

THE CONTRIBUTION OF WINE TOURISM TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TOURIST DESTINATION IN CRETE, GREECE

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Abstract

Wine tourism has been developing dynamically in recent years, playing an important role in regional, business and tourism development, employment and boosting investment. Wine tourism is related to the experiences of tourists who come in direct contact with wine and agricultural activity. Wine tourism consists of a complex of activities that provide intense experiences combined with the heritage and culture of the place about wine, creating deep feelings, emotions and impressions on tourists. Visitors of a tourism destination want to have a variety of wine tourism experiences and have placed wine in their high preferences as an important part of their daily lives combined with gastronomy.

Wine tourism contributes positively to traditional rural areas by creating new jobs and giving a strong competitive advantage to wine production, offering profits to their businesses. Undoubtedly, wine tourism has brought great economic growth in many areas of Greece. Wine tourism offers the possibility of increasing the income criteria of a population, increasing employment and the development of the national economy. Wineries contribute to the tourism development of many tourism destinations. The choice of a destination related to wine is influenced by the presence of a winery company which is the main motivation for the visit. Clearly, there are other incentives that are relevant either to the destination or to specific activities.

The visitor's experiences, knowledge about the wine and their expectations determine the visit to a winery. The "Wine Roads" have great interest, which are specific selected routes that cross the vineyards of a specific geographical area and include wineries, specialized wine tasting and selling shops and restaurants. Visitors can experience landscapes of unique natural beauty by exploring authentic Greek vineyards and knowing famous wineries. They are also given the opportunity to tour traditional settlements and villages with unique attractions. The purpose of this research is to highlight the role of wineries and the "Wine Roads" with a case study in Crete, Greece. It also aims to highlight the many opportunities that wine tourism brings with the contribution of entrepreneurship. A bibliographic review is carried out on the research approaches that have been done at international and Greek level

and at the same time primary qualitative research was held. The presentation of the research findings particularly emphasizes the contribution of the wine companies and the "Wine Roads" in the emergence of a destination, to be distinguished by utilizing the wealth of wine tourism in the context of endogenous development.

Keywords: *Wine tourism, wine, wineries, "Wine Roads", entrepreneurship, tourism development, Crete, Greece.*

1. Introduction

Wine tourism is a strong, constantly growing form of alternative tourism with a very significant economic contribution to wine-producing countries. Its character, on the first level, reveals the recreational role that dominates most parts of tourism. But the wine producing industries identified and predicted the huge economic benefit, which would come from the general regional development of each place and directed their business movements towards analyzing and then improving the conditions to welcome those interested. The long-term sustainability of wine tourism in tourism destinations relies on strict laws to maintain high quality production (Williams, 2003). Wine legislation requires wineries to implement business operations that do not affect the quality of the wine, the composition and the origin of the raw material, compliance with geographical indications, and even control over viticulture and winemaking practices (Sparks, 2007, Pratt, 2014). Wineries are required to implement plans, which maintain the favorable conditions of each region to the extent that enables them to guarantee top quality wine year after year (Williams, 2001, Bruwer, 2003).

Wine tourism is a special form of tourism, both in terms of supply and demand. The businesses focus on the authentic characteristics of the wine business (Carlsen, 2004). From the demand side, it is important to know the needs and preferences of visitors, as well as the motivations that lead them to engage in wine. Hall and Macionis, (1998), define wine tourism as the visit to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine exhibitions for which the tasting of grapes and/or the particularities of the wine-growing region are the primary factors for the visitors (Sparks, 2007). Other authors say that the development of marketing strategy and planning is included in wine tourism (Getz et al, 1999, Pratt, 2014). Domenico and Miller, (2012), support that the definitions of agritourism could be classified into three groups: 1) definitions related to the type of environment, 2) the authenticity of the agricultural establishment or experience and 3) the types of related activities. The European Network of Wine Cities defines wine tourism as the development of leisure activities dedicated to the discovery and familiarization with the cultural background, with the wine, but also with the region that produces it. Wine tourism is part of the special and alternative forms of tourism and is considered a subcategory of agrotourism or outdoor tourism (Kaldis, 2008).

Wine tourism is a form where interested visitors visit wineries and vineyards for the purpose of tasting, observing, learning, "hospitality" (Carlsen, 2004, Sparks, 2007). Visitors also learn about the wine route. It is worth mentioning that the existence of the wine tourism activity implies the visitor's desire to learn about wine and to taste it (Williams, 2003). Wine tourism involves the senses and emotions (Pratt, 2014). The studies that have been carried out have highlighted the need for more research on the sensory dimensions of tourism experiences, as this factor can contribute to better tourism management and improve visitor satisfaction. Wine tourism is emerging as a growing area of special interest tourism based on tourists' desire to visit wine regions or choose to visit wine producing regions and wineries, while traveling for other reasons. This tourism activity is both a form of consumer behavior, a strategy with which destinations develop and commercialize wine-related attractions and images, and a marketing opportunity for wineries to educate and sell their products directly to

consumers. From a consumer perspective, wine tourism is defined as visiting vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine fairs, for which wine tasting or experiencing the characteristics of a wine region are the main motivational factors for visitors.

The tourism experience is physical and multisensory. Tourism organizations need to pay attention to the sensual content of advertising messages conveyed to potential tourists to provide incentives to seek enriched experiences of the place. Along with other image-shaping agents, travel articles provide information and sharpen the imagination about new destinations by creating expectations and influencing their subsequent travel decisions and behaviors. Bonnie's research, (2019), examines winery visitation criteria and motivations to determine, first, the presence of goals that dominate goods instead of experience, and second, whether a dominant motive will influence visitors' perceptions of winery benefits and the brand in general. It further expands the relationships between dominant motivations and consumer profile characteristics (Williams, 2003). The empirical results show two types of visitors: wine buyers and winery vacationers. The results show that wineries need to design a tasting process that provides potential buyers with clear information and purchase opportunities. For "vacationers," the tasting process is just another aspect of a winery attraction and may not have the same level of importance as a source of information as it does for wine "buyers." (Alant, Bruwer, 2004). Therefore, a large research gap appears to exist in wine tourism, in which holistic sensory studies could contribute to a full understanding of the complex, multidimensional nature of tourism experiences (Thanh and Kirova, 2018).

Overall, wine tourism includes three levels of production that differentiate it and add complexity compared to other tourism sectors (Charters, Ali-Knight, 2002). These levels correspond to primary, vineyard management of grape production, secondary wine production and tertiary, services, accommodation and restaurants. The sensory nature of wine tasting accounts for the growing volume of multisensory research on this topic. However, wine tourism involves more complex experiences than tasting, since the sector is a convergence of various services, facilities and activities included in wine tourism products (Scherrer, Alonso, & Sheridan, 2009). Wine tourism is considered a specialized tourism sector that includes activities from three levels of production. These are vineyard management for grape production (i.e., primary sector), wine production (i.e., secondary sector) and accommodation and restaurants located in wine-growing areas (i.e., tertiary sector). Wine tourists visit vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine fairs, as well as participate in wine tasting, experience wine regions, and enjoy landscapes (Carlsen, 2004, Alant, Bruwer, 2004).

Also, educational experiences in wine tourism play an important role in creating visitor memories and ensuring their satisfaction. The most common educational activity is wine tasting, followed by wine and food pairing events at local restaurants. The senses of sight and taste are often emphasized, especially when wineries provide home winemaking seminars or work with chefs and local farmers to offer classes in cooking, the natural environment, wine, food, cultural and historical inputs and above all, of the people who serve them (Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013). This sense of sight is noted by these tourists because of the beauty of the wine landscapes, including vineyards, picturesque central streets, and typical architecture, which offer rewarding aesthetic experiences to visitors.

Tourists also try to escape from everyday reality during their vacations in wine destinations by enjoying wines and typical wine-related facilities, such as accommodation, restaurants and cafes, as part of aesthetic experiences in wine destinations (Thanh and Kirova, 2018). The very nature of wine tourism involves the enjoyment of the senses not only through the wine products, but through all aspects of the wine landscapes including the aesthetics of the vineyards, the atmosphere of the wineries and the authentic environments associated with wine tourism (Hall et al., 2000). Hall, Longo, Mitchell, and Johnson, (2000), support that wine tourism has developed substantially since the mid-1990s. This tourism sector includes

activities such as visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine tasting demonstrations, in which experiences are the main reason for visits. Carmichael, (2005), about wine tourism refers to activities motivated by tourists' desire to try new wines and learn more about the traditions and cultures of wine-producing regions. The experiences of these products are directly based on the use of agricultural land and wine production. Research by Quan and Wang, (2004), has highlighted the experiential dimension of wine tourism. They have reported that non-visual experiences can be either peak experiences or supporting experiences, depending on specific circumstances, but both are important to demonstrate the differentiation of both peak and supporting consumer experiences in tourism.

"Wine routes" are short, planned routes that pass-through locations famous for wine production. Their goal is to introduce the public to each place, through the tradition of viticulture and winemaking. Along these routes one can come across wineries to visit, vineyards, picturesque villages, fantastic landscapes and traditional guesthouses (Griffin, Loersch, 2006). Also, you can taste local wines, various wine snacks and learn the secrets of wine making through guided tours organized by winery experts. Wine routes are a combination of individual facilities (wineries), natural attractions (landscapes), vineyards, footpaths and signposted roads. The combination of social, cultural and environmental characteristics gives wine routes a distinctive character. Also, the concept is defined as the integration of both existing and potential resources and services of interest to tourists in wine regions to form a single thematic concept, thus ensuring an authentic experience. The aim of this is to develop a product that incorporates the identity of the destination, while enhancing the marketing of local products in general and ensuring a high level of customer satisfaction, with the aim of enhancing the overall economic and social development of the region (Thomas et al. 2010).

According to Bruwer, (2003), wine routes are one or more signposted routes covering a well-defined area, wineries, wine tasting centers, vineyards, wine museums and agritourisms, connecting different wineries and wineries to a certain point or region. According to Thomas et al., (2010), to create a wine route product that meets quality standards, four subsystems need to be analyzed and implemented: planning and management, destination, marketing and tourism service. The initial step focuses on the organization of the regional network and the wine route itself. This subsystem encourages the creation of a management body, investments through training, retraining and professionalization of human resources. The development of the destination subsystem requires facilities and utilization of human resources. The development of the destination subsystem requires the installation of road signs to tourists, attractions and the availability of visitor centers. The third subsystem is marketing and involves creating joint promotional strategies as a network.

The tourism services subsystem encourages new and existing businesses to join the network. The implementation of the wine itineraries is divided into 3 phases: initiation, development and integration. During the initiation phase, the network of wine routes is created, as well as the concept and design of the wine routes. The launch phase ends when the wine routes are certified by the country's official stakeholders. The second phase, the development phase, lasts one year and consists of the continuous inspection of the service and product quality provided by the suppliers (Kivela, Crotts, 2006).

The vine has a history of several million years. Fossil vines about 60 million years old are the oldest scientific evidence of the age of the vine. There is no clear claim to the origin of the vine. Even before the ice age, it thrived in the polar zone, mainly in Iceland, in Northern Europe but also in northwestern Asia. The ice age played a decisive role in the geographical isolation and dispersion of the vine species. Over the years, various populations of wild vines moved to warmer zones, mainly to the wider region of the southern Caucasus. In this region, between the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and Mesopotamia, the species of vine or wine-bearer

was born. Viticulture is rumored to have its roots in the agricultural revolution and the permanent settlement of populations for the purpose of cultivation, around 5,000 BC. The ancient Persians, the Semitic peoples and the Assyrians are among the first known grape growers. Over the years, the knowledge of viticulture and winemaking was transferred to the Egyptians, the people of Phoenicia and the populations of Asia Minor and the Greek area. If the outcome of the wine journey is satisfactory, it passes to the next stage. As for the last stage, the integration stage, it is recommended to constantly inspect all the members involved to see if they all meet the quality requirements.

The symbiotic relationship between tourism and agriculture that can be found in agritourism is a key element of environmentally and socially responsible tourism in rural areas (Kivela, Crofts, 2006). Rural hospitality offers new employment and income generation opportunities for rural populations, including agritourism as an expression of cultural exchange of agricultural practices, arts and crafts heritage and culinary traditions.

Crete is the most active of the wine producing regions of Greece. The Cretan vineyard dates to around the Minoan era and is considered from the oldest vineyards in Europe. Today, after a continuous 20-year development, wineries have been created that can be visited, renovated, which even produce several native varieties. There are two networks, the Network of Winemakers of Heraklion prefecture and Chania-Rethymno prefectures, organizations that largely support the work of wineries and help to promote of the newest tourist product. Crete has always been an attractive destination for tourists, due to its natural environment, its archaeological sites, its healthy cuisine, but also its excellent hospitality. Its new wineries to visit, however, add another element to its composition. Of course, those related to wine are not absent from the cultural events. The celebration of wine and traditional products in Rethymnon, the "Oinokretika", fairs and festivals are inextricably linked with Crete throughout the year.

2. Literature Review

The world wine map has been established to be divided into Old and New World. The countries of the European Union belong to the first category, and more specifically France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Greece, Austria, Hungary, etc. The New World consists of USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, South Africa, etc. It is noteworthy that in Europe, wine tourism developed in the form official wine routes (Cambourne & Macionis, 2000). A wine road consists of one or more defined routes in a wine region which are thematically demarcated through a brochure and map, which highlights the different vineyards and wineries and provides information of historical and other interest (Hall et al., 2000, Telfer, 2001). In the European area, most of the wine-producing countries have established Wine Routes, where the French, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese are mentioned as top organized.

France is the leading producer of wine in the world. The achievements of wine tourism show that French wine is an important source of attraction and is recognized for its quality all over the world. More than 10 million people visit the French wine regions. The wine sector is expanding every year and local players organize attractive experiences such as hikes, cellar visits, concerts and wine tasting courses (www.diplomatie.gouv.fr, 2022). In almost all areas, there are vines. Alcase is a land of vines. Armagnac is known as the Gascony region. Beaujolais produces wines for celebrations. Bordeaux is known as the oldest wine vineyard in the world. Bourgogne offers wine with a unique identity, produced from small plots known as Climats. Champagne is the most famous sparkling wine in the world. The cognac vineyard makes a cognac with aromas of experience, passion, daring and talent. Corsica is the only island vineyard. In 1980 the farmers and wine producers of France are affected by the

agricultural economic crisis, as a result they turn to the distribution of their products to tourists to increase their income. From that point on, France gains ground in wine tourism.

In the last decade, Italian wine production has been characterized by increased quality, either of the grapes used to make the wine, or of the technical processes of the winemakers. The Wine Routes are established by national law and the law aims to exploit the wine-growing regions and wineries, including the cultural and natural resources, and to allow tourists to benefit from them. One of the most famous wine tourism regions in Italy is Tuscany, known for its landscapes, traditions, history, artistic heritage. The other famous Italian destinations are Brunellodi Montalcino, Chianti Classico, Nobile di Montepulciano, Vernacciadi San Gimignano and Carmignano.

Another important destination is Spain with its climate, culture and geography. From rustic to sophisticated, traditional to innovative, red, white, sparkling and fortified, Spain's wines along with its legendary cuisine, friendly people and stunning natural beauty have something very special to offer visitors (López-Guzmán et al., 2014). Within this field, wine has always been a key element of the culture of the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula. The first wine route in Spain was developed in Cambados (Thomas, Sandra, Rodriguez, 2010). In the 1970s, the Rioja region, which is internationally known for its red wines, began to plan and develop tourist routes. Later, in 1994, and after the creation of the Spanish Association of Wine-Producing Cities, the methodology needed to plan and carry out the various wine routes was developed. The official wine routes in Spain were developed following a government initiative in 2000, the comprehensive plan for quality in Spanish tourism 2000-2006.

The wide range of grape varieties grown in Germany is impressive, and German wine differs from wines from other countries in that it is light, lively and fruity, thanks to Germany's unique climatic and geological conditions. The diversity of German wine stems from the many soil types and grape varieties and this is reflected in Germany's 13 wine-growing regions: Ahr, Baden, Franken, Hessische Bergstrasse, Mittelrhein, Mosel, Nahe, Pfalz, Rheingau, Rheinhessen, Saale, Sachsen, Württemberg. Each of Germany's 13 wine regions has its own customs and traditions. Wineries in Germany are relatively small-scale and still do most of their work by hand which stands out in the quality of the wines (www.germanwines.de, 2022).

Portugal is a country with a strong wine tradition and the exceptional quality of its wines is recognized around the world, with many awards and distinctions won in international competitions. The country has very beautiful landscapes, rich heritage and interesting culture. The Alto Douro wine region is dominated by viticulture and wine production. It is described, as the result of a remarkable human construction created by winegrowers who transformed steep and stony hills into vineyards, supported by shale walls.

USA is the popular wine destination with topographical, geological and climatic diversity. California produces about 90% of US wine. Washington, Oregon, New York, Texas and Virginia are other major wine producing destinations. According to the survey conducted, one of the most popular wine destinations in the world was Sonoma, which has a long history as one of the top agricultural regions of the US and is home to more than 250 wineries. Las Vegas is one of the world's top US stops for wine lovers without a vineyard in sight (www.sonomawine.com, 2022). Wine production and consumption in Argentina started with the Spanish colonizers and consists of Cuyo and Patagonia, each of which has many wineries due to the good climate (www.winesofargentina.org, 2022). Today, there are over 70,000 wineries, large and small importance, in all 50 states. The main centers of the wine industry are California, the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon) and the New York state.

In the early 20th century, Australia's production was small compared to that of Argentina, Chile and the United States, although its exports were greater than those of the rest of the New World. Margaret River has become one of the world's most renowned Cabernet

Sauvignon and Chardonnay regions (www.winemag.com, 2022). The Chilean wine industry has undergone numerous transformations over the past 30 years. Despite this undisputed success, Chilean wines face very high levels of competition in the various world markets. The current profitability levels of the industry are low and there is an urgent need to raise the positioning and develop a new international marketing strategy. South African vineyards are about 101,000 hectares. In terms of global production scale, the country is in the top 10, with 3.8% of global production. About half of the grapes are used for white wines. Due to the lack of white wine, the number of Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay plantations had increased (Felzenztein, 2011).

Even though winemaking activity has a long tradition in Europe and over 60% of all world wine is produced there, research on the wine tourism consumer is relatively inadequate as reported by Charters and Carlsen, (2006). The typical wine tourist in Southern Spain is between 50-59 years old, middle/high income and usually travels with family. According to Gatti and Maroni (2004), the wine tourist in Italy is mainly a young, foreign male. As far as Greece is concerned, wine tourism is a relatively new tourism sector and, therefore, there is a lack of official data. Now there are six wine tourism networks in Greece. However, the first and most successful one was organized in Northern Greece.

Pan and Ryan, (2009), analyzed 199 travelogues for New Zealand to identify relationships between regions and perceptions based on sensory factors. It was found that coverage of New Zealand by visiting journalists tended to use an appeal to all the senses, but this was not the case for individual destinations. It is observed that urban destinations have potential for wider aesthetic appeal than is currently utilized through products based on urban adventure tourism and culinary tourism.

In recent years, wine tourism has become popular in other countries that are not usually associated with wine, such as China. The Bohai Bay wine region in Shandong Province is the birthplace of China's modern wine industry and the largest wine-producing region in China (Zhang-Qiuetetal, 2013).

In 1920, in Schweigen in the Rhineland-Palatinate region, the first "wine route" was created (Cambourne et al., 2000). The first wine roads were designed in the following regions: Burgundy (1934), Campania and Alsace (1950). In the 1970s, wine roads were planned in the Spanish Rioja (López-Guzmán et al., 2011) and in South Africa in Stellenbosch (Preston-Whyte, 2000).

The history of Greek vineyards is lost over the centuries, which gives Greece a rich variety of ancient native wines. The Greek vine, however, has been enriched over time with new improved varieties, giving a wide range of wines. Based on data from the Hellenic Wine and Vine Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture, the varieties now produced in the country are more than 250, each of which is characterized by many different characteristics.

In ancient Greece, wine was the main agricultural product along with olives and wheat. Wine was associated with the god Dionysus and the ancient Greeks drank it at gatherings and banquets. The Greek colonies had now established the cultivation of the vine and the production of wine throughout the Mediterranean. At the same time, in the neighboring country, Italy, the area called "Magna Graecia" was renamed Enotria ("Land of Wine").

In the first half of the 20th century, modern viticulture begins to flourish. Innovation and viticultural/oenological knowledge are features for the uniform separation of the vines and the facilitation of production. It is noted that the development of chemical products and their processing led to the selection of the best cultivation/production results.

From the Second World War onwards, the agricultural sector, and more specifically viticulture, went through a major crisis. The crisis of the war and the economic crisis led the farmers to leave the countryside. In 1963, the DOC (Denominazioni di Origine Controllata) classification system was born which was based on the relationship between the wine and its

location. Verona also hosted the first Vinitaly event, which was dedicated to national wine production. In the 1970s, winemaking began to move in a new direction. Producers emphasize the quality of production and wine, and demand has evolved based on new consumer tastes. At the same time, new production technologies were introduced, such as stainless-steel tanks, temperature regulation, etc. It is worth noting that during that period there was an explosion in exports and America emerged as the leading market. In the late 70s, the DOCG certification (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) also appeared.

In 1993, wine tourism made its appearance in Greece. More specifically, it takes shape through the "Union of Wine Producers of the Macedonian Vineyard". Then, these actions covered all the prefectures of Macedonia. During 1998 the winemakers of Peloponnese organized their actions in the growing wine tourism sector, adapting their wineries to provide access to the public and entering partnerships with local restaurants and hotels. Similar actions to the above were developed by winemakers based in Central Greece at the end of 2010, as well as Santorini wineries taking advantage of the opportunity presented in that area, due to the rapid increase in tourism. They tried to highlight local varieties such as Athiri and Assyrtiko, at a global level and upgrade them to "internationally recognizable" (Tsartas, 2010).

At the beginning of the 21st century new markets were developed (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South America). This resulted in a dichotomy between traditional European production (Old World wines) and new regions/countries wishing to produce with their own style and new technologies (New World wines). To distinguish a wine, business skill had to be combined with the best possible marketing and communication. During that time, Prosecco rose to prominence and became one of the most popular sparkling wines. Another innovation that appeared at that time was that of precision viticulture (optimizing the yield of vineyards). The development of technology has played a decisive role in improving the production of vineyards, as now with mapping you can monitor the condition of the vines and plants. At the same time, the wineries adopt practices that serve environmental sustainability (use of solar energy, biomass plants, certifications, reduction/elimination of use of chemical products).

As far as Greece is concerned, wine tourism is a relatively new tourism sector and, therefore, there is a lack of official data. Now there are six wine tourism networks in Greece. However, the first and most successful one was organized in Northern Greece. In 2008, the network expanded to include selected hotels, restaurants, local producers and outdoor activities businesses. Along with a series of local cultural activities, it offers visitors to the northern Greek vineyard a total of eight different routes (Karafolas, 2007). At the end of 2016, the Unified Wine Law was implemented in Italy, after a three-year effort of consultations by the parliament, the Ministry of Agriculture and the trade unions. It concerns 90 articles which consolidate and simplify previous laws and regulations related to labelling, geographical indications and production. At the same time, a single control register was put into effect which aims to monitor the production chain to improve competitiveness. It is worth mentioning that the value of this sector is over 14 billion. euros, and exports exceed 5.5 billion euro.

From the middle of the 19th century, wine tours began to be a special tourism incentive. The development of the railroad, the formation of a new middle class, and the establishment of the French wine classification system were factors that pushed the world to know the wealth of wine. In Greece, the wine industry is a timeless phenomenon for the economy, society and culture. Before the 90s, there were few wineries that attracted tourism interest. This may be due, either to the architecture, or to the history they have (Velissariou et al., 2009). In the island area (for example, in Rhodes, in Crete, in Santorini), the visit and tour of a winery is a combined part of the organized coastal mass tourism packages (Alebacki & Iakovidou, 2010).

In Greece, wine tourism is a new phenomenon for the tourism industry. Areas that are in a developed wine tourism stage seem to have gone through a time of about 12 years on average for their development (Stavrinoudis, 2008). Increased demand is observed in autumn with a rate of 61%, which is due to the harvest process that occurs at that time, and the favorable conditions that arise due to the Mediterranean climate (Lelekas, 2008). 80% of the wine tourism demand comes from Greece and 20% from foreign countries (Antonopoulou, 2010).

On the supply side of the wine production infrastructure, it is observed that businesses focus on the authentic features of the wine business (special winery architectures, vineyards, natural and rural landscapes) and on the collaboration/participation of visitors, providing unique and personalized experiences that connect the past with the future (Kaldis, 2008). A large percentage of the wine production infrastructure is organized and has points of sale for wine products, places where you can try and taste the wine, restaurants and organized tours (Vaughan, Andriotis, Wilkes, 2000).

3. Case Study: Crete, Greece

The island of Crete has a great heritage in viticulture and wine production, occupies 12.8% in production and holds a hierarchical position in the wine map of Greece (<https://winesurveyor.weebly.com/tour19.html>). This finding is proven since antiquity to the present day, and this is favored by the suitable climatic conditions in the soil that offer the possibility to create significant grape varieties such as Kotsifali, Syrah, Grenache Rouge, Mourvedre Liatiko Mandilari, Cabernet sauvignon, as well as Dafni, Vilana, Vidiano, Malvasia di Candia, (<http://www.cretan-nutrition.gr/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/+-DROMOI-KRASIOY-GR-mail-F-2.pdf>), (<https://blog.botilia.gr/el/odigos-oinikou-tourismou-kriti/>). Every visitor/wine lover can experience up close a special dimension of wine/gastronomic trip through the tour in the wine regions while at the same time he meets the Greek wine producers (<https://www.visitgreece.gr/el/experiences/gastronomy/greek-wines/wines-of-crete/>), (<https://www.voltarakia.gr/daily-photos/item/9428-anoixta-oinopoieia-dora-kai-diagonismos-fotografias>).

Crete as a tourism destination has one of the most historic vineyards in Europe that contribute to both the productive and social life of Crete until today starting from the Minoan years (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/varieties/>), (Vaughan, Andriotis, Wilkes, 2000). The wine tradition has a long history in Crete for 4.000 years ago and it had taken its first steps with the Wine Roads to bring back to today the special moments of the past (<https://www.tourismtoday.gr/στο-ρυσθμό-της-world-day-wine/>). Kato Zakros has a cultivated vineyard since ancient times and the area of Archanes has the most ancient wine press dating back more than 3,500 years (<https://www.visitgreece.gr/el/experiences/gastronomy/greek-wines/wines-of-crete/>). Today the region of Heraklion has particular interest, as the wineries reach 68% and the production of wine in total volume for the island reaches 80% (http://www.newwinesofgreece.com/dromoi_krasiou_hrakleiou/en_dromoi_krasiou_hrakleiou). An important network of winemakers is formed in the prefecture of Heraklion, which operates collectively and in a structured way, creating the Heraklion Wine Roads since 2007 (<http://www.cretan-nutrition.gr/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/+-DROMOI-KRASIOY-GR-mail-F-2.pdf>). The main goal is for the visitors of the tourism destination to get to know in the best and most representative way in the region its viticultural/wine production zones (<https://petronikolis.gr/el/δρομοι-του-κρασιου/>).

Through the secondary research six most popular wine companies of the prefecture of Heraklion were examined, with the visitor's route east and west of the island to visit the specific wineries through the wine roads to give him the opportunity to know the products of Protected Designation of Origin such as Peza, Arch., Dafnes, Chandakas - Candia (https://www.travel.gr/food_and_drink/i-ellada-toy-krasioy-irakleio-to-kli/) and to try the quality of Cretan wine during his stay on the island (<https://www.cna.gr/stories/kritikos-ampelonas-arxaioteros-sthn-eyropi/>). The route followed to the east by the visitor includes the wine-growing zones of the Protected Designation of Origin products Archanes and Peza, while to the west the products of the Protected Designation of Origin Dafnes (<https://winesurveyor.weebly.com/tour1902.html>) by crossing at the same time, the zone concerning the products of the Protected Designation of Origin of Chandaka/ Candia (http://www.minagric.gr/images/stories/docs/agrotis/POP-PGE/TEXNIKOI%20FAKELOI%20OINON%20POP-PGE%20ENGLISH/PDO%2010/prod_malvasia_chandakas_Candia_1011_14.pdf).

The contribution of the wineries of Heraklion to the various wine tourism experiences is particularly great as that of the Alexakis winery in Peridi Metochi Heraklion of Crete (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/wineries/alexakis-winery/>) which was founded in the 1970s and has become one of the most important businesses on the east route followed by the visitor to the Wine Roads. This is a family business that is the largest private winery in Crete with one of the most modern equipment on the island and while maintaining partnerships with most of the island's vine growers (<https://winesofgreece.org/el/wineries/Alexakis/>). Alexakis winery is located in the area of Finikia and the visitor has the opportunity to try up close all year round in a specially designed area of its facilities (<http://www.cretan-nutrition.gr/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/+-DROMOI-KRASIOY-GR-mail-F-2.pdf>) its special wines and varieties (<https://alexakiswines.com/wines>) distinguishing the winery for its white wine.

On the one hand, the single-variety white wine with the name "Tachtas" attracts attention as the visitor travels to a Cretan variety that concerns the 16th century (https://www.travel.gr/food_and_drink/i-ellada-toy-krasioy-irakleio-to-kli/). At the same time, it can try the varieties such as Thrapsathiri, Sauvignon Blanc, Vilana, Moschato, Vidiano, Dafni, Malvasia and Athiri with Vidiano attracting its attention due to its fruity character and its complexity, (https://www.botilia.gr/p/lefko-krasi/Χανδακας-Candia_2014-Οινοποιία_Αλεξακη). On the other hand, for the visitors who are friends of the complex red wines, the combination of Kotsifali with the cosmopolitan Syrah excites them and therefore the uniqueness of its wines and its varieties makes the wines of this winery hard to find in the national market (https://www.botilia.gr/p/kokkino-krasi/Kotsifali_Syrah-Oinopoieki_Alexaki) due to the quality of the company in raw material and the start of work always from the field (<https://alexakiswines.com/etairia>).

On the east route is the Gavala estate which has a long history as it began in 1906 with the planting of the first vineyards in the location of North Monofatsi where today with the establishment of a state-of-the-art winery in the vineyards guides many visitors to the east route following the methodology of organic farming (<http://www.gavalascrteewines.gr/ksenagisi/>) and having certification with the British standard BRC as the first winery in Greece that has been certified with the British standard BRC (<http://www.cretan-nutrition.gr/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/+-DROMOI-KRASIOY-GR-mail-F-2.pdf>). The fact that makes this winery stands out is the type of tour which includes information on the way of processing in each winery, how they are bottled and how the wines are aged (<http://www.gavalascrteewines.gr/ksenagisi/>). Throughout the visit, it is noted that information is provided on the cultivation of the vineyards with reference to the organically grown grapes where exclusively from them comes the production and bottling of

the Wine with the projection of the production method to take place in the cellar of the winery (<https://www.protothema.gr/travelling/article/360740/fotografies-ta-pio-simadika-oinopoieia-tis-kritis/>). The visitor in the next stage can be transported to the outdoor area where the vineyards are located and to perform there the tasting with reference point the connection with the Cretan tradition and the food as the visitor tastes the traditional cheese the gruyere, the olives, the Cretan salad, lamb and baked potatoes (<http://www.gavalascretewines.gr/ksenagisi/>). The connection of the way of wine production with the tradition and the Cretan cuisine is followed by the available varieties of the winery such as Vilana, Vidiano, Kotsifali, Mandilari, Frangospito red and white with the strong presence of cool taste and fruity aromas with great acidity.

The company G. Paterianakis was founded in 1997 and is based in Melesses and is a family business which from generation to generation aims to offer a unique experience to the visitor who will be unforgettable enjoying the magical view of the vineyard area of (<https://paterianakis.gr/events/>) and it is no coincidence that it is one of the most famous wineries that deal with the Cretan vineyard, cultivating and vinifying local and national varieties (<https://www.in2life.gr/views/telegourmet/telegourmetarticle/245736/oinotoyrismos-sto-kthma-paterianakh-sto-hrakleio.html>). What makes the Paterianaki estate special in the "Wine Roads" of Heraklion is the construction of a unit of suites where the visitor/wine lover can stay on his wine tourism vacation and feel like a family friend who can be guided on a daily basis so in the vineyards as well as in the specially designed production, bottling and aging areas (<https://paterianakis.gr/events/>) as well as to taste traditional local delicacies while giving the winery the opportunity for people with disabilities to live the specific winemaking experience (<https://paterianakis.gr/events/>). Thus, the Paterianaki estate on the eastern route of the visitor stands out for its open doors in the visitor's tour of the Vineyard, in the productive part, in winemaking, while educating its visitors in specially designed spaces, offering a complete wine tourism experience (http://www.arttravel.gr/arttravel-best_oinotourismos/article/15970/kthma-paterianakh-hrakleio).

On the western route, the Zacharioudakis estate has great interest, it is located at the top of the "Orthi Petra" hill (<https://www.zacharioudakis.com/el/>) where it has been active since 2000. It has open spaces for its visitors all year round, offering them an unforgettable experience since alongside the guided tour the visitor also admires the magical landscape of Crete at an altitude of 500 meters (<https://www.zacharioudakis.com/el/visit-us/>). What makes this estate special is the tasting of wine, important local products, the enjoyment of Cretan hospitality, the participation of the visitor in pressing the grapes during the process of harvesting the grapes (harvest) in traditional stone presses (<https://www.zacharioudakis.com/el/visit-us/>). Then, the local tradition meets the enjoyment of the beauty of the place where the visitor is given the opportunity to visit the small church of Panagia in front of the winery, offering him a complete tourism experience (<https://www.zacharioudakis.com/el/visit-us/>).

The estate's favorable location is a hallmark as it is close to a variety of beaches and resorts. The case study of the Diamantakis estate located in the Malevizi District and it was founded in 2007 by the members of the Diamantakis family (http://www.diamantakiswines.gr/dwines/el/Οινοπάρτιο_13.html). It has varieties from Greek and international areas and a view that takes the visitor on a journey since it is located near the foot of Psiloritis (http://www.diamantakiswines.gr/dwines/el/Ampelonas_12.html). What makes this particular winery special is beyond the guided tour of the specially designed areas of the winery and the vineyards, with the possibility to taste 7 different labels of wines that are in circulation while at the same time being in contact throughout the duration of the visit to the winery with the producers themselves thus gaining a personal contact (<https://www.drinksfiles.gr/diamantakis-gr/>).

Finally, the Daskalaki winery, located in the village of Siva, was founded in 1998 by the Daskalaki family and is an important choice for visitors to the Wine Routes of Heraklion as it has been awarded gold in an international competition, winning the grand gold award (<https://www.silvawines.gr/el/schetika-me-emas>).

The award of the specific winery is not accidental as the visitor takes into account the interconnection of the special folklore elements of the area with the winemaking tradition of the place and the traditional winepresses knowing important religious monuments such as the monastery of Paliani (<https://www.cretanbeaches.com/el/religious-monuments-crete/monasteries-in-crete/monastery-of-panagia-palianis-in-venerato>) and applying in recent years organic cultivation respecting the environment (<https://www.oinognosia.wine/producer/silva-daskalaki/>). The award of the specific winery is not accidental as the combination of the experience of the visitor's morals, customs, traditions with the offer of its four flexible tour programs, proves the adaptation of the Silva Daskalakis winery to the needs of the visitor during the preparation of his trip (<https://www.silvawines.gr/el/xenagiseis-geysignosia-amp-wine-tips>). With the four guided tours, the visitor can take a guided tour of the winery and the Vineyard while tasting 9 different wines, the Cretan nut, the island's graviera and the traditional "mezes", (snack).

The specific wineries were chosen as a field of study because, like other famous wineries of Heraklion, they participate in the celebrations of the "Open Doors" event with free entry where the visitor comes into contact with the wine producers over a period of days and is given the opportunity to tour the streets of the Wine of Crete while also participating in a photo competition during their tour of the winemakers' area (<https://www.ertnews.gr/perifereiakoi-stathmoi/iraklio/kriti-quot-anoiktes-portes-quot-sta-oinopoieia-gia-toys-oinofiloy/>).

The network of winemakers of Crete, Wines of Crete (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/>) provides the possibility of highlighting the tourism destination of Crete. In addition to the unique winemaking experience that the visitor lives, it also offers 10 routes that include immersion in the authentic rural life (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-1/>), the real face of Cretan villages (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-2/>), the taste of mountains and coasts (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-3/>), the perfect content of nature and culture (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-4/>), the biological treasures between mountains (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-5/>), getting to know the island, (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/routes/route-6/>), a taste of history (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/routes/route-7/>), the exploration of the mystery of the west (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/routes/route-8/>), the wild mountains, the sense of holiness (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-9/>), and the secrets of the East (<https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-10/>).

Route 4 (graph 1) and route 5 (graph 2) were chosen for this research study:



Graph 1: The route of the Wine Network of Crete
 Source: <https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-4/>



Graph 2: The route of the Wine Network of Crete
 Source: <https://www.winesofcrete.gr/en/routes/route-5/>

These routes include examples of wineries mentioned in this research. It is found that in route 4 that starts from the picturesque village of Crete Houdetsi and ends in the North of the Municipality of Archanes, the visitor can also explore the important wineries he will visit such as the Rhous winery. It has stone-built facilities and ancient palaces and monasteries at the destination of this route such as the Monastery of Agios Georgios Epanosifis, making a stop at other nearby known estates and tasting high quality wines. Then, calming down mentally, the visitor stops at well-known churches and reaches the village of Vorias, where he visits the Gavalas estate with a trademark of the use of Minoan presses from the specific winery, realizing the visitor the great history of the place and Cretan hospitality. The connection of wine tourism with walking, religious, cultural, and nature tourism highlights the relationship between nature and culture, as the visitor ends up in the forest of Rouvas. Finally, on route 5 the visitor is led to one of the Protection Zones of Designation of Origin Daphnes where the specific estate Silva Daskalakis stands out with the monastery Paliani and the organic farming that he applies in his vineyards.

Then, the wine route follows to other wineries such as Efrosini where the visitor comes in personal contact with the owners of the specific winery. The visitor knows the history of the island and the medieval presses. The route is completed at the Diamantaki winery with a

special feature of the winery the origin of its grapes from vineyards that have been planted at an altitude of 400-670 meters. The importance of the route lies in the hiking carried out by the visitor in parallel with his desire to visit the specific winery.

4. Conclusions

The benefits resulting from the wine tourism activity in Crete are considerable and affect all those directly and indirectly involved, and they are economic, social, environmental, cultural, etc. Those directly involved, such as winegrowers, wineries and visitors, are the key actors in the chain for the development of the wine industry, and subsequently wine tourism. The wine tourism activity contributes to the creation and diversification of products and services, to new jobs, to the increase of entrepreneurship and to the attraction of investments. It also creates a good reputation, both for the destination and the wine-producing region, as well as for the wineries and wine-making infrastructure.

Sales are increasing and consumption through visits and purchase of wine products. Partnerships are promoted for partnership and promotion with agencies, with the aim of joining new markets to attract and increase the interested public. It is worth talking about attracting new human resources, in areas where the main productive activity is the primary sector. The connection, contact and communication of the local community with the wine tourists is achieved by expanding the relationships. Wine tourists get to know the cultural elements and culture of the island by creating a climate of trust and hospitality.

An improvement in the standard of living is noted, as is the retention of the rural population in its place of residence. The footprint of mass tourism is reduced and human contact with nature is achieved, natural wealth is highlighted, the countryside is exploited through cultivation and biodiversity and the natural landscape are protected. The benefits of the wine tourism activity in Crete are related to local and regional development, the attraction of investments and financial tools for the development of the region and the wine activity. Also, there is a diversification of the local economy through the exploitation of the wine tourism activity, an improvement in the standard of living, the creation of a good reputation and a positive image for the destination and repeat wine tourists.

Wine routes support the sustainable social and economic development of the region, quality of life, complementary support to the economy by improving local infrastructure and de-seasonalizing tourism visits to the region. They also contribute to the promotion of the country and local products abroad, offer new job opportunities, increase the number of tourists in the region and direct sales of wines and other local products.

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