

# Wine tourism in southern Italy: A surge in popularity and economic impact

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**Abstract.** The paper explores the increasing role of wine tourism in southern Italy, focusing on its economic, cultural, and environmental impact. It highlights how this form of tourism supports local economies through direct sales, benefiting related sectors like hospitality and transportation. The study aims to quantify the value of different components of wine tourism offers and their influence on prices, using the hedonic pricing model. Data from 232 wineries and 627 wine tourism experiences were analyzed. Key factors affecting prices include the number of wines tasted, inclusion of local products, vineyard visits, and the presence of a sommelier. Wine tourism is shown to enhance consumer loyalty, improve attitudes toward wine, and support sustainable practices. The study suggests that wineries adopting eco-friendly methods can benefit from higher consumer interest and pricing potential. It also notes limitations such as the sample size and the reliance on online data, proposing further research to expand understanding of the relationship between sustainability and wine tourism demand.

## 1. Introduction

Wine tourism represents an economic activity with increasingly significant cultural and social aspects. It involves millions of tourists each year who are interested in exploring, tasting wines from the regions they visit, and immersing themselves in the viticultural culture and traditions. Wine tourism promotes direct sales in wineries, contributing to their economy while enhancing and preserving the local wine heritage. Additionally, it offers an opportunity for wine regions to develop sustainable tourism, promoting local products and traditions. This form of tourism creates an authentic connection between producers and consumers, strengthening the identity and reputation of wine destinations on an international level. The economic aspect is primarily driven by the sale of wine tourism packages by winemaking businesses, generating cash flows not only for the wineries but also for related sectors such as restaurants, hotels, transportation, etc. In wine regions worldwide, wine tourism is a way to diversify economic activity, mitigating exposure to the variability of the wine market and culturally allows visitors to deepen their understanding of wine traditions. In the social realm, wine tourism encourages interaction and exchange between people from different cultural backgrounds. Experiences such as tastings, winery and vineyard tours, and wine festivals are fundamental to

fostering a vibrant and ever-growing wine market. In terms of sustainability, wine tourism steers towards increasingly sustainable agricultural practices, both ethically and environmentally, as visitors are becoming more aware of sustainability issues.

Wine tourism is currently a relatively new branch of global tourism, capable of leveraging economic, cultural, and environmental aspects to offer unique experiences. Wine regions that invest in infrastructure and services to attract wine tourists are increasing in number, promoting their territory and products on an international scale.

In Italy wine tourism not only supports direct sales at wineries but also creates a substantial economic impact on local economies, involving sectors such as restaurants, hospitality, and retail. Moreover, the wine tourism market is becoming increasingly important for sustainable development strategies, promoting cultural heritage and local traditions. In 2023, wine tourism generated a total revenue of approximately 2.9 billion euros (Città del Vino, Nomisma, 2024). To develop experiential tourism, wineries have equipped themselves with specific accommodations, in addition to the presence of the winery itself and tasting rooms. In the early stages of wine tourism development, existing wineries were adapted to welcome visitors. Later, new wineries, established in the last twenty years, were designed with spaces for tastings, sales, and tours from the start. The demand for wine

tourism activities is continuously growing, also thanks to ongoing promotion at the international level. More and more tourists are incorporating wine tourism experiences into their travel plans. Although the data is encouraging, little is known about the effect that this kind of tourist offerings have on wine consumers. The study by Gomez-Carmona et al. (2023) examines the impact of the wine tourism experience on the consumer. The results of the study show that through the wine tourism experience, consumers improve their attitudes towards wine, their evaluation of both extrinsic and intrinsic attributes, and their loyalty to different wines. Furthermore, to help marketers better understand their potential audience and market orientation, segmentation based on the level of wine tourism experience can prove essential. The study conducted by Colombini D. (2015) divides wine tourists into four main groups: occasional wine tourists, talent scouts and reporters, classic wine tourists, and luxury lovers. Each group is analyzed based on its consumption patterns, expectations, and behaviors. The study defines an initial pioneering phase during which existing wineries adapted to the increase in tourists, transforming into modern wineries with areas specifically designed to welcome visitors. Subsequently, it classifies Italian wineries into three main types: "functional wineries" focused on production efficiency; "cathedrals," which are historic buildings restored or modern designs where aesthetics play a central role; and wineries with a "strong identity" linked to the founder or the winemaker, reflecting a passion for winemaking. The study also highlights the importance of Italian wine-related elements, such as gastronomic centers and natural attractions, in addition to the rich cultural heritage, in attracting wine tourists from around the world. Lastly, it assesses business and communication aspects, with particular attention to the use of the web.

The findings presented in the article "How to promote sustainable wine tourism: Insights from Italian and French Young Adults" by Vecchio et al. (2024), which focuses on promoting sustainable wine tourism, indicate that the intention to engage in sustainable wine tourism is correlated with higher levels of involvement in the wine world and increased awareness of environmental issues. Therefore, the study confirms that consumers more engaged in the wine world are more likely to visit a sustainable winery and that positive attitudes toward environmental issues are predictors of wine tourism intention.

Additionally, a higher individual perception of having resources, such as time and money, to engage in wine tourism increases the intention for sustainable wine tourism. Thus, perceived behavioral control positively impacts the intention to experience sustainable wine tourism. Similarly, the results indicate that the perception of social pressures from family and friends among young adults is a relevant factor in the intention to engage in sustainable wine tourism.

The results highlight that the sustainable orientation of wineries plays a key role in influencing the choices of wine tourists, suggesting that adopting sustainable practices

brings benefits to wine tourism businesses. The adoption of eco-friendly and sustainable viticulture and production practices, the commitment to preserving and promoting the vineyard landscape, including through waste separation systems, and the availability of public transport access to the winery are significant aspects that positively influence the intention of young adults to engage in sustainable wine tourism. These aspects, therefore, deserve careful monitoring by both private and public stakeholders interested in promoting this type of tourism.

Scientific literature has focused on understanding consumer behavior and, consequently, the motivations behind the choice of wine tourism offers. However, it is necessary to understand the value that consumers attribute to the characteristics of a wine tourism offer and how much they are willing to pay for them by analyzing the relationships between the selling price and the main attributes of these experiences.

### 1.1. Objective of the work

The objective of the research is to estimate the value of individual components of a wine tourism offer and quantify their influence on the final price of the proposals, made by wineries through their websites. To achieve this goal, a methodology based on the hedonic pricing model was adopted. This methodology considers the final price of a product as a function of its characteristics (attributes) and allows to estimate the implicit prices of such characteristics, not directly observable by the consumers.

In the present study, this approach allows for an understanding of how much each component of the wine tourism offer impacts the final price of the proposal and, to apply the methodology, data related to both the selling prices of wine tourism offers and their characteristics were obtained by visiting the websites of major companies operating in southern Italy.

The collected data was used to set up a regression equation, where the price of the offers represents the dependent variable, and the characteristics of the offers (attributes) constitute the independent variables. This makes it possible to determine how each characteristic (attribute) affects the price of the offer shown on the website. The prices derived from this analysis are essential for understanding the decisions of consumers and producers, evaluating which characteristics of wine tourism experiences the consumer is willing to pay a higher price for. Ultimately, understanding how the characteristics of experiences influence the market price is crucial for producers. This study aims to provide useful information for business strategy, helping companies to develop and promote their offerings in line with consumer preferences. Strategic decisions based on this data can lead to better market positioning and greater customer satisfaction.

## 2. Methodology: the hedonic pricing model

The hedonic pricing method has its roots in agricultural economics and the first application of the hedonic

regression methodology to the study of market prices is attributed to Adam M. Rosen (1974). He stated that the purpose of his work was to clarify the meaning and interpretation of implicit prices estimated based on observations related to a competitive market where consumers and producers interact. The main goal of the hedonic pricing method is to specify the influence of individual characteristics on the overall value of a good. Consequently, in the econometric model, the dependent variable is the price of the good, and the explanatory variables are its characteristics. Moreover, the model is divided into two distinct phases: the first phase involves determining the hedonic equation, which will describe the relationship between the value of the good and its specific characteristics. In the second phase, the implicit price of each characteristic is calculated using the partial derivative of the hedonic equation with respect to that characteristic. For a successful application of a hedonic study, a preliminary phase is essential, during which meticulous data collection, analysis, and cataloging are carried out regarding the object of the analysis. The theory of hedonic pricing assumes that each individual perceives a given good as a package of attributes and that different combinations of these attributes result in different levels of utility. Thus, a class of goods can be defined by  $n$  measurable and objective characteristics, and each good can be represented by a vector of coordinates:

$$Z = (z_1, z_2, \dots, z_n) \quad (1)$$

where  $z_i$  measures the quantity of the  $i$ -th characteristic possessed by the good. The products belonging to a particular class can be described by numerical values of  $z$ , offering consumers a wide range of characteristics. Each characteristic vector corresponds to a price vector that relates prices and characteristics:

$$P(Z) = p_i(z_1, z_2, \dots, z_n) \quad (2)$$

Clearly, consumers do not evaluate the good itself but chooses the one that best satisfies their needs, ideally the one that has all the characteristics that maximize their utility. Consumers, when making a choice between multiple goods within the same category, will focus their analysis on the number of characteristics that each possesses.

From the price function  $P(Z)$ , by deriving with respect to the  $i$ -th characteristic, the marginal price of that characteristic is obtained, that is the price the consumer pays to obtain a good with one more unit of the characteristic  $z_i$ , keeping all other characteristics constant. Each product is associated with a function  $P(Z)$ , which relates prices and characteristics, effectively equivalent to the hedonic regression obtained by comparing the prices of products with different characteristics. Since market equilibrium is viewed from both the consumer's and the producer's perspective, it is essential to analyze both consumption and production decisions.

## 2.1. Data Collection

The application of the hedonic model required, as the first phase, the collection of the necessary data to set up the hedonic model equation. For this purpose, a sample of wine tourism companies located in the southern regions of Italy and present on the websites of the two main Italian wine tourism associations, Movimento Turismo del Vino and Città del Vino, was created. Furthermore, the sample was expanded by adding additional companies present on specialized wine tourism platforms such as Tripadvisor, WineTourism, and Winedering. In total, a sample of 232 companies was reached, located in the following regions: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Molise, and Sicily.

For data collection, the companies' websites were visited to gather information on the wine tourism experiences offered and related information, such as price, duration, and the specific characteristics, so that 627 wine tourism experiences provided by 232 wineries were collected. Table 1 shows the variable considered.

**Table 1.** Variables considered for wine tourism proposals.

Variable	Categories
Location	Apulia, Abruzzo, Campania, Sicily, Basilicata, Calabria, Molise
Price and time	Price, Duration (minutes), Price per hour
Types of experiences	Tasting, Local typical products, Lunch or dinner, Picnic, E-bike, Visit to places, Cooking classes, Harvest, Visit to other company sites (laboratory, barrel room, tasting room, etc.), Number of wines tasted, Vineyard tour, Winery visit, Others (Yoga, olive oil tasting, etc.)
Guide for visiting	Staff member, Oenologist, Sommelier, Owner
Language	Italian, English, French, German, Portuguese, Polish, Spanish, Russian, Chinese
Structural characteristics	Online shop, Accommodation availability, Restaurant availability
Presence in wine tourism platforms	Tripadvisor, Winedering, Movimento Turismo del Vino, Città del Vino
Presence in social media	Facebook, Instagram, Other social networks
Certifications	Organic wines, Environmental certification, Ethical certification

## 3. Results

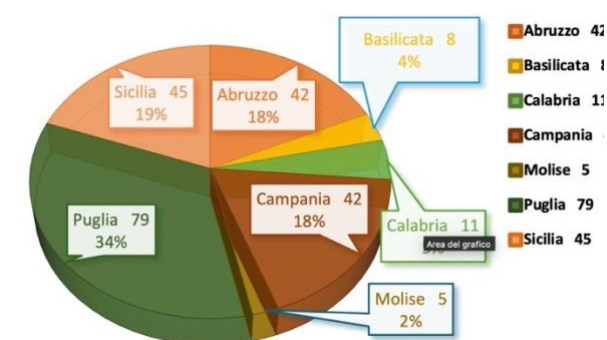
### 3.1. Descriptives characteristics of the sample

The statistical analysis of the data collected enabled a descriptive analysis of the sample.

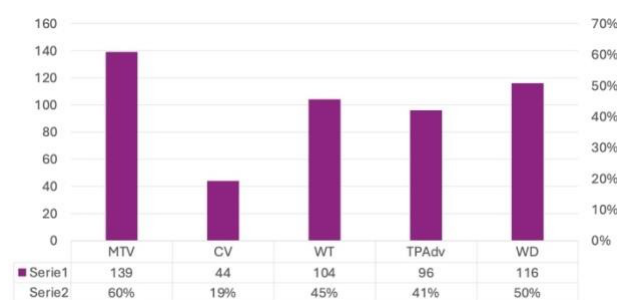
Figure 1 shows that 34% of the companies considered are based in Puglia, 19% in Sicily, 18% in Abruzzo, and 18% in Campania. It should be noted that the small number of companies present in the regions of Molise, Basilicata,

and Calabria is related to the smaller size of these regions, both in terms of land area and vineyard surface.

The platforms consulted for the company search were primarily Movimento Turismo del Vino and the National Wine Cities Association, which accounted for 60% and 19% of the references, respectively, while a small portion of the sample was obtained through the Winetourism (WT), Tripadvisor (TPAdv), and Winedering (WD) platforms. Finally, it was found that 45% of wineries are present on the WT platform, 41% on TPAdv, and 50% on WD (Figure 2).



**Figure 1.** Regional distribution of the 232 wineries of the sample.



**Figure 2.** Wineries on digital platforms.

Movimento Turismo del Vino, Città del Vino, WineTourism, Tripadvisor, Winedering.

In the sample were recorded 627 different experiences, accounting the larger number in Puglia with 31%, followed by Sicily (27%), Campania (21%), and Abruzzo (15%). Next are Basilicata, Calabria, and Molise with 3%, 2%, and 1%, respectively, results that are in line with the number of wineries per region.

The average number of experiences per winery is 2.70, with Sicily recording the highest figure at 3.78 experiences per winery, indicating a high diversification in the types of experiences available for wine tourists to choose from. Lower than 2 experiences per winery are recorded in Calabria and Molise, with an average of 1.45 and 1.0 proposals, respectively. However, it should be noted that the sample examined for these two regions is relatively small.

Table 2 shows that the Wine tasting is present in almost all proposed experiences, 94.1% and it is often linked to the sampling of typical local food products (73%). Experiences often include visits to the winery, vineyards, or other company locations such as the barrel room, laboratory, or company museum. The winery visit is present in 88.4% of cases, while the vineyards are accessible in about half of the offerings, and finally, visits

to other company locations are included in 78.9% of the options. The average number of wines tasted is 3.58, while in 240 tastings, equal to 26% of the offerings, the number of wines tasted is 3, with the maximum number of wines tasted being 10.

**Table 2.** Experiences offered by wineries.

Total number of experiences		627
Wine tasting	590	94.1%
Typical local product	458	73.0%
Lunch or dinner	92	14.7%
Pic-nic	17	2.7%
E-bike	5	0.8%
Sightseeing	7	1.1%
Cooking class	7	1.1%
Other	14	2.2%
Grape harvest	7	1.1%
Average nr. of wine tasted	3.58	
Minimum nr. of wine tasted	0	
Maximum nr. of wine tasted	10	
Visiting the vineyard	343	54.7%
Visiting the winery	554	88.4%
Visiting other places in the winery	495	78.9%

The average price of the offerings across the total sample is € 36.18, with Campania and Sicily showing a higher-than-average value, while Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Molise, and Puglia have a price lower than the total sample average (Table 3). A customer spends this amount on average for the wine tourism experience alone. However, it should be noted that often the visit to the winery or the tasting of wines and local products encourages the consumer to purchase products directly on-site, generating additional revenue for the company. Calabria records the lowest average value at € 22.72, which is 38% lower than the average. The minimum recorded price was € 0 for free experiences, which included only the winery visit (only 2 observations in the sample); the maximum price, on the other hand, was €320. The average hourly price was €19.54, with an average duration of 120.67 minutes and a maximum duration of 2880 minutes, or 48 hours, indicating an experience extended over several days.

**Table 3.** Pricing of experiences.

Price Avg	36.18 €
Price Min	- €
Price Max	320.00 €
Price per hour Avg	19.54 €
Price per hour Min	- €
Price per hour Max	89.00 €
Time Avg (minutes)	120.67
Time min (minutes)	30
Time Max (minutes)	2880

Data were also collected regarding the person responsible for guiding the visitor through the experience, defining the options as: staff, winemaker, sommelier, owner, or more than one figure. The most frequently recorded figure was a staff member, followed by the owner of the company in 10.58% of cases, while the figure of the winemaker and sommelier were recorded in just over 5% of cases. Data regarding the available language provide important insights into the companies' ability to attract and accommodate an international audience. The English language is available in 91.23% of cases, making it present in almost all experiences. This information reflects the wineries' attitude to interact with wine tourists of different nationalities, indicating openness to the global market and the adoption of marketing strategies aimed at diversifying the customers (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Relational Marketing.

Total number of experiences	627	
Staff	524	83.57%
Enologist	32	5.10%
Sommelier	34	5.42%
Owners	68	10.85%
More than one person	30	4.78%
Italian	627	100.00%
English	572	91.23%
French	70	11.16%
German	24	3.83%
Portuguese	12	1.91%

Spanish	46	7.34%
Other languages (Cin, Pol, Rus, etc)	41	6.54%
only it/en	444	70.81%

Figure 3 is referred to the presence of the wineries on the most popular social networks, namely Facebook and Instagram, with the entirety of the sample present on the former platform and 98% present on Instagram. Furthermore, it was recorded that 53% of the companies are also present on other social networks such as LinkedIn, X, YouTube, Pinterest, etc.

**Figure 3.** 81ea1d35

Figure 4 highlights the presence of certifications in the 232 companies analyzed, offering a significant insight into the level of commitment of the wine sector towards sustainable and responsible practices.

The main environmental and ethical certifications are: EQUALITAS, SQNPI sustainable quality, ISO 14001, SOSTain sustainable agriculture, V.I.V.A. certification, AIAB Guarantee, GEEIS Diversity, DNV GL water footprint/carbon footprint. This data allows for an evaluation of the spread of sustainability and social responsibility initiatives among wine producers, highlighting the importance attributed to environmental management and ethical practices in wine production. A high percentage of certified wineries may indicate a strong awareness and a positive response to the growing consumer expectations for sustainable and transparent products. Moreover, sustainability certifications become an added value and a differentiation strategy useful to attract a customer base that is increasingly attentive and aware of the environmental and social impact of the products they purchase.

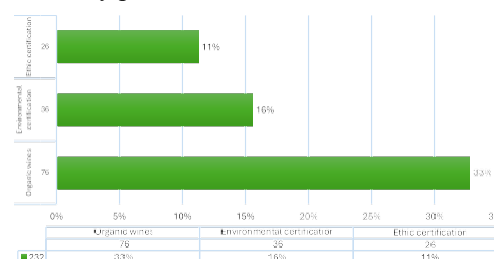
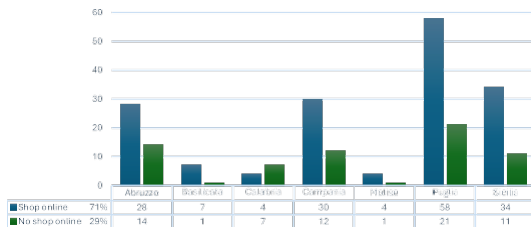
**Figure 4.** Presence of certifications.

Figure 5 shows that 71% of the analyzed companies have a section dedicated to the online shop for wines and other company products. Considering that the sample includes a large number of small to medium-sized companies, it can be deduced that these companies are still paying attention to the use of e-commerce. Therefore, many wineries are adopting digital strategies to sell their products, aiming to remain competitive through the use of technologies that, until a few years ago, were exclusive

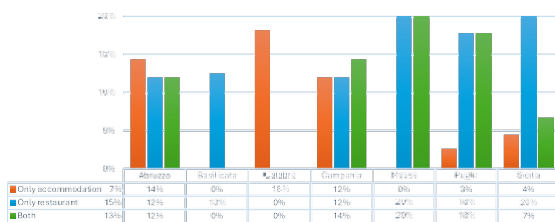
to large and structured companies or specialized winesales marketplaces.

**Figure 5.** E-commerce details.

Figure 6 highlights that 13% of the total sample offers the possibility to have lunch and/or dinner and stay overnight at their facilities; 15% of the wineries offer only the possibility to have lunch and/or dinner, but do not provide the option to stay overnight; at 7% of the



companies, it is possible to stay overnight, but there is no



dining option. These data summarize how wineries are focusing on experiential tourism, aiming to attract wine tourists by creating a deeper and more lasting connection with customers. Furthermore, it shows how the wine sector, once structured almost exclusively vertically, is increasingly structuring itself horizontally, diversifying the offer to meet the needs and expectations of a more demanding and conscious clientele.

**Figure 6.** Restaurants and accommodation.

The hedonic model is based on the concept that a given product is considered as a set of characteristics that can be individually evaluated by the consumer. The final price of the good is clearly observable, while the value of the good's attributes is implicit. The utility perceived by the consumer comes from the characteristics of the good, i.e., the benefit obtained from the product's specifics rather than its consumption. In the present study, the products are represented by the wine tourism proposals from companies, each characterized by a set of features (or attributes) that potential visitors consider when making their purchasing decisions. The hedonic methodology allows for estimating the implicit value of these characteristics based on the explicit price of the offer, using regression analysis.

The dataset has been realized using Microsoft Excel, as the primary tool for data collection and organization. Initially, relevant parameters for the analysis were defined, such as the names of the wineries, the regions they belong to, the wine tourism activities offered, etc. The collected data were then entered into an Excel spreadsheet and, furthermore, Python programming software was used to perform the econometric analysis with the data it contained. Thanks to its versatility and the vast libraries available, Python proved to be highly suitable for data analysis. Additionally, Python integrates easily with other

tools and software, such as Excel for importing and exporting data, making it highly useful for cleaning, processing, interpreting, and communicating data.

In order to choose the variables to include in the model, a correlation analysis was carried out between the price variable and all possible regressors (i.e., the independent variables). Only variables for which there was a statistically significant correlation were considered.

The model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \ln \text{Price} = & \alpha + \beta (\text{Duration (minutes)}) + \gamma (\text{Typical local products}) + \delta (\text{Lunch or dinner}) + \eta (\text{Cooking class}) + \theta (\text{E-bike}) + \vartheta (\text{Harvest}) + \mu \\ & (\text{Number of wines tasted}) + \pi (\text{Vineyard visit}) + \rho (\text{Sommelier}) + \sigma (\text{English}) + \varepsilon \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

The variable "Price" is the dependent variable and represents the price of the experience. The price and the regressors "Duration" and "Number of wines tasted," which express the duration in minutes and the number of wines tasted, were considered continuous variables, while the others, being qualitative in nature, were coded using dichotomous or dummy variables as further specified in Table 5.

**Table 5a.** Results of the model estimation, model performance.

Nr. observations	Adjusted R-square	R-squared	F-statistic	Log-Likelihood
627	0,453	0,481	24,25	-324,69

**Table 5b.** Results of the model estimation.

	Coef.	Std.Err.
<b>const</b>	2.265	0.227 ***
<b>Time (minutes)</b>	0.001	0.000 ***
<b>Puglia</b>	0.075	0.167
<b>Abruzzo</b>	0.103	0.168
<b>Campania</b>	0.173	0.175
<b>Sicilia</b>	0.271	0.169
<b>Basilicata</b>	0.040	0.194



<b>Calabria</b>	-0.161	0.231
<b>Wine tasting</b>	-0.190	0.127
<b>Typical local products</b>	0.191	0.039 ***
<b>Lunch or Dinner</b>	0.500	0.049 ***
<b>Pic-nic</b>	0.179	0.119
<b>Sightseeing</b>	0.158	0.164
<b>Cooking class</b>	0.696	0.128 ***
<b>E bike</b>	0.604	0.091 ***
<b>Others</b>	0.142	0.117
<b>Grape harvest</b>	0.547	0.217 *
<b>Nr. of wine tasted</b>	0.107	0.016 ***
<b>Visiting the vineyard</b>	0.090	0.038 *
<b>Visiting the winery</b>	-0.068	0.061
<b>Visiting other places in the winery</b>	0.081	0.042
<b>staff</b>	0.145	0.078
<b>enologist</b>	0.133	0.075
<b>sommelier</b>	0.151	0.067 *
<b>owners</b>	-0.114	0.096
<b>English</b>	0.316	0.072 ***
<b>French</b>	-0.053	0.060
<b>German</b>	-0.069	0.072
<b>Portuguese</b>	0.071	0.139

<b>Polish</b>	0.152	0.113
<b>Spanish</b>	0.103	0.076
<b>Russian</b>	-0.048	0.150
<b>Chinese</b>	-0.164	0.104

The first variable highlighted in the table is "Time (minutes)," that is, how long the entire wine tourism experience lasts; the model demonstrated significance. This is easily explainable since a longer wine tourism experience is likely related to a more structured and complex package, thus with a higher value.

For the "Typical local products" variable, the model also demonstrated significance. Specifically, an experience that includes the tasting of local products will have a price 19.1% higher. Including the tasting of local products increases the value of the experience and raises the costs that the company must bear, which justifies the higher price charged.

The "Lunch or dinner" variable shows strong positive significance. Including a lunch or dinner at the winery increases the price of the wine tourism package by 50%. This surcharge is likely explained by the fact that the cost of raw materials, organization, and necessary facilities significantly increases the costs for the company. Moreover, providing an experience that includes a restaurant service of adequate quality requires the presence of qualified personnel, which translates into higher costs.

The "Harvest" variable showed a 54.7% increase in the cost of the experience. Being able to participate in the harvest process alongside the staff creates direct involvement in the production operations, offering the wine tourist an authentic and immersive experience, which justifies the higher cost. Visitors are willing to pay more for a unique experience.

Offering a wider range of wines for tasting entails additional costs for the winery, especially if the wines included are of high quality or renowned vintages. These costs are reflected in the price of the experience, as shown by the "Number of wines tasted" variable. The coefficient of 0.107 shows that there is a positively proportional relationship between the cost of the package and the number of wines tasted: as the number of wines tasted increases, the cost increases by 10.7%. The more wines tasted, the more preparation is required from the staff, who must provide detailed explanations about each wine, its characteristics, the winemaking process, and tasting techniques. This increases the educational value of the experience and, consequently, its cost.

The "Vineyard visit" variable also demonstrated significance. If the offer includes a visit to the company's vineyards, the price increases by 9%. The surcharge is justified because qualified personnel, such as winemakers or viticulturists, are required to provide detailed

explanations about cultivation practices, the varieties of grapes grown, and the agricultural techniques used. Vineyard visits extend the overall duration of the wine tourism experience, requiring more time from both visitors and the company's staff. Vineyard visits can only be managed by the guide for a limited number of participants to ensure a high-quality experience, and all these factors are reflected in the price.

The "Sommelier" variable demonstrated significance with a coefficient of 0.151. The presence of a sommelier allows the tastings to be tailored to the preferences and curiosities of the visitors, providing personalized recommendations and answering specific questions. The sommelier plays a crucial educational role, guiding the wine tourist through the tastings and offering detailed explanations about the wines, winemaking techniques, organoleptic characteristics, and food pairings. This educational capacity and enhanced sensory perception of the wines add significant value to the experience, resulting in a 15.1% increase in cost.

Finally, the "English" variable also demonstrated significance, with a positive coefficient of 0.316. Offering the experience in English opens the door to a wider international audience, allowing for targeted promotions in foreign markets. This can also help position the winery as a prestigious and high-quality destination, differentiating it from the competition and attracting a clientele willing to pay more for an exclusive and personalized service. The staff must be adequately trained to conduct tours and tastings in English, which entails additional costs for language training and certifications necessary to ensure an adequate level of service. The added value provided by the option to offer the visit in English is justified by a 31.6% higher price.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the wine sector, Italy plays a fundamental role in terms of history, culture, traditions, production, economic impact, consumption, and exports. Wine tourism has a relatively recent origin, but its spread is now widespread and continuously developing. Therefore, a study of this phenomenon is necessary to best exploit the opportunities related to it. The subject of this work analyzed a sample of 323 companies and a total of 627 wine tourism proposals in the regions of Southern Italy. The methodology used involved the construction of a dataset, the analysis of some descriptive statistics related to the collected data, and finally, the application of the hedonic price model to search for information regarding the correlation between price and the characteristics of the observed wine tourism proposals.

The results of the hedonic model highlighted the significance of variables concerning the total duration of the proposal, the number of wines tasted, the tasting of typical local products, the presence of lunch or dinner, the offering of a harvest-related experience, the inclusion of a vineyard visit, the presence of a sommelier as a guide, and finally, English as the language of the guide, which

translates into the ability to host international wine tourists.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the study conducted presents limitations common to similar studies carried out on samples of consumers or businesses. A first limitation is related to the number of companies analyzed, as the sample considered does not represent the totality of companies operating in wine tourism in Southern Italy. Moreover, the data collected were obtained exclusively through the observation of websites, so the portion of wineries operating in wine tourism but lacking a website was not included in the study. Another limitation is the low frequency of some variables, which could explain the non-significance of some of them.

This study highlights the importance of market analyses for wineries and how conducting them allows companies to gauge consumer perceptions of the characteristics of wine tourism proposals and the reasons guiding purchase decisions.

Finally, the prospects for the wine tourism sector, particularly the Italian one, still present unexplored potential. Firstly, expanding the sample would lead to more reliable and significant results; additionally, extending the research to other Italian regions and comparing the Italian scenario with the international one would provide a broader overview, allowing for a greater understanding of the phenomenon. Given the growing importance attributed to environmental and ethical sustainability, the research could also further explore the impact of eco-sustainable practices on the price of wine tourism proposals.

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