

Article

Visitor's Motivational Framework and Wine Routes' Contribution to Sustainable Agriculture and Tourism

Marzia Ingrassia ^{1,*}, Luca Altamore ¹, Claudio Bellia ², Giuseppe Lo Grasso ³, Paula Silva ^{4,5},
Simona Bacarella ¹, Pietro Columba ¹ and Stefania Chironi ¹

¹ Department of Agricultural, Food and Forest Sciences, Università degli Studi di Palermo, Viale delle Scienze, Building 4, 90100 Palermo, Italy

² Department of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Università degli Studi di Catania, 95124 Catania, Italy

³ CORERAS—Consorzio Regionale per la Ricerca Applicata e la Sperimentazione, Via Libertà n. 203, 90143 Palermo, Italy

⁴ Laboratory of Histology and Embryology, Institute of Biomedical Sciences Abel Salazar (ICBAS), Rua de Jorge Viterbo Ferreira n. 228, 4050-313 Porto, Portugal

⁵ ICNOVA—NOVA Institute of Communication, NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 1099-085 Lisbon, Portugal

* Correspondence: marzia.ingrassia@unipa.it; Tel.: +39-3495739096

Abstract: Wine Routes develop inside the larger context of wine tourism (WT), which is increasingly important for rural communities. Italy is one of the most important countries in the world for wine production and tourism. Sicily is one of the leading regions in Italy for wine production and wine tourists. This study focuses on the Sicilian wine routes (SWRs) and gives an excursus of their development during the last ten years, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the study wants to make an attempt to bridge the existing gap in the literature and highlight the nature and extent of the contribution of the SWR to the development of the WT 'product' from the perspective of the increasingly booming sustainable–rural tourism. Face-to-face interviews were conducted along the SWRs with 283 wine tourists, 65 wine enterprises, and eight expert stakeholders. The motivations for tourists to visit the first time and their intention to return were investigated by the explorative factor analysis. Moreover, the wine tourist profile was highlighted. Findings outline some specific features of the general experience economy model where visitors' emotional involvement and local cooperation appear crucial for the integrated territorial development of the backward rural areas of wine regions in different parts of the world. Managerial implications of findings are discussed.

Keywords: wine tourism; sustainable rural tourism; territorial branding; wine regions; wine lovers; consumer's behavior; consumer's purchasing behavior; territorial marketing



Citation: Ingrassia, M.; Altamore, L.; Bellia, C.; Grasso, G.L.; Silva, P.; Bacarella, S.; Columba, P.; Chironi, S. Visitor's Motivational Framework and Wine Routes' Contribution to Sustainable Agriculture and Tourism. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 12082. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912082>

Academic Editor: Juan Ignacio Pulido-Fernández

Received: 14 August 2022

Accepted: 20 September 2022

Published: 24 September 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The Wine Route Concept

Wine routes (WRs) are recognized and signposted roads surrounded by natural, cultural, and environmental heritage across wine regions [1]. The distinguishing feature of the WRs is that wine tourists can move independently along these routes, by car or bicycle, with available knowledge on wine-growing areas, to visit wineries, taste, and buy wine. In this sense, we can speak of "wine escapes" aimed at getting to know the places wherein the vines are grown (vineyards and territories), and the wineries where the wines are produced and stored [1]. However, at the same time, visitors can get in touch with local populations, experience typical foods and traditions, and learn about local culture and architectural, natural, and landscape beauties [1,2]. In this way, visitors can access other services, complementary to the wine itself. Thus these territories themselves constitute a "specialized tourist offer" [3]. This type of "experiential" and "sustainable" tourism,

with high emotional involvement combines gustative–culinary elements with naturalistic experiences, leisure-relaxing activities (e.g., socializing), and cultural experiences [3,4].

From a logistic point of view, the WRs, being tourist itineraries with high wine vocation, along which there are vineyards, wine cellars, wine shops, tourist accommodations, wine, food, and local handicraft museums, historical monuments, as well as natural and environmental heritages, these routes, when operating efficiently, constitute a powerful connector between economic, cultural, and human resources of wine territories [1].

Given the characteristic of WRs to be a tourist offer involving an entire rural territory, from the economic side, they can be considered as a market, with tourists as clients and wine cellars, wine bars, hospitality enterprises (e.g., hotels, bed & breakfast, etc.), restaurants, travel agencies, and so on as sellers [3]. Moreover, for winemakers, WRs represent an important opportunity to have additional revenues for alternative activities, such as guided visits to the winery and vineyards, sale of wines at the cellar's shop, lunches, or dinners at the winery, etc. [1].

Over the past two decades, WRs have developed in many wine-growing areas of the world, also in the developing countries where wine nowadays accounts for a significant contribution to the economy [5], e.g., Chile is now the fifth largest exporter of wines in the world and the seventh largest producer. Thanks to the increase of interest in “food & wine tourism” [1–6], the WRs became the favorite destination of those wine lovers who also wanted to experience the local gastronomy, particularly in those countries, like Italy, where food plays an important role as a real tourist attraction [7].

Additionally, WRs are important also from a social point of view. In fact, through the passage of visitors, they contribute to revitalizing rural areas, counteracting depopulation, supporting the economy of villages along the routes, and contributing to people-to-people socialization. Recent studies highlighted that WRs are like tourist destination to those chosen by tourists that ask for tranquility, people-to-people socialization, and nature contact, like green tourism, sustainable tourism, or religious tourism [7,8]. Particularly, a similarity is found with cultural routes, e.g., the “spiritual routes” in Syria [9], the Camino de Santiago in Spain, Route 66 in the USA, The trail of Roman Emperors' in Serbia [10], and the Magna Via Francigena in Sicily [8]. These routes are just some of the many examples of trails that are unique for their cultural, naturalistic, and gastronomic peculiarities and that today are increasingly attracting those tourists who are also motivated by different but related motivations to the main ones (typical of religious or cultural tourism, for example), namely close contact with nature and food [8–10].

From a sociological point of view, the WRs should allow the promotion of wine tourism (WT) and the enhancement of rural territory, offering a particular “integrated system of tourism supply”. They represent a paradigmatic case of “social capital” within a defined territory in which investments, experiences, and politics must be shared to have a united territory wherein public and private subjects work together for the development of a territorial network of growth [7]. Following this conceptualization, the WRs operate as a multi-services center framed inside the context of integrated territorial tourism. Therefore, the WRs should involve many stakeholders, e.g., local and regional institutions, research centers, cultural associations, etc. [1,9], and structural/infrastructural components related to road connections, signposting, and the quality of services and hospitality offered by wineries.

Based on the existing literature, it can be said that the quality experience of the wine tourist is of paramount importance [11,12]. A previous study on the experience economy model in the WT sector outlined the relevant constructs on which it is based and explained the experiential nature of WT [12]. These findings were confirmed by many other studies that demonstrated the influence of experiences on the memories of consumers–tourists [11–14]. These studies emphasized the importance of the hedonic element [11] and the strong impact that an extraordinary landscape [11,13] consistent with wine and food can have on the satisfaction of a visitor–consumer [11,13]. Moreover, the

creative tourist experience contrasts with consumer tourists' memories, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, including that of coming back [3,14].

In this articulated and complex offer, where tangible components combine with intangible ones, "wine & land" do constitute for some territories a "sustainable differentiated tourist offer", where the fruition of oenological productions is strictly linked to the territorial tourist offer made of traditions, culture, and history [1–11].

This tourist offer should be able to satisfy the needs of a particular tourist segment while contributing to the enhancement and conservation of a rural territory's heritage with its natural/agricultural environment and landscape, cultural diversity, and gastronomic specialties [1,3].

In fact, the experience, in this case, is not a mere consumption experience. According to Holbrook's conceptual framework of consumer value [15], developed also by Williams, P., and Soutar, G. N. (2000) in a study that highlighted several consumer value dimensions in a travel-related context [16], hedonism is the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake, and pleasure results from the emotional significance attached to the products that are consumed [16]. Moreover, hedonic consumption includes multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of the consumer's experience with products and services. Consumer value in tourism is closely linked to such a perspective as such experiences have utilitarian and hedonic attributes. Therefore, according to the literature, destination and tourism services can be better understood if analyzed through the multidimensionality of value, as the tourist can simultaneously experience several factors: affective and cognitive, social, and personal, active, and reactive [17].

And this is a very crucial point that needs to be addressed by researchers that want to analyze the role of WRs in the context of integrated territorial tourism.

One of the very first studies on WRs with a motivational approach by Alant, K. and Bruwer, J. highlighted the conceptual motivational framework for WT [18]. This study was followed by numerous other ones on the motivation of wine tourists in different wine regions (e.g., Australia [11,18], South Africa [1], Chile [5,19], USA [6], and in Europe, namely in Portugal [20,21], Spain [22], France, Italy [2], Serbia [23], Romania [24], Greece [25], etc.). Other studies explored the value dimensions of a tourism consumption experience [12–14] or the importance of supplementary services [6]. Moreover, other authors explored the characteristics of demand for long-distance WT among wine consumers located far from wine regions [26], or the impact of digital technologies on visitors' experience [27].

Nevertheless, the aspect of multidimensionality of value and motivations was not investigated in depth. Particularly, qualitative elements, defined as multiple motivations that together make up a motivational dimension and characterize it based on certain variables that are prioritized over others, have not been studied by researchers since the first study in 2004 [18].

Furthermore, it is important to know the profile of the wine tourist visiting wineries in different parts of the world as, alongside similar characteristics, elements of diversity may be revealed which then characterize the behavior, needs, and preferences of the different groups or segments of wine tourists.

Therefore, this study, which is a continuation and completion of extensive research conducted from 2018 to 2021 that follows up on previous research carried out in 2007, is an attempt to fill these gaps.

Moreover, at the same time, the aim is to outline the current situation of WRs in Sicily and highlight the strengths and limitations, and the opportunities for development for the backward rural wine territories in different parts of the world, considering the perspective of the increasingly booming sustainable–rural tourism.

Finally, this study tries to provide comprehensive knowledge from different perspectives or viewpoints on the topic, that of the tourist, that of the winemaker, and that of the stakeholder. In this way, it is possible to reduce the bias resulting from the mere fact of having considered only one category of subjects and their opinions on these issues.

More specifically, the study has the following objectives:

- (1) Highlight the wine tourists' motivational factors that induce them to visit wineries of the SWRs the first time and their involvement and intention to return, according to tourists and winemakers;
- (2) Outline the SWRs tourists' profile and propose a new wine consumer segmentation;
- (3) Discover the actual strengths and limitations of the SWRs, according to tourists/winemakers/stakeholders/policymakers opinions, and the eventual strategic role of WRs in the context of sustainable agriculture and tourism for developing resilient models of development suitable for backward wine regions.

2. Context Description

2.1. The Wine Sector in Italy and in Sicily

In Italy, in 2020, there were more than 310,428 farms, of which 45,631 were wineries. In 2021, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the wine sector generated a 13.3-billion-euro turnover, of which 7.1 billion euro were due to exports. In the same year, Italy was the first country in the world regarding the quantity of wine produced [28] with a weight of 16.9% of the global total. The food industry is one of the pillars of the domestic economy, having 133 billion euro of turnover, of which about 52.0 billion are due to exports, about 62,000 actives, and over 465,000 employees. The wine sector has 9.5% of the agricultural production's total value, 10.0% of the food industry's turnover, and 13.7% of agro-food exports [29]. Regarding foreign trade, Italy is a net exporter of wine with exports amounting to 7.1 billion euro in 2021, as well as the second largest exporter in the world in terms of value and volume. In fact, in the last decade, Italy's value of exports has increased by 51.5 % and 4.6% for quantity, thanks to the repositioning of product prices abroad. Moreover, 35.8% of Italy's wine production are wines with quality marks/certifications. These certifications are awarded to wines that are produced according to production specifications, i.e., laws that define the production and commercial requirements of a wine. Specifically, there are four Italian wine classifications: (1) *Vino da Tavola* "VdT" (table wine); (2) *Indicazione Geografica Tipica* "IGT" (Typical Geographical Indication); (3) *Denominazione di Origine Controllata* "DOC" (Controlled Designation of Origin); and (4) *Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita* "DOCG" (Guaranteed and Controlled Designation of Origin). The IGT, DOC, and DOCG designations certify the area of origin of wine and delimit the area of grapes' harvesting. However, IGT wines do not meet the stricter requirements of the DOC and DOCG designations, which generally are intended to protect traditional wine formulations. The DOC appellation, therefore, designates a quality and renowned wine, whose characteristics are related to the natural environment and human factors and comply with a particular product specification that has been approved by ministerial decree. The intrinsic characteristics of these quality wines cannot be replicated because they have been shaped by their territories of origin, which give the products their reputation. One example is the famous *Conegliano Valdobbiadene* area (for the *Prosecco* DOCG wine) [30]. From 2010, with the EU Regulation number 479/2008, the new wines that comply with the DOC e DOCG requirements had to be certified with the "DOP" *Denominazione di Origine Protetta* (Protected Origin Designation) and those that comply with the "IGT" characteristics had to be certified as "IGP" *Indicazione Geografica Protetta* (Protected Geographical Indication). In this way, all PDO and PGI certifications are recognized at EU level [13].

In Sicily (Island of Southern Italy, Mediterranean Sea), the wine sector has a turnover of 550 million euro. Due to the territory's varieties and pedoclimatic characteristics, Sicily has always been suitable for vineyard cultivation. These differences allowed to produce many wines different in quality and sensorial characteristics. Sicily is the second largest wine-growing Italian region after Veneto [31]. During the last ten years, the quality of Sicilian wines improved greatly; this is demonstrated by the 23 areas dedicated to the production of "DOC" wines, and one to the production of the *Cerasuolo di Vittoria* DOCG wine. With regard to quantities, in 2020, Sicilian winemakers produced 1,576,128 hectoliters of wine (42.6% of the total), of which, 787.5 thousand (49.9%) were "DOC" certified wines and 787.2 thousand (49.9%) were "IGP" [28–30]. Most DOC wines are produced in western

Sicily. According to official data [28,29,31,32], in 2020, the DOC “Marsala” was the most produced with 46.8 thousand hectoliters, followed by the the DOC “Etna” with 30.8 thousand hectoliters; the DOC “Pantelleria” accounts for 7.5 thousand hectoliters and the DOCG “Cerasuolo di Vittoria” with 4.3 million hectoliters [28,29,31,32].

The Sicilian wine firms are very different with regard to business structure, dimension, and strategies. There are companies very developed for governance and technologies applied. These companies have a complex organizational structure and invest a lot in innovation. On the other hand, there are also wine enterprises that are still far behind in all aspects, regardless of size. The Sicilian wine export is affected by structural and organizational problems of vertical integration that still affect most of the supply chain. Despite this, Sicily’s wine export value increased since 2016, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, in 2021 Sicily’s wine export value was about 139 million euro (+17% compared to 2020), 2% of Italy’s total wine exports [32].

2.2. Wine Tourism in Italy and in Sicily

Definitions of WT abound as the discipline continue to evolve. One of the very first authors who described WT was Hall C. M. (1998) [33], who specified what seemed to be the most important tourist attractions and motivations: “[.....] visitation to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which grape, wine tasting and experiencing the attributes of the wine region are the prime motivating factors for visitors”. These motivations still seem to be the main ones today [18,24,34]. The term “wine tourism” shows the importance of tourism for the economic development of wine regions as specific tourist destinations [35,36]. According to Alant and Bruwer (2004) [18], wine tourists can be different: from those who travel to the wine region and stop only to buy wine, to those who are general tourists who have traveled to the wine region where their favorite wine is produced. It follows that not all wine tourists are tourists *per se*, but this category may include people who enjoy leisure or socializing or those who travel to get to know the territories (history, art, culture, and people) where famous or just well-known wines are produced. Therefore, definitions of WT range from “visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine exhibitions”, to experiencing a wine region and tasting wines [22], to the more general “visits to a wine region for recreational purposes” [18,35].

In Italy, the tourist sector has high strategic importance, thanks to the unique artistic, cultural, historical, and natural heritage of the country. In the last decade, Italy’s wine and food tourism has represented an important opportunity to trigger processes of participation in development projects of marked territorial importance, [2,24,30,37].

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the tourist sector has been inactive and suffered a severe crisis. Nevertheless, the tourism of cities of art combined with the attractiveness of local food & wine tourism has held up best, as have the not overcrowded tourist destinations, typical of green tourism, agro-tourism, and rural tourism. In this context, WT has suffered from the crisis of 2020, although it had always grown strongly until 2019. An interesting recent study on the role of tourism management and marketing toward sustainable tourism helped to demonstrate that there are several actors in sustainable tourism, such as destination management organizations, stakeholders, tourism policymakers, and communities [23]. Moreover, the study demonstrated their capability to promote social integration, the protection of natural areas and cultural heritage, and the conservation of biodiversity and national parks, improving human welfare and ecosystem services. In addition, the role of marketing toward sustainable tourism is fundamental to promoting products or services to consumers [38]. Other authors demonstrated that local community is a significant player in tourism development, especially in those regions that want to boost their economy by developing sustainable tourism [38]. Particularly, “the elements of the local community, especially those whose development may be directly affected by tourism development and that can enhance the quality of residents’ life, like infrastructure, possibilities for entertainment, preserved culture, and tradition can encourage locals to have a positive attitude towards the development of tourism in their

environment” [38]. Additionally, other authors confirmed the importance of effective management of nature-based tourism, particularly in a post-COVID-19 world, where tourists are more interested in places where they can appreciate the natural environment and have the freedom to move around safely [39].

Thanks to Italy’s natural characteristics, more than 150 WRs have been set up in Italy. These are tourist itineraries officially established through a national law (Law 268/1999), intending to promote the best territories of wine production. The best Italian WRs are the WRs of Piedmont, Friuli, Veneto, Sardinia, Tuscany, and Sicily (Italian regions from north to south). The WT sector, in Italy, has been growing slightly, year after year, since 2019 [27]. Nevertheless, due to the necessary closures adopted in different countries around the world to stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 and 2021, the tourist sector faced a dramatic halt. However, although the official numbers of wine tourists in Italy in the years 2019–2022 are not available (nor regional data), except the average value of 500,000 visitors per year, the Italian official statistical sources are gradually informing that already in the early months of 2022 tourist figures started growing again [40].

Sicily is the biggest island in Italy and the 45th in the world. It is also the fourth region by number of inhabitants. Its territory is divided into 391 municipalities, which in turn are divided into three metropolitan cities: Palermo, Catania, and Messina. Sicily’s minor islands (the Aeolian Islands, the Egadi Islands, the Pelagie archipelagos, the island of Ustica, and Pantelleria) are characterized by a sensational landscape and an impressive natural beauty that remains imprinted forever in the visitor’s memory. Sicily is also one of the most important Italian wine-producing regions and a very popular tourist destination. Due to its mild climate, Sicily is a perfect destination for the so-called “deseasonalized tourism”. Sicily is one of the most complete tourist destinations in the Mediterranean and the world. A mild climate, a natural environment with marvelous islands and islets, and some of the most beautiful beaches in the Mediterranean Sea, active volcanoes, mountains, plains and cities of art, culture (archaeological sites, museums, and art galleries) and gastronomy (food & wine). At the crossroads of several civilizations that have dominated the island during the centuries, Sicily has inherited from each of them a piece of the mosaic that makes up the extraordinary evidence of cultural and artistic heritage, rarely equaled in the world. In Sicily, there are some of the world’s most remarkable sites awarded the status of “World Heritage” by UNESCO (e.g., the Valley of the Temples, the Etna Volcano, Europe’s largest active volcano, the Villa Romana del Casale, the Aeolian Islands, the Baroque Towns, the rocky Necropolis of Pantalica, and the Arab-Norman route, that links the three cathedrals of Monreale, Palermo, and Cefalù).

As for WT, in the last decade, until 2019, Sicilian wineries hosted an average of 500,000 visitors per year [37,40,41]. Moreover, in this region, as in the whole country, in 2020 and 2021, the tourist flow reduced significantly due to the travel ban as a mitigating measure against the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3. The European, Italian and Sicilian Wine Routes

In Europe, the first important studies on WRs date back 20 years. In one of their papers, Hall and Mitchell (2000) [35] examined WT in the Mediterranean area. In this study, they argued that wine has always been part of the Mediterranean culture and an essential element of the so-called “Mediterranean Diet”, which was awarded the designation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009 [42,43]. In addition, it is also important to mention the study by Alonso and Liu (2011) [30] on the relationship between food, wine, and tourism. WT in Europe has primarily been developed through the creation of WRs, with several countries implementing official WRs (e.g., Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain). However, in a continent like Europe with such a rich cultural heritage, WRs are designed to be more than just an opportunity to taste fine wines (accompanied by the local cuisine). Indeed, these routes allow travelers to experience the social, cultural, and environmental attributes that lend a distinctive character to each wine route because of their own regional identity [1–4,8,18–27].

In Italy, in 1999, Law number 268 established the WRs defining these roads as “routes marked and advertised with special signs, along which there are natural, cultural and environmental values”. Moreover, the law states: “these routes are a tool through which the wine territories and their production can be revealed, marketed and enjoyed by visitors as a particular type of tourist offer”. Italian WRs are an integrated tourist offers that systemically link a dense network of interactions among wineries (brand)/vineyards (land) and their territory, consisting of hotels, restaurants, reception centers, villages, historic buildings, museums, natural attractions, artisan productions, etc. [2,30,44]. Following the national Law, most of the Italian wine regions have been provided with their decree to recognize the WR through specific legislation.

Sicily, due to specific historical and geographical reasons, is one of the regions of Italy with “special by-laws”, therefore it enjoys special forms and conditions of autonomy. For this reason, the Sicilian Parliament issued in 2002 the Law n. 5 on WRs defining them as “land and sea routes of wine”. Article 1 of the Law defines the SWRs as “tourist itineraries along which there are vineyards, wineries, wine and vine museums, wine information centers and tourist information centers, businesses producing typical food products, tourist accommodation, and restaurants, natural, cultural and environmental values” which “must have signals and symbols that identify uniquely the routes and promotes recreational, cultural and educational activities carried out by agritourism farms”. According to the regional Law of Sicily, SWRs are legal entities in the form of entrepreneurs’ associations with the aim to improve the route, to be a development driver for the rural territory and to provide an additional opportunity for winemakers to differentiate their offers and obtain additional revenues. The members of the SWRs are wineries, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, hotels, resorts, agritourism farms, and municipalities along the routes.

A few years ago, a cluster of WRs and food entrepreneurs founded the “Federazione delle Strade del Vino e Saperi di Sicilia” (literally the “Federation of Wine and Food Routes of Sicily”), another legal entity aimed to promote Sicilian excellence food products both in Italy and abroad. The strategy of the Federation was to start an integrated tourist offer developed and carried out by a group of WRs together [45]. After the establishment of the Federation, the SWRs changed their name to “Strade del Vino e dei Saperi” (“Wine and Tastes Routes”) but maintained their previous legal form and purpose. Figure 1 shows the map of the thirteen existing Sicilian “Strade del Vino e dei Saperi” [45].

Each route has its particular characteristics because it runs through a specific territory characterized by the unique naturalistic, cultural, and gastronomic heritages and traditions. Since the enactment of the Sicilian Law to date, the following thirteen WRs (alias Sicilia Wine and Taste Routes) were established:

1. Wine Route of Terre Sicane runs between the Valley of the Temples and the whole province of Agrigento;
2. Wine Route Val di Mazara;
3. Wine Route Marsala-Terre d’Occidente [this Wine Route includes four itineraries: the Salt Road (La via del sale), Along the Sea (Lungo il mare), Towards Mazara (Verso Mazara) and Towards Salemi (Verso Salemi)]. These itineraries ideally connect two geographically distant and separate territories: the westernmost tip of Sicily and the island of Pantelleria;
4. Wine Route Erice Doc from the city of Erice, founded by Trojan exiles and later became one of the most beautiful medieval towns in the world for its typical Arab-Norman architecture;
5. Wine Route Alcamo Doc;
6. Wine Route Monreale Doc, is a territory that bewitches for the architectural splendor of the Cathedral of Monreale, the greatest example of Norman architecture in Sicily;
7. Wine Route sul percorso della Targa Florio (on the road of the “Targa Florio”), is in northern Sicily, in an area close to Madonie Park, characterized by the route of the Targa Florio, one of the oldest and most famous automobile races in the world.

8. Wine Route of the Province of Messina with an itinerary around the archipelago of the Aeolian Islands (a UNESCO World Heritage Site);
9. The Wine Route of Etna, which develops around the largest volcano in Europe (the Etna Mountain) now on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites;
10. Wine Route Val di Noto, characterized by the presence of baroque towns;
11. Wine Route of Cerasuolo di Vittoria, including the provinces of Ragusa and Syracuse, among the baroque beauties of another UNESCO World Heritage Site: La Villa del Casale with the Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG wine;
12. Wine Route of Castelli Nisseni (the Nisseni Castles), in the heart of Sicily;
13. Strada del Vino e dei Sapori della Valle dei Templi (Route of Wines and flavors of the Valley of the Temples) in Agrigento, with the famous archaeological park "Valley of the Temples" (Greek Temples) which is one of the sites declared by UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Figure 1. Own elaboration of the Sicilian Wine and Taste Routes Map [45].

There are different types of wines among the SWRs [13]. Most of these wines have the Controlled Origin Designation (DOC) or Controlled and Guaranteed Origin Denomination (DOCG) quality marks (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of wine and vines for each Sicilian wine route.

Wine Route	Wines	Vines	Type of Wine
Alcamo DOC	Alcamo DOC	Catarratto, Inzolia, Grillo, Grecanico, Chardonnay, Muller Thurgau e Sauvignon, Nerello Mascalese, Calabrese o Nero d'Avola, Sangiovese, Frappato, Perricone, Cabernet sauvignon, Merlot e Syrah.	White, red, rosé, sparkling wines
Monreale DOC	Monreale DOC	Catarratto, Inzolia, Grillo, Grecanico, Chardonnay, Muller Thurgau e Sauvignon, Nerello Mascalese, Nero d'Avola, Sangiovese, Frappato, Perricone, Cabernet sauvignon, Merlot e Syrah.	White, red, rosé, sparkling wines
Erice DOC	Erice DOC	Catarratto, Chardonnay, Muller turgau, sauvignon, insolia, Grecanico, Grillo, Nero d'Avola, Frappato, Cabernet sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot.	White, red
Marsala Terre d'occidente	Marsala DOC	Grillo, Catarratto, Inzolia, Damaschino, Perricone, Nero d'Avola, Nerello Mascalese.	White, red
Val di Mazara	Delia Nivolelli DOC	Grecanico, Inzolia, Muller Thurgau, Grillo, Nero d'Avola, Perricone, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah e Sangiovese.	White, red, rosé, sparkling wines
Terre Sicane	Menfi DOC Sambuca di Sicilia DOC Santa Margherita Belice DOC	Inzolia, Chardonnay, Catarratto, Grillo e Gracnico, Nero d'Avola, Perricone, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon e Syrah, Nerello mascalese, Alicante e Alicante Bouchet.	White, red, rosé, sparkling wines
Castelli Nissemi	Riesi DOC	Insolia, Chardonnay, Nero d'Avola, Nerello Mascalese, Cabernet Sauvignon.	White, red, rosé, sparkling wines
Cerasuolo di Vittoria	Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG	Cerasuolo di Vittoria.	Red
Val di Noto	Eloro DOC Moscato di Siracusa Moscato di Noto	Nero d'Avola, Frappato e Perricone.	White, red, moscato passito
Etna	Etna DOC	Catarratto, Carricante, Nerello Mascalese.	White, red, sparkling wines
Provincia di Messina	Mamertino DOC Faro DOC Malvasia delle Lipari DOC	Grillo, Inzolia, Nero d'Avola, Nerello Mascalese, Nerello cappuccio, Nero d'Avola, Malvasia delle Lipari, Corinto Nero.	White, red, malvasia
Percorso della Targa Florio	Contea Sclafani DOC IGT Sicilia IGT Fontanarossa	Catarratto, Perricone, Nero d'Avola, Inzolia, Trebbiano, Chardonnay, Nerello Mascalese, Cabernet Sauvignon.	White, red, sparkling wines
Valle dei Templi	IGP Terre Siciliane DOC Sicilia	Catarratto, Grillo, Chardonnay-Nero d'Avola, Sirah	White, red, rosé, sparkling wines

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Design

This study was carried out by applying different types of analysis and relatively appropriate methodologies for the intended purposes.

First, a tourists' survey (AN1) was carried out in 2019, integrated with further data collected in 2021 during the first summer reopening, after the COVID-19 pandemic closures. AN 1 aimed to learn about motivations for tourists to travel along SWRs and intentions to return, socio-psychographic and experience characteristics of tourists, wine consumption behavior/purchase intentions, etc. Moreover, an attempt to link the motivations to the actual wine tourist's profile (socio-psychographic and experience characteristics, behavior, purchase intentions, etc.) and reasons to come back (repeat visitation) was made. The

survey focused on qualitative and quantitative variables (quali-quantitative variables) and the exploratory factor analysis (FA) was applied to highlight the main motivational dimension in the observed context.

Secondly, AN2 was a winemakers' survey that was carried out to learn the producers' point of view about the actual situation of SWRs and learn about the characteristics of their winery and winery's tourist offer/hosting services. For AN2, the winery's owners (WO)/marketing managers (MM) joining the SWRs were interviewed (defined as "winemakers"). In addition, for this analysis (AN2), a set of quali-quantitative variables was observed, and exploratory FA was applied to highlight the main motivational dimension according to winemakers.

Finally, AN3 was aimed to investigate the opinions of a panel of expert stakeholders (i.e., representatives of regional research and promotion authorities in the wine sector, presidents of SWRs, regional policymakers in the WT sector, etc.). This analysis allowed to learn about the economic and promotional role of the SWRs for the benefit of local communities and territory, in addition to completing the results of previous analyses.

3.2. Sampling Design

A total of 13 WRs were observed in this study (taken as statistical reference Universe). From this starting set, only the wineries joining the 13 SWRs were identified and considered as statistical reference Population. First, a census of the wineries and wine enterprises associated with the WRs was carried out and the population of wineries joining the SWRs was identified. The official list of the existing SWRs and, for each WR, the official list of the associated members was provided by the "Istituto Regionale Vini e Oli di Sicilia" (I.R.V.O.S: Regional Institute of Sicilian Wines and Oils), resulting $N = 172$ associated wineries. Subsequently, Presidents (or Vice-Presidents/Directors) of the 13 SWRs were contacted to obtain the actual number of wineries associated with the WRs in 2019 and in 2021, which resulted in equal to $N = 159$ wineries (statistical population). Therefore, due to the low number of units of the reference population ($N = 159$), all wineries of the WRs were contacted by telephone by a member of the research team. The producers or marketing/communication/reception managers of the cellars contacted were asked whether the winery performed reception activities for tourists or visitors, even if not systematically, and about their willingness to participate in the investigation. The reasoned choice sampling method was applied to exclude from the Population wineries that had no visitors/tourists. Among these, only 65 wineries accepted to participate in the survey (wineries that declared their willingness to be surveyed in this study), therefore $N = 65$ wineries is the statistical Universe of reference (census) for this study.

For AN1, face-to-face interviews with tourists/visitors of wineries in the SWRs were carried out at each winery after tourists' visits. The interviews were carried out during late summer-autumn 2019 and spring-summer 2021, after the COVID-19 closures of 2020. Tourists to be interviewed were collected from at least 2 wineries for each wine route. The wineries for each wine route were selected by applying the random sampling method.

Available by official sources [40], the average value of wine tourists in Italy in the years 2019–2022 is equal to 500,000 visitors per year. The reference Population for the identification of the sample size of tourists/visitors to be extracted was calculated based on an undefined or infinite statistical population. Therefore, under the assumption of Population number undefined, and with the error set at 6%, a sample size of $n = 278$ was obtained as a result of the application of the statistical method for determining a sample size as a function of the sampling error, with $p = q = 0.5$. However, recent official data from the Association of Wine Cities (Censis—Associazione Città del Vino, 2020) [46] show that, in 2019, there was an average attendance of about 3700 wine tourists per winery in Italy. Thus, considering an average of about 3700 wine tourists per winery multiplied by the 26 wineries extracted, an estimated theoretical value of 96,200 visitors per year (estimated Population) was obtained. Therefore, also in this hypothesis, a sample of 277 individuals

would have set the sampling error at 6%, with $p = q = 0.5$. Therefore, for this study, a sample of $n = 283$ visitors resulted suitable.

Regarding the interviews with tourists, it was decided to conduct them in the following way. During the indicated periods, the interviewers of the research team visited the wineries under study on certain previously scheduled days, generally, the days on which the winery was waiting for organized visits, but they also went to the winery on other days. In the case of organized visits, the organizer or tour guide was asked to ask the visitors to participate in the research. In the case of independent visits at the end of the visit, the tourists were asked to participate in this study. In the case of a positive response from the participants, they were first asked to sign a written consent. An experienced surveyor of the research team explained the purpose of the survey to the participants and then distributed a paper questionnaire. Generally, the questionnaires were filled out in a room. This room was most often the same one in which the guided tasting or lunch had taken place, or an existing meeting room in the winery's building, previously organized to receive participants. Alternatively, in other cases, if the structure of the winery allowed it, the questionnaires were filled in at the spaces equipped with tables and benches outdoors. All participants were followed during the filling in of the questionnaire by the surveyor. During the completion of the questionnaires, participants were not allowed to exchange opinions or make suggestions to each other.

For AN2, wineries' owners were interviewed also by face-to-face interviews in the same periods. In some cases, the marketing directors, and hospitality/communication managers were interviewed instead of or in addition to the entrepreneur.

For AN3 expert stakeholders, i.e., representatives of regional research and promotion authorities in the wine sector, presidents of SWRs, regional policymakers in the WT sector, etc. were interviewed. For these interviews, a proper "question route" was used. A question route was designed by the authors to maintain the same course of the discussion, based on similar previous works [47,48].

3.3. Questionnaire Type

3.3.1. AN1

A properly structured questionnaire was prepared for interviews with tourists at the wineries. The questionnaire initially included questions aimed at finding out the personal, socio-economic, and origin information of the tourists interviewed. Then it contained open and closed questions aimed at outlining opinions on the visit to the winery and its motivations. For the study of motivational factors that lead tourists to visit a winery in Sicily and return, the interviewees were asked to answer a single question regarding motivations: "What are the main motivations for you to visit this winery or return? Please, based on your opinion, order from 1 to 17 the following motivations that prompted you to visit this winery or return (from the most important as the first to the less important as the seventeenth)". The variables (motivations to be ordered) of the motivational item (question Q_m) were chosen by authors based on a review of the relevant literature [1,18–27,49,50] on the subject, a preliminary study of the territorial features [3,6,31,45,46], and a previous work [51].

3.3.2. AN2

Interviews with producers were carried out using a specially structured questionnaire with closed questions, that was used for the face-to-face interviews at wineries or eventually sent by email if producers asked to fill it in at a different time (Google Drive was used to create the online questionnaire format). The questions were aimed to find out about the type of reception, visiting and hospitality, level of services offered, tourist channels used, etc. In addition, the questionnaire contained the same list of 17 motivational variables observed for tourists. Similarly to wine tourists, winemakers were also asked to rank the 17 qualitative variables (from the first to the seventeenth as for AN1) according to their

personal opinions and knowledge about the main motivations for tourists to visit their winery and eventually return.

3.4. Factor Analysis (FA)

FA is used when the researcher's interest is to identify a smaller number of factors underlying many observed variables [51–54]. The purpose of the FA is not to perfectly reproduce variance, but rather to simplify the correlation matrix so that it can be explained in terms of a few underlying factors [51–54]. Therefore, the components are real size; the factors are hypothetical dimensions, which are estimated from the observed variables [51–54]. In this study, we are interested in highlighting the main factors that summarize the different motivations that drive tourists/visitors to visit the wineries associated with the Roads. Therefore, in this case, the Exploratory FA can better reveal the underlying dimensions of all the variables considered [51–54].

No data standardization was applied because the analyzed variables had the same ordinal scale. It was not necessary to standardize the data beforehand because the variables have the same units of measurement, that is, in this case, the values of the scale from 1 to 17, so we are imposing the same contribution of the original variables [53,54].

Two tests were applied to evaluate the adequacy of data, as usual in the case of FA: the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test that is the sample adequacy test, and the Bartlett's sphericity test for measuring goodness of fit. KMO statistic is a proportion of variance among variables that might be common variance. It ranges from zero to one, where zero is inadequate, and values close to one are adequate; literature suggests accepting index values at least equal to 0.7 or higher [52–54]. Bartlett's Sphericity test compares the observed correlation matrix to the identity matrix (off-diagonal is zero). As is well known, this test provides indications about factorization goodness. In fact, when positive, it allows to reject the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between the variables. Once the formal factorization requirements of the data have been met, the chosen factorial model can be applied.

The extraction refers to the process of obtaining underlying factors or components. As far as the methods of extraction of factors are concerned, according to the literature on extraction methods [51–54], the Principal Components Method has been chosen, because no other methods of extraction of factors produce factors that explain a greater proportion of variance (it maximizes the variance explained).

One of the most common strategies for deciding on the number of factors is the rule of "eigenvalues greater than 1" (the Guttman–Kaiser criterion allows you to select the initial eigenvalues higher than 1). Both eigenvalues greater than 1 and the "Scree" test using the decreasing graph of eigenvalues (namely the Scree Plot) were considered to identify the number of underlying factors after extraction [51–54]. The decreasing graph of the eigenvalues allows us to identify from the graphical point of view (scree test) the number of factors that deserve to be taken into account, in this case, those whose eigenvalue is greater than 1.

The FA provides the "factor weights" for each combination of extracted factors and observed variables, which are similar to the correlation coefficients between factors and variables. It is extremely difficult to interpret the factor weights of "non-rotated" factors, regardless of the extraction method chosen. Rotation is not always possible, but when it can be done, it redistributes the variance individually explained by each factor. The rotation of factors helps to arrive at a simpler model of factorial weights, maximizing the high correlations and minimizing the low ones. The factors were rotated using the "Varimax" orthogonal rotation technique, which is the most widely used in the literature [51–55] because it provides good outputs in types of analysis like this. The statistical software SPSS v. 21 has been used for processing data.

4. Results

4.1. The Tourist/Visitor's Profile

Table 2 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the wine tourists interviewed in Sicily during late summer–autumn 2019 and during spring–summer 2021 (after the tourist travel restrictions of 2020 as measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic).

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the tourists.

Variables	Categories	Percentage
Gender	Female	46%
	Male	54%
Age	20 to 30	18%
	31 to 40	42%
	41 to 50	16%
	51 to 60	10%
	61 to 70 (and over)	7%
Origin	Italy	39%
	Europe (mainly France, Germany Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Sweden)	36%
	U.S.A.	23%
	Others	2%
Occupation	Professional/executive	11%
	Public employee	23%
	Clerical/sales/craftsman/factory worker	5%
	Self-employed	21%
	Student (full time)	13%
	Retired	8%
	Unemployed	12%
Other	7%	
Education level	High school or less	3%
	Some college e no degree	48%
	Degree	44%
	Postgraduate	5%
Annual household income	Less than 25,000 €	14%
	25,000–50,000 €	55%
	more than 50,000 €	31%
Type of visit	Wine tourism/Holiday with parents/friend's do-it-yourself by the internet	22%
	Wine tourism/Holiday with parents/friends organized visit (TO/TA)	48%
	One day trip	71%
Information about wine routes received by	Depliant and brochures in hotel	3%
	Tourist guides/TA/TO	23%
	Tourist information point	19%
	Specialized wine magazines	8%
	Newspaper, periodical, magazines	4%
	Billboards in airports and along road and motorways	0%
	Websites/Social networks of WRs/wineries	19%
	Websites/Social networks of friends/other users	21%
Other	3%	
Wine consumer	Regular	33%
	Occasional	30%
	As a "connoisseur"	37%

From the answers of the tourists interviewed, results show that the majority are younger than 40 years old (60%). Particularly, 42% are between 31 and 40 years old, i.e., they

represent that part of the population referred to as “millennials”, and 18% are between 20 and 30 years old (Generation Z). Moreover, 46% female and 54% males. They are coming mainly from Italy 39%, Europe 36%, and USA 23%. Further, 23% are public employees, 21% self-employed, 13% are students, 12% unemployed, and 11% are professionals/executives, all with a medium/high level of education (97%) and an income of over 25,000€ (86%). The range between 25,000€ and 50,000€ accounted for 55%. These tourists choose the winery mainly through an organized visit 23%, the remaining part by tourist information points 19%, Websites or Social networks of wineries 19% and 21% by websites or social networks of friends/users, and generally stay for one day (71%). They can be couples of people or small groups that organize by themselves the trip or through an association (of experts in the field or other), a club, or a group of interest to which they belong. This result is similar to what was found by García-Rodea et al. (2022) in Mexico [56]. Most tourists before or after the visit to the winery want to visit also other tourist attractions in the surroundings, like natural, historical, artistic, and cultural heritage. They often have lunch or dinner at the winery [56]. This category of tourists usually choose to have this experience because they are looking for a weekend or vacation outdoors and want to do something new and learn about local food and wine. During food and wine events, such as “Cantine Aperte” in Italy or “Goblets of Stars” in Sicily, or other types of cultural events (e.g., music events, local festivals) or sports events, it is more likely to find small groups of wine tourists moving autonomously to discover a different day in contact with nature.

This information is important because it confirms the main characteristic of wine tourists to be people that want to experience a personally pleasant social aggregation occasion and be emotionally involved [56]. Moreover, it confirms that WT lends itself well to so-called deseasonalized tourism [56]. Often, Sicilian wine tourists are also cruising passengers who choose on the day the ship stops at the port of Palermo or Messina, to get off and visit a winery rather than a city. Either that or they are tourists who choose this type of visit from those offered by the organization of the hotel where they are staying or the travel agency that organized the vacation. These two types of tourists are often foreign tourists, and they arrive at wineries by coach. Most the tourists who arrived through a travel agency or organized tour stated that they did not want to visit other wineries during their current vacation but may replicate the experience in the future because the experience was very satisfying. In contrast, those who were not part of an organized trip said they wanted to continue visiting other wineries during the vacation. These results are in line with those of other authors that studied wine tourists in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chile [5,56,57]. Typically, these tourists travel by bicycle, on foot [5,18,24,42], or by private car. This result was found also in other studies on WT in China [58]. Most tourists interviewed said they were satisfied with this type of vacation outdoors, amidst the rural landscape, tasting new foods and wines in the company of other wine lovers [5,56–58].

4.2. Results of Factor Analysis for Tourists

According to tourists, the main motivations for visiting a winery to taste or learn about new wines are the following (Table 3): “To enjoy the experience of winery’s visit” (M = 2.33), “To experience local food and wine” (M = 3.54), “To have a relaxing day (or weekend) out” (M = 3.78) “To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory” (M = 4.21), and “Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally” (M = 4.69).

These motivations are followed by “Tasting and buying wine”, “Socializing with other wine lovers”, and “Socializing with partner, friends, and/or family”.

Table 4 shows the outcomes of FA, specifically the total variance explained by the extracted factors and the cumulative variance.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the motivational variables ranked by tourists (Q_m).

Ref. Number	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Tasting and buying wine	5.84	3.023
2	To visit winery and learn about the winemaking	8.25	3.745
3	To enjoy new/special wines	9.48	3.614
4	To enjoy the experience of winery's visit	2.33	1.362
5	Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally	4.69	3.214
6	Winery tour	7.63	2.654
7	To experience local food and wine	3.54	2.785
8	To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	10.06	3.789
9	To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines	11.35	3.895
10	Socializing with other wine lovers	6.54	3.362
11	Socializing with partner, friends and/or family	6.94	3.148
12	To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory	4.21	2.896
13	For leisure	12.68	3.648
14	Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby)	13.94	3.645
15	Congresses, events, celebrations, work conventions, etc.	15.32	3.349
16	To have a relaxing day (or weekend) out	3.78	2.254
17	Because the winery is on a Wine Route	16.62	2.316

Table 4. Total variance explained.

Comp.	Initial Eigenvalue			Weights of Non-Rotated Factors			Weights of Rotated Factors ¹		
	Total	% Variance	% Cumulated	Total	% Variance	% Cumulated	Total	% Variance	% Cumulated
1	11.138	69.611	69.611	11.138	69.511	69.511	9.889	61.806	61.806
2	2.371	14.819	84.431	2.371	14.819	84.431	2.516	15.726	77.532
3	1.246	7.787	92.218	1.246	7.787	92.218	2.350	14.686	92.218
4	0.595	3.718	95.396						
5	0.329	2.056	97.992						
6	0.184	1.148	99.140						

¹ Varimax rotation.

The KMO test resulted equal to 0.921, which shows that it is possible to make a positive judgment on the goodness of the data. The Bartlett's sphericity test is $\chi^2 = 731099.232$ (df = 136; Sig. 0.000). The first component has a total initial eigenvalue of 11.138, which is equal to 69.611% of the total variance in the case of non-rotated factors, and 61.806% after factors' rotation. The second component has a total initial eigenvalue of 2.371, which is equivalent to a further 14.819% of the total variance for the non-rotated factors and 15.726% after rotation. The third component has a total initial eigenvalue of 1.246, which corresponds to another 7.787% of the total variance for the non-rotated factors and 14.686% after rotation.

The values of variance after rotation demonstrate that rotation helps to re-distribute the variance to the main factors. In this case, the third factor was particularly strengthened, compared to results before rotation. In addition, also the Scree plot (Figure 2) shows clearly that the third factor is the last with eigenvalue > 1, and thus it confirms that the following factors have no statistical relevance.

The first three factors have a cumulated explained variance of 92.218%, which means that they represent almost the entire information assets of the data and therefore satisfactorily explain the phenomenon under investigation.

By analyzing the factorial coefficients (Table 5), it is possible to identify the main variables for each component extracted. These variables are those that contribute to determining the factors' variance.

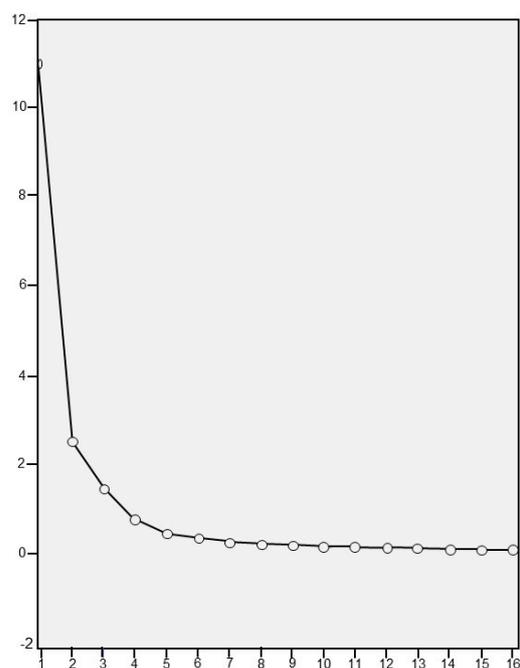


Figure 2. Scree Plot—AN1 (tourists).

Table 5. Principal components: rotated factorial coefficients-tourists¹.

Ref. Number	Variables	Rotated Factorial Coefficients		
		Factor 1 (F1)	Factor 2 (F2)	Factor 3 (F3)
1	Tasting and buying wine	0.639	0.795	0.824
2	To visit winery and learn about the winemaking	0.523	0.580	0.670
3	To enjoy new/special wines	−0.437	0.703	0.776
4	To enjoy the experience of winery’s visit	0.853	0.836	0.837
5	Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally	0.413	0.635	0.887
6	Winery tour	0.632	0.782	0.763
7	To experience local food and wine	0.842	0.531	0.586
8	To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	−0.325	0.794	0.788
9	To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines	−0.347	0.549	0.769
10	Socializing with other wine lovers	0.323	0.813	0.725
11	Socializing with partner, friends and/or family	0.831	0.752	0.443
12	To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory	0.733	0.453	0.680
13	For leisure	0.790	0.680	0.615
14	Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby)	−0.131	−0.100	0.348
15	Congresses, events, celebrations, work conventions, etc.	−0.730	−0.022	0.265
16	To have a relaxing day out (weekend)	0.833	0.583	0.740
17	Because the winery is on a Wine Route	−0.770	−0.623	0.105

¹ Varimax rotation.

Based on the main variables (those with the highest values of the squares of the factorial coefficients), it was possible to identify the main dimensions of the motivational framework for tourists. At this phase, the higher factorial coefficients should be taken into consideration since they indicate the highest contribution of the variables to each factor. Following the FA method, since factorial coefficients do not have defined scaling intervals, the coefficients should be squared to understand how much one factorial coefficient is relevant for the component. In particular, in this case, for example, the result shows that 72.76% (0.853^2) of the variance of the variable “To enjoy the experience of winery’s visit” is explained by the first factor, followed by the variable “To experience local food and wine”, whose variance is explained for 70.89% (0.842^2), and so on. Next, the final step in the process of interpreting the factorial model is to label the latent constructs, i.e., to give a name to each factor such that it summarizes (usually in one or a few words) the contribution of all the variables that lead to its definition. Therefore, by analyzing the

variables that most explain the three factors, it is possible to understand their meaning, and thus define the main dimension of the motivational framework, according to the tourists.

Particularly, by the factorial coefficients' values, the first motivational dimension (factor 1) is explained by the following variables (Table 6): 4. To enjoy the experience of the winery's visit, 7. To experience local food and wine, 16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend), 11. Socializing with partners/friends and/or family, 13. For leisure, 12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory, 1. Tasting and buying wine, and 6. Winery tour. Therefore, this factor may be defined as:

(1) *Visiting & Tasting (WT)*.

Table 6. Factor Analysis's results overview—tourists ¹.

Factors/Motivational Dimensions	Variables/Motivations	Rotated Factorial Coefficients
F1—Visiting & Tasting (Wine tourism)	4. To enjoy the experience of winery's visit	0.853
	7. To experience local food and wine	0.842
	16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend)	0.833
	11. Socializing with partner/friends and/or family	0.831
	13. For leisure	0.790
	12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory	0.733
	1. Tasting and buying wine	0.639
	6. Winery tour	0.632
F2—Sociality & Experience	4. To enjoy the experience of winery's visit	0.836
	10. Socializing with other wine lovers	0.813
	1. Tasting and buying wine	0.795
	8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	0.794
	6. Winery tour	0.782
	11. Socializing with partner, friends and/or family	0.752
	3. To enjoy new/special wines	0.703
	13. For leisure	0.680
F3—Learning & Understanding (territory and winery)	5. Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally	0.635
	5. Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally	0.887
	4. To enjoy the experience of winery's visit	0.837
	1. Tasting and buying wine	0.824
	8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	0.788
	3. To enjoy new/special wines	0.776
	9. To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines	0.769
	6. Winery tour	0.763
	16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend)	0.740
	10. Socializing with other wine lovers	0.725
12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory	0.680	
2. To visit winery and learn about the winemaking	0.670	
13. For leisure	0.615	

¹ Varimax rotation.

This motivational dimension is characterized by the main attractions of wine and food tourism, the discovery of wine territories, and visits to wineries. These are the more general motivations, which characterize all types of wine tourists. The social and experiential spheres are predominant in the main motivation, which is a visit to the winery for wine tasting.

The second motivational dimension (factor 2) is explained by the variables: 4. To enjoy the experience of the winery's visit, 10. Socializing with other wine lovers, 1. Tasting and buying wine, 8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker, 6. Winery tour, 11. Socializing with partner, friends, and/or family, 3. To enjoy new/special wines, 13. For leisure, and 5. Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally (Table 6). This dimension can be defined as:

(2) *Sociality & Experience.*

This dimension shows the tourist/visitor desire to discover new things and have new experiences in a pleasant context of socializing around wine as the main object and leitmotif of the whole experience.

The third motivational dimension derives from the following main variables: 5. Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally, 4. To enjoy the experience of the winery's visit, 1. Tasting and buying wine, 8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker, 3. To enjoy new/special wines, 9. To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines, 6. Winery tour, 16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend), 10. Socializing with other wine lovers, 12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory, 2. To visit a winery and learn about winemaking, and 13. For leisure (Table 6). Therefore, it appears appropriate to define this dimension as:

(3) *Learning & Understanding (territory and winery).*

This dimension highlights the curiosity of wine tourists to know and understand the context in greater depth. More specifically, this dimension highlights wine tourists' interest in learning about the distinctive characteristics of a particular wine territory, the particularities of specific wines (flavors, combinations with foods, content, and type of label), specific wine production methods, and wine producers' attitudes towards environmental issues and innovations adopted in the winery in terms of sustainability. In this dimension, the importance of the brand-land link for wine products emerges [44]. In addition, in this dimension, the components of socializing, communicating, and sharing the learning experience with other people who have the same interests emerge [43,44,59,60].

4.3. Results of Winery's Owners—Winemakers

The following table (Table 7) describes the SWR's member composition.

Regarding the activity of tourists' reception, the winemakers declared to carry out a constant and regular activity of tourist reception complementary to the production of wine, and this confirms other studies about WRs outside Europe [19,35,61,62]. From the results, it appeared that the biggest and most famous wineries also have resorts, thus hosting tourists coming from Italy, Europe, and USA. This result is in line with the answers of a large cluster of tourists that declared visiting the winery in groups, often as an organized trip that moves by coach from the place where they stay overnight and bring them to visit the winery and other sites of tourist interest in the area.

Respondents declared that most tourists decide to visit a winery because of the partnerships established over time between the winery and tour operators or travel agencies [62]. However, there are important elements for entrepreneurs that characterize the choice of one winery over another. In particular, according to winemakers, the main characteristics that a winery should have to satisfy tourists' demand are the reception infrastructures, the quality of combined services offered (hosting spaces, recreation activities, winery guides), hospitality services and structures (parking areas, indoor halls or outdoor spaces for group stops, tasting rooms, dining rooms, etc.), and the beauty of the wine estate [5,57,58]. Another element of interest is the type of services offered, e.g., the quality of the wine tastings, the beauty of the panorama at the tasting venue, the quality of the wines tasted, the care taken in dealing with visitors and answering questions, the kindness of the reception staff, the availability of outdoor and indoor spaces for visitors to stop by, etc. [57–59].

Regarding the tourist demand, the winemakers were found to agree that tourists converge on certain wants and needs, regardless of whether they are employees of the sector, connoisseurs of wines and wine cellars, experts, etc. (sommelier, oenologist, restaurateur, etc.). In fact, rather than dwelling on the other characteristics proposed in the questionnaire, closely linked to the cellar (sale in the cellar, wine cellar, wine cellar prices, etc.) or the area (folklore, food, and wine traditions of the area, etc.), the interviewees indicated the tourist infrastructure, the quality of services offered (reception, cellar guides), hospitality

and entertainment as the main features, combined with the need to be involved in the world of wine [58,63].

Table 7. Entities that join the Wine Routes by type and number ¹.

Wine Route	Type of Business	Numbers
Alcamo DOC	Winemakers/wineries	41
	Hotels/B&B ¹ /restaurants	25
	Other tourist services	10
Monreale DOC	Winemakers/wineries	10
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	25
	Other tourist services	15
Erice DOC	Winemakers/wineries	5
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	9
	Other tourist services	8
Marsala Terre d'occidente	Winemakers/wineries	21
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	15
	Other tourist services	10
Val di Mazara	Winemakers/wineries	22
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	8
	Other tourist services	16
Terre Sicane	Winemakers/wineries	21
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	21
	Other tourist services	10
Castelli Nisseni	Winemakers/wineries	Info not available
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	
	Other tourist services	
Cerasuolo di Vittoria	Winemakers/wineries	20
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	23
	Other tourist services	11
Val di Noto	Winemakers/wineries	18
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	10
	Other tourist services	12
Etna	Winemakers/wineries	15
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	20
	Other tourist services	10
Provincia di Messina	Winemakers/wineries	18
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	26
	Other tourist services	14
Percorso della Targa Florio	Winemakers/wineries	3
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	7
	Other tourist services	9
Valle dei Templi	Winemakers/wineries	7
	Hotels/B&B/restaurants	14
	Other tourist services	7

¹ Bed and breakfast.

Finally, the limits of WRs associations resulted in the following observations: powerless to intercept public funds planned to improve territorial infrastructures (e.g., to make the tourist access easier) and lack of specific signposting of the WRs, which proved extremely important [63]. Another outcome was the difficulty for producers to operate as a single entity and work as a system to achieve common goals of sustainable development for the territory [59]. Instead, what emerged was the inability to converge the personal interests of individuals towards actions of common interest for the benefit of the entire wine-growing area (common strategies, common communication, common promotion,

common strengths, etc.), similarly to another study about the sustainability of the wine industry in New Zealand [64].

4.4. Results of Factor Analysis—Winemakers

Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables based on the scores obtained by the producers. “Tasting and buying wine” (M = 2.45), “To enjoy the experience of winery’s visit” (M = 3.50), and “Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally” (M = 3.86) were the motivations that obtained the largest number of first positions, resulting in the main reasons for tourists to visit the winery, according to producers.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of the motivational variables ranked by wineries (Q_m).

Ref. Number	Variables	Media	Standard Deviation
1	Tasting and buying wine	2.45	1.368
2	To visit winery and learn about the winemaking	5.89	3.940
3	To enjoy new/special wines	4.94	3.594
4	To enjoy the experience of winery’s visit	3.50	2.690
5	Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally	3.86	3.012
6	Winery tour	6.14	3.033
7	To experience local food and wine	6.52	2.612
8	To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	7.94	2.612
9	To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines	10.27	1.810
10	Socializing with other wine lovers	8.89	2.168
11	Socializing with partner, friends and/or family	11.11	3.107
12	To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory	9.63	2.186
13	For leisure	12.59	2.029
14	Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby)	14.70	1.508
15	Congresses, events, celebrations, work conventions, etc.	14.73	1.504
16	To have a relaxing day out (weekend)	15.08	2.318
17	Because the winery is on a Wine Route	14.02	3.124

Table 9 shows the total variance explained by the factors as a result of FA.

Table 9. Total variance explained.

Component	Initial Eigenvalue			Weights of Non-Rotated Factors			Weights of Rotated Factors ¹		
	Total	% Variance	% Cumulated	Total	% Variance	% Cumulated	Total	% Variance	% Cumulated
1	3.697	21.747	21.747	3.697	21.747	21.747	3.240	19.058	19.058
2	3.121	18.360	40.106	3.121	18.360	40.106	2.756	16.212	35.269
3	2.093	12.313	52.419	2.093	12.313	52.419	2.052	12.071	47.340
4	1.911	11.242	63.662	1.911	11.242	63.662	1.980	11.649	58.989
5	1.426	8.390	72.052	1.426	8.390	72.052	1.773	10.429	69.418
6	1.027	6.041	78.093	1.027	6.041	78.093	1.475	8.674	78.093

¹ Varimax rotation.

It is possible to observe that the first component has a total initial eigenvalue of 3.967, which is equal to 21.747% of the total variance after rotation and 19.058 after rotation. The second main component has a total initial eigenvalue of 3.121, which corresponds to a further 18.360% of the total variance before rotation and 16.212 after rotation. The third is a total initial eigenvalue of 2.093, which corresponds to 12.313% of the total variance before rotation and 12.071 after rotation, and so on. Finally, the sixth factor explains the 78.093% of the total cumulated variance both after and before rotation. Moreover, in this case, rotation allowed us to re-distribute the variance of residual factors to the six main ones. The Bartlett’s test resulted $\chi^2 = 663087.333$ (df = 136; Sig. 0.000).

The KMO test, equal to 0.871, confirms the goodness of the extraction process and the identification of six factors as satisfactory (being the cumulated variance = 78.093% and considering that the factors following the sixth do not add further information). This result

is confirmed by the Scree plot (Figure 3) showing that after the sixth factor the eigenvalues are <1 , and thus with no statistical relevance.

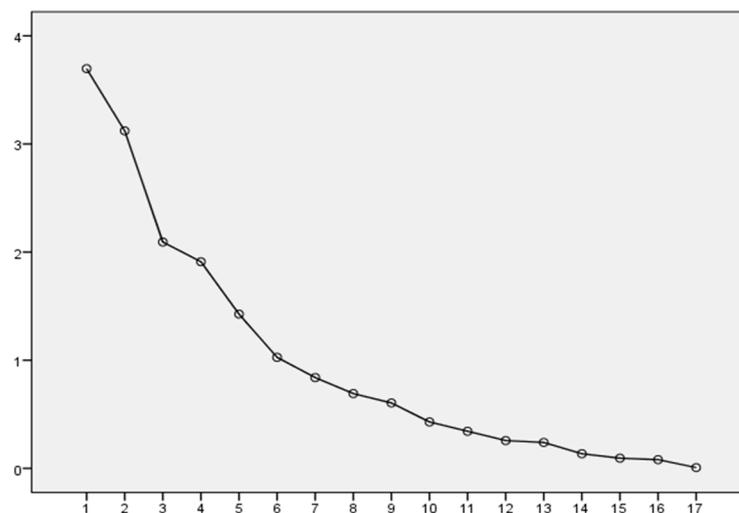


Figure 3. Scree Plot—AN2 (winemakers).

From the analysis of the factorial coefficients (Table 10), it is possible to identify, also in this analysis, the main variables for each component extracted that contribute mainly to determining the factors' variance.

Table 10. Principal components: rotated factorial coefficients—winemakers¹.

Ref. Number	Variables	Rotated Factorial Coefficients					
		Factor 1 (F1)	Factor 2 (F2)	Factor 3 (F3)	Factor 4 (F4)	Factor 5 (F5)	Factor 6 (F6)
1	Tasting and buying wine	0.225	0.767	0.139	0.453	−0.173	0.105
2	To visit winery and learn about the winemaking	0.530	−0.534	0.317	−0.211	−0.018	0.132
3	To enjoy new/special wines	−0.756	0.141	−0.139	−0.97	−0.165	−0.365
4	To enjoy the experience of winery's visit Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally	0.220	0.733	0.538	0.178	0.111	−0.415
5	Winery tour	0.037	−0.372	0.011	−0.312	0.676	−0.14
6	To experience local food and wine	−0.085	0.145	0.168	−0.856	−0.295	0.138
7	To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	0.363	0.531	−0.615	0.058	−0.026	0.167
8	To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines	0.400	−0.382	−0.320	0.435	−0.171	0.494
9	Socializing with other wine lovers	−0.268	−0.351	0.273	0.585	−0.045	0.127
10	Socializing with partner, friends and/or family	0.485	0.404	−0.420	−0.029	0.219	−0.169
11	To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory	−0.695	0.456	0.486	0.205	0.065	0.227
12	For leisure	−0.024	0.271	0.680	0.458	−0.021	−0.162
13	Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby)	−0.428	0.223	0.615	−0.144	0.332	0.293
14	Congresses, events, celebrations, work conventions, etc.	−0.722	−0.210	0.533	0.254	0.319	0.207
15	To have a relaxing day out (weekend)	0.830	0.022	0.366	0.083	−0.116	0.111
16	Because the winery is on a Wine Route	0.352	0.583	0.547	0.350	0.208	−0.347
17		−0.370	−0.318	0.043	0.079	−0.678	−0.136

¹ Varimax rotation.

In addition, in this case, the factorial coefficients' values higher than $|0.450|$ indicate the optimal result [51–55]. Based on these variables it was possible to define the six dimensions.

The first dimension derives from the following main variables (Table 11): 11. Socializing with partner, friends, and/or family, 14. Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby), inversely correlated to the motivation of 15. Congresses, events, celebrations, work conventions, etc. Therefore, the factor may be defined as:

(1) *Social & Recreational (hobby, sport, etc.).***Table 11.** Factor Analysis's results overview—tourists ¹.

Factors/Motivational Dimensions	Variables/Motivations	Rotated Factorial Coefficients
F1—Social and recreational (hobby, sport, etc.)	11. Socializing with partner, friends and/or family	−0.695
	14. Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby)	−0.722
	15. Congresses, events, celebrations, work conventions, etc.	0.830
F2—Food & wine Experience	1. Tasting and buying wine	0.767
	4. To enjoy the experience of winery's visit	0.733
	16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend)	0.583
	7. To experience local food and wine	0.531
F3—Rural/slow/green tourism	12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory,	0.680
	13. For leisure,	0.615
	16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend),	0.547
	4. To enjoy the experience of winery's visit,	0.538
	14. Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby),	0.533
F4—Learning and understanding (wines and winery) for leisure	11. Socializing with partner, friends and/or family.	0.486
	9. To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines,	0.585
	12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory,	0.458
	1. Tasting and buying wine,	0.453
	8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	0.435
F5–F6—Power of the Brand	5. Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery person-ally	0.676
	17. Because the winery is on a Wine Route	−0.678
	8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker	0.494

¹ Varimax rotation.

This motivational dimension highlights the choice of spending free time in the company of other people [1,3,4,6,8–10,22–24,39,43,57,58].

The second motivational dimension derives from the following variables that are (Table 11): 7. To experience local food and wine, 16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend), 4. To enjoy the experience of the winery's visit, and 1. Tasting and buying wine. It is possible to define this dimension:

(2) *Food & Wine Experience.*

Food and wine experience highlights the consolidation of a trend that has been going on for several years now, namely the desire to visit the cellars to get closer to the world of wine and learn and understand the wine world [11–16,23,41,63].

The third dimension is characterized by the following main variables (Table 11): 12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory, 13. For leisure, 14. Recreation (e.g., sport, hobby), 16. To have a relaxing day out (weekend), 4. To enjoy the experience of the winery's visit, 11. Socializing with partner, friends, and/or family. The factor can be defined as:

(3) *Rural/slow/green tourism.*

This dimension has a strong tourist connotation: to visit the beauty and landscape of the area and taste local products, to live in the atmosphere of tasting at the winery, and to practice the activities offered by the winery with other people that share the same interests [6]. In this dimension, the aspects of leisure, sport, hobbies, and activities outdoors emerge, combined with the interest to experience the territory with all its beauties and its heritage. This dimension emphasizes the fact that the main motivation for tourists to return to the same cellar is the desire to relive the first beautiful experience, this result confirms other findings of many empirical studies carried out in other wine territories of the world, e.g., Greece [3,11–16,27,39,56]. As happens in all vacation contexts, the memory of a unique and positive experience influences the desire to return and, in this case, also the desire to consume the wines that were the topic of the experience [5,58,59]. This dimension is very

important because it highlights the contribution of sustainable rural tourism to the WT and its implications may be relevant for WT sector.

Factors 4–6 are those that most represent the motivations of a regular wine tourist and/or an expert of wine. These variables outline a profile of visitor who is very interested in the wines discovered. Particularly, the fourth dimension is explained by the variables: 9. To have information about wine prices and how to buy wines, 12. To visit cultural attractions and rural settings of the territory, 1. Tasting and buying wine. 8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker (Table 11). This factor can be defined as:

(4) *Learning and understanding (wines and winery) for leisure.*

This motivational dimension emphasizes the pleasure that wine lovers find in learning and having new information from producers about production systems, types of wines, sustainability practices, and about wines. This evinces precisely the love for wine and the need to experience pleasant emotions: wine is the hedonic need [65,66].

The fifth and sixth dimensions are not marginal, compared to the antecedent factors, as they express another 10.429% (the fifth) and 8.674% (the sixth) of the total variance.

However, it is interesting to note that the fifth dimension is explained mainly the variable, 5. Because I knew a specific Sicilian wine brand and I want to experience the winery personally followed by motivations of leisure and recreation. Moreover, this variable appears inversely correlated with 17. Because the winery is on a Wine Route (Table 11). This is a dimension wherein the tourist has heard a lot about a winery because he has already tasted its wines, or because of the brand reputation/notoriety and moves specifically to visit the winery and get to know the producer and the wines, although the winery may belong to a wine route. This factor highlights a niche segment of wine tourists, an experienced or neophyte wine tourist, who goes specifically to a winery because he/she has heard about it and wants to get to know it; this dimension outlines the importance of the winery/wine brand image.

The sixth dimension is connected to the antecedent because it is constituted by only one main variable 8. To learn about types of wines and wine production from the winemaker. Therefore, both the 4th and 5th dimensions could be defined as a cognitive dimension of the brand and the producer. This factor can be defined as:

(5) *Power of the Brand.*

In fact, it confirms the importance of the brand name and its strong link, in the case of wines, with the territory of origin [30,44,67].

4.5. Results of the Expert Stakeholders

According to the experts, there is still a very wide gap between the expectations of wine cellars associated with the WRs and the activities that these associations of entrepreneurs carry out for integrated territorial development, like in other similar wine regions, e.g., Turkey or in Australia [63,68]. Although the laws give a lot of autonomy to the WRs and the EU financed multifunctional activities and territorial marketing activities, during the last years (2007–2013 and 2014–2021), to date, the directors of the SWRs have not taken any concrete action to consolidate the “Sicilia DOC” brand and promote it collectively or to promote the Sicilian WR as a unique trademark in the WT sector worldwide [58,63,69]. On the contrary, the experts highlighted several individualistic actions and fragmented strategies that confused wine tourists. At present, the SWRs are still uncomfortable, difficult to identify, difficult to follow, and without any form of signs or information signals. Tourists have a lot of difficulties in finding WRs independently [63]. On the contrary, this problem does not exist for WRs in other regions of Italy, e.g., Tuscany and Veneto for several reasons, primarily because of the greater public funds available to the WRs and the better ability to spend them profitably by the entrepreneurs belonging to the routes; secondly, because of the management committees of the WRs do not work effectively to intercept and spend public funds intended to improve the overall system. In addition, there is a poor synergy of

communication and territorial marketing activities carried out at the WRs level, although there is very good communication made by each winery individually [34,36,59,67]. Another element that deserves a deeper analysis is the emerging difficulty of entrepreneurs to make an integrated wine and tourist offer system in the territory [67]. The owners focus on the promotion of only their band/wine and do no work on implementing strategies and planning concrete activities with other entrepreneurs to promote the entire territory.

In addition, through interviews with expert stakeholders, it was possible to outline the evolution of SWRs from their origin (in 1999) to the present day. A summary was then made highlighting the innovations/improvements and deteriorations that occurred over 10-year periods.

The following table (Table 12) describes the development of the SWRs and their evolution from 1999 to date.

Table 12. Development of the Sicilian Wine Routes' legislation and features and external socio-economic context—from 1999 to date.

Wine Routes' Legislation Features and External Context	Variables		
	From 1999 to 2008	From 2009 to 2018	From 2019 to Date
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Law n. 268/99 establishing the Wine Routes in Italy; - Regional Law n. 5/2002 establishing the Sicilian "Strade e rotte marittime del Vino" (Roads and sea routes of Wine in Sicily); - First application in Sicily of the EU Common Market Organizationn (CMO) for wine; - First application in Sicily of the EU Common Market Organizationn (CMO) for wine; - Establishment of Sicilian Wine Routes by the Istituto Regionale del Vino e dell'Olio—IRVO (regional authority for the study and promotion of the wine and oil sectors): First 7 wine routes established in Sicily (2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reform of the EU CMO (n. 479/2008); - Establishment of the Italian Testo unico della vite e del vino Law n. 238/2016 "Disciplina organica della coltivazione della vite e della produzione e del commercio del vino" (Organised regulation of vine cultivation and wine production and trade); - Establishment in some wine routes of a management committee; - Establishment of the 8th wine route (2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the last 5 wine routes in Sicily; - Nowadays there are other 4 itineraries established by the Associazione Nazionale Produttori Vinicoli e Turismo del Vino "Assovini" (National Association of wine producers and wine tourism)¹
Route signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of regulations about specific road signs for the Wine Routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the specific road signs only in some wine routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the specific road; - Signs in all wine routes but still deficient;
Services offered by wineries associated to SWRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few wineries offer tasting services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the services offered by the wineries concern the visit of the cellar and the vineyards with wine tasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All wineries joining the wine routes offer services of visiting winery and vineyards offering wine tasting or lunch (day tour)
Adequacy of winery's facilities for hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most not suitable for receiving visitors in the winery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restructuring of the wineries' facilities for receiving and offering hospitality to visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Almost all the wineries joining the wine routes have renovated their wineries' facilities for welcoming tourists/visitors
Visiting tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average annual number of wine tourists traveling along Italy's 140 wine routes in 2006 amounted to 20,200. A total of 2,828,000 wine tourists [46]; - Mostly regional and national visitors; - Few foreign tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gradual increase in Italian and foreign tourists with a peak in 2018 - some partnerships with tour operators and travel agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2019 a total of 15 million wine tourists and an average of about 3700 wine tourists per winery; - Further increase in Italian and foreign tourists in 2019 [46] - Drastic reduction in 2020–2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic; - Estimated increase in 2022 to 2019 levels; - Guided tours with specialized staff organized by the winery and consolidated partnerships with tour operators and travel agencies

Table 12. Cont.

Wine Routes' Legislation Features and External Context	Variables		
	From 1999 to 2008	From 2009 to 2018	From 2019 to Date
Road connections	- Inadequate in most cases	- Not always adequate in most cases	- Adequate road connections in about 50% of cases
Wine museums		- Establishment of wine museums in the main wine-growing sites along the wine routes	- Still insufficient number of wine museums along the wine routes
Integrated territorial Tourist systems and Internationalization	- Creation of integrated territorial tourist system (connection between wine tourism and rural tourism/naturalistic tourism/seaside tourism/cultural tourism, etc.); - Introduction of the annual Italian wine tourist event ideated by the Italian Association of Wine Routes called "Cantine Aperte" (Open wineries) in some Sicilian wineries joining the wine routes; - Promotion and internationalization of the wine tourism offer	- Consolidation of integrated territorial tourism system; - Increase of Sicilian territory's promotional activities and number of typical food products (wine, oil, cheeses, etc.); - Increase of fame of the annual Italian wine tourist event called "Cantine Aperte" (Open wineries) in some Sicilian wineries joining the wine routes; - Internationalization of Sicilian enology; - Integrated promotion of wine-growing territories with organization of music, sport and gastronomy events; - Establishment of tastings in wine shops joining the wine routes.	- Reduced effectiveness of the Wine Routes in promoting wine tourism and increased effectiveness of integrated territorial tourism (which also includes wine tourism); - Consolidation of the success of the "Cantine Aperte" event in most of the Sicilian wineries joining the wine routes; - Increased reputation of the Sicilian territory and its typical quality products; - Affirmation of Sicilian enology in the world; - Increase in wine shops associated with the Wine Roads and in wine shop tastings.
Sicilian wine production	- Increase of production of Sicilian bottled wine. Total Sicilian wine production: 8.160 mln of hectoliters	- Increase of production of wines with quality marks (DOC, DOCG, IGT), but general decrease of total quantities of produced wine. Total Sicilian wine production: 6.175 mlns of hectoliters	- Consolidation wines with quality marks (DOC, DOCG, IGT), but further decrease of total quantities of produced wine. Total Sicilian wine production: 4.924 mlns of hectoliters
Funding for investments related to tourism activities carried out by winemakers	- Investments for tourist activities financed by CAP and other public authorities	- Investments for tourist activities financed by CAP and private funding or own funding	- Investments for tourist activities financed by CAP, Recovery and Resilience Fund (from 2021), private funding and own funding

¹ Extensions/splits of some wine routes.

4.6. The Wine Tourist Profile

By analyzing the responses of all the tourists interviewed, combined with those of the wine producers, it was possible to draw up a profile of the wine tourist in Sicily to outline similarities or differences with other results about the segmentation of the WT market in other countries [70,71]. In short, the wine tourist in Sicily is younger than 40 years old (60%). Particularly, 18% are between 20 and 30 years old (millennials). These tourists are predominantly living in a city (75%), with a medium/high level of education (97%) and an income of over €25,000 (86%). This tourist is international (61%), arrives mainly through an organized visit 23%, tourist information points 19%, websites or social networks of wineries 19%, and 21% websites or social networks of friends/users. They arrive for a one-day visit (71%) and are balanced between males (54%) and females (46%). They like direct experiences outdoors and want to combine wine with other beauties of the territory, e.g., having lunch or dinner at the winery and buying wine at the end of the visit (Figure 4). Generally, Sicilian wine tourists are visiting a winery for the first time out of a desire to have this experience or because they have chosen to explore the rural area driven by other motivations and accidentally find themselves on a route where there are wineries that welcome visitors because they were doing another kind of vacation, so-called agro-tourism or slow tourism, cycling tourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, etc. These people can be defined as "accidental" wine tourists. Alternatively, the wine tourist is also

one who is used to practicing this type of tourism periodically and therefore can be defined “frequent/regular” wine tourist. They love to visit wineries to spend a relaxing day or a weekend in places in the middle of the countryside, immersed in the agricultural and natural landscape, enjoy a day in the outdoors, eat local products, taste local wine, and relax in company with other people. They can be both wine experts or neophytes and they often look for complementary services to the wine itself. All types of tourists like to share their opinions with the owner and ask for information about the wine tasted and other types of wine. At the end of the visit, they generally buy wine or ask for information about where to buy the wine once they return home (e.g., through direct contact with the winemaker, at a retailer, or through the Internet).

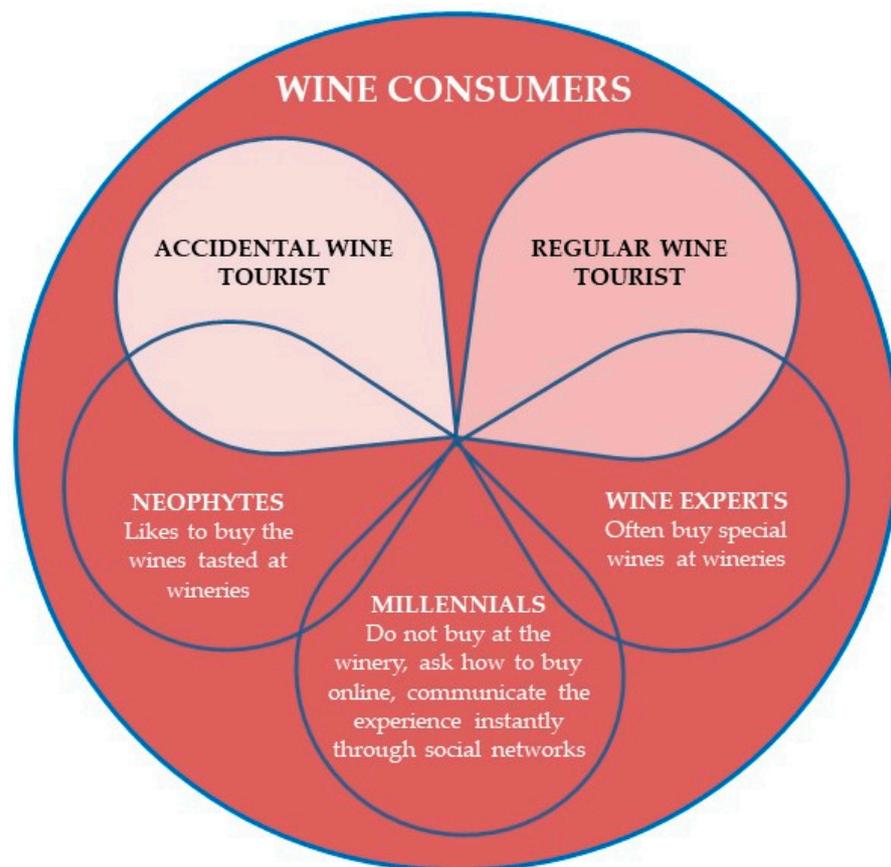


Figure 4. Wine tourist’s profile, market segmentation and purchase intentions.

After having described the profile of the wine tourist in the Sicily region, it is possible to outline a market segmentation in WT describing the different types of wine consumers among wine tourists [70,71]. Table 13 shows the result of wine consumers among wine tourists.

This result also appears to be of interest to wine producers and wine marketing studies because it reveals and confirms the importance to experience wine and its territory in influencing wine-buying behaviors and the importance of sharing with others in consumption habits across all types of consumers [11,13,14,16,70,71]. It also reveals the existence of a particular segment of very young wine consumers/tourists, for whom social networks represent a very important and daily means of communication used to share experiences and exchange ideas [72,73]. This element is very important because it highlights a change in the sharing habits of wine lovers, but also the importance for producers to be able to benefit from the word-of-mouth of their customers/consumers through social networks [60,72,73].

Table 13. Wine consumers' segmentation.

Wine Consumers	Description
Wine passionate	Typical wine lovers: interested in everything about wine, regular wine tourist, love to visit wineries and taste new wines, interested in knowing other wine lovers to share information, also with producers. They usually buy wine
Neophytes	People who have recently approached the world of wine to learn about wines and wineries, to travel to wine regions and learn about their wines, territories, and local traditions. They are interested in learning about the wine-making process. They like to buy the products tasted in the cellar
Occasional wine tourists	People who like to travel by car or camper to learn about new territories and discover the Wine Routes because they are marked along their route and to taste wines at wineries and eat local foods. They are not always interested in buying the wines tasted
Frequent travelers	Frequent travelers who use tour operators, love to learn about new places and learn from guides. They like meeting other people to share opinions about wines. They usually buy the wine they taste
Millennial wine tourist	Travelers who like to discover wine-producing territories and learn about the culture of the area. They are economically independent; they want to experience a cultural-culinary aggregative moment. They usually buy the wine tasted to remember the overall experience.

5. Discussion

The results of this in-depth study provide a comprehensive picture of the current situation of WT in Sicily at the level of tourists/consumers, wineries, WRs, and rural areas. This framework, although susceptible to refinement and further integration of knowledge, allows formulating at present strategic planning for the development of the rural tourism sector and the wine sector.

On the one hand, the enormous potential of WT in wine-growing areas has emerged with reference to those areas that are particularly rich in other tourist attractions, as in this case, such as cultural, naturalistic, and gastronomic ones [74]. On the other hand, the need remains to integrate the WRs into a wider tourism development context, i.e., the more general one of green and sustainable tourism [75]. As mentioned in the introduction, the WRs represent a specialized tourist offer, which seeks to know and meet the new needs of a particular tourist segment and, at the same time, contribute to the enhancement and conservation of the natural/agricultural environment landscape, diversity, and heritage of the rural territory. These paths, if effectively exploited by entrepreneurs and local administrations, can concretely contribute to revitalizing rural areas, counteracting depopulation, supporting the economy of villages along the routes, and contributing to people-to-people socialization in many rural areas of the world [76].

The Sicilian WRs show an authentic and irreplicable identity combination, the Sicilian identity, alias "Sicilianity", as a positive value. This identity is built on a heritage of unique rural territories composed of agriculture, landscape, values, traditions, culture, and art [44]. The results of the study highlighted that the main motivational dimensions of WT are characterized by a sensorial, social, and cultural experience with a strong shared connotation: visiting territories, crossing them, stopping, and tasting wines, experiencing the atmosphere of a visit to the cellar, exchange ideas with producers, enjoy a recreational moment, get to know and learn together. These characteristics are similar to those of sustainable rural tourism. These two types of tourism are strictly connected. From a recently published review on sustainable WT, all the elements of connections between sustainability, rural tourism, and wine were analyzed in depth [77]. WT grew not only because of wineries' direct economic interest, but also because of the availability of local events that are linked to food and wine production. In some cases, events have stimulated

tourism flows and have represented an opportunity for local wineries to connect with tourists [77,78].

Certainly, all the dimensions revealed are characterized by a strong hedonic need. Sicilian WRs are tourist destinations similar to those chosen by tourists that ask for tranquility, people-to-people socialization, and contact with nature, e.g., green tourism, sustainable tourism, or religious tourism, especially in this time, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, in which people feel even stronger than in the past the need to spend their holidays in the open air, far from inhabited centers, the need to reduce the stress of confinement in their homes and cities, the need for sociality [39]. If on the one hand, the results of the study highlighted the current state of backwardness of the Sicilian wine roads, lacking specialized signage and an efficient centralized organization at the territorial level [63], the tourists interviewed declared that they were not aware that the wineries visited were associated with a Sicilian wine route. Indeed, they were not even aware that there were thirteen WRs in Sicily. This negative element highlights the fact that, despite the inefficiency of SWRs, which derives from the inability of producers to work together to make WRs a powerful tourist attraction, there is a great demand for this type of tourism. Moreover, the cellars, individually, are well equipped to receive tourists and are aware of the importance of offering efficient services and leaving a memory of a positive experience, to be repeated, in the memory of their visitors.

Another interesting element that resulted from interviews is the lack of infrastructure that limits rural tourism. Particularly, the actual state of decay, due to lack of public funds, of the provincial and interprovincial roads in the Sicilian region. This limit was highlighted by tourists, winemakers, and expert stakeholders [63]. The visitors that traveled independently declared that it was very difficult to drive or cycle along the wine territories because of the unmaintained roads and the difficulty of identifying the cellars along the routes. In fact, at many points, there was no road or specific signage, and the signal for the internet connection was absent. Therefore, it was impossible to use a common satellite navigator. In short, finding a winery on your own without a tourist guide has in many cases been a very difficult undertaking.

Unfortunately, the only public funding in favor of SWRs is aimed at promotion and communication activities. Despite this, these funds are insufficient. As can be seen, most of the websites of the WRs are obsolete, outdated, or malfunctioning, and it is impossible to reach a wine cellar for a visitor using the WRs. There is a lack of funding for strategic structural and infrastructural investments for the development of WRs which would favor the entire rural territory.

However, despite some opinions of distrust, local and regional public entities invest economic resources to finance sustainable tourism development plans. Nevertheless, the integration of these plans appears necessary among all the SWRs also to cope with the requirements needed to obtain the funds provided by the EU to finance the Community Agricultural Policy for these purposes. The WRs represent a paradigmatic case of “social capital” within a defined territory in which investments, experiences, and politics must be shared to have a united territory wherein public and private entities work together for integrated territorial development [62].

Finally, the study revealed new profiling of wine tourists and segmentation of consumers. These tourists are interested not only in wine, but also a broader type of green vacation, i.e., a vacation typical of so-called green, sustainable, slow tourism [75–77]. These tourists are also interested in responsible consumption and the application of circularity and reuse practices. These results help to design strategies for the survival and development of the entire territorial system and describe the role of WRs in achieving these goals.

5.1. Practical Implications

Since WRs are profoundly different from country to country [19–22] and considering that wine tourists have some elements of differences depending on wine regions and countries, studies of researchers on different wine regions can help entrepreneurs, consultants,

practitioners, and policymakers in offering food for thought to develop suitable strategies of improvement adapted to the specific context of reference.

Moreover, the proposed methodological model can certainly be applied in different territories to carry out similar surveys and compare the results obtained. Therefore, it is not the aim of this research to provide solutions or answers in contexts other than Sicily. However, we point out the importance of WT and outdoor tourism in this region. In addition, we point out the significant data regarding Sicilian wine production, the size of wine-growing areas, and export values that are continually growing and that place the region among the first in the world. For these reasons, the study appears of interest not only to scholars in the field but also to local wine entrepreneurs. Findings suggest the possibility of relaunching the SWRs, through their inclusion in the wider offer of territorial sustainable rural tourism, e.g., agro-tourism [23,38,43,61,76]. Indeed, tourists are highly satisfied with the winery visit while highlighting the relationship between wine, local cuisine, and contact with nature and outdoor activities. The results showed that tourists are increasingly interested to learn about wine producers' commitment to climate change, environmental protection, and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, wine producers have an interest in explaining to their customers/consumers the activities they have undertaken and the efforts they have made to progressively transform their production systems to more sustainable ones (saving energy, water, soil, maintaining biodiversity, reducing the use of polluting products, etc.) that lead to the preservation of the natural environment but also the agroecosystem [77]. Therefore, it appears necessary, to revitalize SWRs and simultaneously avail themselves of their role as a propulsive tool for the economic and social development of a territory, to improve performance through a series of investments that integrate them perfectly into the broader context of sustainable territorial tourism.

It is interesting to note that the observed case of the SWRs faces various bottlenecks to its sustainable development, which are similar to those of other wine territories, e.g., incomplete infrastructure, low human capital, low coordination and governance between relevant public and private companies involved, sustainability issues, inadequate marketing and enotourism-promoting strategies, and lack of synergies with other tourism sectors [19]. Therefore, the solutions and development model suggested by the results of this study may also be of interest to scholars, entrepreneurs, policy makers, and practitioners of sustainable WT in other countries of the world, particularly for New World wine-producing countries that may face similar challenges. This development model, whose main points are described below, will increase resilience, exports, investments, and the number of tourists.

Point 1. Investments in structural and infrastructural interventions.

First, wineries should improve their performance by renewing their business models with a view to sustainability, in their interests, and meeting customer demand [78–80]. This should be done by individual companies using their financing or, if possible, taking governmental contributions (like in the UE under the Common Agricultural Policy funding for agro-environmental measures [66,79,80] or the Next Generation EU recovery plan) Thanks to these investments, it will be possible to carry out interventions in structural works at the firm and WRs level. These innovative business models oriented toward economic and environmental sustainability will be able to create value using the territorial asset and the sustainability production models [80–82] and at the same time help companies to be resilient in the long run given economic, health, and social crises [83–88].

Point 2. Public-private cooperation for the enhancement of the territory and the implementation of integrated development strategies.

Close cooperation with stakeholders and local administrators is crucial to move in this direction [83]. At the territorial level, work should be done to offer users/tourists a unique product characterized by the distinctive elements of uniqueness, which in the case of Sicily can be represented by the quality of the territory: land, air, landscape, food, art, and culture. Collaboration with territorial associations is necessary, and collaboration enables economies of scale. At the local level, the spread of association membership contributes to an image of unity and coordination and the creation of a highly competitive tourism

product. Networking and governance of the wine-tourism local system are also crucial to developing, coordinating, managing, and monitoring projects that are integrated within inter-organized networks with a mix of private and public stakeholders, often characterized by a small or very small business. This requires a leadership that can carry out a precise and accurate analysis of the local social and economic system and act as a champion and promoter of the development process [89–91].

Point 3. Improving the quality of the territory in terms of sustainability.

Infrastructural investments at the local government level are also necessary to develop the quality of services offered including, for example, interprovincial roads or internet coverage in most rural areas. Both two-intervention spheres are crucial to improve sustainable agriculture and tourism. Transitioning as fast as possible to a green economy will be the key to the resilience and sustainable development of rural territories [77–83,89–91]. This new territorial approach can contribute to reducing environmental pollution, using clean energies, better waste management, and soil, providing integrated ecosystem services, as has already happened in other contexts [84,85].

Point 4. Increasing the attractiveness of the territory

All these actions will increase the attractiveness of rural territories for visitors and tourists. In this way, WRs should be remodeled to the perspective of providing a unique territorial offer wherein the routes can gain advantages and at the same time can contribute to the economic and social development of the territory itself [86,91]. In small regions, tourism and non-tourism facilities must be expanded and connected to wine-tourist routes. Sustainable wine tourists are attracted by what is expressed by the culture of a place and its traditions, and WT perfectly fits in with the new tourism trends of sustainable rural tourism, characterized by shorter and more frequent trips, an increase in medium ranged or interregional tourism with more attention paid to quality, a lower number of organized trips and preference to plan a personal itinerary. The satisfaction of a wine-tourist also comes from the existence in the area of clear signposts and routes to visit vineyards. From clear and exhaustive information material to the success of rural tourism, collaboration becomes a crucial factor in rural backward regions such as Sicily.

Point 5. Marketing and Communication campaign.

Finally, effective marketing and communication campaigns appear necessary to present the territory as a unique tourist product [44]. The results demonstrated that destination image was significantly more important for visitors than for winemakers in terms of shaping the brand equity of the wineries and the image of the territorial brand, similarly to other studies [67]. Both producers and tourists agreed on the importance of a unique brand image and a hedonic experience to increase the value of the tourist destination.

Concerning territorial marketing models, there was no unique methodology, as each place had its characteristics [91]. For this reason, different models were developed in different regions and countries. The crucial elements included in these models were the brand construction process, the residents' place identity, cultural meanings, the interactions among stakeholders, as well as with place culture and its image, and the roles of the actors [91]. However, the steps to be followed in the process of the development of territorial marketing models is not clear at present. The actions that should be taken include the identification, organization, and management of the array of existing resources, e.g., in Italy products with protected designation labels, production facilities, hotels, and restaurants, to build an organized sustainable food and wine supply to offer a product that is attractive to the market [89].

5.2. Managerial Implications

The results of this study are important for consultants, practitioners, and policymakers that are involved with tourism campaigns, especially WT campaigns. The gap between internal and external views calls for the development of campaigns to enhance the image that visitors hold and thus increase the number of tourists. Events, such as wine gatherings and gastronomic symposia held at universities and culinary schools, and participation in

business meetings can enhance the perceptions and, in turn, the added value and brand equity of WT destinations. The images of destinations and wines, like Denomination of Origin, can help strengthen the brand equity of WT destinations, especially for visitors. Thus, associations are important for increasing their value. Joint campaigns are advised to enhance the images of destinations and, consequently, the value of sustainable tourism in destinations with a strong identity. Wineries should work with tourism organizations in the development of communication campaigns. This communication should be implemented both by wineries and institutions using traditional channels and social networks to reach potential tourists [44,67]. The study highlighted that these new segments of wine tourists/consumers are very interested in sustainability issues and share their experiences with other people [87–95]. Therefore, the proper use of social networks and influencers appears a very effective tool to make people living the territory [73,96]. In line with other similar studies, cohesion around a shared project appears for the analyzed context to be the best way to improve sustainable agriculture and tourism in rural territories as a means of social and economic development.

5.3. Limitations and Further Research

This study has limitations that create avenues for further research. First, the focus of this study is on three of the most relevant stakeholders in tourism destinations, wine entrepreneurs, visitors, and expert stakeholders. Considering the importance of residents and administrators for the success of tourism development, future research will benefit from incorporating these additional stakeholders. Second, the study has limited generalizability because we focused on one Italian wine region (Sicily), and three groups of participants (producers, visitors, and expert stakeholders). However, the implications turned out from findings could be analyzed in other similar wine regions. The replicability of the robust method applied here allows for carrying out similar research in other contexts.

Future research could replicate this study across different countries to validate results and highlight differences in the development model or achieve further information about WT and its territorial correlations by analyzing other wine territories with the same tourist potential.

6. Conclusions

The main motivational factors for visiting and returning to a winery were highlighted and, in combination with the tourist profiling and consumer segmentation, it helped to describe the actual scenario of WT in the observed wine region. The study revealed that the SWRs should be improved although WT is practiced and there is a strong demand for sustainable and green tourism.

To relaunch the WRs and allow them to contribute to the social and economic development of the rural territory, the findings suggested applying integrated strategies for the sustainable development of viticulture, wine production, and rural tourism.

The new business model of sustainable innovation and drivers for value creation highlighted in this study should be implemented through cooperation between local actors to offer to enhance the value of the territory and offer services of higher quality to visitors. Cooperation among entrepreneurs, stakeholders, and local administrations proved crucial for the success of the valorization strategies, to work for a common project of sustainable development and the valorization of wines and territory.

Moreover, the study highlighted the importance of considering in future studies the contribution of residents, administrators, and governments. Future research will benefit from incorporating these additional stakeholders.

At the global level, the phenomenon of sustainable rural tourism is growing and is a driver for the economic and social development of many rural areas in several countries. The developing countries producers of wine, or rural territories still backward in structural and economic aspects, may benefit largely from the experience of other wine regions in other parts of the world. However, the economic development of rural areas can be realized

through the transition to sustainable agriculture and sustainable rural tourism, which can be implemented following policies that finance investments in the production and use of renewable energies, and for preserving land, landscape, and biodiversity.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.I. and S.C.; methodology, M.I.; software, M.I.; validation, M.I., P.S. and S.C.; formal analysis, M.I., S.C. and G.L.G.; investigation, M.I., C.B. and G.L.G.; resources, M.I. and C.B.; data curation, M.I.; writing—original draft preparation, M.I., L.A., S.B., G.L.G. and S.C.; writing—review and editing, M.I.; visualization, L.A., G.L.G., P.S. and P.C.; supervision, M.I., S.C., P.C. and L.A.; project administration, M.I. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was partially funded by PIA no di inCentivi per la Ricerca di Ateneo (PIACERI)—UNICT 2020/22 line 2, UPB: 5A722192154, University of Catania.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Bruwer, J. South African wine routes: Some perspectives on the wine tourism industry's structural dimensions and wine tourism product. *Tour. Manag.* **2003**, *24*, 423–435. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Festa, G.; Shams, S.R.; Metallo, G.; Cuomo, M.T. Opportunities and challenges in the contribution of wine routes to wine tourism in Italy—A stakeholders' perspective of development. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2020**, *33*, 100585. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Back, R.M.; Bufquin, D.; Park, J.Y. Why do They Come Back? The Effects of Winery Tourists' Motivations and Satisfaction on the Number of Visits and Revisit Intentions. *Int. J. Hosp. Tour. Adm.* **2021**, *22*, 1–25. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Esau, D.; Senese, D.M. Consuming Location: The Sustainable Impact of Transformational Experiential Culinary and Wine Tourism in Chianti Italy. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 7012. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hojman, D.E.; Hunter-Jones, P. Wine tourism: Chilean wine regions and routes. *J. Bus. Res.* **2012**, *65*, 13–21. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Byrd, E.T.; Canziani, B.; Hsieh, Y.C.J.; Debbage, K.; Sonmez, S. Wine tourism: Motivating visitors through core and supplementary services. *Tour. Manag.* **2016**, *52*, 19–29. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bellia, C.; Bacarella, S.; Ingrassia, M. Interactions between Street Food and Food Safety Topics in the Scientific Literature—A Bibliometric Analysis with Science Mapping. *Foods* **2022**, *11*, 789. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bellia, C.; Scavone, V.; Ingrassia, M. Food and Religion in Sicily—A New Green Tourist Destination by an Ancient Route from the Past. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 6686. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Dayoub, B.; Yang, P.; Dayoub, A.; Omran, S.; Li, H. The role of cultural routes in sustainable tourism development: A case study of Syria's spiritual route. *Int. J. Sustain. Dev. Plan.* **2020**, *15*, 865–874. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Božić, S.; Tomić, N. Developing the cultural route evaluation model (CREM) and its application on the Trail of Roman Emperors, Serbia. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2016**, *17*, 26–35. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bruwer, J.; Rueger-Muck, E. Wine tourism and hedonic experience: A motivation-based experiential view. *Tour. Hosp. Res.* **2019**, *19*, 488–502. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Quadri-Felitti, D.; Fiore, A.M. Experience economy constructs as a framework for understanding wine tourism. *J. Vacat. Mark.* **2012**, *18*, 3–15. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ingrassia, M.; Altamore, L.; Bacarella, S.; Bellia, C.; Columba, P.; Chironi, S. Influence of coherent context for positioning distinctive and iconic Sicilian sparkling wines: Effect of a sensorial experience on a Gulet. *J. Int. Food Agribus. Mark.* **2022**, *34*, 144–175. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ali, F.; Ryu, K.; Hussain, K. Influence of experiences on memories, satisfaction and behavioral intentions: A study of creative tourism. *J. Travel Tour. Mark.* **2016**, *33*, 85–100. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Smith, J.B.; Colgate, M. Customer value creation: A practical framework. *J. Mark. Theory Pract.* **2007**, *15*, 7–23. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Williams, P.; Soutar, G.N. Dimensions of customer value and the tourism experience: An exploratory study. In *Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference*; Promaco Conventions Pty. Ltd.: Queensland, Australia, 2000; Volume 28, pp. 1415–1421.
- Gallarza, M.G.; Gil, I. The concept of value and its dimensions: A tool for analysing tourism experiences. *Tour. Rev.* **2008**, *63*, 4–20. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Alant, K.; Bruwer, J. Wine tourism behaviour in the context of a motivational framework for wine regions and cellar doors. *J. Wine Res.* **2004**, *15*, 27–37. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Figuroa, B.E.; Rotarou, E.S. Challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of the wine tourism sector in Chile. *J. Wine Res.* **2018**, *29*, 243–264. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

20. Trigo, A.; Silva, P. Sustainable Development Directions for Wine Tourism in Douro Wine Region, Portugal. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 3949. [CrossRef]
21. Cunha, D.; Kastenholz, E.; Silva, C. Analyzing diversity amongst visitors of Portuguese wine routes based on their wine involvement. *Int. J. Wine Bus. Res.* **2022**, ahead-of-print. [CrossRef]
22. López-Guzmán, T.; Vieira-Rodríguez, A.; Rodríguez-García, J. Profile and motivations of European tourists on the Sherry wine route of Spain. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* **2014**, *11*, 63–68. [CrossRef]
23. Pahrudin, P.; Liu, L.W.; Li, S.Y. What Is the Role of Tourism Management and Marketing toward Sustainable Tourism? A Bibliometric Analysis Approach. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 4226. [CrossRef]
24. Tănase, M.O.; Dina, R.; Isac, F.-L.; Rusu, S.; Nistoreanu, P.; Mirea, C.N. Romanian Wine Tourism—A Paved Road or a Footpath in Rural Tourism? *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 4026. [CrossRef]
25. Karafolas, S. Wine roads in Greece: A cooperation for the development of local tourism in rural areas. *J. Rural. Coop.* **2007**, *35*, 71–90.
26. Getz, D.; Brown, G. Critical success factors for wine tourism regions: A demand analysis. *Tour. Manag.* **2006**, *27*, 146–158. [CrossRef]
27. Alebaki, M.; Psimouli, M.; Kladou, S.; Anastasiadis, F. Digital Winescape and Online Wine Tourism: Comparative Insights from Crete and Santorini. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 8396. [CrossRef]
28. International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV). Available online: <https://www.oiv.int> (accessed on 26 May 2022).
29. Istituto di Servizi per il Mercato Agricolo Alimentare. Available online: <https://www.ismeamercati.it/vino> (accessed on 27 May 2022).
30. Boatto, V.; Galletto, L.; Barisan, L.; Bianchin, F. The development of wine tourism in the Conegliano Valdobbiadene area. *Wine Econ. Policy* **2013**, *2*, 93–101. [CrossRef]
31. Istituto Regionale del Vino e dell’Olio. Available online: <https://www.irvos.it/images/stories/Vitivinicoltura%20regionale%20siciliana%20agosto%202021.pdf> (accessed on 27 May 2022).
32. I Numeri del Vino. Available online: <https://www.inumeridelvino.it/2022/04/esportazioni-italiane-di-vino-per-regione-e-tipologia-aggiornamento-2021.html#more-57347> (accessed on 27 May 2022).
33. Hall, C.M. *Introduction to Tourism: Development, Dimensions and Issues*, 3rd ed.; Addison-Wesley, Longman: Sydney, Australia, 1998.
34. Ingrassia, M.; Altamore, L.; Columba, P.; Bacarella, S.; Chironi, S. The communicative power of an extreme territory—the Italian island of Pantelleria and its passito wine: A multidimensional-framework study. *Int. J. Wine Bus. Res.* **2018**, *30*, 277–291. [CrossRef]
35. Hall, C.M.; Mitchell, R. Wine tourism in the Mediterranean: A tool for restructuring and development. *Thunderbird Int. Bus. Rev.* **2000**, *42*, 445–465. [CrossRef]
36. Chironi, S.; Altamore, L.; Columba, P.; Bacarella, S.; Ingrassia, M. Study of Wine Producers’ Marketing Communication in Extreme Territories—Application of the AGIL Scheme to Wineries’ Website Features. *Agronomy* **2020**, *10*, 721. [CrossRef]
37. Associazione Italiana Città del Vino, XVI Rapporto sul Turismo del Vino in Italia. Available online: https://www.cittadelvino.it/download.php?file=xvi-rapporto-turismo-vino-siena-webinar-27052020_63.pdf (accessed on 31 May 2022).
38. Demirović Bajrami, D.; Radosavac, A.; Cimbaljević, M.; Tretiakova, T.N.; Syromiatnikova, Y.A. Determinants of Residents’ Support for Sustainable Tourism Development: Implications for Rural Communities. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 9438. [CrossRef]
39. Sung, Y.A.; Kim, K.W.; Kwon, H.J. Big data analysis of Korean travelers’ behavior in the post-COVID-19 era. *Sustainability* **2020**, *13*, 310. [CrossRef]
40. Movimento del Turismo del Vino, Guida al Turismo del Vino. Available online: <http://www.movimentoturismovino.it/it/home/> (accessed on 15 January 2022).
41. Merino, F.; Prats, M.A. Are blue flags a good indicator of the quality of sea water on beaches? An empirical analysis of the Western Mediterranean basin. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2022**, *330*, 129865. [CrossRef]
42. Silva, P.; Latruffe, N. Benefits of the Mediterranean Diet—Wine Association: The Role of Ingredients. *Molecules* **2022**, *27*, 1273. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
43. Alonso, A.; Liu, Y. The potential for marrying local gastronomy and wine: The case of the fortunate islands. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* **2011**, *30*, 974–981. [CrossRef]
44. Bellia, C.; Columba, P.; Ingrassia, M. The Brand—Land Identity of Etna Volcano Valley Wines: A Policy Delphi Study. *Agriculture* **2022**, *12*, 811. [CrossRef]
45. Federazione Delle Strade del Vino e Sapori di Sicilia. Available online: <http://federazionestradedelvinodisicilia.it/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
46. Censis-Association of Wine Cities (Associazione Città del Vino) Report. 2020. Available online: <https://www.cittadelvino.it/articolo.php?id=NTAyMQ==#:~:text=La%20grande%20occasione%20dell%27T1%20text%20quoterightItalia,tra%20borghi%2C%20vigne%20e%20cantine.&text=Presentato%20il%20XVI%20Rapporto%20sull,2%2C65%20miliardi%20di%20euro> (accessed on 4 September 2022).
47. Ingrassia, M.; Bacarella, S.; Altamore, L.; Sortino, G.; Chironi, S. Consumer acceptance and primary drivers of liking for small fruits. *Acta Horti* **2018**, *1194*, 1147–1154. [CrossRef]
48. Altamore, L.; Ingrassia, M.; Chironi, S.; Columba, P.; Sortino, G.; Vukadin, A.; Bacarella, S. Pasta experience: Eating with the five senses—A pilot study. *AIMS Agric. Food* **2018**, *3*, 493–520. [CrossRef]
49. Bruwer, J.; Alant, K. The hedonic nature of wine tourism consumption: An experiential view. *Int. J. Wine Bus. Res.* **2009**, *21*, 235–257. [CrossRef]

50. Bruwer, J.; Coode, M.; Saliba, A.; Herbst, F. Wine experience effects of the tasting room on consumer brand loyalty. *Tour. Anal. Interdiscip. J.* **2013**, *8*, 339–414. [[CrossRef](#)]
51. Chironi, S.; Ingrassia, M. Studio dell'attrattività delle Strade del Vino in Sicilia. Un'Analisi Fattoriale per lo studio delle motivazioni che inducono i turisti a visitare le cantine, secondo il parere dei "soggetti qualificati". *Italus Hortus* **2010**, *17*, 260–266.
52. Taherdoost, H.; Sahibuddin, S.; Jalaliyoon, N. Exploratory Factor Analysis; Concepts and Theory. *Adv. Appl. Pure Math.* **2022**, *27*, 375–382.
53. Fabrigar, L.R.; Wegener, D.T. *Exploratory Factor Analysis*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2011.
54. Faris, H.; Gaterell, M.; Hutchinson, D. Investigating underlying factors of collaboration for construction projects in emerging economies using exploratory factor analysis. *Int. J. Constr. Manag.* **2022**, *22*, 514–526. [[CrossRef](#)]
55. Chironi, S.; Bacarella, S.; Altamore, L.; Columba, P.; Ingrassia, M. Study of product repositioning for the Marsala Vergine DOC wine. *Int. J. Entrep. Small Bus.* **2017**, *32*, 118–138. [[CrossRef](#)]
56. García-Rodea, L.F.; Thomé-Ortiz, H.; Espinoza-Ortega, A.; de Alcántara Bittencourt-César, P. Viniculture and Tourism in the New World of Wine: A literature review from the American continent. *Wine Econ. Policy* **2022**, *11*, 127–140. [[CrossRef](#)]
57. Vukojević, D.; Tomić, N.; Marković, N.; Mašić, B.; Banjanin, T.; Bodiřoga, R.; Đorđević, T.; Marjanović, M. Exploring Wineries and Wine Tourism Potential in the Republic of Srpska, an Emerging Wine Region of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 2485. [[CrossRef](#)]
58. Huang, Z.; Weng, L.; Bao, J. How do visitors respond to sustainable tourism interpretations? A further investigation into content and media format. *Tour. Manag.* **2022**, *92*, 104535. [[CrossRef](#)]
59. Ingrassia, M.; Altamore, L.; Bacarella, S.; Columba, P.; Chironi, S. The wine influencers: Exploring a new communication model of open innovation for wine producers—A netnographic, factor and AGIL analysis. *J. Open Innov. Technol. Mark. Complex.* **2020**, *6*, 165. [[CrossRef](#)]
60. Bonarou, C.; Tsartas, P.; Sarantakou, E. E-Storytelling and Wine Tourism Branding: Insights from the "Wine Roads of Northern Greece". In *Wine Tourism Destination Management and Marketing*; Sigala, M., Robinson, R., Eds.; Palgrave Macmillan Cham: London, UK, 2019; pp. 77–98. [[CrossRef](#)]
61. Han, G.; Akhmedov, A.; Li, H.; Yu, J.; Hunter, W.C. An Interpretive Study on Sustainability in the Link between Agriculture and Tourism: Tourist-Stakeholder Satisfaction in Tiantangzhai, China. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 571. [[CrossRef](#)]
62. Achmad, W.; Yulianah, Y. Corporate Social Responsibility of the Hospitality Industry in Realizing Sustainable Tourism Development. *Enrichment* **2022**, *12*, 1610–1616. [[CrossRef](#)]
63. Hatipoglu, B.; Alvarez, M.D.; Ertuna, B. Barriers to stakeholder involvement in the planning of sustainable tourism: The case of the Thrace region in Turkey. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2016**, *111*, 306–317. [[CrossRef](#)]
64. Gabzdylowa, B.; Raffensperger, J.F.; Castka, P. Sustainability in the New Zealand wine industry: Drivers, stakeholders and practices. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2009**, *17*, 992–998. [[CrossRef](#)]
65. Markose, N.; Vazhakkatte Tazhathethil, B.; George, B. Sustainability Initiatives for Green Tourism Development: The Case of Wayanad, India. *J. Risk Financ. Manag.* **2022**, *15*, 52. [[CrossRef](#)]
66. Ingrassia, M.; Chironi, S.; Lo Grasso, G.; Gristina, L.; Francesca, N.; Bacarella, S.; Columba, P.; Altamore, L. Is Environmental Sustainability Also "Economically Efficient"? The Case of the "SOStain" Certification for Sicilian Sparkling Wines. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 7359. [[CrossRef](#)]
67. Gomez, M.; Lopez, C.; Molina, A. A model of tourism destination brand equity: The case of wine tourism destinations in Spain. *Tour. Manag.* **2015**, *51*, 210–222. [[CrossRef](#)]
68. Deville, A.; Wearing, S.; McDonald, M. Tourism and willing workers on organic farms: A collision of two spaces in sustainable agriculture. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2016**, *111*, 421–429. [[CrossRef](#)]
69. Arkema, K.K.; Fisher, D.M.; Wyatt, K.; Wood, S.A.; Payne, H.J. Advancing Sustainable Development and Protected Area Management with Social Media-Based Tourism Data. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 242. [[CrossRef](#)]
70. Alebaki, M.; Iakovidou, O. Market segmentation in wine tourism: A comparison of approaches. *Tour. Int. Multidiscip. J. Tour.* **2011**, *6*, 123–140. [[CrossRef](#)]
71. Alebaki, M.; Iakovidou, O. Segmenting the Greek wine tourism market using a motivational Approach. *New Medit Mediterr. J. Econ. Agric. Environ.* **2010**, *9*, 31–40.
72. Jiménez-Castillo, D.; Sánchez-Fernández, R. The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: Examining their impact on engagement, expected value and purchase intention. *Int. J. Inf. Manag.* **2019**, *49*, 366–376. [[CrossRef](#)]
73. Ingrassia, M.; Bellia, C.; Giurdanella, C.; Columba, P.; Chironi, S. Digital Influencers, Food and Tourism—A New Model of Open Innovation for Businesses in the Ho.Re.Ca. Sector. *J. Open Innov. Technol. Mark. Complex.* **2022**, *8*, 50. [[CrossRef](#)]
74. Char-lee, J.M.; Becken, S.; Watt, M. Learning through a cluster approach: Lessons from the implementation of six Australian tourism business sustainability programs. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2016**, *111*, 348–357. [[CrossRef](#)]
75. Cucculelli, M.; Goffi, G. Does sustainability enhance tourism destination competitiveness? Evidence from Italian Destinations of Excellence. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2016**, *111*, 370–382. [[CrossRef](#)]
76. Budiasa, I.W.; Ambarawati, I.G.A.A. Community based agro-tourism as an innovative integrated farming system development model towards sustainable agriculture and tourism in Bali. *J. Int. Soc. Southeast Asian Agric. Sci.* **2014**, *20*, 29–40.
77. Montella, M.M. Wine Tourism and Sustainability: A Review. *Sustainability* **2017**, *9*, 113. [[CrossRef](#)]

78. Santini, C.; Cavicchi, A.; Casini, L. Sustainability in the wine industry: Key questions and research trends. *Agric. Econ.* **2013**, *1*, 9. [[CrossRef](#)]
79. Ferrer, J.R.; García-Cortijo, M.C.; Pinilla, V.; Castillo-Valero, J.S. The business model and sustainability in the Spanish wine sector. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2022**, *330*, 129810. [[CrossRef](#)]
80. Merli, R.; Preziosi, M.; Acampora, A. Sustainability experiences in the wine sector: Toward the development of an international indicators system. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2018**, *172*, 3791–3805. [[CrossRef](#)]
81. Broccardo, L.; Zicari, A. Sustainability as a driver for value creation: A business model analysis of small and medium enterprises in the Italian wine sector. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2020**, *259*, 120852. [[CrossRef](#)]
82. Szolnoki, G. A cross-national comparison of sustainability in the wine industry. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2013**, *53*, 243–251. [[CrossRef](#)]
83. Law, A.; De Lacy, T.; Lipman, G.; Jiang, M. Transitioning to a green economy: The case of tourism in Bali, Indonesia. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2016**, *111*, 295–305. [[CrossRef](#)]
84. Pace, L.A. How do tourism firms innovate for sustainable energy consumption? A capabilities perspective on the adoption of energy efficiency in tourism accommodation establishments. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2016**, *111*, 409–420. [[CrossRef](#)]
85. De Steur, H.; Temmerman, H.; Gellynck, X.; Canavari, M. Drivers, adoption, and evaluation of sustainability practices in Italian wine SMEs. *Bus. Strategy Environ.* **2020**, *29*, 744–762. [[CrossRef](#)]
86. Khan, A.; Bibi, S.; Lorenzo, A.; Lyu, J.; Babar, Z.U. Tourism and Development in Developing Economies: A Policy Implication Perspective. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 1618. [[CrossRef](#)]
87. Rabadán, A.; Bernabéu, R. An approach to eco-innovation in wine production from a consumer's perspective. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2021**, *310*, 127479. [[CrossRef](#)]
88. Kanchanapibul, M.; Lacka, E.; Wang, X.; Chan, H.K. An empirical investigation of green purchase behaviour among the young generation. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2014**, *66*, 528–536. [[CrossRef](#)]
89. Bencivenga, A.; Vollaro, P.D.; Forte, F.; Giampietro, A.M.; Percoco, A. Food and wine tourism in Basilicata. *Agric. Agric. Sci. Procedia* **2016**, *8*, 176–185. [[CrossRef](#)]
90. Presenza, A.; Minguzzi, A.; Petrillo, C. Managing Wine Tourism in Italy. *J. Tour. Consum. Pract.* **2010**, *2*, 46–61. Available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/11536> (accessed on 31 August 2022).
91. Manzoor, F.; Wei, L.; Asif, M.; Haq, M.Z.U.; Rehman, H.U. The Contribution of Sustainable Tourism to Economic Growth and Employment in Pakistan. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2019**, *16*, 3785. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
92. Rovira, M.; Garay, L.; Górriz-Mifsud, E.; Bonet, J.-A. Territorial Marketing Based on Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFPs) to Enhance Sustainable Tourism in Rural Areas: A Literature Review. *Forests* **2022**, *13*, 1231. [[CrossRef](#)]
93. Pomarici, E.; Vecchio, R. Millennial generation attitudes to sustainable wine: An exploratory study on Italian consumers. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2014**, *66*, 537–545. [[CrossRef](#)]
94. Aschemann-Witzel, J.; Asioli, D.; Banovic, M.; Perito, M.A.; Peschel, A.O. Communicating upcycled foods: Frugality framing supports acceptance of sustainable product innovations. *Food Qual. Prefer.* **2022**, *100*, 104596. [[CrossRef](#)]
95. Soregaroli, C.; Ricci, E.C.; Stranieri, S.; Nayga, R.M., Jr.; Capri, E.; Castellari, E. Carbon footprint information, prices, and restaurant wine choices by customers: A natural field experiment. *Ecol. Econ.* **2021**, *186*, 107061. [[CrossRef](#)]
96. Johnstone, L.; Lindh, C. Sustainably sustaining (online) fashion consumption: Using influencers to promote sustainable (un)planned behaviour in Europe's millennials. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* **2022**, *64*, 102775. [[CrossRef](#)]