

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF WINE TOURISM MODEL IN THE OLTENIA REGION

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Abstract

Wine tourism model is an industry with great prospects for economic development in the rural areas of the Oltenia Region. This study develops a conceptual framework of wine tourism model through a review of the relevant literature and an exploratory study of the Oltenia region. Although it has a wine industry with development prospects, the region is well positioned to market new tourism products after the COVID-19 pandemics, which contain the wine experience and product based on a unique regional identity in Romania.

The maps made in this exploratory study can thus be integrated with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) databases to better understand the environmental exploration and defining elements of Romanian vineyards.

For the map with defining elements of vineyards in Romania (for the tourism model), focused on the Oltenia region exploratory study, the data were downloaded from National Institute of Statistics (NIS), for the year 2023.

In conclusion, we believe that it is necessary to develop new wine products after the COVID-19 pandemic, containing the wineries and vineyards of the South-West Oltenia region, but also the organization of wine festivals, because they can provide a favorable environment for the development of new collaborative partnerships and investments between wine producers and stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Key words: *wine tourism, table grapes, wine grapes, vineyards, cartographic method – GIS*

INTRODUCTION

The amphitheater between the Danube, Parâng and the legendary Olt, this wine-growing region Oltenia - represents the oldest wine-growing area in Romania (<https://www.gds.ro/Local/2018-11-16/oltenia-o-mica-romanie-winery/>). Oltenia represents a true and authentic wine-growing area, as it is framed in multiple microclimates and soil types, has a complete variety of wine types (white, red, aromatic, wine distillates) and table

grapes and raisins (<https://ro.scribd.com/document/610161321/Areale-viticole-din-Oltenia>).

According to the author Vilcea & colab. (2024), oenological tourism represents a dynamic concept that is based on two interconnected economic sectors (1) wine production, and (2) tourism, each of the two sectors having extremely important implications for the development of the local economy, as well as from the point of view of view of the extremely different

lifestyle of the inhabitants of the rural environment compared to the urban one.

The wine industry is one of the most representative markets globally, thus it is made up of small and medium enterprises that operate at local, regional or national level (Grechi et al., 2024).

According to the author Tănase & colab. (2022), wine is considered a consumer product associated with people's lifestyle. Wine tourists can be divided into: (1) active tourists (2) and potential tourists (Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2010) Thus, active wine tourists are characterized by the fact that they are wine consumers and have visited at least once a winery, and potential wine tourists are characterized by the fact that they are wine consumers but have never visited a winery.

The post-pandemic development of wine-related tourism products can be seen as a whole as an intersection of two economic industries, such as tourism and wine situated in wider contexts for the explored wine region and also of the wine landscape (Hall et al., 2000; Holland et al., 2014). The marketing of these products is a combination of developments specifically linked to wineries and public investment in wine tourism (Getz & Brown, 2006). According to the author Cambourne & colab. (2000), the development of wineries and vineyards as tourism products encouraged entrepreneurs to enter the wine industry with small-scale production and lifestyle motivations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are widely used to analyze, edit and visualize geographic data for various purposes (Vilcea et al., 2023), in our case it is the area of vineyards worldwide, the areas cultivated with vines -de-vie at the European level, the location of wineries in Romania and last but not least, the oenological tourism practice areas in the Oltenia Region.

According to the author Constantinescu & colab. (2023); Drăguleasa & colab. (2024), GIS represents a "software that can

provide users with a combination of geospatial information management tools and methods that allow researchers to collect, analyze, edit and visualize geospatial data".

The maps made in this exploratory study can thus be integrated with GIS databases to better understand the environmental exploration and defining elements of Romanian vineyards.

By examining the defining elements of Romanian vineyards with GIS, managers can thus rapidly develop an exhaustive and accurate spatial database with consistent data to monitor spatial patterns over time (Vianna et al., 2019; Minasi et al., 2023). Bonfante et al. (2015), GIS allows for the collection and processing of high-resolution topographic data and, last but not least, is useful for vineyard and winery management at a microscopic scale of land area.

The map plays the most important role in geographic methodology (Figure 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6), as well as in geographic thinking and language, it provides us with the most suggestive images of the distribution of geographic phenomena in space.

Diagrams are simpler representations compared to maps and also (Figure 4), easier to make, they are used more and more in tourism geography, but not only, due to the expansion and diversity of statistical-mathematical methods.

The main advantage of the diagrams is that, in relation to the text, they show only through a few lines, more synthesized the research phenomena both quantitatively and qualitatively (in our case it is about Figure 4. total production of grapes, by counties).

Quantitative methods and computer technology are the two basic elements that gradually led to the emergence of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which have only one common goal, that of spatial analysis of georeferenced data.

In order to create the cartographic material from this exploratory study, the data sources used are the following: (1) National Institute of Statistics. Available online:

<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, (2) Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. OM 1205/2018; Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development: Bucharest, Romania, 2018. <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/201889>, (3) [geo-spatial.org](http://www.geo-spatial.org): Available online: http://www.geo-spatial.org/vechi/?s=download&c=dow_da te; <http://geo-spatial.org/vechi/download>, (4) Natural Earth. Cultural Vectors at 1:10m— Free vector and raster map data at 1:10m, 1:50m and 1:110m scales. Available online: <https://www.naturalearthdata.com/downloads/10m-cultural-vectors/>, (5) CORINE Land Cover 2018 (Vector/Raster 100 m), Europe, 6 years—Copernicus Land Monitoring Service. Available online: <https://land.copernicus.eu/en/products/corine-land-cover/clc2018>, and (6) Map of cheese and wine producers. Available online: <https://www.crameromania.ro/zone-viticole-producatori-vin-branza>.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Area of vineyards worldwide and areas cultivated with vines in Europe

Analyzing the area of vineyards worldwide (Figure 1), we note that the largest areas are on the European continent (Spain, France and Italy), followed by the Asian continent (China), and the smallest areas are occupied by Asia, Africa, North America, South America and Europe.

The worldwide vineyard area location map was made using ArcMap 10.7.2 and involved downloading data from <https://www.naturalearthdata.com/downloads/10m-cultural-vectors/>. After which, for each country, the available ha value was inserted into the attribute table.

The process consisted of creating a new field in the attribute table called "live date" and manually inserting the data for each country. Following this procedure, I created the classes and chose their appropriate color scheme.

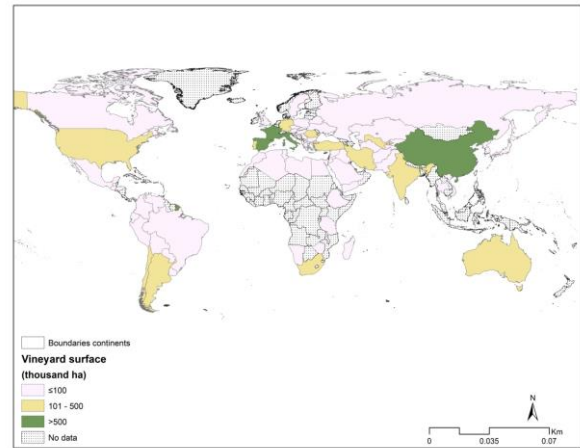


Figure 1. Map of the location of the vineyard area worldwide

Source: data processing authors ArcGIS 10.7.2
<https://www.naturalearthdata.com/downloads/10m-cultural-vectors/>

Regarding wine producers, worldwide there are two important types (Wines of Balkans

<http://www.winesofbalkans.com/wine-tourism.html>; Hernandez, 2010): (1) producers from the Old World, including most European countries, such as (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Romania, and Hungary), and (2) New World wine regions (Australia, Argentina, Chile, United States of America, Czech Republic or South Africa) (Wine Tourism South Africa <http://winetourismsouthafrica.co.za/2014/02/13/marketing-the-atmospherics-of-wine-tourism/>; Hanykova et al., 2014).

For the representation of the CLC 2018 map at the European level, we downloaded the data from Copernicus, after which the transformation of the CLC 2018 data from the ETRS89 projection into Stereo70 was carried out (Figure 2); this tool is found in the following mode: Data Management Tools – Projections and Transformations – Project. The Clip Tool was used to cut the shapefiles to the desired size and scale. The map export preparation was done by switching from the Data View window to the Layout View variant.

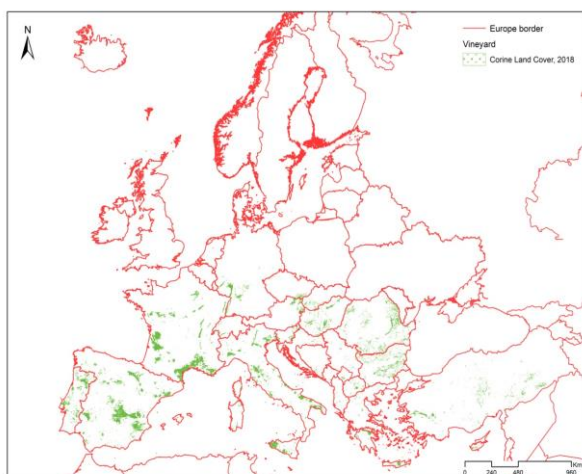


Figure 2. Map of the areas cultivated with vines in Europe

Source: data processing authors ArcGIS 10.7.2
<https://land.copernicus.eu/en/products/corine-land-cover/clc2018>

Wine tourism model in the Oltenia Region

For the map with defining elements of vineyards in Romania (for the tourism model), focused on the Oltenia region exploratory study (Figure 3), the data were downloaded from NIS, for the year 2023. After they were downloaded, they were prepared in Excel and imported into the attribute table of counties at the level of Romania in the two categories: table and wine grapes, expressed in tons.

The map contains the wine-growing regions in Romania, the big cities, the national roads with an emphasis on the South-West Oltenia Region.

The wine-growing regions in Romania are: Oltenia and Muntenia Hills, Moldavia Hills, Dobrogea and Transylvania Plateau, Crisana and Maramureș, Banat, Danube terraces and sandy areas and other areas favorable for cultivation in South-West Romania. Also, the current Romanian legislation delimits for Romania 8 regions, 37 vineyards and 180 centers as main taxonomic units

(<https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/201889>).

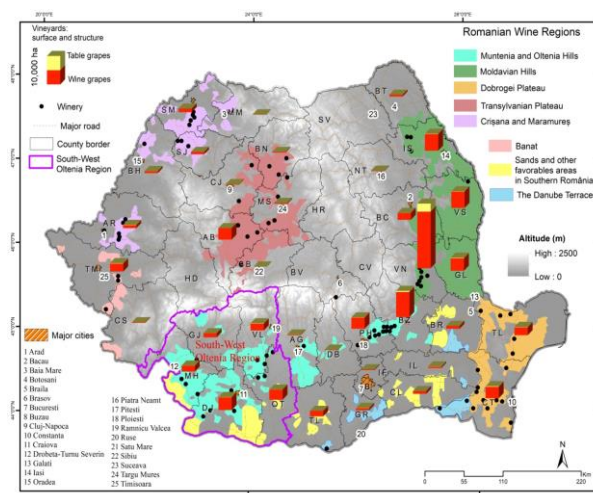
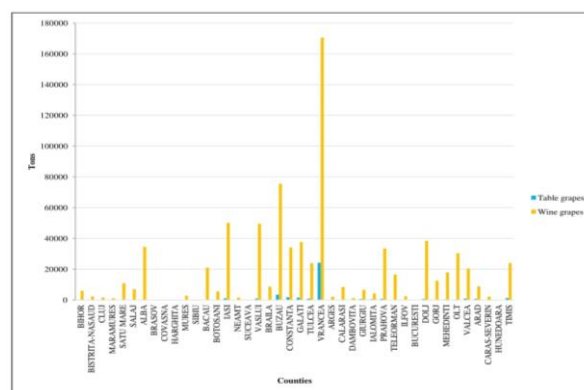


Figure 3. Defining elements of vineyards in Romania,

focused on exploratory study Oltenia Region

Source: data processing authors ArcGIS 10.7.2
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>; http://www.geo-spatial.org/vechi/?s=download&c=dow_date; <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/201889>

Investigating the statistical data from the NIS, for the year 2023 there is only one county in Romania that has the highest total production of table grapes (24227 tons) and wine grapes (170529 tons), this is Vrancea from the wine region Dealurile Moldovei (Figure 4).



of obtaining wine (Guțan et al., 2023), of the traditional "must" this truly represents a unique and unmistakable experience, compared to visiting a winery.

On the other hand, as in all tourist destinations, the location is the main pillar, as it is the framework in which the wine tourism experience is based. The location of the practice of oenological tourism is particularly significant, considering that the vineyards must be planted on a specific land with specific characteristics of the vine (García Revilla & Martínez Moure, 2021).

Practicing oenological tourism in the rural areas of the Oltenia Region, which offers a varied range of complementary activities throughout the calendar year, means that it is possible to reduce seasonality and thus result in new (stable) jobs over a longer period of time (Cava Jimenez et al., 2022; Olteanu & Gabor, 2022).

The rural environment specific to each village or commune in the Oltenia Region offers tourists, at every step they take on the paths, a diversity of traditional activities, but also new opportunities for relaxation and, why not, rejuvenation (Drăgan et al., 2024). For this purpose, the natural characteristics of an area, either rural or urban, tend to be valuable resources that, through their physical and cultural attributes, build specific identities and communities (Drăgan et al., 2024b).

Activities such as walking and riding, hunting, sightseeing, fishing, picking berries offer tourists new opportunities after the COVID-19 pandemic to enjoy peace, connect with the environment and appreciate extraordinary natural landscapes (specific to the rural area).

According to Drăgan et al. (2024c), the low cost of tourism products and services contributes to the attractiveness of rural destinations for tourists who want to experience country life with a relatively low budget, compared to urban destinations.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we believe that it is necessary to develop new wine products after the COVID-19 pandemic, containing

the wineries and vineyards of the South-West Oltenia region, but also the organization of wine festivals, because they can provide a favorable environment for the development of new collaborative partnerships and investments between wine producers and stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The post-pandemic COVID-19 development of new tourist products created in wineries and vineyards presents two aspects, first of all, it addresses either organized and individual tourism, domestic tourists, as well as foreign tourists (Crăciun et al., 2022), and in other secondly, it represents a fundamental problem in full revitalization due to the need for new activities, which do not involve the measures imposed during the Coronavirus period (Bădiță et al., 2015).

Tourist attractions are also included within the tourism products, which are defined by the wealth of natural and socio-cultural tourism potential with interesting value (Nyulas et al., 2024), which attract a considerable number of travelers far from their homes (Popescu et al., 2023).

During wine festivals, tourists can purchase various souvenirs of the wineries and vineyards visited. According to the most recent study "Souvenir practices of domestic tourists" souvenirs play a key role after vacation in stimulating memories (Lupu et al., 2024). Thus, souvenir sellers can generate income for the local community (Light et al., 2024).

Despite the important contributions made by the research undertaken, it is important to note that the study also has certain research limitations. Firstly, the first limitation concerns the nature of the data used, as it is secondary. In order to successfully overcome this limitation, as a future line of research, we propose to carry out an opinion survey to find out, through primary data, what are the motivations of tourists in terms of visiting wineries in the Oltenia Region. Secondly, the second limitation of the research refers to the expansion of the analysis beyond the context of Romanian wine.

In future research, the team of authors will focus on knowing the profile of the wine tourist who visits the wineries in the South-West Region of Oltenia, but not only, because they can be extremely important elements regarding diversity that then characterize the behavior, needs and preferences of different groups or segments of wine tourists.

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Data are contained within the article.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or the decision.

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