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InterWine

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

Wine and Heritage: Tourism Between Tradition and Innovation

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor

Brežice, September 23rd – 25th, 2026

TEDU26

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The book of abstracts includes all abstracts accepted for the conference. However, the final conference programme was changed due to unforeseen cancellations of participation by individual authors.

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Preface

The contributions to the TEDU26 conference, Wine and Heritage: Tourism Between Tradition and Innovation, explore the many ways in which wine tourism connects with cultural heritage, digital transformation, destination management, and visitor experiences. Wine is more than a beverage: it carries stories and cultural meanings, shapes landscapes and local identities, and creates opportunities for tourism development. The contributions reflect this richness, bringing together research and practical experiences from different geographical and cultural contexts, while also raising questions for further discussion.

These questions have been central to the InterWine project, of which this conference is a part. Through our work with winemakers, heritage professionals, tourism organisations, and local communities in Brežice, Velika Gorica, and Pušća, we have seen both the opportunities and the practical challenges involved in connecting wine and cultural heritage in tourism. Conversations with local partners have helped us better understand their needs, experiences, and expectations. They have also reminded us that wine tourism is most meaningful when it reflects the place and the people who live and work there.

This conference offers an opportunity to build on these experiences, bring them into dialogue with research from other settings, and encourage further cooperation between researchers and practitioners.

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Asst. Prof. Anja Mlakar, PhD
Chair of the conference program committee

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CONFERENCE AIM AND SCOPE

International Scientific and Professional Conference: Wine and Heritage: Tourism Between Tradition and Innovation

September 23–25, 2026, Brežice, Slovenia

Organised by the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor, in partnership with regional and international stakeholders.

Is wine just a beverage? Not at all. It is a cultural expression, a marker of identity, a carrier of memory, and a source of innovation. TEDU26 examines how wine and heritage meet in tourism and cultural development, with particular attention to the links between tangible and intangible heritage, local practices, contemporary visitor expectations, and digital futures.

The conference responds to changes affecting tourism and heritage, including climate change, digitalisation, changing consumer behaviour, and evolving understandings of authenticity. It asks how wine can be interpreted as living heritage, how digital tools reshape storytelling and experience design, and how wine-growing communities can preserve and creatively reinterpret their cultural traditions.

The event brings together researchers, heritage professionals, tourism experts, and practitioners to discuss theoretical perspectives and practical examples that connect cultural memory, sustainability, destination development, and innovation.

Conference topics include:

Wine, Identity and Destination Narratives

- Wine and place identity; innovative wine tourism and destination management.
- Wine, gastronomy and local traditions in tourism experiences; cooperation and governance in wine destinations.
- Regional case studies and heritage-based destination storytelling.

Heritage, Memory and the Culture of Wine

- Wine as intangible and living heritage, including historical, archaeological and religious dimensions.
- Heritage landscapes, community identity and collective memory.
- Interpretation, storytelling and creative reinterpretation of wine heritage, including music and wine.

Digital Futures and Innovation in Wine and Heritage Tourism

- AR/VR and immersive media, smart tourism and data-driven destination development.
- Digital storytelling, social media, branding and marketing of heritage destinations.
- AI, creative technologies and design thinking, including the digital-transition challenges faced by small producers and heritage institutions.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Wine and Heritage: Tourism Between Tradition and Innovation

Brežice, Slovenia — September 23–25, 2026

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

10:00	Registration and welcome coffee	Lobby, Faculty of Tourism
11:00	Opening session and welcome addresses University of Maribor, Faculty of Tourism dean and Organising Committee; institutional representatives and InterWine project partners	Lecture room 4
11:45–12:30	**Keynote Lecture: Emanuela Panke**	**Lecture room 4**
12:30	Lunch	Faculty of Tourism
14:00–16:00	**Panel Session 1: Wine Tourism Experiences, Visitor Expectations and Communication**	**Lecture room 4**
16:00	Coffee break	Faculty of Tourism
16:30–18:30	**Parallel Panel Sessions 2 and 3**	**Lecture rooms 2 and 5**
18:30	End of the first-day conference programme and walk to Brežice Castle	
19:00	Reception, cultural programme, dinner and networking event Provided by Alenka Černelič Krošelj, museum advisor and Managing Director of Posavje Museum Brežice	Posavje Museum Brežice

Thursday, September 24, 2026

8:30	Registration and welcome coffee	Lobby, Faculty of Tourism
9:00–10:00	**Keynote Lecture: Marianna Sigala**	**Lecture room 4**
10:00–12:00	**Panel Session 4: Wine Heritage, Cultural Memory and Contested Landscapes**	**Lecture room 4**
11:00–13:00	**Parallel Session 5: Wine Destination Development: Cooperation, Competitiveness and Skills**	**Lecture room 5**
13:00	Lunch	Faculty of Tourism
14:00–16:00	**Parallel Session 6 (online) and Session 7**	**Lecture rooms 2 and 4**
16:00	Coffee break	Faculty of Tourism

17:00	InterWine project Presentation of InterWine project work packages and results: Ivana Alilović, Goran Švast, Ena Gašaprac, FT UM	Lecture room 4
18:00	End of conference programme	Faculty of Tourism
18:15	ZPTM — Guided tour of Brežice (optional)	Brežice

Friday, September 25, 2026

8:00	Departure for study visit Bus provided by Zagreb County Tourist Board	Gymnasium Brežice, bus station
9:00	Guided tour InterWine good-practice examples, Štrukli tasting (dumplings), and a tour of the Visitor Centre Velika Gorica provided by the City of Velika Gorica	Velika Gorica
12:00	Lunch Presentation of Pušća Municipality (TZSSDIB); wine tasting provided by Pušća Municipality	Pušća Municipality
15:30	Guided tour Pišece Castle provided by the Posavje Museum Brežice	Pišece Castle
17:00	Return to Brežice and end of the tour	Brežice bus station

Panel Session 1: Wine Tourism Experiences, Visitor Expectations and Communication

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 | 14:00–16:00 | Chair: Assit. Prof. Dr. Janez Gorenc | Lecture room 4

No.	Authors	Presentation
1	Biljana Božinovski	Wine Tourism Through the Eyes of Generation Z: Perceptions and Feedback from Emerging Visitors
2	Mojca Ramšak	Virtual Wine Tourism, Sensory Innovation and the Digital Reframing of Wine Heritage during the COVID-19 Pandemic
3	Adina Negrusa and Ecaterina Bonca	Motivations, experiential learning, and perception shifts: Evidence on how Wine Routes shape perceptions of national wines and cultural heritage
4	Anikó Dinya	Local Wines as Heritage-Based Experience Elements in Rural Hotel Food and Beverage Services
5	Jana Vilman	Small Label, Complex Message: Communicating Wine Quality, Origin and Destination Recognition on Wine Back Labels
6	Branka Novcic Korac, Clara Marin Garcia and Tina Šegota	How wine packaging design influences perceived quality and willingness to pay

Panel Session 2: Wine, Landscape and Destination Identities

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 | 16:30–18:30 | Chair: Sen. Lect. Dr. Biljana Božinovski | Lecture room 4

No.	Authors	Presentation
1	Nobuhiro Shiihara	Rethinking Wine Tourism in Katsunuma through Winescape and Taskscape
2	Sotirios Bolis	Reviving and celebrating the Myth of Malvasia wine: International cooperation, cultural festivals, and the Recognition of Intangible Cultural Heritage
3	Gina Bordea and Corneliu Iațu	Wine tourism in Vrancea County: between the valorization of identity heritage and the new dynamics of contemporary demand
4	Martina Senekovič, Maja Borlinič Gačnik and Črtomir Rozman	Viticulture as the Initial Link in Wine-Tourism Value Creation: A DEXi Case Study of Radgonske gorice
5	Jasmina Jakomin and Janja Lozar	Culinary Trail of the Ethnic and Local Cuisine in the Danube Region

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Panel Session 3: Digital Innovation and Sustainable Futures in Wine and Heritage Tourism

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 | 16:30–18:30 | Chair: Asst. Prof. Dr. Jana Vilman | Lecture room 2

No.	Authors	Presentation
1	Gyöngyi Kovács	Coding Living Heritage: Testing a Novel Storytelling Classification System in the Online Communication of Hungarian Wineries
2	Janez Gorenc, Marjetka Rangus and Jana Vilman	Barriers and Stimuli for ESG Adoption in European Tourism SMEs: A Thematic Analysis
3	Mihaela Franjić, Filip Bernardić, Elizabeta Ferara	Shaping the Identity of a Wine Micro-Destination through Heritage, Production, and Community: Case Study of Pušća Municipality
4	Maja Turnšek, Nejc Pozvek, Marjetka Rangus and Tjaša Pogačar	Tourism Climate Change Adaptation Needs: The Case of Posavje Region
5	Ivana Alilović	Designing a Methodological Framework for Interpreting Wine Heritage in Zagreb County: Connecting Destination Narratives, Digital Storytelling and Sustainable Visitor Experiences
6	Tjaša Alegro	Wine Destination Image across Digital Platforms

Panel Session 4: Wine Heritage, Cultural Memory and Contested Landscapes

Thursday, September 24, 2026 | 10:00–12:00 | Chair: Nejc Pozvek | Lecture room 4

No.	Authors	Presentation
1	Tjaša Tolar and Timotej Pavlin	Archaeological finds of grape vine remains in the Krško Basin
2	Anja Mlakar	Wine as a relationship with place: Biodynamics and heritage making at Rifnik
3	Akira Ide	Wine Tourism in terms of Dark Tourism
4	Saša Zupan Korže	Integration of Wine Heritage in Ttourism: Case study of Moldova
5	Timotej Pavlin and Svit Komel	Abandoned Vineyards near Pilštanj
6	Salma Mouhami	Commodification as Negotiation: How Master Craftspeople in Fez Construct Authenticity Under Tourism Market Pressure

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Panel Session 5: Wine Destination Development: Cooperation, Competitiveness and Skills

Thursday, September 24, 2026 | 11:00–13:00 | Chair: Asst. Prof. Dr. Milica Rančić Demir | Lecture room 2

No.	Authors	Presentation
1	Radmila Jovanović, Oliver Kesar and Emilija Manić	CHARTING THE WINE TOURISM LANDSCAPE: A GIS COMPARISON OF SERBIA AND CROATIA'S UNTAPPED POTENTIAL
2	Judit Sulyok and Eszter Madarász	One for all, all for one – Network of the Balaton Circle (Lake Balaton, Hungary)
3	Elizaveta Ibragimova and Maja Borlinič Gačnik	From Identity to Action: Winemakers' Perspectives and Strategic Directions for Wine Tourism Development in the Karst Wine-Growing District
4	Helena Ružić, Milica Rančić Demir and Maja Borlinič Gačnik	A comparative analysis of wine tourism development in Slovenian and Croatian Istria: Strategic indicators, authenticity and visitor perception at wine festivals
5	Gregor Jagodič, Pavlina Simčič and Maja Borlinič Gačnik	Innovative wine tourism experiences as an opportunity for greater competitiveness of smaller wine providers - from tasting to creation
6	Danijel Đekić	Bridging Skills Gaps for the Future of Tourism: A Comparative Analysis of Employers' and VET Experts' Perspectives in the Western Balkans

Panel Session 6: Wine and Cultural Heritage: Identity, Interpretation and Visitor Experience — Online Session

Thursday, September 24, 2026 | 14:00–16:00 | Chair: Assit. Mihaela Franjić | Lecture room 2

No.	Authors	Presentation
1	Tofunmi Sanni, Abioye Adedipe, Ibrahim Kukoyi, Edward Akerele and Halimat Sowunmi	ENHANCING WINE TOURISM THROUGH CULTURAL STORYTELLING
2	Jagjit Singh	Enhancing Passenger Experience through Onboard Wine Service
3	Chioma Egere, Ibrahim Kukoyi, Augustine Egere and Ayoola Ewuola	Leveraging Augmented Reality as a tool for promotion of heritage sites in Badagry, Lagos State, Nigeria.
4	Opeyemi Ibrahim and Adegoke Bakare	WINE AND HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY CELEBRATIONS: AN ASSESSMENT OF BEVERAGE PREFERENCES AND THE PLACE OF INDIGENOUS DRINKS AT SELECTED SOCIAL EVENTS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA
5	Jacopo Manni	Volcanic Wines and Island Identity: Territorial Narratives, Heritage Construction and Wine Tourism in the Aegean Archipelago
6	Ibraheem Kukoyi, Abioye Adedipe, Lukman Adebanjo, Ayoola Ewuola, Oluwafemi Olagunju and Juliet Ayoola	REINVENTION OF HIBISCUS WINE (ZOBO DRINK) AS A GASTRONOMIC AND WELLNESS TOURISM PRODUCT IN NIGERIA: PERSPECTIVE OF TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS IN SOUTHWESTERN, NIGERIA
7	Victoria Olubusayo, Ibraheem Kukoyi	THE PALM WINE, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND HERITAGE TOURISM IN NIGERIA: REFRAMING OF INDIGENOUS WINE IN GLOBAL WINE DISCOURSES
8	Sekinat Bello, Ibrahim Kukoyi, Abioye Adedipe, Jamiu Labode and Oluwadamilola Faloye	AFRICAN-THEMED RESORT DESIGN AND TOURISTS' PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY IN NIGERIA

Panel Session 7: Designing Heritage Experiences: Creativity, Hospitality and Gastronomy

Thursday, September 24, 2026 | 14:00–16:00 | Chair: Assit. Prof. Dr. Tomi Špindler | Lecture room 4

No.	Authors	Presentation
1	Mihaela Kežman	Fractal Drawing as a Sensory Wine Experience: Connecting Tradition and Innovation in Tourism
2	Katalin Juhász-Dóra	From Accommodations to Luxury Experience Hubs: Investigation of the Hungarian Luxury Wine Hotels
3	Oscar Tiku	Challenges of indigenous gastronomy in tourism
4	Klavdij Čehovin	Innovative approaches to the development of wine tourism and destination management: The case of the Vipava Valley
5	Jasna Potočnik Topler, Charles Mansfield and Rita Baleiro	A Literary Walk at Malhadinha Nova Estate

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TEDU26

ABSTRACTS

WINE TOURISM THROUGH THE EYES OF GENERATION Z: PERCEPTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM EMERGING VISITORS

Biljana Božinovski[1]

[1] *Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor; Slovenia; biljana.bozinovski@um.si*

Wine tourism has emerged as an important niche within cultural and experiential tourism, yet its long-term sustainability depends on engaging younger visitors who will shape future demand. Generation Z represents the next cohort of wine consumers and tourists, but their relationship with wine differs from that of previous generations, often characterized by lower consumption, greater health awareness, and different expectations regarding authenticity, sustainability, and social relevance. At the same time, wine tourism is increasingly understood as an experience-driven form of tourism, where value is created through participation, storytelling, and personal engagement rather than product consumption alone; however, this shift does not automatically align with Generation Z preferences, as studies indicate that younger visitors do not necessarily value structured participation, mingling, or overtly social formats, often favouring more flexible, low-pressure, and individually controllable experiences that allow for selective engagement rather than constant interaction. This contribution examines how Generation Z tourism students from the Western Balkans, currently studying in Slovenia, perceive wine tourism experiences and what they expect from the sector. The study is based on qualitative data from reflective essays written by 22 undergraduate students following three structured field visits to wine tourism providers, including a winery, a winegrower, and a restaurant with a curated wine offer in the spring of 2026. The data are analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in how participants describe and evaluate their experiences, with particular attention to the elements they perceive as engaging, meaningful, or (un)appealing. It will explore the role of factors such as storytelling, atmosphere, interaction, and product presentation, as well as potential barriers to engagement, including perceived complexity, lack of familiarity, or limited relevance to everyday lifestyles. The study is expected to provide insight into how Generation Z frames value in wine tourism contexts and what this may imply for the design of more accessible and experience-oriented offerings. We will thus contribute to ongoing discussions on sustainable wine tourism by identifying how current practices align with, or diverge from, the expectations of younger visitors. We hope to offer practical implications for experience design, communication, and product presentation, with a view to supporting long-term engagement and the continued relevance of wine tourism in a changing consumer landscape.

Key words: *Generation Z; wine tourism; visitor perceptions; experience design sustainable tourism*

VIRTUAL WINE TOURISM, SENSORY INNOVATION AND THE DIGITAL REFRAMING OF WINE HERITAGE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Mojca Ramšak[1]

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Introduction

Wine tourism has traditionally rested on embodied, place-bound experiences: cellar visits, guided tastings, and face-to-face encounters between producers and visitors that transmit terroir, craft, and local memory. The closure of hospitality venues and the suspension of travel and gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly removed these conditions, forcing wineries and wine destinations worldwide to reinvent visitor engagement through digital means. This paper examines how the wine industry translated heritage-based, sensory practices of tasting and storytelling into online formats, and asks what this rapid digital reinvention reveals about the relationship between tradition, authenticity, and innovation in contemporary wine tourism.

Method

The study draws on qualitative content analysis of media publications, industry reports, and social media discourse concerning wine consumption and marketing, observed between March 2020 and May 2023. Slovenian sources were analysed alongside international wine-trade publications and survey data on virtual tastings, supplementing earlier fieldwork published as a monograph on the social impact of wine marketing.

Findings and Discussion

The pandemic generated an entirely new market niche of online wine tourism: virtual cellar tours, guided blind tastings, and remote wine fairs replaced in-person visits within weeks of the first lockdowns. Larger, business-to-consumer-oriented producers had adopted online tastings with reported profitability. Across global markets, producers also recast wine for new occasions and younger, mobile consumers through innovations such as wine-in-a-can and single-serve formats, while playful blind tastings and food pairings challenged wine's traditionally elitist image. Most significant for heritage-based tourism was a parallel, globally observable industry response to widespread COVID-related anosmia: wineries and allied producers began developing sensory rehabilitation tools built from regional aromatic materials, designed to reconnect impaired bodies with the olfactory memory underpinning terroir, place, and wine culture more broadly. In Slovenia, smaller producers used humour, wordplay, and locally resonant memes to sustain visibility and sociability online. Notably, producers did not merely adapt out of necessity: they actively branded these improvised solutions – virtual tastings, canned formats, sensory kits – as expressions of authentic tradition, turning commercial expedience into heritage discourse. Together, these strategies show heritage being neither abandoned nor simply digitised, but actively reinterpreted: sensory and narrative elements once delivered in situ were redesigned for screens and for impaired senses alike, recreating intimacy, place attachment, and authenticity through new technological and sensory means.

Conclusion

The pandemic acted as an accelerant rather than a disruptor of wine tourism innovation, demonstrating that digital tools can extend rather than dilute heritage experience when sensory and narrative elements are deliberately reconstructed online. These findings show that the wine and wider alcohol industry possesses the tools and adaptive capacity to sustain and reshape consumption even under crisis conditions, readily inventing new "traditions" of drinking and presenting them as heritage to legitimise consumption regardless of the circumstances imposed upon it.

Key words: *wine tourism; digital innovation; virtual tastings; sensory heritage; authenticity; COVID-19; Slovenia*

TEDU26

MOTIVATIONS, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, AND PERCEPTION SHIFTS: EVIDENCE ON HOW WINE ROUTES SHAPE PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL WINES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Wine tourism has evolved into a multidimensional experiential phenomenon capable of shaping not only visitor motivations but also their perceptions of national wines and cultural heritage. While existing research has predominantly examined isolated winery visits, limited attention has been given to integrated tourism products such as wine routes. This study addresses this gap by investigating the motivational drivers of participation along the emerging Moldova Wine Route and by analyzing how these motivations relate to the perceived importance of key experiential attributes. Using an exploratory quantitative design, the study draws on survey data collected from visitors along the route. Exploratory factor analysis identifies underlying motivational dimensions and core experiential attributes, while correlation and variance analyses examine their interrelationships across tourist segments. Additional statistical analyses assess how wine-route participation influences visitors' knowledge of wine culture, production processes, grape varieties, tasting techniques, and food-and-wine pairing practices. The study further evaluates behavioral outcomes such as post-tasting wine purchases and the extent to which wine tourism experiences reshape perceptions of the quality of local wines compared to international alternatives. The findings reveal distinct motivation-based segments and demonstrate strong associations between motivational profiles, experiential evaluations, and learning-related outcomes. Results show that wine-route experiences significantly enhance cultural enrichment, leisure satisfaction, and social interaction, while also contributing to a measurable shift in visitors' appreciation of national wine heritage. By conceptualizing wine routes as integrated experiential systems, the study extends motivation theory within emerging wine destinations and offers actionable insights for destination managers and winery stakeholders seeking to design targeted, experience-based strategies. These insights have broader implications for strengthening the competitiveness and cultural positioning of national wine tourism destinations.

Key words: *wine tourism; wine routes; motivations; cultural heritage; emerging destinations*

LOCAL WINES AS HERITAGE-BASED EXPERIENCE ELEMENTS IN RURAL HOTEL FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES

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Background and Introduction: In rural tourism, local gastronomy and wine play an increasingly important role in shaping destination identity, creating authentic guest experiences, and generating regional value. Local wines may appear in hotel F&B services not merely as consumer products, but also as cultural and heritage-based experiential elements that connect guests with the history, natural characteristics, production culture, and gastronomic traditions of the region. Therefore, the F&B offerings of rural hotels can play a significant mediating role in presenting local wine culture. At the same time, the question arises as to the extent to which the presence of local wines becomes a consciously developed experiential element, or whether it remains merely a matter of supply and procurement. Objective: The aim of the research is to examine how and in what role local wines appear in the F&B services of rural hotels, how regional wines can contribute to enriching the hotel guest experience, mediating local heritage, and supporting the gastronomic and tourism positioning of the destination. A further objective of the research is to explore the opportunities that the integration of local wines into hotel offerings may provide for innovative, experience-based F&B service development. Methodology: The secondary research is based on the analysis of the F&B offerings and communication practices of rural hotels. The methodology includes content analysis of hotel menus, wine lists, websites, and online communication platforms, with particular focus on the presentation, interpretation, and positioning of local wines as experiential elements. The primary research consists of semi-structured interviews aimed primarily at exploring the views of hotel professionals working in managerial positions within F&B departments. Results: The findings of the research highlight that the role of local wines in the F&B services of rural hotels can be interpreted on several levels. On the one hand, they may appear as differentiating elements of the offer; on the other hand, they can serve as carriers of local identity, authenticity, and heritage-based guest experience.

The study is expected to reveal that the conscious presentation of local wines, for example through wine dinners, wine tastings, food and wine pairings, storytelling, cooperation with local producers, or thematic gastronomic packages, contributes to increasing the experiential value of hotel F&B offerings. At the same time, the analysis also points out that in many cases local wines still do not appear as strategic experiential elements, but merely as one product category within the overall offer. Conclusions: The conscious integration of local wines into the F&B services of rural hotels creates an opportunity to connect tradition and innovation. Regional wines can not only enhance the quality of the gastronomic offer but also contribute to the unique image of the hotel, deepen the guest experience, and communicate the cultural and gastronomic values of the destination. The perspective that local wines are not merely F&B products, but heritage-based, experience-oriented, and strategic elements of service development

may be particularly important for rural hotels, which can differentiate themselves in the tourism market by building on local values.

Key words: *local wines; heritage-based experience; F&B services; hotel management; gastronomic tourism*

TEDU26

SMALL LABEL, COMPLEX MESSAGE: COMMUNICATING WINE QUALITY, ORIGIN AND DESTINATION RECOGNITION ON WINE BACK LABELS

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Wine back labels represent a limited yet highly complex physical-digital communication space in which legally required information, quality cues, geographical origin, producer identity and destination-related messages converge. Following recent changes in EU wine labelling requirements, back labels are increasingly expected to include or provide access to information on ingredients, nutritional value and QR-based e-labels, in addition to established mandatory data such as alcohol content, allergens, origin and producer information. At the same time, wineries often use the back label to communicate non-mandatory but strategically important content, including the story of the wine, the winemaker, vineyard characteristics, awards, regional symbols and wine destination references. This creates a risk of information overload, where legally required and promotional content compete for limited consumer attention. The central design and communication challenge is therefore how complex information can be organized on a small label surface in a way that remains legally compliant, readable, understandable and meaningful for consumers.

This study addresses the wine back label as a communication and user experience interface. The central research question is how different types of information on wine back labels can be hierarchically organized so that consumers notice them, understand them, trust them and connect them with perceived wine quality and destination recognition. These include legal, quality-related, origin-related, narrative and destination-related information. Particular attention is given to the purchasing situation in which wine is selected from a shelf without direct explanation from a salesperson. In such contexts, the back label must support consumer orientation, interpretation of key information, assessment of quality and formation of trust. The study also examines how different consumer groups, particularly wine experts and non-experts, read back labels, which information they notice first, which designations they understand or overlook, and which information they perceive as relevant for purchase decisions and destination interest.

Methodologically, the research is structured in three phases. First, a visual and informational analysis of approximately 100 wine back labels from five countries will be conducted. The labels will be selected from wine shops according to predefined criteria, including compliance with new labelling requirements and the use of QR codes or e-labels. Within these criteria, bottles will be selected randomly from available wine-shop shelves. The analysis will examine the presence, visibility and presentation of mandatory information, the labelling and function of QR codes, and the occurrence of additional content related to wine quality, geographical origin, producer identity, regional characteristics and wine destination communication. Special attention will be given to the distinction between legally required digital information and promotional or destination-related digital extensions.

In the second phase, three alternative versions of a wine back label will be developed on the basis of the analytical findings. Each version will propose a different communication hierarchy for organizing information within a limited label surface. The three versions will differ in whether they prioritize mandatory information, quality and origin cues, or narrative and destination-related content. In the third phase, these label versions will be tested with two consumer groups: wine experts and wine non-experts. The user testing will examine how participants read the labels, which information they understand, how they perceive wine quality, whether they recognize the geographical origin or wine-producing area, and whether the information presented influences trust, purchase intention and interest in visiting the destination.

The expected outcome of the study is an applied communication hierarchy model for designing wine back labels. The model will define which information should be prioritized on the physical label, which information can be transferred to digital extensions, how legal, narrative and destination-related content should be visually separated, and how producer identity and destination identity can be communicated without reducing clarity. The research contributes to packaging design, user experience and wine tourism studies by reframing the wine back label not merely as a regulatory surface, but as a strategic micro-interface for communicating wine quality, origin and destination recognition.

Key words: *wine back label; user experience; perceived quality; origin destination recognition*

TEDU 26

HOW WINE PACKAGING DESIGN INFLUENCES PERCEIVED QUALITY AND WILLINGNESS TO PAY

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The results reveal the deep integration of viticulture within Moldova's economy, heritage, and cultural identity. Wine production in the region dates back nearly 5,000 years to the ancient Cucuteni-Trypillia culture. Since the 14th century, winemaking has been a cornerstone of Moldovan agriculture, serving as a primary supplier to Russian and Polish markets for centuries. By the early 20th century, production had reached 5–6 million barrels annually, though the sector was largely characterized by the mass production of average-quality wines.

Key words: *wine packaging design; label design; wine purchase; perceived quality; willingness to pay*

TEDU26

RETHINKING KATSUNUMA'S WINE TOURISM THROUGH WINESCAPES AND TASKSCAPES

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This presentation reconsiders wine tourism in Katsunuma, Koshu City, Yamanashi Prefecture, by shifting analytical attention from wine as a finished commodity to the spatial, historical, and practical relations that make wine production possible. Rather than approaching wineries as discrete destinations connected by functionally neutral transit spaces, the article conceptualizes Katsunuma as a living cultural landscape in which viticulture, winemaking, infrastructure, settlement, mobility, and everyday life are mutually constitutive. To develop this argument, it brings the concept of the winescape into dialogue with Tim Ingold's notion of the taskscape. The winescape framework foregrounds the spatial interdependence of vineyards, wineries, houses, roads, irrigation channels, stone retaining walls, retail facilities, and transportation infrastructure. These elements are treated not as a secondary setting for wine production, but as integral components of the environment through which grapes are cultivated, processed, circulated, sold, and experienced. Ingold's concept of the taskscape extends this spatial analysis by emphasizing temporality, recurrent practice, and the rhythms through which landscapes are continuously produced and maintained. In Katsunuma, pruning, vine training, irrigation, repair, harvesting, fermentation, transportation, commercial activity, and everyday habitation collectively sustain the visible landscape. The article further situates contemporary Katsunuma within a longer historical transformation from a mixed agricultural landscape, including sericulture and rice cultivation, toward a region increasingly organized around grape growing and wine production. Particular attention is given to the horizontal overhead grape trellis, whose spatial configuration produces an immersive environment distinct from the panoramic visuality associated with vertically trained vineyards. By directing attention upward and inward, the trellis mediates bodily experiences of shade, humidity, light, movement, and scale. At the same time, it is interpreted not merely as a scenic or aesthetic feature, but as an agricultural infrastructure whose continued existence depends upon repeated labor and maintenance. On this basis, the article reconceptualizes wine tourism as an embodied and multisensory practice of walking, sensing, and interpreting place. This perspective expands the notion of terroir beyond taste by incorporating topography, microclimate, sound, smell, infrastructure, and visible traces of labor. It also reveals tensions between scenic authenticity and agricultural sustainability, and between automobile-based tourism and the slower temporalities of farming and everyday life. The article concludes by proposing slow wine tourism as an interpretive framework through which the spaces between wineries can become central to the visitor experience. By privileging slower mobility and sustained engagement with landscape, labor, history, infrastructure, and community, this approach reorients wine tourism from the consumption of wine toward the experience of the relations that make wine possible. In doing so, it offers a relational account of wine tourism grounded in the interaction of spatial form, historical transformation, embodied perception, and everyday practice.

Key words: *Wine tourism; Winescape; Cultural Landscape; Taskscape; Slow tourism; Weather-world; Environmental perception*

TEDU26

REVIVING AND CELEBRATING THE MYTH OF MALVASIA WINE: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, CULTURAL FESTIVALS, AND THE RECOGNITION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Malvasia wine has one of the longest recorded histories in European wine culture. Its story begins with the Byzantine port of Monemvasia in Greece, in the late twelfth to early thirteenth century, from where it spread across Europe through Venetian and Genoese trade networks. For the next centuries it dominated the European market, appearing in royal courts, commercial records, and the literature of the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Its commercial success caused the spread of Malvasia cultivation and production throughout the Mediterranean and to Atlantic regions such as the Canary Islands, Madeira, and the Azores. Today, many grape varieties, types of wine, and production techniques continue to bear the name Malvasia. In Greece, after centuries of decline during and after the Ottoman period, the tradition has been revived since the early 2000s in its place of origin, Monemvasia, and then in Crete and Paros, through the efforts of local winemakers, private and public institutions, and the support of the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) recognition. Since 2018, the transnational cooperation project "Malvasia Myth", implemented under the EU LEADER/CLLD programme, has fostered an international movement aimed at reviving and reinterpreting the wider cultural legacy of Malvasia. Initiated by Monemvasia, with Local Action Group (LAG) Parnonas as lead partner, the project brings together the historical legacy of Malvasia, often described as one of the most famous wines in history, with contemporary practices across various Malvasia-producing regions. It promotes a multifaceted cultural practice that reactivates historical memory, strengthens local identity, and encourages transnational cooperation through networking, festivals, wine competitions, and intangible cultural heritage safeguarding processes. This paper investigates the structure and significance of this movement, focusing on four contemporary initiatives connected with the Malvasia Myth project (either inspired, funded, co-funded, or supported) that demonstrate distinct yet complementary strategies for valorising Malvasia heritage: the Malvasia Festival Monemvasia in Greece, the Festival della Malvasia di Sala Baganza in Italy, the World of Malvasia international competition in Croatia, and the Semana de la Malvasia de Sitges in Spain. The paper also discusses two forms of institutional recognition: the inclusion of the Malvasia Myth within the Iter Vitis Cultural Route of the Council of Europe (2022) and the inscription of "Sun-dried Malvasia Wine of Monemvasia, Crete and Paros" in the Greek National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2026). The case studies demonstrate that the modern revival of Malvasia extends beyond the promotion of a wine product. It reactivates a shared cultural memory and presents wine heritage as a convergence of viticulture, winemaking, history, place, memory, narrative, festivities, cultural tourism, and international cooperation.

Key words: *Malvasia; Malvasia Myth; Monemvasia; intangible cultural heritage wine festivals; cultural routes; Mediterranean wine; wine tourism*

WINE TOURISM IN VRANCEA COUNTY: BETWEEN THE VALORIZATION OF IDENTITY HERITAGE AND THE NEW DYNAMICS OF CONTEMPORARY DEMAND

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the consumption behavior and motivations of visitors in the Vrancea wine region, a reference space for the oenological heritage in Romania. The research evaluates how tourists' preferences resonate with local authenticity, cultural heritage and new demands oriented towards personalized and sustainable experiences. The empirical approach was based on the application of a structured questionnaire, distributed in a hybrid system (face-to-face in wineries and specific events, respectively online). The validated sample includes 281 responses (of which 157 were collected in situ). The research instrument analyzed variables such as: visit history, accommodation preferences, information channels, seasonality and temporal distribution of flows, along with the assessment of the importance given to authenticity, cultural immersion, multisensory stimuli and direct interaction with local producers. The results indicate a moderate to high degree of prior experience in wine tourism among respondents (approx. 50%). A clear preference for accommodation in informal networks (family/friends) is noted to the detriment of classic hotel structures. Digital sources (official wineries' platforms and social networks) constitute the main information channel. Spatio-temporal, visits are concentrated in the summer and autumn seasons, with a pronounced convergence on weekends. From a motivational perspective, the central value attributed to authenticity, direct contact with product creators, immersion in local culture and multisensory components of the experience is highlighted, along with an increased sensitivity to the principles of sustainability. The findings demonstrate that, in a traditional wine-growing region, preserving territorial identity and responding to the demands of contemporary demand are not contradictory. The heritage dimension and authenticity function as fundamental vectors of attractiveness, confirming the need to reconfigure the local tourism offer through authentic, personalized experiences anchored in the principles of sustainable regional development.

Key words: *wine tourism; tourist heritage; authenticity; tourist demand; Vrancea; Romania*

VITICULTURE AS THE INITIAL LINK IN WINE-TOURISM VALUE CREATION: A DEXI CASE STUDY OF RADGONSKE GORICE

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This paper examines the link between viticulture and wine tourism through the case of the company Radgonske gorice. The starting point of the research is that the value of a wine-tourism offer is not created only in the cellar, during tastings, or through a tourism product, but already in the vineyard, where grape quality, landscape identity, the relationship with the local environment and part of the brand story are formed. The aim of the paper is to develop a focused multi-criteria framework for assessing how a sustainable viticultural foundation is transformed into tourism value. Methodologically, the research is designed as a case study using the DEXi method. The model uses three ordinal values: low, medium and high. The data basis relies on already collected internal records of Radgonske gorice, primarily viticultural, financial-accounting, oenological, procurement, logistics, sales and tourism records. In the model, these data are used as evidence for classifying indicators into descriptive categories, rather than as publicly presented absolute numerical values. This enables a scientific analysis of a real company while maintaining the confidentiality of business-sensitive information. The results show that viticulture at Radgonske gorice functions as an important initial link in the creation of tourism value. The strongest connection with tourism is reflected in the quality basis of the wine, the tradition of sparkling wine, the cultivated vineyard landscape, local identity and the possibility of interpreting the origin of the product. The DEXi linking matrix shows that a high viticultural foundation, combined with medium or high tourism interpretation, leads to a high value of the viticulture–tourism link. The scenario interpretation further indicates that tourism value decreases when either viticultural stability or the interpretation of the vineyard story declines. The paper demonstrates that the DEXi method can transparently connect the production stage of the wine value chain with the tourism experience. The research contributes to the understanding of wine heritage as the result of production, landscape and interpretative practices, and offers a useful framework for the further development of sustainable wine-tourism strategies.

Key words: *viticulture; wine tourism; sustainability; DEXi; wine supply chain Radgonske gorice; sparkling wine*

CULINARY TRAIL OF THE ETHNIC AND LOCAL CUISINE IN THE DANUBE REGION

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With the Culinary Trail project, we aimed to strengthen sustainable tourism development in the Danube Region by integrating culinary heritage, wine heritage, cultural assets, and local gastronomy into a coherent transnational tourism offer. The main objectives are to enhance the visibility of ethnic minorities' culinary heritage and lesser-known wine and culinary destinations, improve cooperation among heritage sites and local stakeholders, and develop innovative tourism products that connect tradition with contemporary visitor experiences. Culinary Trail is implemented through a participatory, cross-border approach involving diverse cultural and geographical contexts. The methodology includes mapping and valorisation of culinary and wine heritage assets, stakeholder engagement with local producers, representatives of ethnic minorities, tourism providers, and cultural institutions, as well as capacity-building activities such as training sessions and knowledge exchange workshops. The participatory process has resulted in several key outputs, including a collection of culinary heritage units, a transnational strategy, and targeted transnational action plans for the involved ethnic minorities. Culinary Trail has built a rich digital catalogue of over 700 culinary heritage units, including foods, beverages, culinary techniques, traditions, and festivals, available on the www.culinarytrail.eu platform. This digital catalogue enables transnational trails that highlight culinary and wine heritage across the Danube Region. As a result of consultations with ethnic minorities and workshops, strategic documents were developed to support the preservation of culinary heritage in the Danube Region. Pilot actions included the development of thematic routes, training programmes, the establishment of a demonstration and training centre, culinary competitions, and the development of VR concepts for a river boat and food cart. The training programmes addressed the preservation and promotion of ethnic and local culinary heritage, covering traditional culinary knowledge and fostering intergenerational collaboration, introductory wine education, and advanced food-and-wine pairing techniques linked to ethnic gastronomy. The Culinary Trail international online competition promoted innovation in sustainable and ethnic gastronomy across the Danube Region. Through the categories Frugal Gastronomes and Ethnic Gastronomes, focused on the pairing of regional wines and ethnic cuisine, participants developed concepts linking culinary heritage, sustainability, local products, and cultural storytelling. Preliminary results indicate that integrating wine heritage with culinary and cultural tourism significantly increases the attractiveness of rural and lesser-known destinations. Collaboration between stakeholders has proven essential for creating authentic and market-ready tourism experiences. The project has also highlighted the importance of storytelling, local identity, and heritage interpretation in enhancing visitor engagement. Furthermore, capacity-building activities have improved the skills of local actors in product development and sustainable tourism management, although challenges remain in ensuring long-term cooperation and

financial sustainability. The Culinary Trail directly addresses the intersection of tradition and innovation in culinary heritage tourism. It builds on the culinary heritage of ethnic minorities in the Danube Region and addresses also the beverages, among which also traditional wine-making practices and local culinary heritage while introducing innovative approaches to tourism product development, cross-border cooperation, and digital promotion.

Key words: *culinary heritage; wine heritage; sustainable tourism; ethnic minorities; food and wine pairing; participatory approach; Danube Region*
Interreg Danube Programme

TEDU26

CODING LIVING HERITAGE: TESTING A NOVEL STORYTELLING CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM IN THE ONLINE COMMUNICATION OF HUNGARIAN WINERIES

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Introduction

In the dynamically changing world of contemporary wine production and wine tourism, wine is no longer perceived merely as a commercial product, but as a vehicle for living cultural heritage, collective memory, and local identity (genius loci). Within this environment, storytelling on the digital platforms of wineries (websites and social media) has emerged as a primary tool for building credibility and transmitting cultural values. However, the structural composition, narrative depth, and conflict patterns of Hungarian wine communication have rarely been investigated through a systematic, validated classification framework.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to methodologically test and validate a five-dimensional hybrid storytelling classification system and narrative archetype model – originally developed and successfully applied in rural tourism and agritourism contexts – specifically within the environment of wine communication. The study aims to investigate how accurately this novel structural framework can describe and categorize the heritage-based and digital storytelling patterns of Hungarian wineries.

Methodology

The investigation is grounded in a structured, qualitative content analysis of digital textual narratives sourced from the official online channels of prominent and active Hungarian wineries. The texts are coded along the five main dimensions of the newly adapted classification structure: story type (e.g., origin myth, heritage-based), narrative focus (entrepreneur, landscape, community), conflict-management patterns (with special emphasis on the dilemma of heritage preservation versus technological modernization), emotional tone, and the narrative role of the location (genius loci). To reduce coding noise and ensure analytical consistency, the structured textual analysis is supported by artificial intelligence, followed by manual validation and refinement. Findings/Discussion: The methodological testing is expected to demonstrate that the agritourism-focused classification framework can be adapted to the wine context with high reliability. Through this model, dominant narrative archetypes – such as "The Founder's Journey" (highlighting personal dedication) and "The Story of Place" (emphasizing the landscape as an active protagonist) – can be precisely isolated in the online communication of wineries. In the viticultural context, the hybrid combinations of conflict codes (particularly the dilemmas of cultural and generational heritage protection) and nostalgic-inspiring emotional tones provide a methodological novelty, illustrating how wine is conceptualized as a "living heritage" in the digital space.

Conclusion

The main methodological contribution of this research is a validated classification and coding toolkit that can be deployed on larger, international viticultural text databases in the future. From a practical perspective, the structured mapping of online narratives highlights the current gaps and strengths of Hungarian wine storytelling. It provides a strategic roadmap for industry stakeholders to transition from generic marketing slogans toward structurally sound, authentic, and heritage-based digital storytelling.

Key words: *wine tourism; storytelling; classification system; cultural heritage content analysis*

TEDU26

BARRIERS AND STIMULI FOR ESG ADOPTION IN EUROPEAN TOURISM SMES: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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Tourism competitiveness is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional construct that goes beyond traditional economic metrics like number of arrivals and revenue. A destination's ability to remain competitive is now conditioned by its capacity to use resources sustainably while ensuring long-term social and environmental enhancement. However, for small and medium tourism enterprises (SMTEs), which represent the majority in the industry, the transition toward environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices is often characterized by degraded competitiveness. While sustainability is framed as a strategic asset, SMTEs frequently experience it as a significant resource drain or a bureaucratic burden. This study investigates the exact institutional and internal mechanisms that both stimulate and impede SMTE managers in their adoption of ESG practices. Drawing on a dual theoretical framework, the research utilizes institutional theory to analyze the mounting external push factors, such as coercive pressures from upcoming regulatory mandates like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the shifting demands of dominant corporate players within the tourism supply chain. Simultaneously, the study employs the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to decode the internal pull factors, modeling the owner-manager's decision-making process through the lenses of personal attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Using qualitative evidence from in-depth interviews with SMTE owners across various European contexts, the analysis identifies a critical implementation gap between macro-level sustainability strategies and micro-level operational realities. The findings reveal that while institutional isomorphism often drives instrumental compliance, enduring transformation is predominantly catalyzed by the managers' intrinsic moral compass, and lifestyle values and motivations. Furthermore, the study explores how resource poverty, characterized by financial and time constraints, diminishes perceived control and leads to institutional isomorphism of ESG practice implementation (e.g., choosing local food or wine producers) while in reality settling for minimum compliance, thus resulting in decoupled ESG practices. By integrating behavioral psychology with institutional analysis, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of tourism competitiveness. It offers insights for policymakers to shift from a focus on mandatory compliance with ESG to making action easier, aligning with the economic realities of the SMTEs.

Key words: *SMTEs; sustainability; competitiveness; institutional theory; theory of planned behavior; ESG*

SHAPING THE IDENTITY OF A WINE MICRO-DESTINATION THROUGH HERITAGE, PRODUCTION, AND COMMUNITY: CASE STUDY OF PUŠĆA MUNICIPALITY

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Rural areas today can no longer be viewed solely as geographical locations, but rather as complex spaces of experience and everyday life. Tourism, in particular, serves as one of the drivers of rural development and is increasingly recognised as an important tool for supporting local communities, generating additional income, and preserving cultural and natural heritage. As a result, rural tourism is moving beyond its former role as a marginal or secondary form of tourism and is experiencing continuous growth and increasing attractiveness. At the same time, it is becoming less focused on the rural setting itself and increasingly centred on the experiences it offers to visitors. This development confirms the growing importance of rural tourism as a tool for regional development, particularly in the context of diversifying tourism supply and reducing pressure associated with mass tourism. This case study examines the Municipality of Pušća as a small rural destination with potential for tourism development based on the integration of rural, wine, and cultural heritage resources. The analysis shows that its main challenge is not a lack of resources, but their fragmentation and limited integration into a coherent tourism product. Within the InterWine project, particular attention is given to participatory and co-design approaches that involve local stakeholders in identifying development priorities and shaping destination identity. The case demonstrates how small destinations can strengthen their competitiveness through coordinated resource integration, community participation, and the development of authentic, sustainable, and experience-oriented tourism products.

Key words: *Pušća municipality, rural tourism, co-design methods, destination development, community participation*

TOURISM CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION NEEDS: THE CASE OF POSAVJE REGION

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The paper will present a basic analysis of past trends based on climate indicators in the Posavje region, as well as projected future climate change trends. It will include an overview of tourism in the Posavje region and its regional governance. Special attention will be devoted to wine tourism. The concluding section will provide recommendations for tourism climate adaption measures in the region.

This output is the result of project V1-24022, "The foundation for an assessment of climate change vulnerability and adaptation within statistical regions"

Key words: *climate change adaptation; tourism; Posavje Slovenia*

TEDU 26

DESIGNING A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING WINE HERITAGE IN ZAGREB COUNTY: CONNECTING DESTINATION NARRATIVES, DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND SUSTAINABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

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Introduction

Wine tourism is evolving into a product and a way of understanding the identity of a place through past and present culture, memories and living heritage. Current research indicates that wine destinations have significantly more competitive value when wine is embedded into a larger destination narrative, heritage interpretation and multisensory experiences for visitors, rather than being promoted as an isolated product (Faye and Meral, 2025; Gu et al., 2024). This paradigm shift is especially important for a number of continental destinations where there is a hope to connect traditional local practices with the new digital marketplace and new sustainable tourism products. Zagreb County represents an ideal example as its current strategic plan incorporates cultural/heritage resources, digital initiatives, stakeholder collaboration and integration of eno/gastronomic resources, and cultural content as demonstrated by programs such as Via VINO and InterWine.

Method

A methodological pathway for understanding wine heritage at tourism destinations provided in this paper utilizes a qualitative literature review of current research about wine tourism, heritage interpretation, destination narratives, authenticity, and digital storytelling, and linked to the Destination Management Plan for the area of Zagreb County until 2028 as a context. The objective is to find out how wine-related tangible and intangible heritage can be systematically translated to form cohesive, sustainable, and visitor-oriented destination experiences at tourism destinations.

Findings and Discussion

A framework of five steps is proposed by this paper for developing wine heritage tourism in an area. First, wineries must be located and mapped in the region along with any associated wine heritage such as vineyards, wineries, local varieties, gastronomical offerings, events, rituals, narratives and cultural landscapes. Next, the assets must be connected to create a sense of place, identity, memory, and lifestyle for visitors. Third, both tangible and non-tangible wine heritage elements need to be made available in various formats (for example, wine tourism routes, guided tours, tasting options, exhibit formats, and/or story-based itineraries). Fourth, the use of digital storytelling tools (mobile interpretive devices, social media platforms, immersive media formats) in addition to artificial intelligence (AI) supported design of the content will allow for ongoing interaction with the guest before, during, and after their visit (Kasemsarn and Nickpour, 2025). Finally, the implementation of the above must be supported by governance mechanisms that connect tourism boards, wineries/producers, heritage

facilities and municipalities, while also monitoring the authenticity of each heritage site, visitor engagement with heritage sites and sustainability outcomes (Jezierska-Thole et al., 2025; OECD, 2025).

Conclusion

The paper suggests treating wine heritage as an interpretative resource to use strategically and not just as part of product characteristics. It provides a new method of heritage-based wine tourism development, which adds to the current discourse on how to connect the three aspects of authentic experiences, a local identity and digital innovation in a sustainable manner, for the governance of the destination. The framework provides a transferable model for the Zagreb County area to strengthen its storytelling from a destination perspective, in addition to fostering collaboration between different sectors.

Key words: *heritage of wine tourism; construction of destination experiences; digital storytelling of destination heritage; sustainable tourism; Zagreb County*

TEDU26

WINE DESTINATION IMAGE ACROSS DIGITAL PLATFORMS

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Introduction

Wine tourism destinations increasingly rely on digital media to shape how they are perceived by potential visitors. Official websites, tourism platforms, and experience marketplaces play a key role in constructing the image of destinations also as wine tourism spaces. This pilot study explores how leading wine destinations are represented across different digital platforms and how these representations contribute to the construction of destination image, with particular attention to the role of wine, heritage and experience. The focus is on how wine destinations are communicated through digital media environments, and how these representations frame wine as a cultural, experiential, and tourism-related resource.

Methodology

The study uses a qualitative comparative approach based on purposive selection of cases. Four internationally recognised wine tourism destinations were selected: Bordeaux (France), Tuscany (Italy), Napa Valley (USA), and Douro Valley (Portugal). For each destination, four digital platforms were analysed, including official destination webpages (visit.com), wine-related webpages, experience platforms (e.g. GetYourGuide), and specific wine tours (e.g. TripAdvisor). In total, twenty digital materials were examined using thematic analysis and within-case narrative synthesis. The analytical framework focused on three interpretative dimensions: narrative framing of wine, communication of experiential engagement, and representation of wine heritage. This approach enabled the identification of distinctive narrative profiles for each destination.

Results and Discussion

The findings show that wine destination image is constructed through platform-specific representations that emphasise different aspects of wine tourism. In Bordeaux, digital media emphasise wine as a system of expertise, classification, and prestige, positioning the destination within a highly institutionalised heritage context. Tuscany is represented through landscape aesthetics, gastronomy, and lifestyle-oriented experiences, highlighting emotional and sensory dimensions of wine tourism. In Napa Valley, platforms construct a curated and accessible premium experience, centred on comfort, organisation, and consumption. In contrast, the Douro Valley is presented through strong heritage-based representations, focusing on landscape, tradition, and the cultural symbolism of Port wine.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that digital media play a central role in constructing the image of wine tourism destinations. By comparing representations across platforms, the study provides an initial insight into how destination image is shaped through digital media, particularly in relation to heritage and tourism experiences.

Key words: *wine tourism, wine destination image, digital media, heritage communication*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OF GRAPE VINE REMAINS IN THE KRŠKO BASIN

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Viticulture today represents one of the most important economic and tourist sectors of the Krško Basin and its surroundings. This area has a very long tradition viticultural tradition. Based on archaeological finds, written sources, and also archaeobotanical discoveries, it is indisputable that grape vine and its products were often consumed in this area, and most likely also cultivated since the Roman period. Archaeological research conducted during the construction of the highway passing through the Krško Basin revealed a multitude of new archaeological sites, which also uncovered plant remains, primarily remnants of fruits and charcoal from various plants that people in the past either cultivated or gathered in nearby forests. Among other things, archaeobotanical analyses have shown that at many sites, from the Neolithic to the Roman period, there are also remains of wild and/or cultivated grapevines. The lecture will present the sites in the Krško Basin where the oldest vine remains to date have been discovered, as well as critically evaluate their contribution to our understanding of the history of viticulture in the Krško Basin.

Key words: *archaeology; grape vine; viticulture; heritage*

WINE AS A RELATIONSHIP WITH PLACE: BIODYNAMICS AND HERITAGE MAKING AT RIFNIK

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How does a winegrower's connection to a place and its past influence the wine he produces? This presentation examines the work of a biodynamic winegrower at Rifnik in eastern Slovenia. It combines heritage perspectives with spiritual aspects of biodynamic agriculture. Based on interviews and informal conversations conducted with him, it analyses how Aci Urbajs relates farming to spirituality, landscape, and interpretations of the distant past. He presents the Neolithic as a period associated with cooperation and respect for the Earth, values that inform his current agricultural practices. He also describes Rifnik as a place whose character is expressed through wine. These interpretations are communicated to visitors through conversation, tasting, and the use of particular types of drinking vessels. Within the family, differing spiritual perspectives coexist with shared farming practices. The presentation demonstrates how (archaeological) heritage can become integrated into everyday farming, hospitality and wine tourism. It also examines how biodynamic winegrowers draw on narratives about place and the past to frame and communicate their work.

Key words: *biodynamic wine; heritage; spirituality; archaeology; Rifnik*

TEDU 26

WINE TOURISM IN TERMS OF DARK TOURISM

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Wine tourism might seem unrelated to dark tourism at first glance. However, there are many cases where the culture of alcohol is linked to the memory of tragedy. For example, the origins of Japan's wine industry lie in the second world war. During World War II, the military was manufacturing radar, which required a large supply of tartaric acid, a component necessary for radar and torpedo detectors. During World War II, wine was considered a luxury drink and therefore avoided in Japan. But ironically, in the Yamanashi prefecture area, wine was produced as a by-product for radar manufacturing, leading to today's wine production. Winemaking was indeed part of the wartime industry.

Also, Hokkaido in Japan is known as a region with a high concentration of sake breweries, but it wasn't originally a place where sake was produced. Towards the end of the war, when the traditional sake-producing Nada region of Kansai became a target of bombing, the production base was evacuated to the northern lands to prevent its loss. This illustrates how the geographical spread of winemaking was not driven purely by industrial development, but rather by external pressures such as urban destruction. The current location of winemaking facilities itself means the tragic memory of wartime "evacuations."

In Europe, too, we see a combination of dark tourism and wine tourism. The underground cellars of the Champagne region of France functioned throughout both World Wars as air raid shelters, hospitals, and sometimes schools, accommodating thousands of people. Similarly, Milesti Mici in Moldova, now known as the world's longest wine storage facility, was originally a granite quarry. During the Cold War, it was developed as a shelter in the face of the threat of nuclear war and later began to be used as a wine-related facility. These are examples where the physical characteristic of underground brewing spaces—constant temperature—was utilized not only to protect alcohol, but also to protect people from attack during times of conflict.

Thus, even wine tourism, often considered a pleasant form of travel, has aspects of dark tourism when viewed from a different perspective. In this report, I would like to re-examine wine tourism from the perspective of dark tourism in order to enhance its diversity.

Key words: *dark tourism; war; Japan*

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INTEGRATION OF WINE HERITAGE IN TOURISM: CASE STUDY OF MOLDOVA

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This paper examines the transformation of Moldova, a small landlocked nation in Eastern Europe, from a traditional wine-producing region into a prominent global destination for wine tourism. The study utilizes data collected in April 2026 through a combination of desktop and field research, incorporating secondary data from authoritative sources and primary data gathered via participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Thematic content analysis was applied to process the data, with the findings presented through descriptive narratives, tables, and supportive visual materials. The results reveal the deep integration of viticulture within Moldova's economy, heritage, and cultural identity. Wine production in the region dates back nearly 5,000 years to the ancient Cucuteni-Trypillia culture. Since the 14th century, winemaking has been a cornerstone of Moldovan agriculture, serving as a primary supplier to Russian and Polish markets for centuries. By the early 20th century, production had reached 5–6 million barrels annually, though the sector was largely characterized by the mass production of average-quality wines. Following independence in 1991, Moldova underwent a strategic restructuring of its wine sector to overcome a period of systemic crisis. This transition focused on the production of high-quality wines, market diversification, and the adoption of modern winemaking practices. While international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Chardonnay remain significant, producers have increasingly turned toward indigenous grapes, including Rara Neagra, Feteasca Neagra, Feteasca Regala, etc. as well as new selection varieties like Viorica, Alb de Onitcani, etc. These varieties now form the backbone of the Moldovan wine sector, offering a more personalized and terroir-driven consumer experience. This commitment to excellence has been validated by prestigious international awards for Moldovan wines securing 956 medals in 2020 alone. Wine tourism has subsequently emerged as a strategic priority and a central pillar of the national tourism strategy. It serves as a vital tool for rural development, fostering local entrepreneurship and ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage. Beyond the contributions of large-scale state producers, a growing segment of small and medium-sized wineries and artisan winemakers is enriching the tourism landscape by offering integrated gastronomic experiences and luxury accommodations. The National Office for Wine actively promotes the sector under the "A Legend Alive" brand, seamlessly integrating it with broader cultural initiatives. Moldova's tourism infrastructure features some of the world's most extraordinary wine cellars, such as Cricova, an "underground city" with 120 km of tunnels, and Milestii Mici, which holds the world record for the largest wine collection with 1.5 million bottles. Additionally, restored historic sites like Castel Mimi have evolved into globally recognized wine destinations. These findings present Moldova as a compelling case study of an emerging wine nation that has successfully leveraged its viticultural heritage and dedication to quality to establish a prosperous presence in the global market. The evolution offers valuable insights for other regions seeking to enhance their own wine sector and tourism appeal.

Key words: *wine tourism; Moldova; indigenous grapes; integrated experiences; viticultural heritage*

TEDU26

ABANDONED VINEYARDS NEAR PILŠTANJ

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The article will present new archaeological and historical findings about the vineyards in Vinagora or Trška Gorca near Pilštanj in the Kozjansko region of Styria. This striking place with an active local community and rich cultural and natural heritage attracts many visitors today. Hiking trails have been arranged around Vinagora, but the remains of former vineyards are often overlooked by visitors and locals. These remains speak about the rich history of viticulture and economic development in recent centuries. The remains of stone drywalls still bear silent witness to the parcel division of vineyards, which dates back to the Middle Ages, and artifacts discovered in the ruins of the Gorca testify to the everyday life of former vineyard owners. Based on the discovered artifacts, we will also touch on the living conditions of the rural proletariat after the land reform. The analysis of the urbaria of the Pilštanj lordship and the Franciscan cadastre complements our knowledge of the history of these vineyards from the early modern period onwards. In this paper, we will place the Pilštanj vineyard estates in the broader context of the acquisition of the estates of the noble Attems family in the Styrian region and the importance of wine in their beginnings of capital accumulation and expansion of their estates.

Key words: *archaeology; legal history; vineyards; viticulture; heritage*

COMMODIFICATION AS NEGOTIATION: HOW MASTER CRAFTSPEOPLE IN FEZ CONSTRUCT AUTHENTICITY UNDER TOURISM MARKET PRESSURE

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Heritage industries driven by tourism occupy an increasingly central position in both national economies and cultural sustainability agendas, yet the actors who produce and sustain these industries remain peripheral in the scholarly record. A significant body of research has examined how tourists consume, evaluate, and assign meaning to cultural products, while artisans, those who invest years of skill into handcrafting objects that carry cultural weight, have been largely cast as reactive suppliers rather than as agents with their own logic, strategies, and cultural stakes. This paper addresses that imbalance by centering the perspectives of Moroccan artisans and examining how they perceive and navigate a market that now places their handmade work alongside mass-produced printed souvenirs that carry a recognizable Moroccan aesthetic without the craft behind it. Morocco provides an analytically compelling context for this inquiry. The handicraft sector contributes approximately 7% of national GDP and generates an estimated 14 billion USD annually, of which production-based crafts account for roughly 9.6 billion USD. These figures establish artisanal production not as a residual cultural practice but as a structurally embedded pillar of the country's economic and tourism infrastructure. Yet within this same market, factory-manufactured items printed with Moroccan motifs increasingly share shelf space with handmade goods, driven by seller incentives to present both as equally authentic, and by tourist demand shaped by budget constraints that lead many visitors to prioritize price over craft value. Artisans find themselves caught between these converging pressures, negotiating the worth of their labor within a market that increasingly renders the distinction between made and manufactured invisible. The study draws on qualitative fieldwork conducted in the Fez medina and its surrounding artisan quarters. Semi-structured interviews captured artisans' professional trajectories and accumulated experience, situating their perceptions within the broader arc of their craft practice. Photo-elicited questioning then invited participants to respond to images drawn directly from the contemporary market, spanning handmade traditional items and mass-manufactured printed souvenirs that carry a Moroccan visual identity while bypassing the knowledge embedded in craft production. This methodological sequence was designed to surface artisans' own evaluative frameworks rather than impose researcher-led categories onto their experience. Three interconnected theoretical frameworks organize the analytical work. Constructivist accounts of authenticity inform the paper's understanding of how artisans assign and contest cultural value in a diversified market. The glocalization framework provides vocabulary for examining how globally circulating imaginaries of Moroccan craft are selectively absorbed, standardized, or resisted at the local level. Actor-centered approaches to commodification create analytical room for artisans to appear as deliberate agents balancing market imperatives against cultural integrity. Two questions structure the empirical inquiry: first, how do artisans perceive a market in which their handmade work coexists with mass-manufactured objects that appropriate Moroccan visual culture without its embedded

craft knowledge; and second, how do artisans understand and respond to the converging economic pressures of sellers who present both product types as equally authentic, and tourists whose budget constraints increasingly lead them to prioritize price over craft value. These questions carry direct policy relevance as Morocco prepares for the heightened international visibility of the 2030 FIFA World Cup. Understanding how those closest to the craft respond on their own terms is a necessary foundation for any tourism development strategy that takes living cultural heritage seriously.

Key words: *Cultural heritage; Artisans agency; Authenticity; Commodification; Sustainable tourism*

TEDU26

CHARTING THE WINE TOURISM LANDSCAPE: A GIS COMPARISON OF SERBIA AND CROATIA'S UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

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Wine tourism has increasingly been recognized as a significant driver of regional development and an effective instrument for the diversification of local economies. In this context, the present study focuses on Serbia and Croatia, two neighboring countries characterized by diverse viticultural traditions and emerging wine tourism markets. The key objectives are: (1) to conduct a comparative assessment of wine tourism potential in the two countries, (2) to examine regional disparities, and (3) to identify the key factors shaping the spatial distribution of wine tourism development potential. Ultimately, the study aims to provide a robust basis for the formulation of targeted wine tourism development strategies. The methodology integrates Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA). Open geodata (CORINE Land Cover, OpenStreetMap, Google Maps, Digital Elevation Model) were used for the selection and analysis of vineyard areas and wineries. The assessment was conducted through six factors: cultural attractions, accessibility, supplementary tourism offer, ancillary services, natural resources, and accommodation supply. The weighting of factors was carried out by the panel of tourism experts, and the results were cartographically presented through three potential maps. The analysis covered 33 wine subregions, 10 in Croatia and 23 in Serbia. The results indicate pronounced spatial differences based on the assessment of wine tourism potential in both countries: in Croatia, these are the coastal wine subregions of Istria and Dalmatia. The value of wine tourism potential is very high, values 7–9 on a scale of 9. Also, this value was confirmed based on Google open data from 2024, Croatia has 28 registered wineries of which as many as 21 are located in previously mentioned coastal subregions reaching a very high potential. Areas with high potential in Serbia are located mainly on the outskirt of Belgrade metropolitan area and along the Danube River, where accessibility mitigates the weaker infrastructure in other wine-growing subregions. Of about 100 wineries, only 18 in the Belgrade subregion have very high potential. The total vineyard area according to CORINE Land Cover data is 174.7 km² for Croatia and 189.7 km² for Serbia. The level of development of wine-growing infrastructure for tourism purposes is currently on the side of Croatia, while Serbia significantly lags behind in this segment. Both countries have a long wine tradition and a similar past, but the level of wine tourism development between them differs quite a bit. Croatia's membership in the EU enabled the improvement the wine tourism offers, while Serbia's potential remains insufficiently exploited due to underdeveloped wine tourism products, deficient accommodation, weak international recognition and the absence of a wine tourism development strategy. Further research should focus on the application of the proposed methodology in order

to develop an integrated tourism offer and achieve better positioning of wine tourism among other tourist products. Also, it is necessary to conduct qualitative research that would include the attitudes of key stakeholders (winemakers, tourist boards, travel agencies, tourism managers and policy makers), in order to identify the main obstacles and factors of wine tourism development.

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Key words: *wine tourism potential; GIS; MCDA; Serbia; Croatia; transition economies*

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ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE – NETWORK OF THE BALATON CIRCLE (LAKE BALATON, HUNGARY)

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Networks and cooperation have a growing importance in nowadays business life, including companies involved in tourism. Lake Balaton (Hungary) is a leading destination in the country, offering a wide range of high-quality experiences, such as wine and gastronomy. The Balaton Circle network of wineries and gastronomy-oriented businesses, founded in 2014, has the main objective of establishing an all year around destination attractive for both domestic and international visitors. The study's main objective is to map innovation and cooperation practices, furthermore the added value of the network for members. Empirical research is based on semi-structured interviews with members, including winery and gastronomy. The results unveiled the innovation both at individual (company) level, and both on the level of the network. Regarding the contribution of the members, common values and personal commitment is a cutting-edge success factor. The Balaton Circle network clearly provides and adds value for the members which has tangible (e.g. BalatonBor, a community wine), and intangible (e.g. knowledge sharing, lobby power) elements. Besides its theoretical implications, the study as a best practice can give inspiration for other networks involved in wine industry.

Key words: *network; tourism; winery; innovation; gastronomy*

FROM IDENTITY TO ACTION: WINEMAKERS' PERSPECTIVES AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR WINE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE KARST WINE-GROWING DISTRICT

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The Karst wine-growing district in Slovenia represents a distinctive cultural landscape shaped by a unique terroir, long-standing winemaking traditions, and a strong regional identity (Cerezo-Medina et al., 2025). Wine regions are often defined by their specific geographical, cultural, and historical characteristics, which together form the basis of their tourism appeal (Jezierska-Thöle et al., 2025; Kerma, 2018; Kubát et al., 2023). Despite these characteristics, the Karst wine-growing district remains relatively under-recognized as a wine tourism destination, particularly in comparison with other wine regions in Slovenia and beyond. Although Slovenia has a long tradition of viticulture and a rich wine culture, wine tourism is not yet strongly integrated into national tourism strategies (Kerma and Gačnik, 2015; Žibert et al., 2020). Previous research has also highlighted the importance of local actors, particularly winemakers, in shaping wine tourism development, while also pointing to challenges related to stakeholder coordination (Tafel and Szolnoki, 2020; Festa et al., 2020)). In this context, this study explores how local winemakers perceive the development of wine tourism in the Karst wine-growing district and how their insights can inform future development strategies and support the more effective positioning of the region as a competitive wine tourism destination. This study is based on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with five winemakers working in the Karst wine-growing district, including both the Slovenian Karst and the neighboring Italian Karst region. The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, allowing for the identification of key patterns related to regional identity, tourism development, and stakeholder perspectives. The findings reveal a shared understanding among winemakers of the Karst's cultural and symbolic value, particularly in relation to its terroir, traditions, and wine production. However, this identity is not yet effectively translated into a recognizable and competitive tourism product. The findings point to several structural challenges, including limited visibility, fragmented stakeholder collaboration, and a lack of coordinated strategic development. In addition, an insufficient digital presence and underdeveloped storytelling practices further constrain the region's tourism potential. Building on these insights, the study proposes strategic directions for the future development of wine tourism in the Karst wine-growing district. These include strengthening collaboration among winemakers, tourism providers, and local authorities; enhancing the region's visibility through more integrated and strategically targeted promotion; and developing a more holistic tourism offer that combines wine, gastronomy, cultural heritage, and the landscape into cohesive visitor experiences. In addition, digitalization and storytelling are identified as important elements in communicating the region's identity to broader audiences and increasing its international recognition. By focusing on the perspectives of local actors, this study contributes to ongoing discussions on wine tourism, cultural

heritage, and destination development, demonstrating how locally grounded insights can inform more effective and place-based tourism strategies in wine regions.

Key words: *wine tourism; Slovenia; Karst wine-growing district; qualitative research; winemakers' perspectives; destination development*

TEDU26

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WINE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN ISTRIA: STRATEGIC INDICATORS, AUTHENTICITY AND VISITOR PERCEPTION AT WINE FESTIVALS

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Wine tourism represents a significant form of contemporary tourism, combining wine-related experiences with cultural heritage, gastronomy, and landscape, and contributing to the development of rural destinations. It is commonly defined as a form of tourism focused on experiencing wine and related activities, integrating cultural, gastronomic, and experiential dimensions of a destination (Lockshin & Corsi, 2012). The connection between wine and regional identity plays a crucial role, as the synergy between wine culture, tourism, and local identity significantly contributes to sustainable regional development (De Uña-Álvarez & Villarino-Pérez, 2019; Žibert et al., 2020). The Istrian peninsula represents a particularly interesting cross-border wine tourism destination, where Slovenian and Croatian Istria share similar geographical and cultural characteristics, yet develop within different institutional, market, and strategic frameworks. Despite numerous studies addressing wine tourism in individual countries, there is a lack of comparative research examining closely connected regions and exploring how differences in development models are reflected in the structure of the offer and in visitor perception. Existing studies emphasize that the success of wine tourism depends on economic factors, on infrastructure, heritage, branding, and destination management (Alexeev et al., 2025). The aim of this paper is to analyse similarities and differences in the development of wine tourism in Slovenian and Croatian Istria and to examine how different development approaches are reflected in the structure of wine tourism supply and in visitor experience. The study focuses on two selected wine festivals: Istria Wine & Walk (Buje, Croatia) and Festival of Refosco and Slovenian Istria (Koper, Slovenia). Attention is given to perceived authenticity, service quality, visitor satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. Methodologically, the research combines benchmark analysis and survey research. The benchmark analysis compares key strategic indicators of wine tourism development, including infrastructure, wine routes, institutional support, key events, and digital presence. The empirical part is based on a structured questionnaire measuring multiple dimensions of visitor perception: authenticity, service quality, experiential value, destination image, overall satisfaction, and intention to revisit. This approach follows contemporary research emphasizing the importance of the experiential dimension of wine tourism and its impact on visitor attitudes and behaviour (Gómez-Carmona et al., 2023). The expected results will provide insights into how different development models influence visitor experience and which elements of the offer most strongly contribute to perceived destination value. Particular importance is attributed to authenticity, which has been identified as a key determinant

of visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions in wine tourism contexts (Yeh et al., 2025). The contribution of this paper lies in advancing the understanding of cross-border wine tourism development, supporting the creation of more competitive and integrated wine tourism products, and highlighting the role of experience, identity, and sustainability in shaping wine tourism destinations.

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Key words: *wine tourism; Istria; authenticity; wine heritage; visitor perception*

INNOVATIVE WINE TOURISM EXPERIENCES AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GREATER COMPETITIVENESS OF SMALLER WINE PROVIDERS - FROM TASTING TO CREATION

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Wine tourism has, in recent decades, developed into one of the most important forms of specialised tourism, extending beyond wine tasting and cellar visits. In its modern understanding, it connects cultural heritage, gastronomy, natural features, local identity, stories of wine-growing families and the expectations of contemporary visitors. Wine is understood as both a gastronomic and marketable product and as a carrier of space, tradition, knowledge and symbolic meaning. Terroir, as an interplay of natural, cultural and social factors, shapes wine identity and serves as the foundation for creating authentic wine tourism experiences. A wine destination represents a geographical area of wine production and a comprehensive experiential space where wine-growing practices, cultural heritage, local knowledge, hospitality and tourist interpretation intertwine to form a recognisable and meaningful whole. Modern visitors increasingly seek personalised, authentic, aesthetically appealing and participatory experiences. This reflects a shift from the passive wine taster to an active participant who learns about the wine-growing landscape, the production process, local stories and the destination's lifestyle. Wine tourism is becoming an important development mechanism for rural areas, enabling diversification of wine-growing activities, direct contact with consumers, stronger local partnerships and higher added value. For smaller wine providers, boutique and innovative experiences represent an opportunity to differentiate themselves, strengthen their market position and build long-term recognition, especially in competitive and saturated markets. The purpose of the paper is to analyse the possibilities for developing innovative wine tourism experiences using the example of the Patrick Simčič Wines winery in Goriška Brda and to place them within the broader theoretical framework of modern wine tourism, based on authenticity, terroir, storytelling, co-creation and sustainable development. The research addresses how smaller wine producers can upgrade their traditional offer with innovative tourism products, increase competitiveness and reinforce the connection between wine, place and visitors, while responding to changing expectations in contemporary tourism. Methodologically, the paper is based on a case study. The empirical part uses qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with winery guests, representatives of local tourism agencies and winemakers. The interviews were analysed through transcription, thematic coding and interpretive analysis. The theoretical part draws on a literature review of wine tourism, innovation in tourism, experience design, terroir and the sustainable development of wine destinations, providing a comprehensive conceptual background. The results show that authenticity, personal contact with the winemaker, inclusion of the local landscape, opportunities for active visitor participation and the

connection of wine with nature, cuisine, story and sense of place are key to developing a competitive wine tourism offer. Based on the findings, three proposals for innovative experiences were created. The proposed products combine educational, sensory, social and experiential dimensions and enable greater differentiation in the competitive wine tourism market. The paper discusses the intersection of wine heritage, local identity, innovation and tourist experiences, while offering practical insight into how smaller wineries can upgrade traditional tastings with thoughtful experience design, increase added value and contribute to the sustainable and competitive development of wine destinations.

Key words: *wine tourism; innovative experiences; terroir; authenticity; co-creation; Goriška Brda; competitiveness*

TEDU26

BRIDGING SKILLS GAPS FOR THE FUTURE OF TOURISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYERS' AND VET EXPERTS' PERSPECTIVES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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Introduction

The tourism sector is experiencing rapid transformation driven by digitalisation, sustainability, changing visitor expectations and increasing demand for authentic, experience-based destinations. These changes require a workforce equipped with advanced technical, managerial and transversal competencies, while education systems are challenged to respond more effectively to evolving labour market needs. This study explores current and future competence requirements in the tourism sector from the perspectives of employers and vocational education and training (VET) experts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. Particular attention is given to the potential role of European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 5 qualifications in bridging the gap between vocational education and labour market expectations.

Methodology

The research was conducted within the Erasmus+ Capacity Building project EDU5WB using a qualitative research design. Six focus groups were organised across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania, involving tourism employers and VET experts representing vocational schools, higher education institutions, ministries and qualification agencies. Discussions followed a common protocol covering competence needs, digital and green transition, work-based learning, curriculum development and the implementation of EQF Level 5 qualifications. Data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify common patterns, stakeholder perspectives and country-specific differences.

Results and Discussion

The analysis revealed remarkable consistency across the three countries. Both employers and VET experts recognised a growing mismatch between existing tourism education and labour market requirements. Participants consistently identified shortages of practical occupational competencies, digital literacy, communication and interpersonal skills, problem-solving abilities, leadership and customer experience management. Digital transformation and sustainability emerged as cross-cutting competence domains that should be embedded throughout future tourism education programmes. Despite differences in the regulatory maturity of EQF Level 5 implementation, participants agreed that Level 5 qualifications could provide an important pathway between secondary vocational education and higher education by preparing professionals capable of assuming supervisory, specialist and mentoring roles. Work-based learning, closer cooperation between education providers and employers, curriculum flexibility and modular learning pathways were recognised as essential conditions for improving the responsiveness of vocational education systems. Across all three countries, stakeholders also emphasised the need for stronger lifelong learning opportunities and micro-

credentials to respond more rapidly to changing industry needs. Although the research was conducted in the context of EQF Level 5 qualifications, the findings extend beyond qualification frameworks by providing broader insights into the competencies required for the future development of sustainable and experience-oriented tourism destinations. These findings are also highly relevant to wine tourism, where professionals increasingly need competencies in sustainability, digitalisation, heritage interpretation, experience design and stakeholder cooperation to create authentic and competitive visitor experiences.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that strengthening tourism competitiveness requires simultaneous investment in human capital, curriculum innovation and stronger partnerships between education providers, employers and policy makers. Developing flexible qualification pathways and competence-based education systems will be essential for preparing professionals capable of supporting the digital and green transition of tourism. The findings contribute to current discussions on sustainable tourism by demonstrating that destination competitiveness increasingly depends on a workforce equipped with technical, digital, managerial and interpersonal competencies.

Key words: *Tourism competencies; vocational education and training; EQF level 5; lieflong learning; Western Balkans*

TEDU 26

ENHANCING WINE TOURISM THROUGH CULTURAL STORYTELLING

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Wine tourism has transformed into a multidimensional form of tourism that combines product consumption with cultural, historical, environmental, and experiential elements. Unlike other agricultural products, wine derives value from its geographic origin, production processes, and embedded cultural narratives, positioning it as a unique cultural product. In this context, storytelling has emerged as a powerful mechanism for communicating meaning, shaping perceptions, and enhancing visitor engagement, transforming wine from a physical product into a meaningful and immersive tourism experience through narratives of heritage, terroir, and identity. Despite growing recognition of storytelling's importance, existing research remains largely descriptive, offering fragmented insights across separate concepts such as authenticity, co-creation, winescape, and multisensory experience, without an integrated framework linking these dimensions to visitor outcomes. This paper addresses that gap through a conceptual synthesis that examines the concept and dimensions of cultural storytelling, namely cultural and heritage narratives, place and terroir, authenticity, emotional engagement, sensorial attraction, narrative structure, consumer co-creation, and digital storytelling; analyses the theoretical foundations underpinning these dimensions and synthesises empirical evidence on storytelling's direct and indirect effects on wine tourism experience, in order to propose an integrated conceptual framework explaining how cultural storytelling enhances visitor experience and destination competitiveness. The study is guided by four research questions: what are the core dimensions through which cultural storytelling shapes the wine tourism experience; what theoretical foundations underpin cultural storytelling in wine tourism; what does empirical evidence reveal about storytelling's direct and indirect effects on wine tourism experience; and how can these theoretical and empirical insights be synthesised into an integrated framework explaining storytelling's role as a driver of visitor engagement and destination competitiveness. Methodologically, the study adopts a conceptual, narrative-review approach, synthesising seven theoretical perspectives, storytelling theory, narrative persuasion, experiential consumption, co-creation, authenticity, terroir, and digital engagement

theory, with empirical findings from ten key studies on wine tourism storytelling, presented as a structured comparative review used to build an integrated framework rather than to summarise prior findings descriptively. The resulting framework contributes to the literature by addressing what existing research identifies as inadequate: the integration of storytelling features, practical implementation, and comprehensive models capturing storytelling's multidimensional nature. In doing so, the study clarifies how cultural storytelling improves wine tourism by strengthening visitor experiences, building emotional bonds, and supporting branding and marketing initiatives, and offers destination managers and researchers a structured basis for designing storytelling interventions and for future empirical study.

Key words: *Cultural Storytelling; Wine tourism; Visitor Experience; Authenticity*

TEDU26

ENHANCING PASSENGER EXPERIENCE THROUGH ONBOARD WINE SERVICE

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In the increasingly competitive airline industry, enhancing passenger experience has become a key strategic priority, particularly for full-service and premium carriers. While factors such as seating comfort and in-flight entertainment are widely studied, onboard food and beverage services—especially wine service—remain an underutilized yet impactful element of airline hospitality. This paper explores how curated onboard wine service can significantly enhance passenger satisfaction, contribute to brand differentiation, and elevate the overall perception of service quality.

Wine service in aviation is more than a complementary offering; it represents sophistication, relaxation, and attention to detail. Airlines are increasingly collaborating with sommeliers and sourcing high-quality wines to align with their brand image and improve customer experience. However, the unique cabin environment at cruising altitude presents challenges to wine perception. Reduced air pressure and low humidity affect taste sensitivity, often diminishing sweetness and enhancing bitterness. As a result, airlines must carefully select wines with robust flavor profiles that perform well under these conditions. This study highlights the importance of understanding sensory science to optimize onboard wine offerings.

Another critical factor influencing the success of onboard wine service is the role of cabin crew. Well-trained crew members with basic knowledge of wine service can significantly enhance the passenger experience through proper presentation, confident recommendations, and personalized interaction. Training programs that incorporate elements of sommelier expertise enable staff to create a more engaging and refined service environment, particularly in business and first-class cabins.

The integration of wine with in-flight meals is also essential in delivering a cohesive dining experience. Thoughtful wine pairing can elevate meal quality and increase passenger satisfaction. Additionally, cultural and regional preferences must be considered when designing wine menus, especially on international routes, to ensure relevance and appeal to diverse passenger groups.

From an operational perspective, airlines face challenges such as storage limitations, cost constraints, and maintaining consistency across flights. Despite these issues, the long-term benefits of investing in quality wine service – Including improved customer satisfaction, enhanced brand image, and competitive advantage – are significant. Airlines that prioritize wine service often receive higher customer ratings and stronger brand loyalty.

This paper adopts a qualitative approach based on secondary data, industry practices, and insights from hospitality research. It establishes a conceptual link between onboard wine service and passenger experience, emphasizing its role as a key experiential touchpoint in air travel.

In conclusion, onboard wine service is a strategic tool that can transform the in-flight experience when executed effectively. By addressing environmental challenges, investing in staff training, and aligning wine offerings with culinary services, airlines can create a memorable and differentiated passenger journey.

Key words: *Airlines; Onboard; Wines; Service*

TEDU26

LEVERAGING AUGMENTED REALITY AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTION OF HERITAGE SITES IN BADAGRY, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

As digital technologies become more prevalent in heritage tourism, there is an increasing demand for immersive and meaningful visitor experiences, particularly in less developed destinations. Badagry, located in Lagos State, Nigeria, is a significant historical site due to its role in the transatlantic slave trade and colonial history. However, it remains under-visited and offers limited opportunities for visitor engagement. While Augmented Reality (AR) has been implemented at heritage sites globally, it has not yet been introduced in Badagry, and research on its potential in similar contexts is limited. This study examines how visitors in Badagry might perceive and accept AR, as well as its potential impact on their experience. Using a scenario-based survey, the research applies concepts from the experience economy and technology acceptance to assess how AR features such as interactivity, immersion, and ease of use influence visitor engagement and overall experience. The study surveyed 200 participants, including tourists and key stakeholders, and analyzed the data using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Findings indicate that visitors who perceive AR as interactive and immersive are more likely to be engaged, gain knowledge, and express a desire to return. Interactivity and immersion are particularly influential, and individuals with greater digital familiarity have higher expectations. This research contributes new insights on digital tools in heritage tourism from a less-studied location, highlighting the potential of AR to transform heritage experiences and underscoring the need for digital strategies tailored to local contexts to promote sustainable and engaging tourism.

Key words: *Augmented Reality; Heritage Tourism; Visitor Perception; Badagry*

WINE AND HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY CELEBRATIONS: AN ASSESSMENT OF BEVERAGE PREFERENCES AND THE PLACE OF INDIGENOUS DRINKS AT SELECTED SOCIAL EVENTS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Introduction

Beverages play an important role at social events in Nigeria, serving as symbols of hospitality, cultural identity, and social status. Recently, there has been increasing integration of culinary heritage with modern innovations, including wine and cocktails. Weddings and birthday celebrations in particular form a distinct social economy in which food and drink are not incidental but central to how hospitality, status, and community belonging are performed. Beverage choice at these events spans a wide spectrum like imported wines and spirits, carbonated and non-carbonated soft drinks, dairy-based drinks, cocktails, and a cluster of indigenous beverages like palm wine, zobo, and kunu which carry distinct cultural weights even where they are consumed less frequently than conventional options. Palm wine's significance at Nigerian social events extends well beyond refreshment. It is consumed less frequently than conventional drinks. This study evaluated attendees' preferences for beverages offered at both wedding (W) and birthday (B) events.

Methodology

A multi-stage sampling was used to randomly select 150 attendees from two local governments in Lagos state. Structured questionnaires were administered and data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings/Discussion

The results revealed a strong preference for conventional non-alcoholic beverages such as Chivita, Fanta, and Yoghurt, while local beverages such as zobo, kunu, and palm wine were comparatively less preferred. The result also showed that there is significant relationship between ethnicity and the choice of preferred local beverages (kunu, zobo and palm wine) at both events. By integrating palm wine and other indigenous drinks into modern event experiences, stakeholders can foster cultural continuity and create authentic gastronomic attractions that enrich tourism experiences, thereby advancing the volume's broader objective of exploring how tradition and innovation together sustain cultural heritage and tourism development.

Key words: *Beverage Preferences; indigenous drinks; Palm wine; Wedding; Birthday; Lagos State*

VOLCANIC WINES AND ISLAND IDENTITY: TERRITORIAL NARRATIVES, HERITAGE CONSTRUCTION AND WINE TOURISM IN THE AEGEAN ARCHIPELAGO

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Volcanic wines have become increasingly important within contemporary wine tourism and destination branding strategies. Beyond their oenological characteristics, they serve as cultural and symbolic resources through which island communities communicate territorial distinctiveness and construct place-based identities. This paper explores how volcanic wines contribute to the production of territorial narratives and tourism experiences in the Aegean archipelago, focusing on islands such as Santorini and Nisyros, where volcanic landscapes represent a defining element of both environmental and cultural heritage.

The research adopts a qualitative geographical approach combining field observations, landscape analysis, documentary research and the examination of tourism and promotional materials. Particular attention is devoted to understanding how wineries, tourism organizations and local stakeholders transform volcanicity from a physical characteristic of the landscape into a symbolic asset capable of generating cultural, economic and tourism value.

The analysis reveals that volcanic wines function not only as agricultural products but also as powerful territorial symbols. Volcanic landscapes, traditional viticultural practices, local histories and environmental constraints are incorporated into destination storytelling, creating narratives that emphasize authenticity, resilience and uniqueness. Through wine tourism experiences, visitors are encouraged to engage with the relationship between geology, landscape and culture, transforming wine consumption into a broader process of territorial interpretation. In this context, volcanic terroir becomes a key element in destination differentiation, helping small island regions position themselves within increasingly competitive tourism markets.

The findings also highlight how volcanic wines contribute to the patrimonialization of island landscapes by linking geological heritage with agricultural traditions and contemporary tourism practices. These processes strengthen local identity while supporting forms of tourism development based on cultural and environmental specificity. The growing international interest in volcanic wines therefore reflects not only changing consumer preferences but also broader transformations in the ways destinations mobilize landscape and heritage as strategic resources.

The paper argues that the Aegean Islands provide a valuable case for understanding how wine, landscape and identity interact in the construction of destination narratives. By examining volcanic wines as instruments of territorial storytelling, the study contributes to current debates on wine tourism, heritage-based destination management and the role of agricultural landscapes in shaping distinctive and sustainable tourism destinations.

Key words: *Vulcanic Wines; Heritage; Wine Landscapes; Territorial Narratives; Aegean Islands*

TEDU26

REINVENTION OF HIBISCUS WINE (ZOBO DRINK) AS A GASTRONOMIC AND WELLNESS TOURISM PRODUCT IN NIGERIA: PERSPECTIVE OF TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS IN SOUTHWESTERN, NIGERIA

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TEDU26

Hibiscus wine, commonly referred to as Zobo in Nigeria is commonly brewed by traditional healers for its diuretic and antihypertensive properties at inception. Beyond medicinal value, Zobo has longed served as an indigenous household beverage, served in family and communal events. The global shift of attention to consciousness in healthy foods and sustainability in all spheres of human life necessitated studying this nature's gift (Zobo) with a view to underscore its capability in promoting Nigeria as a gastronomic and wellness tourism destination. The study adopted survey as its research design. The study population consisted of tourism stakeholders (Hospitality/Catering, travel/tour service providers, tourism destination managers, government officials, Zobo producers and academics in tourism and hospitality discipline) in Southwest, Nigeria. A total of 156 respondents were selected using multistage sampling techniques; respondents were first categorized into population sub-strata, systematic sampling method was used to select Hospitality/Catering and travel/tour service providers, purposive sampling method was used to select destination managers, government officials and Zobo producers while availability sampling method was used to select academics. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and interview. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data were content analysed. Findings revealed that Hibiscus wine production method has witnessed series of changes from inception to date even though it's still a cottage industry. Zobo is perceived as an indigenous asset that can be incorporated into beverage services in hotels, restaurants and national events (M = 3.39; SD = 0.668) which should be branded with quality packaging outlook (M = 3.56; SD = 0.592). Regulatory (NAFDAC) certification (49.4%)

and consistent taste profile (32.7%) were found most critical factors for Zobo to be considered a flagship product in Nigeria. Zobo's health benefits can be used to market Nigeria as a Wellness Tourism Destination with its medicinal and nutritional qualities written on its packaging labels. Zobo producers should be given special consideration and government support to encourage large-scale production (M= 3.28; SD = 0.537). However, majority (32.7%) and (30.8%) of tourism stakeholders perceives consumer preference for foreign brands and short shelf-life/production technology respectively as major barriers to mainstreaming Hibiscus wine into Nigeria's tourism landscape. In addition, there is a significant relationship (r = 0.234; P = 0.00) between Zobo's potentials as a gastronomic asset and its reinvention as a branded flagship product. Promotion of medicinal and nutritional qualities of Zobo significantly relates (r = 0.392; p = 0.00) to the reinvention and acceptability of Zobo. Also, government policies and commercialization efforts have a highly significant effect (p = 0.00) on the reinvention of Zobo as a tourism product. The study concludes that Zobo can be successfully reinvented as a flagship gastronomic and wellness tourism product in Nigeria. It is recommended that Hibiscus wine producers focus attention on NAFDAC certification, consistent taste profiling and enhancing quality branding of the product. Government should formulate policies that will consciously improve commercialization of Zobo to further promote Nigeria as a gastronomic and wellness tourism destination.

Key words: *Reinvention, Hibiscus Wine (Zobo), Gastronomy Tourism, Wellness Tourism Tourism Stakeholders*

TEDU 26

THE PALM WINE, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND HERITAGE TOURISM IN NIGERIA: REFRAMING OF INDIGENOUS WINE IN GLOBAL WINE DISCOURSES.

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Wine is commonly known as a symbol of culture, identity and tourism growth especially in the mature wine producing countries like Bordeaux and Tuscany. Nevertheless, the modern definition of wine as legacy continues to be highly influenced by Eurocentric culture and in most cases, it does not include the non-grape-based and indigenous wine cultures. This paper discusses critically the ways in which wine can be reconstructed as a more cultural construct through the use of palm wine in Nigeria as a living heritage as part of the identity, memory and communal practices. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study draws on cultural heritage theory and experiential tourism frameworks to analyse the meanings attached to palm wine within Nigerian societies. Data for the study were gathered through document analysis, ethnographic narratives and cultural records, with emphasis on rituals such as marriage ceremonies, libation practices, festivals and communal gatherings. The study utilized qualitative content analysis and interpretive methods to analyse the data gathered for the study. The results point to the idea that wine, when perceived beyond its traditional definitions, can be interpreted as a changing and culturally specific heritage resource. Palm wine in Nigeria is not a definite and staged notion of authenticity, but an active and dynamic practice, with the community shaping. This questions the prevailing discourses of wine tourism that tend to ascribe authenticity to tradition, without considering the processes of adaptation and reimagining. The study also found that digital tools can transform wine heritage tourism through digital storytelling, virtual engagement and social media platforms that enhance the visibility and accessibility of indigenous wine cultures. These innovations enable communities to reclaim and reinterpret their heritage for contemporary audiences while transforming palm wine traditions into immersive tourism experiences that balance cultural integrity with modern expectations. When discussing the connection between authenticity and technological innovation, the paper indicates the necessity of a balanced approach to the integration that would retain cultural meaning and allow creative expression. It also highlights the significance of community contribution in the curating and presentation of wine heritage so as to make tourism development inclusive and sustainable. Finally, this study adds to ongoing debates on how wine is interpreted as heritage in the contemporary world. It expands the scope of wine tourism discourse by incorporating non-Western perspectives and demonstrates how emerging destinations like Nigeria can position indigenous wine traditions within global tourism narratives. By linking cultural memory, authenticity and digital innovation, the study offers an integrated framework for reimagining wine heritage tourism in the future.

Key words: *Palm Wine, Wine Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Digital Innovation, Cultural Identity, Authenticity*

AFRICAN-THEMED RESORT DESIGN AND TOURISTS' PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY IN NIGERIA

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African-themed resorts are curated cultural landscapes that merge heritage preservation with tourism innovation. This study examines the relationship between African-themed resort design and tourists' perception of cultural authenticity at KAP Film Village and Africhatta Film Village and Resort in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study is grounded in experiential and heritage tourism discourse, where destination aesthetics and cultural representation influence how visitors interpret identity, tradition, and place meaning. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data were collected from 340 tourists using structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Qualitative data were obtained through field observations and informal interactions, providing contextual insights into cultural representation, design elements, and visitor experiences within the resorts. The findings indicated that African themed architectural design strongly enhances tourists' perception of cultural authenticity. The architecture reflecting indigenous identity recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43), culturally inspired artworks and décor ($\bar{x}$ = 3.37). Cultural performances ($\bar{x}$ = 3.36), festivals ($\bar{x}$ = 3.32) and traditional arts and crafts ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30) were also highly rated, suggesting strong visibility of cultural elements. Tourists further affirmed that the resorts provide meaningful cultural exposure ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31) and meet expectations of heritage representation ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28) indicating that the destinations function as curated cultural landscapes. A statistically significant relationship exist between African-themed design and tourists' perception of authenticity. Positive correlations were found between design and cultural heritage perception ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.05$), architectural aesthetics ($r = 0.324$, $p < 0.05$) and integration of culture, environment and hospitality ($r = 0.268$, $p < 0.05$). Additional significant relationships include African identity beyond entertainment ($r = 0.215$, $p < 0.05$), authenticity of cultural performances ($r = 0.205$, $p < 0.05$) and participatory cultural engagement ($r = 0.160$, $p < 0.05$). Qualitative findings revealed that visitors interpret design elements such as carvings, spatial layout and symbolic décor as markers of authenticity. Observations further indicated that storytelling elements embedded in performances and

environmental design enhance the immersive experience, positioning the resorts as spaces where culture is actively staged and experienced rather than passively observed. The study concluded that African-themed resort design significantly shapes tourists' perception of cultural authenticity while creating immersive and meaningful heritage experiences. By combining visual aesthetics with narrative and participatory elements, these resorts function as hybrid tourism spaces where tradition is preserved and innovatively reconstructed within experiential tourism frameworks.

Key words: *African-themed design, Cultural authenticity, Resort, Tourists' perception*

TEDU26

FRACTAL DRAWING AS A SENSORY WINE EXPERIENCE: CONNECTING TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN TOURISM

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Contemporary tourism increasingly emphasizes experiential, participatory, and creative approaches that enable visitors to actively engage with the local environment. Wine tourism represents an important field for connecting cultural heritage with modern tourism practices. The aim of this paper is to explore the potential of fractal drawing as an innovative tool for interpreting wine heritage and enhancing the traditional wine tasting experience.

The paper is based on a conceptual analysis and the development of a creative workshop model that combines sensory wine perception with artistic expression. The methodological approach integrates elements of experiential learning, sensory wine analysis, and art-based techniques of fractal drawing. A three-stage model is proposed, consisting of wine tasting, guided sensory perception, and the visual interpretation of the experience through fractal drawing.

The findings suggest that fractal drawing enables the transformation of complex sensory wine experiences into visual forms, where individuals express perceptions of color, aroma, structure, and intensity through lines, patterns, and color compositions. Each wine can thus develop its own distinctive "fractal identity," opening new possibilities for interpreting wine narratives and differentiating tourism offerings. This approach encourages a deeper understanding of wine, enhances visitors' emotional engagement, and supports intergenerational interaction and the inclusion of diverse target groups.

Fractal drawing as a sensory wine experience represents an innovative approach in wine tourism, connecting the tradition of viticulture with creative and participatory forms of experience. The paper highlights the potential for developing creative tourism based on visitor involvement, heritage interpretation, and the creation of unique and meaningful experiences.

Key words: *wine tourism; fractal drawing; sensory experience; creative tourism*

FROM ACCOMMODATIONS TO LUXURY EXPERIENCE HUBS: INVESTIGATION OF THE HUNGARIAN LUXURY WINE HOTELS

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The following research provides an overview of the natural surroundings, the wine region, range of hotel services and physical servicescape of the luxury wine hotels currently operating in Hungary. The integration of the Hungarian tourism and wine industry has undergone significant qualitative and structural changes in the recent decades, with the emergence of wine hotels representing a novel, dynamically developing segment of this trend. The theoretical framework is based on the literature review on wine tourism, Hungarian wine regions and wine hotel characteristics, while the empirical section draws on primary and secondary data collection and analysis. In the framework of qualitative research method, in-depth interviews were conducted with the managers of leading wine hotels in the most significant domestic wine regions (Tokaj, Villány, Eger and the Lake Balaton). The research results highlight that the luxury wine hotels in Hungary are no longer merely establishments offering accommodation and wine tastings, but rather comprehensive experience centres. In line with modern consumer demands, wine wellness (vinotherapy), fine dining, and gastronomic tourism based on local ingredients are becoming increasingly prominent among their services. The empirical results indicate that the functional operations of domestic wine hotels clearly differ from traditional wellness hotels; the core of a successful service palette consists of proprietary wine tastings, vineyard tours, wine-gastronomy dinners, and innovative vinotherapy treatments. At the same time, the study highlights the challenges facing the sector, such as a shortage of skilled labor, infrastructure disparities among wine regions and limited use of digital marketing tools. A strategic framework focusing on closer cooperation between wine hotels, local small-scale producers and regional destination management organizations is proposed based on the research results. This integrated approach can ensure the long-term sustainability of Hungarian wine tourism and its successful positioning in international markets. The future development of the wine hotels depends essentially on the formulation of sustainable and integrated development strategies that reposition Hungarian rural tourism in the global market through the strengthening of the national wine brand. Overall, the research study concludes that the investigated Hungarian luxury wine hotels function not firstly as accommodations, but as complex experience hubs.

Key words: *cultural landscapes; winescapes; wine hotels; wine regions; Europe*

CHALLENGES OF INDIGENOUS GASTRONOMY IN TOURISM

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Tourism can promote native produce, products, and heritage. It is essential to shed light on the connection between regional eats and indigenous culture so that the intangible values of history, culture, and wisdom embedded in native and authentic gastronomy are more widely shared. Despite emerging research on gastronomy in tourism, the debate over the underrepresentation of indigenous gastronomy in the current tourism remains underexplored. Taking case studies of two native subnational food cultures in Indonesia, this study explores the challenges facing Papuan (Melanesian) gastronomy in West Papua and the palm wine (i.e., saguer) of the Minahasa people in North Sulawesi, through participatory observations, semi-structured interviews with local accommodation representatives, and literature reviews.

The national (Indonesian), Western, and Oriental cuisines are common in the food services of starred hotels because they use standardized menus with relatively stable supplies. Starred hotels do not incorporate indigenous gastronomy into their daily breakfast menus. Indigenous cuisine can be prepared in catering services only at the event holder's request, though it is relatively rare. Non-star hotels and inns predominantly do not provide food service. Informal homestays provide full-board accommodation with homemade meals made from ingredients sourced from the nearby market, though indigenous food is yet to be found. Indigenous staples such as sago have become less common in the daily household consumption of the natives, except for special ceremonial occasions. Indigenous gastronomy is inadequately represented in contemporary tourism due to changes in local diets, hotel standards, and an import-dominated food supply chain. Local markets and starred hotels outsource a more affordable and stable food supply from outside the region. Besides, the engagement of indigenous people in the hospitality industry, especially in food services, remains limited.

The nationwide restriction on alcohol beverage production and sales in Indonesia consequently impedes production, consumption, and gastronomic innovation involving native palm wine, thereby threatening its existence and potentially leading to the loss of part of the native food culture. As with other tangible and intangible aspects of a community that embraces authenticity, the appreciation of native produce and products ought to be preserved and shared more broadly, for example, through gastronomy tourism. Using native palm wine and liquor to innovate meals and foodstuffs, and/or exploring their pairing potential to enhance the gastronomic experience could be other avenues. Despite being markedly different from grape wine, palm wine shares common roles in promoting and sustaining local food culture, heritage, and identity. Drawing on relatively marginalized food cultures in the Global South, this study offers unique insights and invites further debate beyond the topic of grape wine and heritage.

Indigenous gastronomy embraces gastronomic authenticity, cultural heritage interpretation, and destination identity. Yet it is often poorly integrated into standardized hospitality, limiting its potential. Further investigation into its untapped potential and the reduction of barriers are crucial.

Key words: *indigenous; gastronomy; hospitality; tourism*

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INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WINE TOURISM AND DESTINATION MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF THE VIPAVA VALLEY

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Vipava Valley is one of Slovenia's nine wine-growing districts. Its geographic position, history, and established best practices in linking wine tourism with cultural heritage provide a solid foundation for even faster destination development.

During the lecture, participants will learn about the marketing, heritage, and geographical features of the Vipava Valley. A key focus will be placed on diversifying the tourism offerings and tailoring them to specific target groups to achieve higher added value and ensure year-round availability.

The presentation will also address certain barriers to destination development, exploring how to overcome them by implementing best practices and innovative approaches across the entire development and marketing chain, of course also digitalisation.

Additionally, it will highlight what works and what does not in destination marketing. Since the Vipava Valley borders other prominent wine regions – such as the Karst, Goriška Brda, and Friuli on the Italian side – opportunities for broader cooperation, both product-wise and logistically, will also be presented.

Ultimately, the core of this development is sustainable tourism and niche target groups with specific interests, all aimed at leveraging the full diversity that the Vipava Valley has to offer throughout all seasons.

Key words: *Wine is not enough; Being innovative; Collaboration*

A LITERARY WALK AT MALHADINHA NOVA ESTATE

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Portugal has a long-standing winemaking tradition that continues to play a significant role in both regional and national economies. Within this context, the Malhadinha Nova Estate represents a distinctive example of an integrated wine, hospitality, and agricultural project, where production is closely intertwined with culture, landscape, and experience design. In 2025, a literary walk was developed at the estate as an innovative interpretative model that connects wine tourism with storytelling practices. This research paper presents the literary walk as a case study to explore how literature can add a new experiential and symbolic layer to wine tourism destinations. By embedding carefully curated fictional texts, poetry, and narrative fragments into the physical environment, the walk encourages visitors to engage with the landscape not only through the lens of terroir and production, but also through imagination, memory, and emotion. In doing so, the estate is reframed as a narrative space where sensory engagement is enriched by interpretative meaning. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, including landscape reading, textual curation, experience design, and visitor interpretation. This methodological framework enables an understanding of the literary walk both as a designed tourism product and as a cultural practice that mediates between place and visitor. The findings suggest that storytelling significantly enhances place attachment and visitor engagement, fostering deeper, more reflective tourism experiences. Literature functions as a bridge between tangible and intangible heritage, allowing visitors to co-create meaning and develop a more personal connection to the destination. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential of literary interpretation as a strategic tool for sustainable tourism development, contributing to cultural preservation while diversifying the experiential offer. In conclusion, the integration of storytelling into wine tourism represents a promising pathway for creating immersive, meaningful, and culturally grounded visitor experiences. The case of Malhadinha Nova demonstrates how narrative-based approaches can transform traditional wine tourism into an interpretative journey that is in line with contemporary demands for authenticity, sustainability, and emotional engagement.

Key words: *wine tourism; storytelling; literary routes; experience design; cultural landscape; visitor engagement; place attachment; sustainable tourism; Portugal; Alentejo*

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