

# Possibilities and Prospects for the Development of Family wine tourism in Georgia

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## Abstract

Wine tourism is considered a sustainable segment of tourism in the world and an important factor of rural socio-economic development. Wine tourism is, on the one hand, a type of agriculture-based tourism. Therefore, the development of these two fields is related to each other. Nowadays, many families who used to produce wine only for themselves have moved on to a new stage and are involved in wine tours and hosting guests. The increase in the number of wine companies has led to a high demand for grapes, which is beneficial for the rural population. Therefore, this sector creates new jobs and has a good impact on both the social and economic aspects of the country. Like all over the world, family farms dominate the wine-growing area of Georgia, which are small-scale farms according to the volume of their activities. When we discuss Georgian wine tourism, we consider that the issue concerns small family viticulture and winemaking enterprises. There are unique opportunities for the development of family wine tourism in Georgia, of which the relationship between the tourist and the viticulture and wine production staff is important, which is the best opportunity provided by family farms. Based on the study of the literature, the main motives for which tourists engage in wine tourism were determined. Accordingly, the direction and method of the research were identified. A telephone survey (interview) was used as the research method, and the survey was about the needs of wine tourism product producers. The needs of wine tourism product producers were identified, the solution of which will contribute to the development of wine tourism and meeting the needs of wine tourism product consumers.

**Keywords:** wine tourism, viticulture-winemaking, wine tourism product, family farms

## Introduction

Wine tourism is visiting and observing vineyards and wineries, attending festivals and other events dedicated to wine, during which the main motivating factor for visitors is wine tasting and registration. Acquaintance with the attributes of viticulture and winemaking (Hall & Macionis, 1998, Hall et al. 2000, Carlsen and Charters 2006).

Today, wine tourism is on the rise and is the fastest growing segment of tourism worldwide. According to the international experience, the tourism development strategy considers wine tourism as the most important direction of the regional development of tourism. (Taylor, 2006). It plays an important role in the development and marketing of wineries as popular places. (Getz & Braun, 2006; Petrevska & Deleva, 2014).

Wine tourism is a rapidly growing trend of tourist activity in Georgia as well, the product of which has motivated consumers and producers. Wine tourism, like any economic activity, depends on its environment. The study of this environment is necessary to determine the actual growth and development prospects of wine tourism in the country, and thus it represents an actual economic task.

In the conditions of today's globalization, the development of wine production and wine tourism is justified for the country from both a social and a political point of view. On the one hand, wine tourism is a type of tourism based on rural economy. Therefore, the separation of these two fields is related to the country. Nowadays, many families, who used to produce wine only for themselves, have moved to a new stage, are involved in the wine industry and receive guests. This sector creates new jobs and has a good impact on both the social and economic aspects of the country.

In the wine-growing countries of the world, including Georgia, wine tourism, which is also a practical activity, aims to provide a wine tourism product and consumption. Wine tourism is a relatively new field of business. Its development significantly contributes to solving social and economic problems in rural areas. The main goal of the wine tourism business is to systematically increase the efficiency of the wine tourism product delivery and realization, which means, on the one hand, that Satisfying the demand for one's tourist product, on the other hand, the production and realization of the tourist product. To increase profits. The identification of existing problems in Georgian family wine tourism and the search for ways to overcome them is the main goal of the previous article.

## Methods and Materials

In order to investigate the problems, we conducted a survey of family wine cellars, for which we used both the Google Drive application and the common method of quantitative research - a mass survey, which was used regularly. We obtained interesting results by means of telephone interviews of producers of wine tourism products in Ukraine and by processing specially prepared questionnaires.

## Results

Georgia, distinguished by the variety of agro-climatic resources and the abundance of historical and cultural heritage, is one of the unique countries in the world. All of this is a sign of the development of the country's wine industry. Georgia has all the advantages that are related to the development of wine tourism: the history of winemaking, the uniqueness of wine production. The technology, the simplicity of the grape varieties and the natural conditions that contribute to the production of unique wine. The fact that the method of making Kvevri wine was included in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage is also important (UNESCO, 2025).

According to the 2023 report of the National Wine Agency, according to the data of January-January-June of this year, 43.4 million litres of wine are exported from Georgia to 56 countries of the world, an increase compared to the same volume in 2022. It is 27%. Wine export income increased by 26% and amounted to 126.2 million US dollars (Wine Agency, 2025)

In recent years, numerous wine-themed festivals, events, exhibitions and competitions have been taking place more and more frequently in Georgia, which helps to attract tourists interested in wine tourism. For the second time this year, on the initiative of the Prime Minister and the organization of the Government Administration, the festival "Wine Days 2023" is being held, in which 850 winemakers in 23 municipalities will share one square during which he will participate "Georgian Wine Festival" is being held for the first time together with "Meidan Group". On October 21, "Wine Club" within the framework of the Georgian Wine Days, "Ghinobistive 2023", which has been holding a festival action for several years with the support of the National Wine Agency: "A new small Men in the big arena in 2023". For the second time, Georgia is hosting one of the most prestigious international wine and spirits competitions in the world, IWSC 2024 Wine Judging in Georgia. Last year, out of 487 female wines registered at the competition, medals were awarded to 288 wines (16 gold, 63 silver and 209 bronze). It is worth noting that most of the 150 registered enterprises were small and medium-sized wineries (Entrepreneur, 2022)

Festivals, exhibitions and competitions allow family farms to present their products to both Georgian consumers and foreigners interested in exporting Georgian wine.

World winemaking is dominated by family farming (Rauhut Kompaniets & Nilson, 2019). It is the same in Georgia, for example. According to Kharashvili, more than 75% of farms employed in viticulture are small-scale (Kharashvili, 2017). Farmers do not have information about markets, most of them do not have education in the field of farming, they suffer from a lack of food resources for production. The amount of grape and wine production per unit of land occupied by vineyards is low; In particular, 19 hectoliters per hectare, e. 1,900 liters of wine are produced, while 62 hectoliters are produced in the new countries of viticulture and winemaking, i.e. It is 3.2 times less. The small scale of enterprises severely limits access to financial resources, qualified labor force and other factors, etc. In such a situation, the formation of cooperatives in agriculture and agriculture is relevant. For most of the

interviewed farmers and winegrowers, the form of cooperatives in the field today is represented by an informal union rather than a legal status. Monitoring of family farms and small wineries found that they have low income, which limits access to investments and credits, own or hired technical equipment. The possibility of the distribution of rights, the sale of productive grapes and wine. The researcher believes that the unification of small-scale farms and wine producers into cooperatives in the winemaking sector will lead to: increasing access to local markets, reducing costs during the purchase of large quantities of agricultural resources (fertilizers, chemicals, etc.) (reduction) reduction of purchase costs, the combination of land and technical means will significantly increase productivity. Creation of cooperatives in viticulture will significantly reduce dependence on wine companies, especially in terms of wine prices, increase access to export markets, as well as additional knowledge and resources. Possibilities of receiving EB, etc. (Kharaisvili, 2017).

Studies have shown that personal relationships between the tourist and the winemaker, as well as the staff of the wine industry, have a significant impact on the impression of the wine tour. Tourists are requested to be treated with care during the tour. According to this sign, compared to visiting a large wine factory, tourists prefer visiting small enterprises, where they receive it more warmly, while visiting a wine enterprise Good customer service can become a decisive factor for repeat visits to this company (Roberts and Sparks, 2006).

In the study by the same authors, the focus of the interviewees was on the use of wine, some of them were interested in local food products along with wine, and some of them were interested in the handicrafts of the region, for example, wood carving. with working objects. It was found that information about the region is an important factor in terms of strengthening the experiences experienced by the tour for the visitors of the region. Respondents pay special attention to three sources of information: print, provided by information centers and popular voices.

For the majority of the respondents, the wine tour was interesting not only in terms of wine, but also in the fact that they enjoyed the nature and local beauty, and learned about the history of the region, acquainting yourself with wine and food, talking with the local population, communicating with the employees of the winery, getting to know the need for pairing wine and food, everything together creates pleasant memories of the tour (Roberts and Sparks, 2006).

Wine tourism in the wine-growing countries of the world, including Georgia, as a practical activity, aims at the production and consumption of the wine tourism product. Its development significantly contributes to solving socio-economic problems in the country. The main goal of the wine tourism business is to systematically increase the effectiveness of the production and sale of wine tourism products, which means, on the one hand, increasing the demand for wine tourism products. to satisfy, on the other hand, to increase the profit from the production and sale of the tourism product of wine.

According to the data of the National Statistical Service of Georgia, as of October-February 2023, 842 wine enterprises are registered, 6 large enterprises, 27 medium and 809 small enterprises are registered. Despite the fact that the questionnaire was sent to all operating companies and wineries, the level of activity was still not great, although problems and ways to solve them were still identified. A total of 144 respondents were surveyed (number of questions 12). Two or 1.4% were large enterprises, six enterprises (4.2%) were medium-sized wine companies. 136 (94.4%) family-type enterprises, of which 122 (84.7%) enterprises were engaged in wine tourism, 22 enterprises (15.2%) were engaged only in wine production (although Of these, 13 entrepreneurs were thinking of producing wine tourism in the future), so we continued the further survey with wine tourism entrepreneurs. All 122 wineries offered wine tasting to tourists; 93% to visit the cellar and get to know the technological processes of wine production; 91, 8% for vineyard management and participation in the harvest; Overnight stay with food service - 19.6%; overnight stay without food service 21.3%; Other services (only food without overnight stay) - 38%.

On the question of how many tourists you can receive on average - 11.4% can receive 10 people, 37.7% - 15 to 20 people, 30.3% - 25 to 30 people, 40- 13% can accommodate from to 50 people, and 7.3% can accommodate more than 70 tourists.

When asked whether wine tourism met your expectations, 89% of the respondents answered that it fully met their expectations, 9.8% partially met their expectations, and only one respondent gave a negative answer.

To the question, how much is the average cost of the tour per person, the answers were as follows: if they only want a tasting - 25-30 GEL, a tasting with a meal - 70-150 GEL, and 26.2% of the wineries could not offer this service. Yes, 3.2% answered that the average cost of the tour per person is 150 GEL and more.

Tourists were mainly from Georgia, the countries of the former Soviet Union, Asia, Europe and the United States of America. In response to the question of what effect does the visit of wine tourists have on the sale of wine at the place, 86% of the respondents answered that it has a significant effect, according to 9% insignificant impact, while 4.9% think it has no significant impact. However, all respondents believe that without the tight connection between winemaking and tourism, wine production will decrease significantly.

The vast majority of family wineries and wine tourism businesses are run by family members. 72.9% of the surveyed respondents have a problem with qualified labor. Wine production and wine tourism bring the same benefits to 80.3%; wine production brings more benefits - to 5.7%, and wine tourism - to 4.9%; 9% are not sure. (Fig.1)

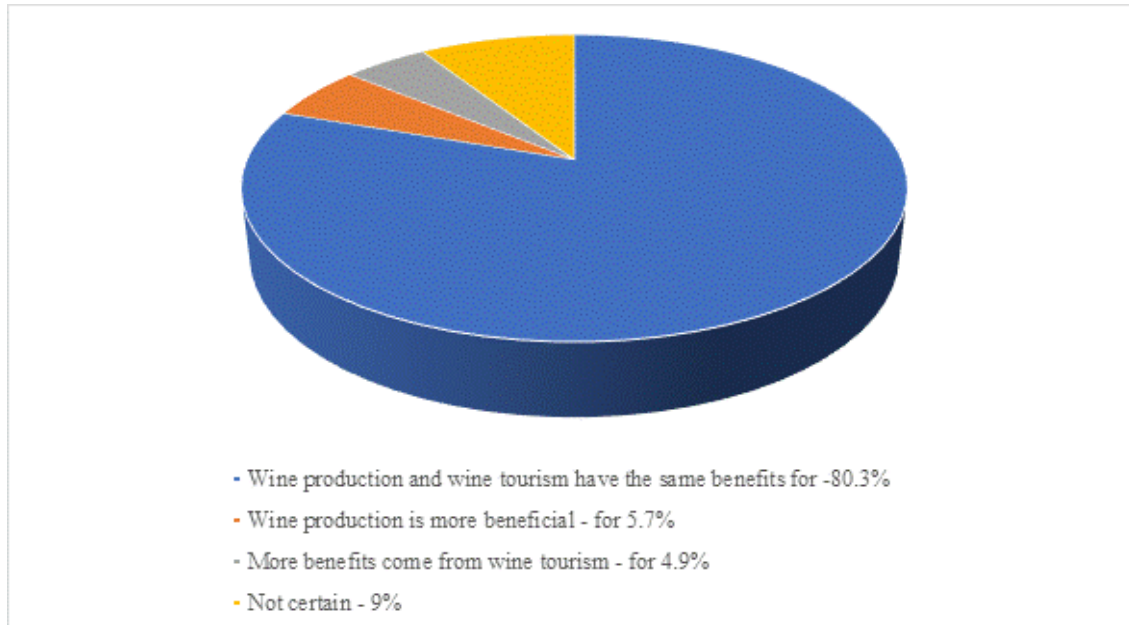


Figure 1. The vision of the interviewed wine companies and family wineries in the direction of profits from wine tourism and wine production (%)

Entrepreneurs consider the following necessary for the development of wine tourism: financial assistance (89.3%), improving the qualifications of employees (72.9%), improving infrastructure and cheap credit (62.2%) (Fig.2).

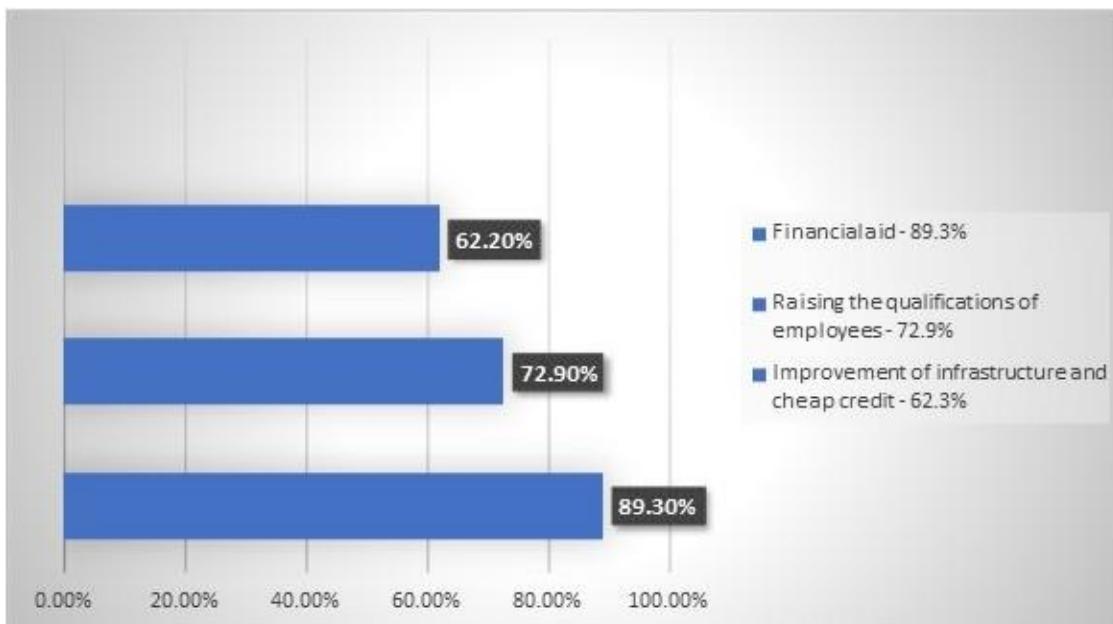


Figure 2. The vision of the interviewed wine companies and family wineries in the direction of promoting the development of wine tourism (%)

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the research, it can be seen that tourists prefer to visit a small family business, where they receive them more warmly, compared to visiting a large wine company. One of the important contributing conditions for the development of family wine tourism is the formation of positive attitudes of people. As we have seen, out of 144 surveyed wineries, 122 wineries are engaged in wine tourism, and 89% think that wine tourism fully justified their expectations. It is also important that 86% of the surveyed respondents confirmed that the visit of Wine production and wine tourism have the same benefits for -80.3% wine tourists has a significant impact on the on-site sale of wine. Wine production and wine tourism have the same benefits for 80.3%. It should also be noted that all respondents believe that wine production will increase as a result of the close connection between winemaking and tourism.

In our opinion, family wine tourism is getting bigger and bigger and has great potential for development. The state should be interested in wine tourism as an object of health business, as a strategy for socio-economic development of the village, and more active steps should be taken by small wineries. It helps, namely:

- Assistance in order of infrastructure;
- Creation and provision of long-term financing programs adapted to small wineries;
- Activation of the involvement of the banking sector in the direction of providing low-interest loans to small and medium-sized wineries;
- Initiation of educational projects for the owners of small wineries (retraining of professional personnel, training in a foreign language).
- To raise awareness about Georgian wine, create a single electronic platform where video reviews about wineries will be posted.
- Online stores, which are not easily accessible for wine lovers. This will be a good advertisement and will increase the awareness of family wineries, which will allow family wineries to attract both local and foreigners interested in wine export.

For family farms, viticulture is a traditional branch, while tourism is an innovation. Wine tourism should be considered as a strategy based on the unity of viticulture and winemaking as a traditional family business and tourism as an innovative activity of a family farm. Wine tourism should be considered as a business model of a combination of family farming, family viticulture and tourism.


## Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## Authors' contribution

M.Kh and M.A., in order to highlight the problems, conducted a survey of family wine cellars by means of a quantitative research method - a mass survey and analysis of existing literature. I.V. is responsible for formulating the main terms of the work and developing conclusions and important recommendations based on it.

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