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5 **Re-visiting the concept of winescape through netnography: “A tale of two cities”**

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36 **Abstract**

37 Winescape is a central concept in wine tourism studies but is still under-researched, especially when
38 package tours are concerned. This study has a two-fold objective: 1) to identify the winescape
39 attributes of an emergent wine destination (Bulgaria) as perceived by organized wine tourists and
40 compare them to a well-established Old-World wine region (Italy), and 2) to unveil the links between
41 winescape attributes and servicescape dimensions. To this end, we employed a netnographic approach
42 through the application of content analysis of TripAdvisor reviews and a combination of closed and
43 open coding. Seven categories of winescape were identified, which almost completely coincide with
44 the results of previous research. At the same time, some differences were found, mainly in the salience
45 of the individual elements, which suggests a different composition of the winescape depending on
46 several factors, among which the characteristics of the destination and the specifics of the tour
47 operator. The study complements existing knowledge by validating a previously proposed model, and
48 at the same time showcasing the context-dependent differences in attribute salience for two different
49 types of destinations. In addition, it is the first to identify the links between the traditional supply-
50 driven winescape models and the more holistic concept of experiencescape.

51 **Keywords:** winescape; wine tours; qualitative research; netnography; Bulgaria

52 **1. Introduction**

53 Wine tourism is often defined as a sub-type of gastronomy tourism ‘whose purpose is visiting
54 vineyards, wineries, tasting, consuming and/or purchasing wine, often at or near the source’ [1, p.
55 44]. Consuming a product at the place it was produced enables the visitor to connect to the territory
56 and its culture. The complex blend of a destination’s landscapes, culture, food and wine products,
57 and the techniques employed for producing them shape its identity and are perceived as ‘the
58 foundation of the DNA of the tourism experience’ [2, p. 9]. It is therefore no surprise that wine
59 tourism is seen not merely as a wine-related activity, but an immersion into the winescape [3].

60 The concept of winescape is gaining increasing attention in the field of wine tourism. There are
61 several reasons for this - on the one hand, it is broad enough to cover almost all aspects of this type
62 of tourism product, and on the other - it is often used as a basis for analyzing the image of wine
63 tourism destinations [4], wine tourism experiences [5], or customer satisfaction [6]. At the same time,
64 its conceptualization is still considered to be in its nascent stage [7].

65 In purely technical terms, wine tourism is usually perceived as a visit to wineries and vineyards, but
66 in fact its scope is far wider. In recent years, visits to wine bars and tastings in major urban centres

67 have become increasingly popular, as well as the participation in various wine-related events - wine
68 exhibitions, wine festivals etc. Apart from that, wine tourism can be practiced both individually and
69 in the form of an organized trip. Research on winescape has been mainly focused on the micro
70 (winery) and macro (wine region) level, while studies on wine tours and wine events remain scarce
71 [8].

72 Servicescape is perceived as the major source for constructing personally significant experiences [9].
73 Thus, it is directly linked to customer satisfaction [10] and perceived service quality [11]. Being a
74 particular case of servicescape, winescape is sometimes defined as the environment where wine
75 tourism experiences occur [7], [8] and the numerous institutional arrangements and values in this
76 context play a significant role in deriving the benefits wine tourists pursue [5]. With this in mind,
77 knowledge of the winescape attributes and how they are perceived and appreciated by tourists is
78 essential for the successful operation of the winery and the wine destination. In this respect, the
79 following three trends have been observed in recent years – 1) a holistic approach, including analysis
80 of as many stakeholders as possible [12]; 2) an emic rather than an etic approach, where the study
81 does not employ ready-made, predefined models, but is informed by consumer-driven data [4]; 3) an
82 increasing variety of methods used to collect and process information [7], [9]. In line with the above
83 trends, this article focuses on a hitherto neglected stakeholder in wine tourism - wine tour providers.
84 Despite using a previously proposed model, the approach is predominantly emic - in addition to
85 validating the model for a different context, the study is open to updating and supplementing it based
86 on consumer perceptions.

87 The winescape reflects the objective resources and features of a given wine establishment or a wine
88 region and it can be therefore presumed that different contexts will present varying configurations at
89 least in the salience of individual attributes. There has been a call for studies on the way tourists
90 assess winescape attributes in a specific wine region, which can also be done from the perspective of
91 package tours [13]. This study provides insight on the way winescape is perceived by organized wine
92 tourists in Bulgaria – a wine region, which is worth studying because of its interesting pattern of
93 development as a wine producer and because of the fact that it is exemplary for an emergent wine
94 destination from an understudied region – South-Eastern Europe. Once among the top wine exporters
95 in the world, the country had to totally rearrange its viticultural sector and start its development from
96 a very unfavourable base [14]. Taking Bulgaria as a basis for analysis, this study aims to: 1) identify
97 the winescape attributes of an emergent wine destination as perceived by organized wine tourists and
98 compare them to a well-established Old-World wine region, and 2) provide some insight on the links
99 between winescape attributes and experienscape dimensions. To this end, the netnographic approach

100 was taken, through thematic analysis of TripAdvisor reviews.

101 **2. Literature review**

102 The winescape appeared as a concept in the scientific literature in the 1970s, when Peters [15] defined
103 it as a specific form of an agricultural landscape consisting of three main elements: the grapes, their
104 environment, and the vintners in the context of the cultural practices related to wine. This first
105 perspective was mostly geographical in nature and placed winescape into the broader framework of
106 cultural landscapes; later on, the concept evolved to adopt a more marketing-oriented focus.

107 In its present use, the winescape is actually more related to the broader term of servicescape, than to
108 the notion of cultural landscape [16]. The concept of servicescape was initially used in the field of
109 marketing of service organizations and denotes the built environment that affects both employees and
110 customers and whose dimensions can be controlled by the firm [17]. This model describes the
111 servicescape in three key dimensions: (1) ambient conditions; (2) spatial layout and functionality;
112 and (3) signs, symbols and artifacts, and excludes the social and natural dimensions. These were later
113 added by Rosenbaum and Massiah [18], who claimed that a servicescape was formed not only by
114 factors that can be controlled by the company, but also by immeasurable, and often managerially
115 unmanageable social, symbolic and natural stimuli.

116 In a similar vein, Arnould et al. [19] defined two main attributes pertinent to the servicescape: the
117 substantive staging and the communicative staging. The former refers to the physical staging of
118 environment, while the latter is connected with its interpretation and transmits meanings from the
119 provider to the customer.

120 The winescape models for the macro (destination) and the micro (winery) level do not exhibit any
121 significant differences. Scenery setting, the wine product, people and hospitality, ambience of the
122 region, wineries and wine estates are among the main attributes at the wine destination level [4]. The
123 micro level framework presents winescape as consisting of almost the same supply-related elements:
124 setting, atmospherics, wine quality, wine value, wine complementary product, signage, and wine
125 service staff [16]. The only difference is seen in the model of the wine tour servicescape, where tour
126 planning and logistics is one of the most salient attributes [8].

127 So far, there has been only one study on winescape from the perspective of package tours [8]. It
128 offered a model consisting of six winescape attributes: tour guiding, core wine product, tour planning
129 and logistics, complementary activities, food and dining, and nature and scenery. These were
130 validated by a consequent study on wine tour success factors [13], which was performed for the same

131 destination, but used totally different research methods (multidimensional scaling method, cluster
132 analysis, and sentiment analysis).

133 Along with the obvious similarities, there are also some noticeable differences in the above models,
134 which mainly refer to the stated significance of individual attributes. At the destination/wine region
135 level, the nature was reported as the most prominent attribute (Bruwer, et al., 2016). In contrast, staff
136 was identified to exert much more influence at the micro (winery) level [16] and in the case of
137 organized travel, where it was operationalized as ‘tour guiding service’ [8], [13].

138 Despite these differences, there are enough similarities to suggest a generic winescape framework
139 that encompasses the findings of various studies for the three levels – the micro, the macro and the
140 intermediary one, consisting of six attributes: destination features, wine, people, wineries, food and
141 dining, and signs and symbols [20]. Composed of clearly identifiable attributes, it is supply-related
142 in its structure and content, but when assessed, the approach is usually demand-oriented, taking the
143 customer perspective by employing either structured surveys [6] or free text analysis [21].

144 There is one more approach in conceptualizing winescape that differs from the attribute-based models
145 presented above – the wine-experiencescape [10]. It is premised on the theory of experiencescape,
146 which is defined as the stimuli in a service environment (along with a hospitality culture) that shape
147 tourist experiences and affect customer reaction towards the product [12]. There are five types of
148 stimuli: sensory, functional, social, natural, and cultural. In the case of wine tourism, experiencescape
149 has been operationalized in the following way [10]:

- 150 • Sensory dimension: wine tasting, winemaking.
- 151 • Functional dimension: attributes of utilitarian value such as layout, architectural design and
152 equipment of the winery, layout, signage, quality of the accommodation, and value for money.
- 153 • Natural dimension: landscape, scenery, vineyards.
- 154 • Social dimension: interaction with fellow travellers in the winery, communication with
155 winery staff.
- 156 • Culture and hospitality dimension: heritage, attitude, and behavior of the employees and staff
157 toward the customers.

158 The model is entirely based on literature review and there has not been any empirical study to test
159 how the dimensions are linked to attributes identified in previous research. The present study will
160 attempt to fill this gap by constructing a model, which takes into account both the supply-related
161 attributes of traditional winescape frameworks, and the more demand-oriented dimensions of Pizam

162 and Tasci's and Gunasekar et al's concepts. The two research questions are:

163 RQ1. Are there any differences in winescape attributes' perceptions for a well-established Old-World
164 wine destination (Tuscany) and an emergent destination from South-Eastern Europe (Bulgaria)?

165 RQ2: How are supply-driven winescape attributes and the experiencescape dimensions linked?

166 **3. Material and methods**

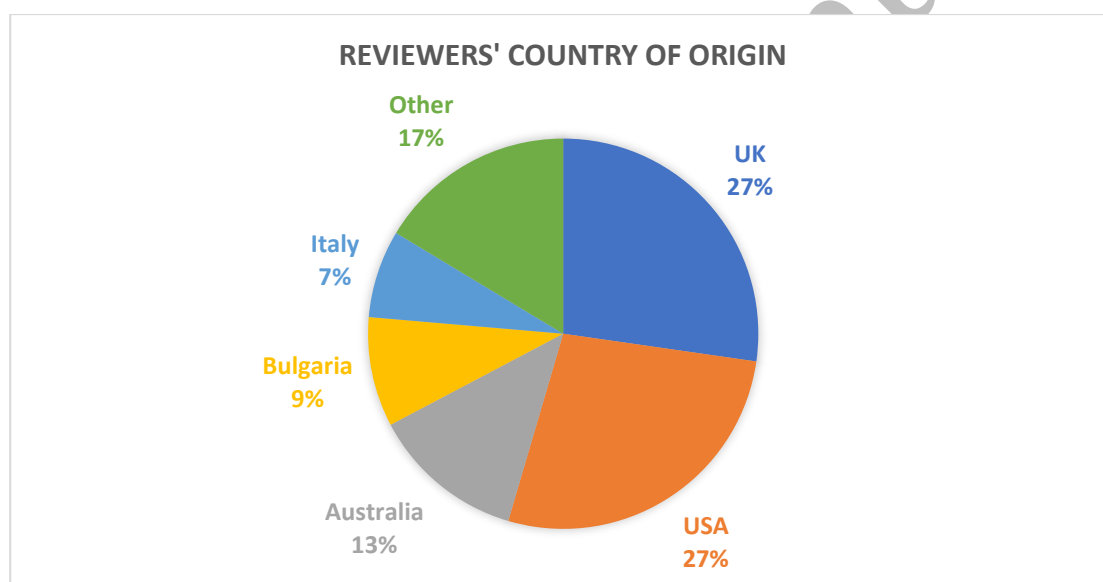
167 **3.1. Study area**

168 The study is focused on a specific country – Bulgaria, which can be used as exemplary for an
169 emergent wine destination with an interesting history as far as wine production is concerned. For
170 more than 20 years (1961-1985) the country almost consistently ranked among the world top 5 wine
171 exporters [22, pp. 176, 196]. Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign in the mid-1980's ended this
172 positive trend, resulted in the loss of a major market and gradual decline of both production and export
173 [23, p. 265]. The decade after 1989 was marked by a dramatic restructuring of the sector and signs of
174 slow recovery were only seen after 2000. In recent years, the country is slowly regaining positions
175 on the world market but by 2021 it ranks only 34th in world wine exports [24]. There is a positive
176 trend of reorientation from quantity to quality, which is especially important for wine tourism. An
177 increasing number of wineries open their doors to tourists, although unfortunately there are no official
178 data on their total number. According to a study conducted in 2020, Bulgaria is in the second stage
179 of the wine destination life cycle [25], visitor numbers are still small, but with a positive increase rate,
180 horizontal and vertical networks are insufficient, and there are initial steps in the launch of wine routes
181 and joint wine events [14]. There are only a few specialized tour operators offering mainly inbound
182 tour packages. Most of them are small, family owned businesses emphasizing on private and small
183 group tours.

184 **3.2. Data collected**

185 The main goal of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the winescape, which is best achieved
186 through analyzing qualitative information. One of the relatively new methodologies in this regard is
187 netnography - an interpretive method that adapts ethnography to the study of online societies [26]
188 and is very suitable for 'generating rich, thick description through grounded interpretations' [27]. In
189 tourism studies, the main sources for accessing the needed type of qualitative data are platforms
190 providing user-generated content such as TripAdvisor, Instagram, AirBnB or Flickr. In this particular
191 case, the most appropriate choice was found to be TripAdvisor, because of its high degree of

192 reliability [28], [29] and broad popularity worldwide, which brings in a sufficient number of
193 consumer reviews. One of the few Bulgarian tour operators specializing exclusively in wine tourism
194 was selected as the object of the study – it was also the one with the greatest number of customer
195 reviews on TripAdvisor. The reviews referred to several tours offered by the company, ranging from
196 one-day to multi-day ones. A total of 80 reviews (79 in English and 1 in French), posted from
197 November 2015 to November 2021 were subjected to thematic analysis. The analysis is based only
198 on the body text of reviews, while the title was omitted, because it would often contain information
199 present in the body text, thus leading to distortion of results. The company and its tours have an
200 outstanding traveller rating on TripAdvisor – 77 reviewers have rated them as excellent and 3 – as
201 very good, using the TripAdvisor 5-point rating system, ranging from 1 bubble=terrible to 5
202 bubbles=excellent. The majority of reviewers were foreign tourists coming from Germany, UK, the
203 USA, Australia, etc., with only 9% of all reviewers being domestic ones (Figure 1).
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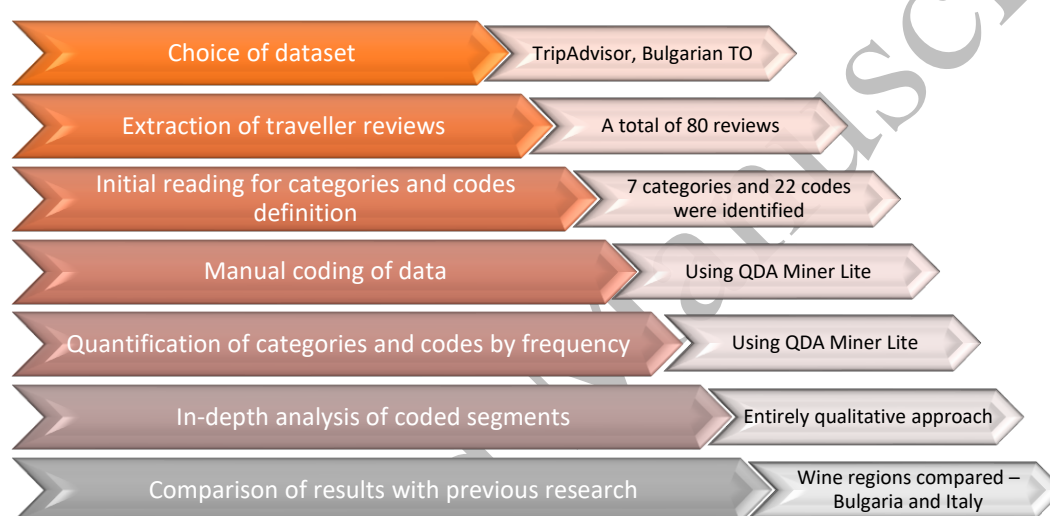
206 Figure 1. Distribution of reviewers by country of origin

207 3.3. Methodology

208 The identification of winescape attributes was premised on the notion of salience – the quality of
209 some attitudes and beliefs to be more prominent, to enter a person's mind more readily and as a
210 consequence be more frequently verbalized [30, p. 163]. Thus, following the identification of
211 categories and codes, the initial dataset (traveller reviews) were coded manually and the results were
212 quantified in terms of category and code frequency of mentions. The definition of categories and
213 codes was partially informed by previous research – the winescape model of Terziyska and

214 Damyanova [8], but also keeping the in vivo element – new categories and codes were added if
215 identified, which was done through thematic analysis, one of the most popular methods for
216 ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ [31]. Reviews were then
217 qualitatively analysed to get additional insight on individual codes and identify possible links between
218 winescape attributes (named categories in the analysis) and the dimensions of the wine experiencescape
219 model. Finally, the results were compared to a similar study, conducted earlier in a different context
220 – a well-recognized Old-World destination (Italy). Thus, the research went through seven stages,
221 starting from choosing the dataset and ending with comparison with findings from previous research
222 (Figure 2).

223



224

225 Figure 2. Research stages

226 The advent of qualitative analysis software has enabled the use of mixed methods and the processing
227 of large datasets of unstructured text through automatic coding. A lot of recent studies in wine tourism
228 using a qualitative approach have taken benefit of this opportunity [10], [13], [32]. At the same time,
229 some authors claim that this may lead to a loss of ‘valuable, often nuanced, information’ and
230 recommend a more in-depth, traditional qualitative analysis of at least some part of the data [33, p.
231 649]. To answer this concern, the present study is based predominantly on pure qualitative analysis,
232 though some quantification is also included, using QDA Miner Lite – qualitative data analysis
233 software for coding, retrieving and analyzing texts or images.

234 **4. Results and discussion**

235 **4.1. Winescape attributes for package tours: the case of Bulgaria**

236 The initial category and code definition resulted in the identification of 7 categories (winescape
 237 attributes), and 22 codes pertaining to them. Of these, the most salient was the core wine product,
 238 which was mentioned in 84 % of cases (traveller’s reviews), followed by the tour guide – 83 % (Table
 239 1).

240 Table 1. Frequency distribution of categories and codes

Category	% Cases	Code	% Cases
core wine product	84%	wineries	57,5%
		wine-based activities	25,0%
		wine	56,3%
tour guide	83%	knowledgeable	62,5%
		accommodating	20,0%
		friendly	21,3%
		passionate	13,8%
		general/unspecified	12,5%
		fun	5,0%
		English fluency	2,5%
planning and logistics	45%	general planning and coordination	33,8%
		booking	7,5%
		vehicle/driving	6,3%
		pick-up	6,3%
		choice of activities	2,5%
		nature and scenery	5,0%
destination appeal	41%	cultural attractions	36,3%
		food	27,5%
food and dining	35%	dining place	8,8%
		passive involvement	5,0%
complementary activities	5%	active involvement	0,0%
		hotels	5,0%
accommodation	5%		

241
 242 *Core wine product*

243 The core wine product is composed of three subcategories (described as codes) – wine, wineries, and
 244 wine-based activities. Of these, wineries and wines are the most salient, mentioned in 58% and 56%
 245 of reviews respectively. This finding was quite expected, as wine tourism revolves around wine, and
 246 the places and experiences related to it. At the same time, this is the first study reporting the core
 247 product category as the most salient as far as winescape attributes are concerned.

248

249 There are three types of reviews on wineries:

250 (1) Posts that just include the word winery or wine cellar, but do not provide additional
251 information. These were only used for measuring the saliency of the attribute.

252 (2) Posts that describe wineries using only a few adjectives. The most common words used are
253 *quality, stunning, beautiful inside, small, authentic, organic*.

254 (3) Posts where the reviewers explain more elaborately what impressed them about their visit.
255 These are the segments that will be analyzed in depth to gain more insight and identify
256 possible links to wine-experiescape dimensions.

257 Apart from the obvious references to wineries' design, the other two prominent features that stood
258 out during the qualitative analysis were the attitude of wine staff/winery owners and the educational
259 aspect. A number of reviewers discuss the warmth and passion of the employees who welcomed them
260 on site: '*At both locations we were shown round by very passionate vintners*' (Fiona D, UK, July
261 2021), '*the wineries we visited had the most informative staff*'. The above reviews point to a
262 significant overlap of the role and desired features of the tour guide and the winery staff.

263 Diversity is also a feature that seems to be highly appreciated by reviewers: 'We visited several
264 different and contrasting vineyards' (Kevmcc655, UK, January 2017), 'Two very different wineries,
265 a great range of very good and very interesting wines. Fully recommended!' (twoa2017, Germany,
266 2017).

267 Wines are described as great and delicious. There is also an emphasis on the opportunity to taste
268 traditional local varieties: 'We enjoyed our day tour from Plovdiv and had a great experience tasting
269 wines from traditional Bulgarian grapes, as well as other varietals.' (EBHart, USA, July 2019).

270 Wine tasting and winery tours are the most common wine-based activities mentioned by reviewers.

271 I have been to a fair share of wine tours and what made this trip even more unique is at
272 the end of the trip we learnt how to blend our very own wine with the enologist which we
273 bottled and brought home with us. (Mila, Croatia, August 2016)

274 However, what seems to be most valued is the opportunity to talk to the winemakers / winery owners:

275 We visited 11 wineries and received a very warm welcome from every one of them. The
276 passionate winemakers gave informative tours and we tasted almost 60 wines, some of

277 which we could not resist taking home in our overloaded suitcases. (Westbourne W, June
278 2019),

279 Ultimately though it was Vasil and the winery owners' kindness and warmth that made
280 this a really wonderful experience, and we would recommend anyone to try such a tour!
281 (Johanmyst, The Netherlands, September 2021)

282 The core wine product has obvious links to at least three of the experiencescape dimensions – the
283 functional one (references to the design and character of the wine cellars and vineyards – small,
284 different, fantastic, beautiful), the social one (communication with winemakers, focus on warmth,
285 passion and informativeness), and the sensory one (wines, tastings). The cultural dimension can also
286 be seen through the mentions of traditional local wines.

287 Tour guide

288 Despite being ranked as second in terms of salience, in reviews the tour guide is often pointed as the
289 main reason for an unforgettable and meaningful experience:

290 Vasil, who drove us around and acted as our guide and interpreter when needed, was very
291 knowledgeable about the ancient and recent history of Bulgaria. This background made
292 our experience much more meaningful. (Darby H, UK, June 2017)

293 Of all the features that were mentioned, knowledgeable stands out as the most prominent one, seen
294 in 62% of all posts. Apart from knowledge in history and culture of the destination (see above review),
295 the other most discussed aspect is expertise in wines and winemaking and the ability to communicate
296 it to an audience with varying degrees of proficiency:

297 Our tour guide Nicollet has a true passion for wines and Bulgarian culture and history.
298 Her enthusiasm was contagious as we soon felt like we were touring with old
299 friends. (Pablo J, USA, June 2017).

300 *Friendly* and *accommodating* are the two features that follow next in terms of saliency with almost
301 equal frequency of mentions: 21 and 20 percent respectively. In some of them the guide's kindness
302 and responsiveness are directly linked to tourist satisfaction: '*our guide Nicolay was so kind and so*
303 *good and helpful, that we enjoyed this tour in this beautiful country*' (yiota123, Cyprus, May 2018),
304 '*First of all, the driver was one of the owners and it was a pleasure to spend the day with him. He*
305 *was friendly, knowledgeable and fun.*' (Celisa B, USA, September 2018).

306 The tour guide's passion and enthusiasm for their job are mentioned in only 13 percent of reviews
307 but are always linked to a highly positive impression / experience: *'The hosts were fantastic-- they*
308 *know a ton about wine and you can't help but get swept away by their enthusiasm.'* (Pablo J, USA,
309 June 2017), *'He clearly had a huge passion for Bulgarian wine which shone through throughout the*
310 *tour'* (Pat M, August 2018).

311 *Fun* is another quality of the tour guide, which has been articulated in 5 % of reviews. It is strongly
312 connected with the social dimension of the experienscape and the entertainment aspect of the
313 experience model of Pine and Gilmore [34].

314 Fluency in English was appreciated by 2 of reviewers, one of whom emphasizes how important this
315 is if you do not know the local language and the guide actually acts as a translator in contacts with
316 locals.

317 Tour guiding has a pronounced relation with the functional, social and cultural dimensions of the
318 wine-experienscape dimensions defined by Pizam and Tasci [12] and Gunesakar et al. [10]. In line
319 with previous research [35], the tour guides transcend their role as a one-way communicator, and act
320 as experience brokers who, in addition to conveying information (functional dimension), engage their
321 audience in emotional experiences through friendliness, enthusiasm and sharing, and connect tourists
322 (through interpretation) with the destination history and culture.

323

324 *Planning and logistics*

325 This category is unique to the wine tour servicescape and for obvious reasons is not present in the
326 micro (winery) or macro (wine region) levels. With a share of 45% of mentions, it is the third most
327 important in terms of salience. Apart from that, there are also clear verbal references to its significance
328 for the overall tourist experience.

329 The arrangements after the tour were also done very competently and appropriately, with
330 good hotels and transport arrangements, and excellent suggestions for things to do. The
331 whole experience couldn't really have been better. (Kevmcc655, UK, January 2017)

332 In addition to the flawless arrangements of the tour, attention to detail and the excellent choice of
333 non-mainstream wineries are highly valued: *'The tour was an outstanding success largely due their*
334 *efficient organisation and attention to detail coupled with a flair for finding smaller more interesting*
335 *vineyards'* (Martin H, UK, June 2017).

336 Similar to the findings of Terziyska and Damyanova (2020), the pace of travel and the included
337 activities are also an important factor: *'We packed a tremendous amount into the three days*
338 *without it feeling exhausting.'* (Lucy L, March 2020).

339 The booking process has been mentioned in a relatively small number of reviews (7,5 % of all posts).
340 Timely reply, responsiveness to individual preferences and suggestions/information on what can be
341 seen at the destination are appreciated. Convenient pick-up arrangements and safe and comfortable
342 driving are the least salient, with only 6,3% of mentions each.

343 Choice of activities is the least mentioned subcategory and comments mainly refer to diversity
344 and combining wine tastings with visits to historical sights: *'Each wine stop along the way was*
345 *slightly different making the tour all the more interesting.'* (Liseylou82, Australia, March 2016).

346 The Planning and Logistics category does not have a clear link to any of the dimensions of the
347 experienscape defined by Pizam and Tasci (2019). The most logical reference is the functional
348 dimension, as it refers to practical arrangements, which facilitate the creation of a satisfying
349 experience.

350

351 *Destination appeal*

352 This category refers to the macro environment, or in other words – the appeal of the broader
353 destinations and the specific attractions included in the tour. There are clear cues to the importance
354 of this attribute for a more enjoyable trip and a way to get a more in-depth understanding of the
355 destination:

356 The countryside near the Greek border is really quite beautiful and the walking tour of
357 the old town of Plovdiv with its cobbled streets and Roman Theatre made a delightful
358 start to our first day. (Westbourne W, June 2019)

359 The day was also broken up with a visit to the red church, which was a great way to
360 experience a little bit of the region's history, while sobering up so we could enjoy the
361 wines at the next stop. (Liseylou82, Australia, March 2016)

362 The three day tour is an excellent way to get a feel of Bulgaria in a very short time. (Lucy
363 L, March 2020)

364 *Food and dining*

365 Food and dining have been mentioned in more than one-third of reviews and are thus ranked fifth of
366 all attributes. Special attention is paid to the opportunity to taste local produce: *'We had lunch at the*
367 *second vineyard which was delicious and comprised mainly locally sourced produce including goat*

368 - *which I can recommend!*' (Fiona D, UK, July 2021), and traditional Bulgarian cuisine: *'We had a*
369 *delicious, traditional Bulgarian lunch thanks to him'*. As stated in Gunasekar et al. (2021), this
370 attribute has an obvious sensory experienscape dimension, coupled with a cultural one. Although
371 there are no cues linking it to the social dimension in this dataset, a previous study [8] points to the
372 existence of such a relation too.

373 The dining place is usually described as nice and traditional / local and has a slight reference to the
374 cultural dimension expressed through descriptions of style and setting *'The tasting was in a beautiful*
375 *old town restaurant'* (R8574VYpauls, January 2018).

376

377 *Complementary activities*

378 This category entails activities that are not related to the core product (wine) and exclude visits to
379 cultural attractions, which are under the Destination appeal category. Of the two subcategories –
380 active and passive involvement, only four mentions of passive involvement were found, referring to
381 a visit to a folk festival, craft beer brewery, spa, and a meeting with a rose oil producer. Most of these
382 could be linked to the cultural dimension of the experienscape.

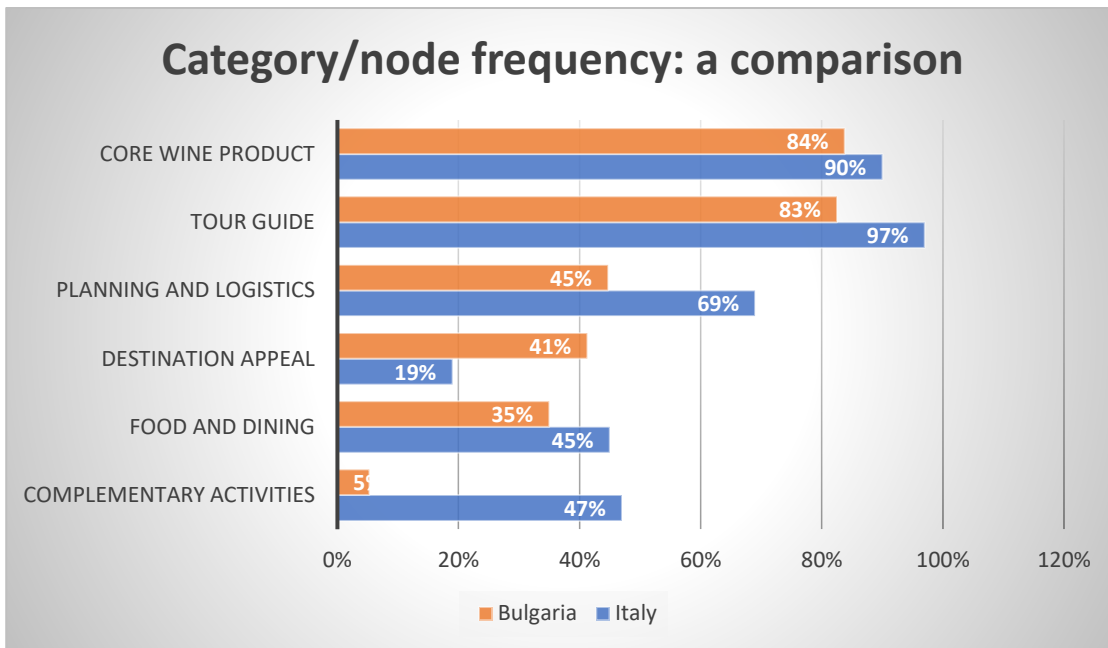
383 Accommodation

384 Together with Complementary Activities, this is the least salient category (mentioned in only 5% of
385 all reviews). It is specific to the multi-day wine tours and is clearly linked to the functional dimension
386 of the experienscape. Seen in 5% of reviews, it is verbalized exclusively through comments on the
387 quality of hotels – *excellent, wonderful, good, far better than most I have experienced.*

388 **4.2. Two types of destination – similarities and differences in the perceived winescape**

389 The present study has followed the same methodology as a previous one [8], which enables a direct
390 comparison of results. As the wine regions are very different in nature – the former one is a well-
391 established Old-World wine destination and a leading wine producer (Italy), and the latter is a post-
392 socialist country (Bulgaria), which is striving to regain its position on the world wine market, and can
393 be seen as an emergent wine destination, still in its early steps of development [14]. The two
394 companies under study are of the same type – family wine tour operators, offering private and small
395 group packages.

396 There is an almost complete correspondence between the winescape attributes identified in the two
397 studies, the only difference being Accommodation, which is not present in the study of Terziyska and
398 Damyanova [8], due to the fact that only one-day tours were analyzed.



399
400 Figure 3. Winescape attributes' salience in Italy and Bulgaria: a comparison

401 **5. Discussion**

402 The winescape attributes identified in this study almost fully coincide with the model of Terziyska
403 and Damyanova [8], and the success factors presented by Barbierato et al. [13], the only difference
404 being the “Accommodation” attribute, which is present only in this study. “Destination appeal” to a
405 great extent corresponds to “Nature and scenery”, but has been extended to include cultural
406 attractions.

407 This conformity validates the winescape model, but at the same time, there are some significant
408 differences in the salience of individual attributes (Figure 3) that can probably be explained by the
409 different nature and stage of development of the two destinations.

410 The most obvious differences (more than 20 percentage points) are seen in the following three
411 attributes - planning and logistics, attractiveness of the destination and complementary activities, with
412 the latter exhibiting a difference of more than 40 percentage points.

413 In previous studies based on sentiment analysis, the *logistical aspect* has been associated more with
414 negative experiences and evaluation [13]. However, in the two studies discussed here, negative
415 ratings are virtually non-existent, and since this is an attribute that applies exclusively to the specific
416 tour company, the difference is probably due to the individual specifics of the two tour operators. In
417 any case, the conclusion that can be drawn is that a higher degree of salience is caused not only by
418 the low perceived quality of this attribute, but also by positive impressions.

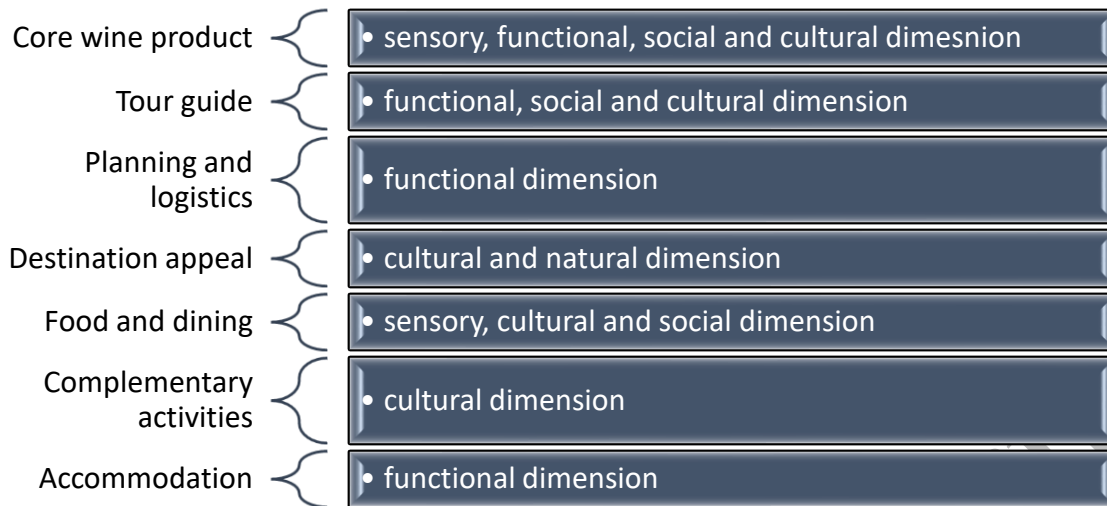
419 In the case of the *destination appeal*, expressed through the natural and cultural attractions, the
420 probable explanation lies in the different phases of wine tourism development in the two destinations.
421 Bulgaria is a relatively new player on the wine tourism scene, with a wine culture still under
422 development. In this case, the increased presence of cultural tourism elements in wine tours
423 compensates for the shortcomings in the winery offerings. This observation is also confirmed by a
424 supply-based study [14], which shows a significant share of the wine&culture type of tours in
425 Bulgaria. In this type of tours, a significant part of the programme is dedicated to cultural/heritage
426 attractions, sometimes at the expense of the number of wine tastings.

427 The great discrepancy in the salience of *complementary activities* can be attributed to the more general
428 nature of tourism supply in Bulgaria, which is still focused on non-participatory activities and is
429 dominated by visits to natural and cultural attractions.

430 The lower salience of *food and dining* in Bulgaria is destination-specific – while Italy is a world
431 leader in gastronomy, in Bulgaria this is still a problem area.

432 As for the two most important attributes – *tour guide* and *core wine product*, the score is higher in
433 the Italian study, but the difference is not so significant. Though not so well-known, Bulgarian wines
434 have a noticeable rise in quality in recent years, attested by a number of international awards [36] and
435 attract with their novelty. At the same time, as evidenced by the rating in TripAdvisor, the specialized
436 wine tour operators in the country offer products of extremely high quality.

437 As far as the relation between the winescape attributes and the experiencescape dimensions is
438 concerned, the most obvious finding is that one and the same attribute can have several experiencescape
439 dimensions (Figure 4). Having sensory, functional, social and cultural dimensions, the core wine
440 products is most complex one, followed by tour guiding and food and dining.



441

442 Figure 4. Associations between winescape attributes and experiencescape dimensions

443 In this study, the categories of “Accommodation” and “Planning and logistics” were found to be
 444 related only to the functional dimension of the experiencescape, and “Complementary activities” – to
 445 the cultural dimension, but other settings or cases (destinations and individual operators) could
 446 produce different results, especially as far as “Complementary activities” are concerned.

447 **6. Conclusion**

448 The results presented in this paper validate the winescape model of Terziyska and Damyanova [8]
 449 and the success factors of Barbierato et al. [13]. The leading role of the tour guiding service, which
 450 dominates as an element of the winescape and is probably the most important factor for success, is
 451 fully confirmed. Of no less importance is the core wine product, consisting of wine, wineries and
 452 wine-related activities. These are the two attributes with the most references to experiencescape
 453 dimensions. The core wine product is the most complex attribute, combining almost all dimensions:
 454 sensory, functional, social and cultural. The social dimension of the tour guide is exhibited through
 455 their role in involving tourists into an enriching and relaxing experience, providing both knowledge
 456 and entertainment. A warm and friendly attitude and passion for their job are the most emphasized
 457 facilitators to achieving a satisfying interaction and memorable experiences. Tour guides also act as
 458 cultural ambassadors of the destination and ensure a deeper insight into its culture and history.

459 Although the set of attributes is nearly the same in the two studies, which validates the general
 460 framework of the model, there are significant differences in the salience of individual attributes. The
 461 main reasons for this are the specifics of the firm under study (the wine tour provider), the stage of
 462 development and the features of the wine destination (the structure and nature of the viticultural sector

463 and the tourist products offered by wine cellars) and the general trends in tourism development in the
464 broader destination. Providers in Bulgaria, which is an emergent wine destination, seem to rely more
465 heavily on attractions other than wine and this is reflected in the perceived winescape. The resources
466 of the destination also have their impact – in Italy, the food and dining aspect is much more
467 pronounced. It was interesting to find out that wine popularity did not exert significant influence – in
468 the case of Bulgaria it was compensated by novelty, quality and local character (the opportunity to
469 taste local varieties).

470 As winescape attributes are easily translated into success factors [13], the above findings can be very
471 useful for wine tourism practitioners (both wineries and tour operators) in analyzing their products
472 and adjusting them to customer needs. The model can also be used as a basis for measuring tourist
473 satisfaction for wine tours, because of the association between salient product attributes and customer
474 satisfaction and tourist experience [33], [37]. Last but not least, the results can be used for future
475 comparative studies to identify context-specific patterns for different types of wine destinations.

476 The main limitation of the study is the fact that was conducted for a specific destination – Bulgaria,
477 which hampers generalizability of results. However, most probably findings will also be valid for
478 other destinations of the same type – newcomers on the scene of wine tourism.

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