

The value of landscape in rural tourism

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Despite the growing interests towards landscape in tourism research, analyses of its value are still in their infancies. Based on a revision of the literature and work-in-progress studies conducted by the authors, the present work discusses the significance of landscape in tourism.

Past research studies showed that among US travellers, Italy was rated significantly higher than other countries on its appealing in terms of local cuisine, beautiful scenery and natural attractions (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Similarly, Brown and Getz (2005) when studying wine destinations found that Italy and France are perceived as wine destinations “*because both possess an abundance of cultural, landscape, and wine-related attractiveness*” (p. 273). Additionally, other studies have demonstrated that tourists are attracted to mountain landscapes because of their aesthetic aspects (Munic, 1997 and Price et al., 1999 cited in Beza, 2010). In fact, many tourists seek rural destinations which offer experiences related to the landscape, environment, cultural patterns, historical features, and wine and food products (Bessiere, 1998; Gao et al., 2014; Renkoa et al., 2010). Indeed, when marketing of rural destinations, landscape is often included in a composite product characterized by: food, wine, landscape and culture.

Analysing landscape results rather challenging as the perception of landscape is subjective and derives from a personal interpretation of it (Beza, 2010). It can be considered as “the final product, in visual and aesthetic terms, of a series of interacting factors including climate, relief, water, soil, natural flora and fauna, and human actions” (Sayadi et al., 2009, p. 335).

Work-in-progress research has given the first results on the value of landscape. Within a motivation-satisfaction-loyalty model in wine tourism, a positive experience with landscape affects satisfaction, which in turns affects loyalty. Within a demand and supply conceptual framework, landscape affects the choice of a farm tourism service over another, and the positive perception of landscape surrounding a farm tourism service affects tourists' expenditure behaviour.

The present work-in-progress study combines the results of 3 studies on 2 different datasets to analyse and discuss the value of landscape in rural destinations.