

WINE TOURISM EXPERIENCES – THE KEY ENABLERS FOR ATTRACTING VISITORS IN RURAL AREAS AS A STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM IN ROMANIA

Andra - Elena GURGU, Gina FÎNTÎNERU

University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, 59 Marasti Blvd,
District 1, Bucharest, Romania, E-mails: gurguandra@gmail.com,
fintineru.gina@managusamv.ro

Corresponding author: gurguandra@gmail.com

Abstract

The current research sets out to examine what type of experiences are attracting tourists to the wineries. Wine tourism is a part of agritourism and it represents an opportunity to attract tourists in rural regions where the wineries are usually concentrated. In general, tourism experiences that are found at a winery are related to experiencing the wine, expanding wine knowledge, or leisure and entertainment activities. In the last years, the wine makers from Romania, besides grape growing and wine production, they have been involved in expanding their business and investing in tasting rooms, restaurants, accommodation and leisure activities - all these facilities to serve as attraction for the tourists. Firstly, for the wine tourism services to be developed, it should be defined which are tourists' expectations in terms of wine tourism experiences, while secondly the focus should be on the effort needed from the wineries, meaning investment costs, extra staff and trainings, infrastructure, engagement in marketing activities etc. Considering the increasing interest for this type of tourism, the research is based on a self-administrated survey that refers to the motivations of tourists, the key factors that influence the decision to visit a wine region and the main activities and services from the wineries that engage visitors. Based on the received responses, the data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression in order to show the influence between the wine tourism experiences and tourists' expectations. Wine tourism experiences in the rural areas contribute to the development of agritourism and the economy of the region.

Key words: wine experiences, sustainable agritourism development, winescape, wine tourists, experience tourism

INTRODUCTION

Experience tourism is the new niche type of tourism that might represent an opportunity for hospitality and tourism companies to expand [3]. When it comes to wine tourism the memories of the experiences lived during the visit at the winery are one of the most important influence factors for tourists. Thus, [19] stated that winery experience is fundamental for engaging tourists and for the development of wine tourism. The synergy between wine and tourism is seen as beneficial for both parties, and in order to achieve strong results behind this, it is needed for a creative environment to develop activities that make people want to travel to the wine regions for such experiences.

On the other side, based on the definition from [8], wine tourism is considered to be a visitation to the vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine exhibitions, where wine

tasting and experiencing the characteristics of the vine are the main reasons for visit. This definition is reinforcing the importance of experience for wine tourism, where wine tasting represents the starting point of a winery visit.

Wine tourism is considered being part of the rural tourism or agritourism, where the main reason is that geographically wineries are located in agricultural areas. Moreover, the wine tourism experiences combined with the rurality of the landscape is generally recognized by authors [14] as being attractive for visitors.

[23] categorize wine tourism experiences as follows: educational experience in wine tourism, entertainment experience in wine tourism, esthetic experience in wine tourism and escapist experience in wine tourism. Educational and escapist experiences are requiring active participation from tourists' side. The main activities for an educational

experience are wine tasting and seminars for wine knowledge expansion, as well as various type of classes where wine is associated with gastronomy or art. At the same time, escapist experiences are referring to non-usual type of activities at the winery such as vineyard tour by horse, vineyard hiking and cycling, grape harvesting or hot air ballooning over vineyards.

The passive participation is characteristic for entertainment and esthetic experiences where main activities consist of wine museums, wine blending demonstration, enjoying the “winescape”, visits to typical restaurants, bars and cafes, or other type of events with wine theme [23].

Other researchers identified the main wine tourism experiences that visitors can get during their winery visit. Thus, [24] sustain that interaction with wine cellar staff, entertainment activities, wine educational exposure are part of the experiences related to wine. Furthermore, wine routes represent another key factor for wine tourism, that encourage business growing of wine producers and contributes to the recognition among tourist of wine region where it comes from. Hence, agritourism includes, as well, wine related experiences as cultural and nature-based activities converging in an authentic rural wine tourism participation of visitors [24].

In the perspective of consumer behaviour, the experience generated by a travel activity determines tourists to be more engaged to a specific type of tourism, and to also recommend it further to their acquaintances; this engenders word of mouth marketing. The experience of visitors needs to generate value for them [7], so that they remain with a positive memory that can influence future decisions when making travel plans related to wine tourism, mainly because tourism experience is highly subjective [24] [18]. Moreover, [25] affirms that wine tourism experience consists in more than wine tasting and visit of the wine cellar or the territory where the wine is produced. Thus, wine tourism and diversity of wine experiences requires more involvement of the wine producers in order to expand their services at

the cellar, that includes and links economic, cultural or social dimensions.

Motivations and behavioural intentions of wine tourists are important to be outlined, for wine producers to understand which are visitors’ expectations when it comes to the services and activities at the winery. Additionally, in order to create a competitive advantage for their wine cellar and to attract tourists, wine makers have to engender unique experiences that determine people to choose their venue against other places from the same wine region [5].

On the other hand, for the supply side of the wine tourism, that consists of wineries and wine producers, to reach customer satisfaction and engagement, they recognize the need of having a general picture of the wine tourist [17]. Customer engagement has shown grater financial performance [5], consequently the interest for designing innovative experiences represents a focal point for wine makers, as well as to understand customers perspective when it comes to wine tourism. In relation with the supply side of wine tourism, it is not generally available that all wineries to be interested in practicing wine tourism, and to benefit from the advantages that were showed to the wine industry over time [12].

[6] examine the reasons why wine producers are reluctant to wine tourism, where some of the motivations are lack of experience in tourism activities and trained employees, as well as increased costs for this type of activities. The main interest for wine producers is grape growing and wine making, while wine tourism would require additional efforts from their side and to be involved in development of touristic services. Wine tourism will serve as an extension of their primary business, even though the advantages are generally accepted such as direct selling, workplaces creation, promotion of the region [21] or gaining consumers loyalty [5].

Wine related attractions that can be performed during a winery visit include various experiences [14], that will further influence tourists’ perception of wine tourism.

Thus, the current study stands to examine the types of wine tourism experiences that might influence tourists’ decision to visit a wine

region, what they are looking for when practicing wine tourism in Romania and their engagement in this type of tourism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper sample consists of 112 people who identified as wine tourists. The questionnaire was filled online at the respondent's convenience, where it was distributed on social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook) in targeted groups identified with wine consumers, wine professionals or travellers that enable to target people with interest in wine tourism. This method was chosen due to ease of access to the sample and low cost.

Previously, before sharing the questionnaire online, a pilot study was conducted (N=8) in order to establish the logic and clarity of the questions. The questionnaire consists of four sections, firstly the respondents were asked for consent to participate to the study, while the rest of the sections include interest in wine tourism, types of wine tourism experiences and socio-demographic characteristics. The time period for collecting the data was between February – March 2024.

In this study, the quantitative methodology was mainly used based on the survey responses received, while a short qualitative analysis of the wine producer's perspective of wine tourism is included at the end of the research.

The collected data was analysed using Descriptive Statistics from Microsoft Office package and frequency tests, correlation and regression from SPSS statistical package.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Wine tourism in Romania has started to develop in the last couple of years. In regard to the offer side, Romania has a significant number of wine makers and wineries that are spread in seven wine regions classified as DOC (Designation of Origin) and IG (regions with geographical indication) areas by [16]. as shown in Table 1.

Romanian wine production ranks as 12th worldwide as per [13], while in terms of

vineyards surface it is placed as 11th[13] from total reported countries.

Table 1. Romania's wine regions

Romania's wine regions
Wine region of Banat Hills
Wine region of Crişanei and Maramureş Hills
Wine region of Moldavian Hills
Wine region of Muntenia and Oltenia Hills
Wine region of Transylvania Highlands
Wine region of Dobrogea Hills
Wine region of Danube Terraces and other lands

Source: [16].

The current stage of development of wine tourism in Romania shows that most of the wineries have a tasting room where they can receive tourists, and that they practice wine cellar and vineyards tours [26]. Moreover, there are wineries that besides the basic services, they have a restaurant on the property, accommodation and spa facilities [15], or they are able to provide other leisure activities for their visitors, such as sports (fishing, tennis, hiking, off road etc.), vineyards walks and picnics or visits to thematic museums in the wine region etc. [22].

In the first stage of analysis all respondents (N=112) have consented to participate to the research, and the tiebreaker question was if they usually consume wine, while only 3 people have responded negatively. However, they were not excluded from the research as [10] identifies the types of wine tourists (wine lovers, wine interested and the curious tourist), where the author describes the curious tourist as a person that is not wine oriented, but they are visiting wine regions to find out what wine tourism means. Furthermore, [4] in their wine tourist types classification identify visitors as wine lovers, wine connoisseurs, wine interested, wine novices and the hanger-on, where the last typology is a segment of people that are visiting a wine region as part of a group, and at the moment of visit they are not interested in wine.

In addition, the research considers both categories of people, the ones that already visited wine regions (83%) and the ones who did not (17%) for an overall perspective of understanding which are the experiences that

would influence travellers to decide to try wine tourism.

Romania has several vineyards that are split across the country, therefore in general it is easy to reach a wine region.

In regard to the frequency of visits to wine regions and wineries, most of the respondents said that they are visiting once a year (32.1%) or once every few years (31.3%) (Figure 1).

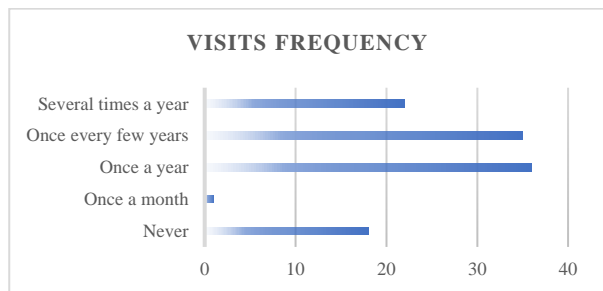


Fig. 1. Frequency of visits to wine regions
Source: Result of survey, 2024.

The category of people that visit wine regions and wine cellars more often are usually wine professionals that are working in the industry - several times a year – 19.6% and once a month - 0.9%, while 16.1% have never visited a wine region until now.

Resulting from the research, the most visited wine region is Muntenia and Oltenia Hills with a majority of 56.3% from the total, while the second visited wine region is Moldova Hills – 36.6%.

Muntenia and Oltenia Hills are located in the south of Romania, and the location is close to the capital of Romania, Bucharest, this could be considered as a strength of the location because the areas are easy to be reached.

On the other side, Moldova Hills is the region with the most wineries with a vast history in wine making, thus it is considered a region with high potential for visits.

Dobrogea Hills (26.8%) and Danube Terraces (13.4%) are also located as well in a strategic area of Romania, being easy to reach when people are transiting the area mostly in the summer in their way to the Black Sea.

The central and west located wine regions sums up less visits compared with the other wine regions, where Banat Hills has the lowest rate, 8.9% in this current study (Fig. 2).

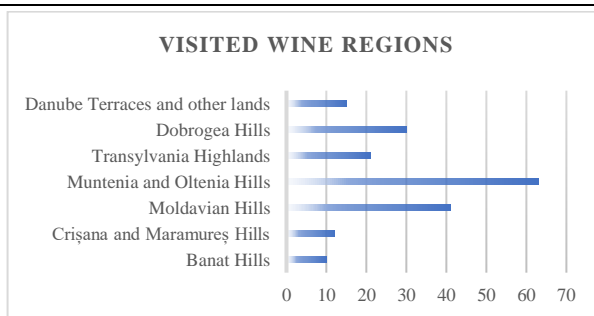


Fig. 2. Visited wine regions from Romania
Source: Result of survey, 2024.

Provided that the respondents were asked about which are the main resources used for planning a wine tourism trip, a frequency test was performed.

Frequency test was used to provide an overview of the distribution of values within a variable, and to understand the tendency of the received responses.

However, social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook are generally used to find out information about wine tourism. In total 85 respondents choose social media as primary resource, where 25.9% are using only social media, while 14.3% also check out reservation platforms or wineries official websites.

The people who look for information from multiple sources are 12.5% or less as it can be noticed in the below Table 2, alternatively only 1.8% are planning their trip to wine region based on recommendations, and 0.9% are using other sources.

It is generally available that nowadays, the majority of people are looking for information about everything on internet, thus considering that wine tourism is relatively a new product for the Romanian market the details advertised on various websites should be enough for people in order to be able to plan a trip to wine regions.

Moreover, the main channel for advertising is social media, because it is the easiest way to reach the consumers, where this type of marketing is also preferred by wine and tourism industries.

The main reasons for visiting a wine region and the wine cellars are mainly to taste wine 74.1%, mentioned by 83 people, as well as to enjoy the vineyards landscapes (67% of the respondents), to learn about wine (52.7% of

the respondents) or to buy wine (43.8% of the studies of [20] or [2].
respondents), these results are similar with the

Table 2. Frequency test – Resources used for planning a wine tourism trip

Resources for planning a wine tourism trip		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Other	1	.9	.9	.9
	Recommendations	2	1.8	1.8	2.7
	Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.)	9	8.0	8.0	10.7
	Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Travel agencies	1	.9	.9	11.6
	Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Wine related websites (winetourism.com, winetoursromania.com, viator.com etc.)	1	.9	.9	12.5
	Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Winery website	3	2.7	2.7	15.2
	Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Winery website; Wine related websites (winetourism.com, winetoursromania.com, viator.com etc.)	1	.9	.9	16.1
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.)	29	25.9	25.9	42.0
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.)	7	6.3	6.3	48.2
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Wine related websites (winetourism.com, winetoursromania.com, viator.com etc.)	3	2.7	2.7	50.9
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Winery website	16	14.3	14.3	65.2
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Winery website; Travel agencies	1	.9	.9	66.1
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Winery website; Wine related websites (winetourism.com, winetoursromania.com, viator.com etc.)	14	12.5	12.5	78.6
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Reservation platforms (Booking, Airbnb etc.); Winery website; Wine related websites (winetourism.com, winetoursromania.com, viator.com etc.); Travel agencies	3	2.7	2.7	81.3
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Travel agencies	1	.9	.9	82.1
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Winery website	9	8.0	8.0	90.2
	Social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok etc.); Winery website; Wine related websites (winetourism.com, winetoursromania.com, viator.com etc.)	2	1.8	1.8	92.0
	Wine related websites (winetourism.com, winetoursromania.com, viator.com etc.)	2	1.8	1.8	93.8
	Winery website	7	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

The question regarding the reasons for visiting, the respondents had the option to choose multiple answers, therefore they mentioned that they wanted to see where the wine is produced and to understand the wine making process (34.8%), while 37 respondents stated that they wanted to try a new type of tourism for them - wine tourism mainly chosen by the people who have not visited yet a wine region. In regard to what, [4] mentioned in their wine tourism classification, 29.5% might be considered hanger-on because they are visiting wineries as part of a group. However, the lowest statements were for answers like to meet the

wine producers (16.1% of the respondents) or out of curiosity (based on recommendations) for 9.8% from the total answers.

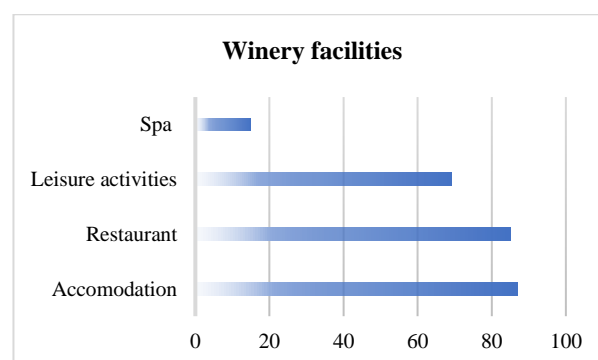


Fig. 3. Winery facilities
Source: Result of survey, 2024.

In the above Figure 3, it can be seen which are the facilities that respondents are looking for when travelling to a wine region. Soare et. al. (2010) points out in their study that wineries started to invest in tasting rooms, but even more in accommodation facilities or restaurants [22]. Consequently, nowadays there are many wineries that offer various services at their property and are very well developed. Hence, tourists' preferences showed that most of them want to have accommodation (77.7%) and restaurant (75.9%), as well as other leisure activities (61.6%), if we consider all these facilities, it can be said that the winery offer meets all the needs of visitors, and that tourists can have a full experience at the winery.



Fig. 4 Determining aspects for wine tourism trip planning

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

In the following section, the study was focused on determining which are the main aspects that travellers are taking into consideration for a wine tourism trip planning, which are the type of experiences that attract them in a wine region and which are the activities that they really intent to do during their visit. Thus, Fig. 4 shows that most of the respondents are considering the rural landscapes (81.3% - 91 people) of vineyards and the facilities from the area (68.8% - 77 people), the results reinforcing the idea that people are looking for full experiences when travelling to a wine region. The rest of the

aspects mentioned are related to subjective motivations depending on each person preferences, ensuing notoriety of the winery or infrastructure and accessibility, considering that in general wineries are located in rural areas where the roads are not in a very good condition; these aspects are found in other scholar's research regarding tourist motivations [2]. In regard to the activities that tourists prefer, the respondents mentioned mostly to taste wine (47.3%), recreational activities (33%) and cultural activities (19.6%) that are specific to the area, these being identified as pull motives by [5]. On the other side, only 33.9% from the respondents will plan such a trip as part of the new experience that they want to try.

The experiences that attract tourists can be seen in Fig. 5, in the questionnaire respondents had to choose from an open list with wine tourism experiences that are usually available for this type of activity. In general, even small wineries have the proper facilities to organise wine tastings or winery tours, these being the most representative activities for wine tourism [10].

In this research 90 people mention that they want to do a wine tasting during their visit together with other activities, out of which 7 people are only going for wine tasting.

82 respondents said that they wanted to do a winery visit, while vineyard walks were mentioned by 58 people.

For the not usual activities that can be done at the winery identified as escapist experiences by [23], 37.5% are attracted to come for biking through vineyards or horseback riding through the vineyard – 33.9%, while 25% from the respondents would try the experience of hot air balloon rides over the vineyards. The experiences that involve food are vineyard picnics and wine pairing, that were chosen by 51 people meaning 45.5% out of total responses received.

Furthermore, experiences that engage with learning about wine were wine blending demonstrations, wine making demonstrations and museums visits were summaries less than 24% for each activity.



Fig. 5. Wine tourism experiences that attract visitors
Source: Result of survey, 2024.

Additionally, to better understand tourist preferences regarding wine tourism experiences, the respondents were asked which are the activities that they really intend to do during their visits in a wine region. Therefore, a frequency test was performed for the purpose of data exploration based on the received responses. In the below table 3, data distribution shows that 14 people (12.5%) are aiming for a more complex experience combining many activities such as representative activities (wine tasting, winery visit, vineyard walks), together with leisure activities and activities where wine and gastronomy are combined (wine pairing). Few of the respondents stick with the main wine tourism activities, only one or more (e.g. wine tasting, winery visit and vineyard walks), identified also by other authors like [1]. Entertainment experiences are distributed across the received answers, where we include mainly leisure activities (fishing, biking, hiking etc.) mentioned by 51 people and cultural activities as per 35 people. On the other side, the activities classified as educational experiences by [23] had an

extensive distribution in the frequency test as this activity has been mentioned by 71 people from the total respondents.

In addition, the participants of the study were asked to choose one of the wine tourism experiences identified by [23], in order to understand what travellers' direction are in regard to this. Entertainment experience was chosen by 51.8% from total respondents, showing that vineyards walks, biking through vineyards or participation to wine blending demonstration are attractive to them. Escapist experiences have been chosen by 21.4% of the participants displaying the intentions for not usual activities, like hot air balloon ride over the vineyard or horseback riding through vineyards. Educational experience sums 15.2% from the responses, while esthetic experiences only 11.6%.

In order to deepen the understanding of the wine tourism experiences that attract visitors in rural areas, linear scale questions were asked so that the respondents note from 1(Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree) some statements related to wine tourism development and agritourism.

For this analysis were used regression and correlation tools, in order to identify the relationship between the variables and the strength between them.

Firstly, a correlation test has been performed in order to determine the relationship between wine tourism offer perspectives and the available activities at the winery. As Table 4 shows the mean is around 3 meaning that the respondents are not really aware of how varied the wine tourism offer is in Romania, but they tend to know more which are the available activities that they can do at the winery.

Standard deviation below 1 shows that indeed, the general opinion of the respondents is mostly neutral.

Table 3. Frequency test – Planned activities for a wine tourism trip

Planned activities					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	.9
	Vineyard walks	2	1.8	1.8	2.7

Vineyard walks;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	4	3.6	3.6	6.3
Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities	1	.9	.9	7.1
Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	1	.9	.9	8.0
Wine pairing activities	2	1.8	1.8	9.8
Wine tasting	3	2.7	2.7	12.5
Wine tasting;Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	2	1.8	1.8	14.3
Wine tasting;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	1	.9	.9	15.2
Wine tasting;Vineyard walks	2	1.8	1.8	17.0
Wine tasting;Vineyard walks;Cultural activities;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	17.9
Wine tasting;Vineyard walks;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	1	.9	.9	18.8
Wine tasting;Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities	5	4.5	4.5	23.2
Wine tasting;Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	24.1
Wine tasting;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	1	.9	.9	25.0
Wine tasting;Winery visit	4	3.6	3.6	28.6
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Cultural activities;Wine pairing activities	2	1.8	1.8	30.4
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Cultural activities;Wine pairing activities;Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	31.3
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	32.1
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks	9	8.0	8.0	40.2
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Cultural activities	1	.9	.9	41.1
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Cultural activities;Wine pairing activities	5	4.5	4.5	45.5
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Cultural activities;Wine pairing activities;Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	46.4
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Cultural activities;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	6	5.4	5.4	51.8
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Cultural activities;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	14	12.5	12.5	64.3
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	65.2
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	2	1.8	1.8	67.0
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	67.9
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities	9	8.0	8.0	75.9
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities;Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	76.8
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	3	2.7	2.7	79.5
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	5	4.5	4.5	83.9
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Wine pairing activities	6	5.4	5.4	89.3
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Wine pairing activities;Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	90.2
Wine tasting;Winery visit;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	2	1.8	1.8	92.0
Winery visit;Cultural activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	2	1.8	1.8	93.8
Winery visit;Cultural activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	94.6
Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Cultural activities	1	.9	.9	95.5
Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	1	.9	.9	96.4
Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.);Events (festivals, workshops etc.)	1	.9	.9	97.3
Winery visit;Vineyard walks;Wine pairing activities;Leisure activities (e.g. biking, fishing, hiking etc.)	2	1.8	1.8	99.1
Winery visit;Wine pairing activities	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for wineries offer and available activities

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
Romanian wineries have a varied offer for wine tourism	3.02	.949	112
When I plan a wine tourism trip, I know what activities are available	3.27	.995	112

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

The results displayed for the correlation of wine tourism offer and available activities show a moderate to high relationship between the variables, meaning that the visitors have an idea of which are the available activities at the winery, however they are not confident to consider that the offer for wine tourism services is varied enough.

Table 5. Correlation between wineries offer and available activities

Correlations			
		Romanian wineries have a varied offer for wine tourism	When I plan a wine tourism trip, I know what activities are available
Romanian wineries have a varied offer for wine tourism	Pears on Correlation	1	.729
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	112	112
When I plan a wine tourism trip, I know what activities are available	Pears on Correlation	.729	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	112

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

For a better understanding of the relationship of wineries offer and available activities, the linear regression test was performed where “available activities” was considered the independent variable as this is general information that tourists can find without visiting a winery, while “wineries offer” was considered dependent variable as this is subjective based on visitor’s perception, and the opinion can be formed only after the

visitation of the winery. Hence, the value of Adjusted R Square = 0.528 shows that available activities are determined in about 52.8% cases by the variety of wineries offer, concluding that the influence between the variables is moderate to strong.

Table 6. Regression between wineries offer and available activities

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.729	.532	.528	.652

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

Additionally, in order to see the relationship between wineries infrastructure and wine tourism impact for agritourism and if this is a good practice to attract people in rural areas by different means, a correlation test was performed. Thus, considering that means for “Wine tourism has a positive impact for agritourism” and “Wine tourism is a good practice to attract people in rural areas” are close to 4 (Agree), this result that people consider wine tourism as being favourable for agritourism development, and that wine tourism is indeed a good opportunity to bring visitors to rural areas where wineries are located.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of wineries infrastructure and wine tourism impact for agritourism

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Romanian wineries have proper infrastructure for wine tourism activities	3.14	.919	112
Wine tourism has a positive impact for agritourism	3.96	.914	112
Wine tourism is a good practice to attract people in rural areas	3.93	.956	112

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

Evidence from above Table 7 illustrates that there is a positive relationship between all the variables, overall, the correlation shows a moderate (0.522) to high (0.666) relation. To summarize if wineries infrastructure would be more developed in the future, the impact of

wine tourism for agritourism will increase and will result in more people visiting rural areas.

Table 8. Correlation between wineries infrastructure and wine tourism impact for agritourism

Correlations				
		Romanian wineries have proper infrastructure for wine tourism activities	Wine tourism has a positive impact for agritourism	Wine tourism is a good practice to attract people in rural areas
Romanian wineries have proper infrastructure for wine tourism activities	Person Correlation	1	.522	.391
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	112	112	112
Wine tourism has a positive impact for agritourism	Person Correlation	.522	1	.666
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	112	112	112
Wine tourism is a good practice to attract people in rural areas	Person Correlation	.391	.666	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	112	112	112

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

In the last phase of the survey, the demographic profile of the respondents was designed, where the profile is similar to participants of other studies related to wine tourism experiences such [2] or [18] in regard to age, gender, residence, education and occupation, while monthly income is adapted to each country economic specific.

However, in reference to the supply side of wine tourism the study conducted by Gurgu and Fîntîneru (2023 and 2024) [8, 9] was used, where wine producers were interviewed to explore their perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of wine tourism

activities for their businesses. The sample consisted of only 19 Romanian wineries from total of 63 wineries that were invited to participate. Firstly, the wine producers stated that wine tourism contributes to their brand image and it is favourable for advertising, it helps to increase wine sales and that engage customers loyalty for their wines. Secondly, another benefit would be that during their visit to wineries, the consumers have the chance to learn about wine and to expand their knowledge.

Table 9. Demographic profile of respondents

	% tourists
Age	
18 - 25 years old	17.00%
26 - 35 years old	34.80%
36 - 50 years old	33.00%
51 - 65 years old	13.40%
above 65 years old	1.80%
Gender	
Female	67.90%
Male	32.10%
Residence	
Urban	83.00%
Rural	17.00%
Education	
Middle school	1.80%
High school	15.20%
University degree	83.00%
Occupation	
Employed	67%
Freelance	2.70%
Unemployed	0%
Student	15.20%
Retired	1.80%
Monthly income	
<1,900 lei	9.80%
1,901 - 2,500 lei	3.60%
2,501 - 5,000 lei	25.90%
5,001 - 7,500 lei	18.70%
7,501 - 10,000 lei	24.10%
>10,000 lei	17.90%

Source: Result of survey, 2024.

On the other side, wine makers point out the main challenges that they have when practicing wine tourism, for instance that wine tourism requires high investments and increases the cost of winery maintenance, and that they do not have proper governmental support in order to expand their business to such type of activity. Moreover, wine industry declares that there is not enough trained labour for wine tourism, and that currently the demand is quite low. Therefore, it can be concluded that wineries are still looking for

the value that wine tourism could bring for their wine business.

CONCLUSIONS

The current research highlights wine tourism experiences, showing the current stage of wine tourist preferences and which are the main experiences that engage travellers to visit a wine region.

Wine tourism experiences are happening in rural areas due to the location of the wineries, thus agritourism embraces wine tourism as being a significative part of it. As illustrated in the study there is a positive relationship between wineries infrastructure for wine tourism and agritourism development; if wineries expand more their business to wine tourism, rural tourism will benefit from it as more people will come to visit the areas. Hence, the economy of the region will also increase based on the new created working places, opportunity for expansion of the other touristic attractions from the area etc.

The study showed which are the main experiences that might be considered as motivation drivers when tourists plan their wine tourism trip. As classified by [23] there are four types of wine tourism experiences: educational, entertainment, esthetic and escapist. Based on the received responses, overall, the travellers tend for an entertainment experience grounded on complex leisure activities such as wine tastings, vineyard walks and picnics, biking through vineyards, wineries tours etc. From this, it can be concluded that wine producers should focus on expanding and on adding more activities that can be done at the winery with the purpose of attracting visitors.

In the same way, other determining factors for tourists are winery facilities or proper infrastructure of the wine region. On this has been established that visitors are looking for accommodation, restaurants and a strong offer of leisure activities that they can do during their visits. Moreover, other services like spas would be considered as an asset for the property.

Furthermore, the sources used when planning a wine tourism trip highlight the power of

social media nowadays, as 75.9% from total respondents are looking for information there. Even more, social media can really influence the decisions for visiting a location instead of another place, as people are reviewing their experiences on the internet more and more. The presence of the accommodation facility of the winery on booking platforms such as Booking.com or Airbnb brings confidence to the tourists when choosing to come to visit, while it is equally important that the official website to provide clear and concise information about everything that a prospect visitor might want to know previous to the trip, for instance property facilities, available activities and services, how they can make a reservation, costs etc.

Following this research, it can be concluded that between wine tourism and agritourism exists a strong relationship. Considering the interdependence between the two, the development of both types of tourism can happen at the same time, while wine tourism experiences might be the driver that bring people to visit the rural areas, agritourism might use this as a strategy to engage the visitors and to sustain the expansion of the overall tourism of the area.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alant, K., Bruwer, J., 2004, Wine Tourism Behaviour in the Context of a Motivational Framework for Wine Regions and Cellar Doors. *Journal of Wine Research*, Vol. 15(1), 27 - 37.
- [2] Byrd, E.T., Canziani, B., Hsieh, Y. J., Debbage, K., Sonmez, S., 2016, Wine tourism: Motivating visitors through core and supplementary services. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 52C, 19-29.
- [3] Capitello, R., Agnoli, L., Begalli, D., 2013, A new approach to the analysis of visitor perceptions towards a tourism destination: the role of food and wine experiences. *scientific Papers. Series "Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and rural development"*, Vol. 13(1), 57-64.
- [4] Charters, S., Ali-Knight, J., 2002, Who is the wine tourist? *Tourism Management*. Pp. 311-319. https://www.academia.edu/20222936/Charters_S_and_AliKnight_J_2002_Who_is_the_Wine_Tourist_Tourism_Management_23_3_, Accessed on March 23, 2024.
- [5] Gaetjens, A., Corsi, A.M., Plewa, C., 2023, Customers engagement in domestic wine tourism: The role of motivations. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, vol. 27.P 100761 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2022.100761>

- [6]Getz, D., Brown, G., 2006, Critical success factors for wine tourism regions: A demand analysis. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 27(1), 146-158.
- [7]Gómez-Carmona, D., Paramio, A., Cruces-Montes, S., Marín-Dueñas, P.P., Montero, A.A., Romero-Moreno, A., 2023, The effect of the wine tourism experience. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, Vol. 29. <https://rodin.uca.es/handle/10498/28968>, Accessed on January 4, 2025.
- [8]Gurgu, A. E., Fintineru, G., 2023, The potential of Romanian wineries in wine tourism development. *Scientific Papers. Series "Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and rural development"*, Vol. 23(2), 281-290.
- [9]Gurgu, A.E., Fintineru, G., 2024, Insights of Romanian wine producers' business and their involvement in wine tourism . *Scientific Papers. Series "Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and rural development"*, Vol. 24(2), 503-512.
- [10]Hall, M., 1996, *Wine Tourism in New Zealand*. Publisher details unavailable. https://www.academia.edu/163165/Wine_tourism_in_New_Zealand, Accessed on March 23 2024.
- [11]Hall, M. C., Sharples, L., Cambourne, B., Macionis, N. (Hg.), 2002, *Wine tourism around the world. Development, management and markets*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- [12]Howley, M., van Westering, J., 2008, Developing wine tourism: A case study of the attitude of English wine producers to wine tourism. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 14(1), pp. 87-95.
- [13]International Organization of Vine and Wine, OIV 2023 Report, www.oiv.int, Accessed on March 23 2024.
- [14]Mitchell, R., Charters, S., Albrecht, N.J., 2012, Cultural Systems and Wine Tourism Product. *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 39(1), 311-335.
- [15]Official websites of Romanian wineries, (n.d.). Accessed on March 23, 2024.
- [16]ONIV - National Vitivinicol Interprofessional Organization, www.oniv.ro, Accessed on March 23, 2024.
- [17]Priilaid, D., Ballantyne, R. and Packer, J., 2020, A "blue ocean" strategy for developing visitor wine experiences: Unlocking value in the Cape region tourism market. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, vol. 43, 91-99.
- [18]Rachao, S.A.S, Breda, Z.J, Fernandes, C.O., Joukes, V.N.P.M, 2021, Drivers of experience co-creation in food-and-wine tourism: An exploratory quantitative analysis. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, vol. 37: 100783.
- [19]Santos, E., Barattucci, M., Tavares, F.O., Tavares, V.C., 2023, The Senses as Experiences in Wine Tourism—A Comparative Statistical Analysis between Abruzzo and Douro. *Heritage* 2023, 6, 5672–5688. <https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage6080298>
- [20]Sekulic, D., Mandaric, M., Milovanovic, V., 2016, Motivations of travellers for participation in wine tourism in Serbia. *Economics of Agriculture*, (63) 4 1237-1252.
- [21]Sevil, G., Yuncu, R.H., 2009, Wine producers' perceptions of wine tourism. *Tourism Review*, vol. 57(4), 477-487.
- [22]Soare, I., Man, O., Costache, S., Nedelcu, A., 2010, Viticultural Potential and Vine Tourism in Romania. *Journal of tourism*, vol. 10, 68-74.
- [23]Thanh, T.V., Kirova, V., 2018, Wine tourism experience: A netnography study, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 83, 30-37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.10.008>.
- [24]Teng, Y.-M., Wu, K.-S., Wang, W-C., 2022, Exploring rural winery loyalty: The effect of visitors' experience in Taiwan rural winery tourism. *Journal of Rural Studies* 96, pp. 32-41.
- [25]Vecchio, R., Annunziata, A. and Bouzdine-Chameeva, T., 2024, How to promote sustainable wine tourism: Insights from Italian and French young adults. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, vol. 5(2), 120-137.
- [26]Wine Tourism, www.wineturism.com, Accessed on March 24, 2024.