, and instead encountering wine served alongside a fairly conventional meal with no explicit connection drawn between the two, may register that gap as an active disappointment rather than a neutral shrug, consistent with a negative rather than simply weak relationship between cultural-cognitive value and behavioural intention.

Read together with the preceding analysis, these two accounts are not mutually exclusive: a visit heavy on information and light on delivered connection could produce both a sense of fatigue and a sense of unmet promise at the same time, and this paper cannot adjudicate between them with the data at hand. As with the architecture and food examples in section 5.1, neither reading was tested directly (the survey did not measure attention, time allocation or pre-visit expectations) so both remain candidate explanations for the pattern reported in section 4 rather than confirmed mechanisms.

5.4 Why call it a paradox: a boundary condition for consumption values

Section 2.4 set out the reasoning in advance: cultural-cognitive value, like the other four dimensions, should in principle need to be processed through satisfaction before it shows up in behavioural intention, and what Table 3 shows is that this processing step appears to be missing specifically for this one dimension. That is the sense in which "paradox" is being used here, not merely an unexpected coefficient, which could describe almost any surprising result, and not a suppression effect in the formal statistical sense, which would require a specific third-variable mechanism this paper has not tested for. What is being described is narrower: a value dimension behaving against the logic that governs every other value dimension in the same model, despite no obvious a priori reason why it should. The three candidate explanations above (visual-versus-experiential culture, the gastronomic gap, and cognitive overload or unmet expectations) are offered as reasons this particular paradox might arise, not as proof that it must. Whether this is a general property of cultural value delivered in low-participation formats, or something more specific to regions still early in their tourism development, is not something one study, built around a single dataset and a single point of departure from an otherwise clean five-dimension model, can settle. It is, at minimum, a pattern (knowing that

does not yet translate into returning) worth testing in other emerging wine regions before it is treated as anything more general than that.

5.5 Why negative, and not simply absent?

One part of the result deserves separate attention rather than being folded into the paradox framing above. Cultural-cognitive value did not significantly predict customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.098$, $p=.141$), but its direct relationship with behavioural intention was negative and statistically significant ($\beta=-0.162$, $p=.030$). A null relationship would have been easier to interpret as a simple failure of cultural knowledge to translate into behavioural response. The negative coefficient asks a different question: why might stronger perceived cultural-cognitive value be associated with lower post-visit behavioural intention in this setting?

Measurement limitations offer one possible explanation, though they cannot be confirmed as the cause. The retained CCV items had statistically significant loadings, but the construct's reliability was modest (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.675$, $CR=0.661$, $AVE=0.400$), a pattern shared across the wider seven-construct model rather than unique to CCV. This leaves open the possibility of measurement-related noise, but it does not by itself explain why the relationship runs negative rather than simply weak or null.

A different possibility concerns how cultural interpretation is embedded in the visit itself. Time and attention on a winery visit are limited; an itinerary weighted toward historical exhibits and guided cultural narration leaves less room for the service interactions and relaxed, unstructured moments that section 4 shows are doing most of the work in building satisfaction. On this reading, the issue is not that visitors reject cultural content, but that cultural interpretation delivered mainly as information, with little room for personal or emotional engagement, may compete with the experiential elements satisfaction actually depends on. This is one possible crowding-out interpretation: cultural content adds knowledge while, under some forms of delivery, reducing the conditions through which that knowledge becomes personally meaningful.

This interpretation should stay tentative. The survey did not record how visitors split their time between cultural interpretation, service interaction and tasting, nor did it measure attention or emotional engagement directly, so the negative coefficient cannot be read as direct evidence of displacement. It does, however, point to a specific question for future research: whether the amount and form of cultural interpretation condition its relationship with satisfaction and intention.

A second possibility sits closer to Oliver's (1980) expectation-disconfirmation framework, already used in section 5.3. Cultural narratives may shape visitor expectations before or during the visit, particularly where a destination is marketed through distinctive cultural imagery, as Ningxia's is. Where the on-site experience does not match that build-up, the resulting evaluation may resolve as an active negative judgement rather than a neutral shrug, which would show up statistically as a negative coefficient rather than a null one. Pre-visit expectations and expectation-performance gaps were not measured here, so this remains a proposition for future testing rather than a demonstrated mechanism.

Neither explanation can be confirmed with the data collected here, and the two are not mutually exclusive. What the evidence does support is a narrower claim: a negative, significant path is a different kind of result from a null one, and cultural-cognitive value did not operate as a straightforwardly positive resource for post-visit behavioural intention in this setting. Whether that reflects how cultural content is delivered, the expectations attached to it, measurement limitations, or some mix of the three remains open, and is best treated as a specific question for future work (ideally research measuring cultural exposure, time allocation, emotional engagement and pre-visit expectations directly) rather than folded silently into the broader paradox narrative above.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Theoretical contribution

This study contributes to consumption-value research by identifying a possible boundary condition in the assumed positive or neutral effect of value dimensions. The four benchmark dimensions support the familiar pattern: value enhances satisfaction, which carries the effect toward behavioural intention. Cultural-cognitive value did not follow this route. The implication is not that cultural value is inherently ineffective, but that its behavioural relevance may depend on whether acquired cultural knowledge becomes personally meaningful. This shifts the theoretical question from whether cultural value exists to how cultural value is experienced. Conceptual Proposition 1 in section 2.4, and the knowledge-meaning-behaviour chain that links TCV, experiential-consumption research and TPB together in section 2.5, are the framework this study uses to make that shift explicit. Nothing here proves that the same pattern would show up in another emerging wine region, but the mechanism

proposed is not obviously specific to Ningxia, and testing it elsewhere seems a reasonable next step rather than a settled expectation.

6.2 Methodological contribution

Table 1 in section 3.2 is offered partly as a template for other researchers building context-specific cultural value scales rather than adapting an existing one wholesale: showing the full item-level psychometric picture, including what was dropped and why, is more useful to a reader trying to judge a new construct's credibility than reporting only the final, cleaned-up numbers. The methodological value of the study lies mainly in the transparent development and reporting of a context-specific CCV measure, alongside a two-step SEM and bootstrapped mediation approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) applied to isolate one dimension's different behaviour against four internal benchmarks.

6.3 Managerial implications

The clearest practical implication is to move cultural content from something observed to something done. Gastronomic storytelling through structured pairing (a vertical tasting of Cabernet Gernischt vintages matched deliberately against specific Tan sheep preparations) converts a cognitive fact ("this region has distinctive lamb") into a sensory experience the visitor actually has, rather than one they are merely told about. Replacing passive museum-style tours with participatory activities (trying a step of traditional stone-pressed fermentation, working with vine rattan in a small craft session) shifts culture from something watched to something practised, which should, if any of the explanations in section 5 is on the right track, help the experience register as satisfaction rather than as unprocessed information.

There is also a narrative-level implication that costs relatively little to act on: reframing the Gobi terroir's harshness away from a purely technical account of viticultural struggle and toward something closer to a story about resilience and identity, aligning cultural cognitive content more deliberately with the emotional register that already appears to be working well in this setting. Whether that kind of reframing is enough on its own, without the more resource-intensive participatory changes described above, is an open question this study cannot answer.

6.4 Limitations

The cultural cognitive value scale is new, developed specifically for this study, and has not yet been tested in another sample or region; its current item set leans toward knowledge acquisition rather than participatory engagement, which may itself be part of why it behaves as it does, a possibility this paper cannot rule out with the data at hand. The design is cross-sectional, so the mediation results describe a statistical pattern rather than a confirmed sequence over time, and the sample, drawn through non-probability methods from one region, may not represent the full range of Ningxia's wine tourists. It is also worth restating the point made at the top of section 5: the explanations offered there (the architecture, the food, the fatigue-versus-expectation account) are inferential readings of a single result, built after the fact, rather than mechanisms this study tested directly. The whole argument in this paper ultimately rests on one construct behaving differently across three related statistical tests within one dataset; that is a coherent pattern, not three independent pieces of evidence, and it should be weighed accordingly until it is checked against other regions or other samples.

6.5 Conclusion

Ningxia's wine tourism brand is, in large part, a cultural argument, desert, heritage, cuisine, a story of reclaiming wasteland into vineyards. This paper's evidence suggests that argument, as currently delivered, may not be reaching the visitor in quite the way the region's marketing assumes it is. The other four value dimensions tested here behave as expected; cultural-cognitive value is the one that shows a different pattern, and it shows up as a small but statistically significant negative association with post-visit behavioural intention. Whether this pattern is specific to Ningxia or may also occur in other emerging wine destinations remains an empirical question. This study cannot settle that question, but it can at least put it on the table (the cultural-cognitive paradox, and what it takes to get from knowing a place to actually returning to it) with data behind it.

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