

Wine Tourism as a Place-Based Strategy for Value Creation and Regional Development

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse how wine tourism contributes to economic, social, and environmental outcomes at both the winery and regional levels, and to examine its strategic role within an emerging wine tourism destination. A qualitative case study approach was adopted, and data were collected through an in-depth semi-structured interview with the winery's senior management, direct observation, and documentary analysis, following a triple bottom line perspective to capture multidimensional impacts. The findings show that wine tourism does not function as a primary revenue source but plays a strategically significant role by enhancing financial stability, brand positioning, and market access, while at the regional level, it generates spillover effects through employment creation, cooperation with local actors, and destination branding. Socially, it contributes to cultural valorisation and learning opportunities, although deeper community embeddedness depends on education and long-term institutional commitment. Environmentally, it reinforces resource efficiency and landscape preservation but increases pressure on fragile ecosystems in the absence of coordinated territorial governance. This research presents empirical evidence from Mexico, an underexplored context in wine tourism research, advances understanding of wine tourism as a relational and place-based mechanism linking firm strategy with regional sustainability outcomes, and provides relevant theoretical, managerial, and policy implications for wine tourism and regional development, offering insights on how to integrate wine tourism into sustainable regional development strategies.

Key words

wine tourism, corporate performance, regional development, sustainability, triple bottom line.

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Introduction

The global wine industry has undergone profound transformations over recent decades, driven by changes in production technologies and consumption patterns, as well as by a growing integration of wine with broader experiential, cultural, and territorial dynamics (Alebaki et al., 2022; Jovanović et al., 2025; Frasnetti et al., 2024; Sthapit et al., 2024). Traditionally understood as an agri-food sector focused on the cultivation of grapes and the production and commercialisation of wine, the industry has increasingly embraced a multifunctional perspective in which wine is embedded within tourism, gastronomy, culture, and context-based experiences. In this environment, wine tourism has emerged as a strategic activity that allows wineries and regions to diversify income sources, strengthen brand identity, and foster closer relationships with consumers, which has potential economic, social, and environmental impacts at the local and regional levels (Bole, 2024; da Silva Flores et al., 2024; Spiga & Cardebat, 2024; Turčinović et al., 2025). In this sense, wine tourism has become a key component of rural development strategies, particularly in wine-producing regions seeking to enhance their competitiveness in increasingly saturated and globalised markets (Pearson et al., 2024; van Leeuwen et al., 2024; Hewidy & Eräranta, 2025). At the international level, this activity has consolidated as a mature and structured sector in traditional Old World wine regions, especially in Europe, and has rapidly expanded its influence to New World wine-producing countries, with particular relevance in the United States, Australia, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, and New Zealand, demonstrating that wine tourism can function as a catalyst for territorial development by stimulating local employment, encouraging entrepreneurship, supporting the preservation of cultural heritage, and promoting sustainable land-use practices (Deng et al., 2024; Lei et al., 2024; Kladou et al., 2025). The global diffusion of wine tourism has also been facilitated by changes in consumer behaviour, with tourists increasingly seeking authentic, place-based experiences that combine leisure, learning, and emotional engagement; as a result, wineries have progressively repositioned themselves as experiential spaces rather than solely production units, integrating tasting rooms, guided tours, restaurants, accommodation, cultural events, and educational activities into their business models (Pearson et al., 2024; Sáenz-Navajas et al., 2024; Tasci et al., 2024; Zhan & Shi, 2024; Carchano et al., 2025). Within this global panorama, Mexico represents an interesting and underexplored context for the study of wine tourism since, although Mexico is not traditionally classified among the world's major wine producers, its wine sector has experienced significant growth and professionalisation in recent decades, and its production is characterised by a strong regional concentration, with a predominance of small and medium-sized wineries, and a close linkage between wine, gastronomy, and tourism. This makes the Mexican wine sector especially suitable for the development of wine tourism as a complementary activity capable of enhancing both winery performance and regional development outcomes. The Mexican wine industry has evolved significantly since its early historical origins, moving from a marginal and fragmented activity to a dynamic sector with increasing national and international recognition, and today wine production is largely concentrated in a limited number of regions, among which Baja California stands out as the most prominent and consolidated wine-producing area.

Other emerging regions, such as Querétaro, Coahuila, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas, have also begun to develop wine tourism initiatives, although on a smaller scale, fostering the growth of domestic wine consumption, the rise of culinary tourism, and the increasing interest of both national and international visitors in Mexican wine culture, creating favourable conditions for the expansion of wine tourism across the country. In this regard, Baja California, and more specifically the Valle de Guadalupe and its surrounding areas, occupies a central position in the Mexican wine context, accounting for the majority of national wine production and considered the epicentre of wine tourism in Mexico. It is characterised by a geographical proximity to the United States, a favourable climate, a particular terroir, and a strong gastronomic ecosystem, which have contributed to its rapid development as a wine tourism destination over the past two decades, and it has witnessed an increase in the number of wineries, tourism infrastructure, and complementary services over time,

transforming the region into a reference point for experiential tourism in Mexico. Within this regional context, wineries have increasingly adopted wine tourism as a strategy to develop their business activity, integrating production, hospitality, culture, and sustainability-oriented practices. Among the wineries operating in Baja California, Winery Magoni, located near Ensenada, offers a particularly illustrative case of how wine tourism can generate multidimensional impacts at both the firm and regional levels. Winery Magoni combines wine production with tourism activities that emphasise experiential design, architectural integration with the landscape, and a strong connection to local identity. Its location in Baja California, the most developed wine tourism region in the country, provides an ideal setting to analyse the economic, social, and environmental effects of wine tourism within a developing wine economy. The topic of wine tourism has attracted increasing attention from scholars across disciplines, including tourism studies, regional economics, management, and sustainability. From a theoretical perspective, it is a field that can be understood as a hybrid activity situated at the intersection of agriculture, tourism, and cultural industries, aligning closely with theories of endogenous regional development, which emphasise the mobilisation of local resources, knowledge, and identity to generate sustainable growth, as well as the experience economy framework, which highlights the shift from product-centred to experience-centred value creation, and with stakeholder theory, given the multiple actors involved, including wineries, tourists, local communities, public institutions, and environmental organisations (Sun & Drakeman, 2022; Pearson et al., 2024; Sánchez-García et al., 2024). The importance of wine tourism for regions can be analyzed through economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Economically, wine tourism can contribute to revenue diversification for wineries, reduce dependence on volatile wine markets, and enhance direct-to-consumer sales, often with higher margins, while at the regional level, it stimulates local economies by creating employment, supporting small businesses, and encouraging investment in infrastructure and services (Amaral et al., 2024; Jannes & Barreal, 2024; Mora et al., 2025).

Socially, wine tourism fosters cultural exchange, reinforces regional identity, contributes to the preservation and valorisation of local traditions, gastronomy, and heritage, and facilitates stronger connections between producers and consumers, enhancing trust, knowledge transfer, and social capital (Lazăr & Pnake, 2024; Martins et al., 2025). Environmentally, wine tourism can incentivise sustainable practices by increasing awareness of landscape preservation, promoting responsible resource management, and aligning winery strategies with environmental management, particularly when sustainability becomes part of the tourism narrative and visitor experience (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024; Sorcaru et al., 2024; Vecchio et al., 2024). Despite its growing relevance, the empirical analysis of wine tourism in emerging wine regions remains limited, particularly in the Mexican context, and existing studies have predominantly focused on well-established wine destinations in Europe or the New World, leaving a gap in understanding how wine tourism functions in regions where the sector is still consolidating and where institutional, social, and environmental dynamics may differ significantly (Crick & Crick, 2024; Lei et al., 2024; Depetris-Chauvin, 2025). Moreover, there is a need for in-depth qualitative research that captures the complexity of wine tourism impacts beyond aggregate indicators, incorporating wineries' perspectives and their interactions with the surrounding territory. The main objective of this research paper is to analyse the economic, social, and environmental impacts of wine tourism activities at both the winery and regional levels.

Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative case study approach, which is suitable for exploring complex phenomena embedded in specific contexts (Sthapit et al., 2024; Turčinović et al., 2025). In particular, an in-depth analysis of Winery Magoni and its wine tourism activities is conducted, drawing on several sources of evidence, including a semi-structured interview, direct observation, and secondary documentation, seeking to understand how wine tourism contributes to the strategic development of the winery, how it interacts with the local community and regional ecosystem, and how it shapes sustainability-oriented outcomes in the Ensenada region, a leading Mexican wine tourism destination. This approach allows for a rich and contextualised understanding of the processes through which wine tourism generates value and impacts across different

dimensions, and facilitates analytical generalisation, enabling the extraction of theoretical insights that may be relevant to other wineries and regions with similar characteristics. The results of the study indicate that wine tourism plays a central role in enhancing the economic resilience of Winery Magoni by diversifying income streams, strengthening brand positioning, and fostering direct relationships with consumers, while at the regional level, it contributes to local economic development through employment creation, collaboration with local suppliers, and the attraction of visitors with high spending potential.

In social terms, the findings highlight the role of wine tourism in reinforcing regional identity, promoting cultural exchange, and generating positive spillovers for the local community, while environmentally, this investigation provides evidence about how wine tourism can support sustainability objectives by encouraging landscape conservation, responsible resource use, and environmental awareness among visitors, although it also underscores the need for careful management to mitigate potential negative impacts associated with increased tourist flows. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature on wine tourism and regional development by providing empirical evidence from an emerging wine region and by integrating economic, social, and environmental dimensions within a single analytical framework, and reinforces the view of wine tourism as a strategic activity that extends beyond traditional tourism metrics and highlights its relevance for sustainability-oriented regional development. In managerial terms, the findings offer practical insights for winery owners and managers regarding the strategic design of wine tourism experiences, the integration of sustainability into tourism offerings, and the importance of collaboration with local stakeholders, while from a policy perspective, the study provides evidence to support the development of specific public policies aimed at fostering sustainable wine tourism, improving infrastructure, and enhancing coordination among public and private actors. The structure of the research is shown in Figure 1.

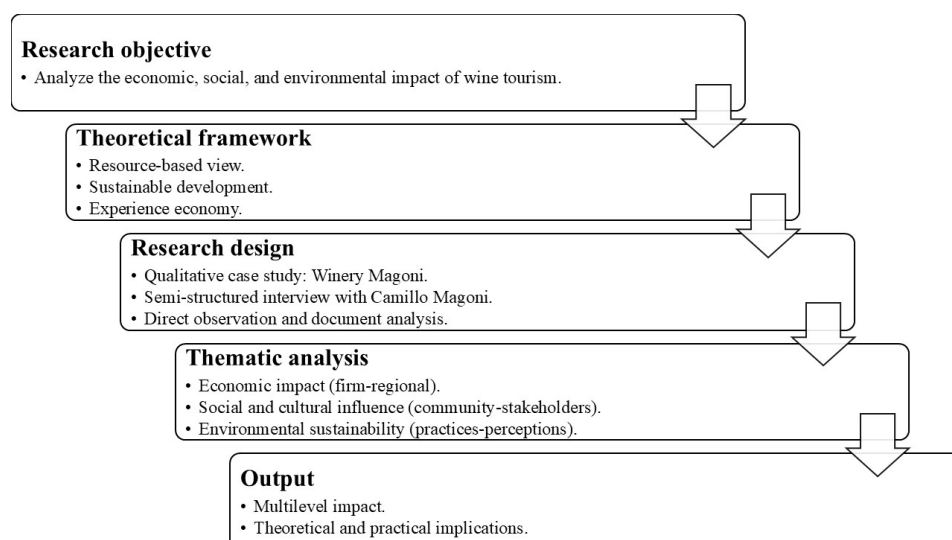


Figure 1. Research design and analytical approach.

Source: Own elaboration.

1. Literature review

1.1 Value creation through wine tourism

Wine tourism has progressively been conceptualized as a strategic mechanism through which wineries extend their value creation processes beyond the core activity of wine production, and wineries engaged in wine tourism tend to adopt hybrid business models that integrate production, services, culture, and place-based experiences (Pearson et al., 2024; Depetris-Chauvin, 2025; Rašan et al., 2026). From this perspective, value creation emerges from the sale of wine as a product and from the symbolic, relational, and experiential dimensions associated with visiting the winery and engaging with its territory (Sánchez-García et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2024). Wine tourism allows firms to

internalise downstream activities, strengthen direct relationships with consumers, appropriate higher margins, and reduce dependence on traditional distribution channels (Brito et al., 2024; Dias et al., 2024; Constantin et al., 2025). The resource-based view provides a theoretical basis to understand how wine tourism contributes to firm-level value creation and, according to this perspective, competitive advantage arises from the effective deployment of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources (Monson, 2024; Spiga & Cardebat, 2024; Ferreira & Ferreira, 2025; Malhotra et al., 2025). In the wine sector, these resources are deeply embedded in territory and include terroir, landscape, heritage, architectural design, and tacit knowledge, and enable wineries to mobilize and recombine these resources in ways that are difficult for competitors to replicate, transforming them into experiential assets that enhance perceived value, e.g., through guided tours, tastings, and storytelling, wineries convert intangible attributes into market-relevant capabilities that support differentiation strategies (del Pilar Leal et al., 2024; Downing & Barney, 2024; Cobbinah et al., 2025).

Beyond firm boundaries, value creation through wine tourism also operates at the regional level, and wineries act as drivers of value within broader local systems, generating spillover effects for hospitality providers, restaurants, artisans, and other complementary activities, stimulating network-based value creation, where multiple actors jointly contribute to and benefit from the attractiveness of the destination, reinforcing regional branding, and contributing to the emergence of wine territories as coherent tourism ecosystems rather than fragmented offerings (Lei et al., 2024; Jovanović et al., 2025; Rašan et al., 2026). However, wine tourism is not limited to economic outcomes, and scholars increasingly stress that the process is multidimensional, encompassing social and environmental dimensions that reinforce long-term viability, since by fostering closer interactions between producers, visitors, and local communities, wine tourism enhances relational value and trust, which are essential for sustaining competitiveness over time (Amaral et al., 2024; Vecchio et al., 2024; Johnson & Buhalis, 2025). In this sense, wine tourism operates as a platform through which wineries align economic objectives with broader territorial development goals, creating shared value that transcends transactional exchanges.

1.2 Place-based social dynamics of wine tourism

Wine tourism is inherently place-based, as it is grounded in specific geographical, cultural, and social contexts that shape both the supply of experiences and their perceived authenticity, since the social dynamics that emerge from wine tourism are deeply intertwined with local communities, traditions, and forms of collective identity, reconfiguring social relationships by bringing together producers, residents, visitors, and institutions within shared spaces of interaction, thus playing a central role in determining the sustainability and legitimacy of wine tourism development (da Silva Flores et al., 2024; Lazăr & Pnake, 2024; Vieira et al., 2025). Stakeholder theory offers a robust framework to analyse the social dimension of wine tourism, since it emphasizes that organizational activities generate impacts for multiple stakeholder groups, whose interests and expectations must be recognized and balanced, e.g., in the context of wine tourism, wineries interact with tourists, local residents, employees, suppliers, public authorities, and civil society organizations, so that when wine tourism strategies are aligned with stakeholder interests, they contribute to social cohesion, mutual trust, and community support, which are critical for long-term success (Cao et al., 2024; Piras & Pedes, 2025; Back et al., 2025).

Social value creation through wine tourism supports local employment and skills development, particularly in rural or semi-rural areas where alternative opportunities may be limited, contributes to the preservation and revitalization of local culture by valorising traditions, gastronomy, and narratives associated with wine production, and fosters social capital by encouraging collaboration among wineries and between wineries and other local actors, leading to coordinated initiatives such as routes, festivals, and collective branding efforts (Gu et al., 2024; Jannes & Barreal, 2024; Lazăr & Pnake, 2024; Spiga & Cardebat, 2024). However, social outcomes are contingent on governance and inclusiveness, since wine tourism can generate tensions related to land use, access to resources, or cultural commodification if local communities are marginalised from decision-making processes

(Monson, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). In this regard, stakeholder-oriented approaches help mitigate these risks by promoting dialogue, transparency, and shared responsibility, so that wine tourism becomes a socially embedded activity that reinforces place identity and collective well-being, provided that social dynamics are actively managed rather than assumed to evolve spontaneously (Back et al., 2025; Piras & Pedes, 2025).

1.3 Tourism, resources, and competitive dynamics in the wine sector

The competitive dynamics of the wine sector have increasingly shifted from product-based competition toward competition among destinations and integrated offerings, and as global wine markets become more saturated and standardised, wineries seek alternative sources of differentiation that are less vulnerable to price competition (Brito et al., 2024; Back et al., 2025; Constantin et al., 2025). In this context, tourism emerges as a strategic domain in which resources embedded in territory and organisation are transformed into competitive advantages that extend beyond the bottle, so that wine tourism can reshape competitive logic by repositioning wineries within broader destination systems. From an endogenous development perspective, regional competitiveness is driven by the ability of local actors to mobilize internal resources and capabilities, and wine tourism exemplifies this logic by leveraging natural landscapes, historical trajectories, and accumulated knowledge as foundations for tourism development, which are context-specific and path-dependent resources that limit imitation and reinforce the uniqueness of wine regions, fostering the coherence and authenticity of the regional offer (Crick & Crick, 2024; Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024).

Tourism-related competitiveness in the wine sector is also relational in nature, inasmuch as wineries compete and cooperate simultaneously within regional networks, engaging in dynamics that enhance destination attractiveness (Gao et al., 2024). Collective action among wineries and tourism stakeholders strengthens bargaining power, visibility, and resilience, particularly in emerging wine regions, reducing individual vulnerability to market fluctuations and enabling knowledge sharing and innovation (Sáenz-Navajas et al., 2024; Cobbinah et al., 2025). Moreover, the integration of tourism into competitive strategies alters resource allocation and strategic priorities within wineries, while investments in visitor facilities, human resources, and service quality become central to maintaining competitiveness, contributing to build long-term advantages by helping to position the winery within the destination's competitive structure, thus serving as a strategic domain through which wineries and regions jointly construct sustainable competitive positions (Alessandri et al., 2024; Pearson et al., 2024; Turčinović et al., 2025).

1.4 Experiential tourism as a source of value creation

Experiential tourism has become a dominant paradigm in contemporary tourism research, emphasizing the role of emotions, engagement, and meaning in shaping visitor satisfaction and value perceptions, and within the wine sector, it reframes wine consumption as an immersive process that connects sensory experiences with narratives of place, people, and production, being central to the attractiveness and differentiation of wine tourism destinations (Gao et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Zhan & Shi, 2024). In this respect, the experience economy framework argues that economic value increasingly derives from staged experiences that engage consumers on emotional, intellectual, and sensory levels, so that experiences such as tastings, vineyard walks, and interactions with winemakers transform wine from a commodity into memorable encounters, deepening consumer attachment, enhancing willingness to pay, and fostering long-term loyalty (Sorcaru et al., 2024; Sthapit et al., 2024). Experiential value creation also operates through learning and participation, since wine tourists often seek knowledge about production processes, terroir, and sustainability practices, positioning wineries as educational spaces, and this learning dimension can enhance perceived authenticity and reinforce the symbolic value of wine, through participatory experiences which may be effective in generating lasting impressions and positive word-of-mouth (Gao et al., 2024; Sorcaru et al., 2024). Furthermore, experiential tourism contributes to value creation by integrating environmental and cultural elements into the visitor experience, inasmuch as landscapes, architecture, and sustainable practices become part of the narrative conveyed to tourists, aligning

experiential enjoyment with environmental awareness, supporting managerial objectives and broader sustainability goals by shaping visitor attitudes and expectations (Nave et al., 2021; del Pilar Leal et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2024).

The proposition that wine tourism positively contributes to the triple bottom line integrates insights from the economic, social, and environmental dimensions discussed in prior sections and, in this respect, it functions as a value creation mechanism that aligns firm-level strategies with regional development outcomes (Amaral et al., 2024; Piras & Pedes, 2025). Wine tourism can enhance revenue diversification, strengthen market positioning, stabilize cash flows for wineries, generate spillover effects that benefit local economies through employment, entrepreneurship, and destination attractiveness, foster stakeholder engagement, reinforce place identity, contribute to social cohesion when governance structures are inclusive and participatory, strengthen social capital and legitimize the wine sector within its territorial context by creating spaces of interaction among producers, visitors, and communities, sustaining tourism growth and mitigating potential conflicts associated with increased visitation (Johnson & Buhalis, 2025; Vieira et al., 2025). In addition, wine tourism can support sustainability objectives by incentivizing preservation of the natural environment, responsible resource management, and environmental education, since when sustainability practices are integrated into the tourism experience, they become visible and valued by visitors, reinforcing incentives for wineries to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors, and contributing to the conservation of natural and cultural assets that underpin long-term competitiveness (Amaral et al., 2024; Brito et al., 2024).

H1. Wine tourism positively contributes to the triple bottom line by generating benefits for wineries and for the regional systems to which they belong.

2. Methodology

2.1. Case study context

Winery Magoni is a family-owned winery located in the Valle de Guadalupe, near Ensenada, the core wine-producing area of Baja California. The winery is recognised for its focus on quality wine production based on estate-grown grapes and for its strong connection to the territory and local wine culture. In recent years, this winery has deliberately incorporated wine tourism into its business model, transforming the winery into a space where visitors can engage with both the technical aspects of winemaking and the cultural narrative of the region, and through guided tastings, food pairings, and open-air visitor experiences, the winery seeks to strengthen consumer loyalty and reinforce the symbolic link between wine, landscape, and identity, which contributes to positioning the Valle de Guadalupe as a leading wine tourism destination in Mexico. The interviewee, Camillo Magoni, was born in Morbegno, Italy, and trained in oenology and viticulture at the prestigious Scuola Enologica di Alba in Piedmont, and he combines formal European winemaking education with more than five decades of professional experience in Mexico.

After early professional training in northern Italy, he relocated to Baja California in the early 1960s, where he became one of the key figures in the modern development of viticulture in the Valle de Guadalupe and its surrounding areas. His long tenure as chief winemaker for leading regional wineries and his later role in founding Winery Magoni position him as an authoritative and historically grounded voice within the Mexican wine sector. Beyond his technical expertise, Camillo Magoni has played an active role in the cultural and institutional life of this region, while his service as Honorary Consul of Italy, his recognition by the Italian government for professional merit, and his involvement in the preservation of the historical missions of the territory reflect his strong engagement with heritage and territorial identity. His authorship of the first comprehensive historical account of wine in the peninsula further reinforces his status as both practitioner and historian of the region, making him an exceptionally well-informed and credible key informant for analysing how wine tourism intersects with economic development, social dynamics, and environmental management in Baja California.

2.2. Methods and data collection

This study adopts a qualitative case study methodology to examine how wine tourism is developed within its real context and how it contributes to economic, social, and environmental outcomes at both the winery and regional levels, which is particularly suitable for this research because wine tourism is a complex, place-dependent phenomenon shaped by organizational strategies, territorial characteristics, and interactions among multiple stakeholders, allowing for an in-depth and contextualized understanding of processes and mechanisms that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative designs. The selected case is Winery Magoni, located near Ensenada, in Baja California, which was deliberately chosen due to its active involvement in wine tourism, its emphasis on experiential offerings and architectural integration with the surrounding landscape, and its role in reinforcing the regional image of Baja California as a leading wine tourism destination in Mexico. Data were collected using a qualitative, multi-source approach that combined direct observation, an in-depth interview, and the analysis of documentary materials to capture the complexity of wine tourism activities and to understand how they generate economic, social, and environmental effects within the regional context. Direct observation was conducted during visits to the winery, allowing the researchers to examine how wine tourism experiences are designed and delivered in practice, paying particular attention to the organization of visitor flows, the interaction between staff and guests, and the role of landscape, architecture, and storytelling in shaping the visitor experience, as well as assessing how concepts such as terroir expression, exclusivity, and environmental awareness are embedded in the winery's tourism offering and communicated to visitors.

To complement these observations, a semi-structured interview was conducted on 19 August 2025 with Camillo Magoni, winemaker and general manager of the winery, whose dual role, combining technical leadership in wine production with strategic oversight of tourism and organizational planning, provided a comprehensive perspective on the integration of wine tourism into the winery's business model, and addressed how tourism activities support economic performance, foster relationships with the local community, and align with environmental management practices. In addition, various documentary sources were reviewed, including institutional publications, press coverage, and audiovisual materials produced by the winery and external actors, which were used to contextualize and interpret the primary data. While statistical generalization is not the objective of this study, the combination of data sources and the interviewee's extensive experience strengthen the robustness of the findings and support their relevance for academic, managerial, and policy discussions on wine tourism and sustainability. The interview guide was structured into five thematic blocks. Table 1 summarizes the main outputs following this structure.

Table 1. Structure of the interview and summary of the findings.

Section	Summary	Level
Winery overview and strategic positioning	Winery Magoni is positioned as a quality-oriented boutique winery deeply rooted in the historical evolution of the Valle de Guadalupe, whose strategy is based on reinforcing the symbolic connection between wine, territory, and identity. In this regard, wine tourism is framed as a platform to communicate regional value rather than as a standalone commercial activity.	Contextual framing
Economic relevance of wine tourism	At the firm level, although wine tourism contributes a small percentage of direct revenues, it represents a strategically important share of Winery Magoni's income, since it provides continuous cash flow, supports financial stability, enhances brand positioning and, most importantly, it functions as a long-term mechanism to stimulate wine sales in external markets. At the regional level, wine tourism stimulates demand for accommodation, restaurants, transport, and artisanal products, reinforcing Ensenada's tourism economy, and the winery acts as part of an interconnected system in which visitor flows benefit multiple sectors, so that economic value emerges through this chain of complementary activities rather than through isolated winery performance alone.	Firm-level approach Regional-level approach
Social and cultural implications	Winery Magoni's wine tourism activities create employment, learning opportunities, and social interaction, yet their social impact depends on the integration of local residents. The interview highlights a gap between regional tourism growth and community involvement, showing that sustainable social embeddedness requires education, identity building, and long-term institutional commitment beyond individual wineries.	Firm - Community - Regional approach

Source: Own elaboration.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99

[illegible]

The development of Winery Magoni should be understood as part of the broader territorial dynamics shaping the wine region of Ensenada and, more specifically, the Valle de Guadalupe since, rather than evolving in isolation, the winery's trajectory reflects a process of co-evolution between firm-level strategies and regional transformation, in which wine tourism acts as a mediating mechanism. The interview evidence reveals that Winery Magoni's position within the territory is grounded in a long-term vision of viticulture, identity, and place-making, rather than in short-term tourism exploitation and, from the perspective of Camillo Magoni, the winery's development is inseparable from the historical and cultural construction of the region. With more than six decades of experience in Baja California's wine sector, he situates Winery Magoni within a lineage of pioneers who contributed to establishing quality standards and a shared territorial reputation. As he explains, "making wine in the Valle de Guadalupe has been a life objective for many of us, that is why we are here, and that is what gives meaning to what we do". This statement illustrates how the winery's development is embedded in a sense of personal and collective commitment to the territory, reinforcing the idea that wine tourism emerges as an extension of an existing regional project rather than as an exogenous activity.

Wine tourism has reinforced Winery Magoni's role as a territorial actor by transforming the winery into a point of encounter between production, visitors, and the surrounding landscape, but the interviewee consistently emphasizes that tourism is not conceived as an end in itself, but as a strategic instrument aligned with regional promotion, "I see wine tourism as brand promotion, not as an activity per se, of course it has to be economically sustainable, but its objective is to promote our wines, the region, and everything that exists around us", which is a vision that situates the winery within a broader territorial narrative, where individual success is linked to the collective image of the region. The development of Winery Magoni also reflects an awareness of the spatial and infrastructural constraints of Ensenada and the Valle de Guadalupe, since unlike consolidated wine destinations with long-established tourism infrastructures, this region remains in a transitional phase, where rapid growth coexists with structural deficiencies. The interview highlights that winery development has occurred in parallel with uneven territorial planning, generating tensions between

investment, preservation, and quality of life, which is reflected in several comments by Camillo Magoni, such as “the valley is not only the responsibility of wineries, it is the responsibility of society, authorities, and all of us together”, underscoring the interdependence between winery development and territorial governance.

Within this context, Winery Magoni positions itself as a moderate and reflective actor, advocating for a development model based on coherence and regulation rather than uncontrolled expansion, which is reflected in his refusal to incorporate large-scale gastronomic facilities, arguing that “our job is to produce wine, gastronomy professionals should do gastronomy, and we should support them by being present in their wine lists”, which reinforces territorial complementarity, avoiding internal competition among local actors and supporting the emergence of a diversified regional ecosystem. Wine tourism has also contributed to redefining the winery’s spatial relationship with the territory by encouraging continuous adaptation and incremental innovation, since development is conceived through small-scale improvements that respond to both repeat visitors and territorial coherence. As Camillo Magoni explains, “many visitors come back, and it is important for them to discover something new, even if it is something small”, which is a logic that aligns winery evolution with the rhythm of the territory, privileging continuity over spectacle. In this vein, the case highlights structural challenges that condition winery development within the territorial dynamics of Ensenada, especially regarding infrastructure and accessibility, which the interviewee identifies as critical bottlenecks for sustainable growth by stating that “you cannot talk about high-quality tourism if access roads, safety, and basic services remain the same as they were sixty years ago”, pointing out the limits of individual winery efforts and reinforcing the need for coordinated public–private action to support territorial development.

Regarding demographic and social dynamics within the region, while winery growth has generated employment and attracted investment, Camillo Magoni expresses concern about the limited integration of local residents into the evolving wine tourism economy, arguing that territorial development will remain fragile if the resident population does not feel ownership over the region’s transformation, which is reflected in several comments like “if people who live here do not feel proud of being from the Valle de Guadalupe, it is very difficult to build a sustainable future”, thus situating winery development within a broader social framework, where territorial identity becomes a prerequisite for long-term stability. Therefore, the winery’s evolution is shaped by its historical embeddedness, strategic restraint, and explicit recognition of shared responsibility for regional outcomes. Wine tourism strengthens the winery’s visibility and reinforces territorial narratives, but it also exposes structural weaknesses and governance gaps that exceed firm-level control. In this regard, winery development in emerging wine regions cannot be understood solely through internal performance indicators and must be analysed as part of a territorial system in which firms, institutions, and communities co-evolve. In the case of Winery Magoni, wine tourism acts as a connective tissue linking production, place, and people, and reveals the conditions required for sustainable regional development in Ensenada.

3.2. Wine tourism and economic performance

Wine tourism at Winery Magoni has a well-defined and strategic role in its economic model, functioning as a complementary mechanism that supports financial stability, market positioning, and long-term commercial performance. The interview reveals a deliberate approach to economic value creation, in which tourism is embedded within a broader market-oriented strategy rather than pursued as an autonomous business line. As Camillo Magoni explains, “wine tourism represents around six to eight percent of our income, at most”, so that from a strictly quantitative perspective, the direct economic contribution of wine tourism to the winery’s revenues remains relatively modest, which may reflect a conscious decision to avoid overdependence on visitor-based revenues, and to maintain the placement and performance of its wines in domestic and export markets as the core economic objective. Despite its limited direct contribution, wine tourism plays an important role in smoothing income flows and enhancing financial resilience, and as the interviewee underscores,

“those small amounts, even if they are small, are constant, and they help a lot with financial manoeuvrability”, showing how wine tourism contributes to liquidity management, reducing short-term financial pressure without altering the winery’s strategic focus.

In this regard, the economic relevance of wine tourism lies in its indirect effects on sales performance and market expansion, as the company explicitly uses it as a brand-building platform to influence future purchasing decisions beyond the winery premises. As Camillo Magoni affirms, “what we want is for the visitor to keep our image in mind and, when they are in an anonymous setting, choose our wine”, which reflects a long-term view of consumer behaviour, in which the visits to the winery shape preferences in retail and restaurant environments. He also recounts how exposure to wine tourism has led to unexpected commercial opportunities, particularly in international markets, through comments such as “we opened a market in the United States that we would not even have dreamed of a few years ago”. In this regard, participation in wine tourism activities has facilitated personal connections, strengthened brand recognition, and generated invitations to promotional events abroad, such as pairing dinners and tastings, which reveal how tourism operates as a gateway to external markets, amplifying the winery’s commercial reach without requiring large-scale marketing investments, and influencing product presentation and portfolio evaluation, thus contributing to economic learning processes within the firm.

The interviewee emphasizes that “it is not the same to see your wine on your own shelf as in an anonymous market”, observing visitor reactions to wines in the tasting environment provides valuable insights that differ from those obtained through traditional distribution channels, and allows the winery to assess labelling, pricing, and positioning strategies under real consumer interaction, and inform subsequent commercial decisions. However, the winery has deliberately avoided diversification strategies that could compromise its core identity or create conflicts within the regional ecosystem, such as the decision not to develop a gastronomic facility, since as he establishes, “our job is to produce wine, gastronomy should be done by professionals who dedicate themselves to that”, which is a choice that reinforces complementarities with local restaurants, thereby supporting cooperation and a more balanced territorial economy. Investment patterns related to wine tourism further reflect this cautious approach, since the company prioritizes incremental improvements that enhance visitor experience and preserve financial flexibility, and as the interviewee highlights, “it is important that returning visitors find something new, even if it is small”, which makes reference to the fact that investments in small-scale attractions, such as a technical library, a balsamic production space, and experimental wine displays, enrich the visit without imposing excessive fixed costs, aligning tourism-related investment with manageable financial risk and long-term sustainability.

Wine tourism has also influenced internal cost structures through increased emphasis on staff training and service quality, and although this implies additional expenditure, the interviewee views human capital investment as essential for maximizing the economic return of tourism activities, and underscores the role of service quality as a multiplier of tourism’s economic impact and as a driver of brand reputation and consumer loyalty, by affirming that “you can design the best strategies, but if the people in direct contact with visitors are not motivated, it is useless”. At the regional level, Winery Magoni’s wine tourism activities indirectly contribute to the economic vitality of Ensenada and the Valle de Guadalupe, as increased visitor flows benefit hotels, restaurants, transportation services, and artisanal producers, creating a network of interdependent economic actors. As Camillo Magoni states, “this is a chain, and it only works if all the links are aligned”, which reflects the importance of interconnectedness, since it enhances destination attractiveness and reinforces positive feedback loops between wineries and the regional economy. He also reveals structural constraints that limit the full economic potential of wine tourism, affirming that “you cannot sell a premium experience with precarious access and basic services”, since deficiencies in infrastructure, regulation, and coordination reduce efficiency and increase transaction costs for both wineries and visitors, so that the winery performance requires public investment and territorial planning.

3.3. *Social embeddedness and community effects of wine tourism*

The social dimension of wine tourism at Winery Magoni reveals a complex and uneven process of embeddedness within the local community of Ensenada and its surrounding rural areas, and rather than assuming that tourism automatically generates social cohesion, the interview evidence points to a deeper reality in which wine tourism creates opportunities for social value creation, and exposes structural gaps related to education, identity, and territorial integration, which shows that social impacts are not an automatic by-product of tourism growth but depend on deliberate collective action and long-term vision. From the perspective of Camillo Magoni, one of the most critical challenges lies in the limited involvement of the resident population in the symbolic and cultural evolution of the wine region, and despite the international visibility of the Valle de Guadalupe, “the local population has remained somewhat on the margins of this evolution”, which reflects a perceived disconnect between the expansion of wine tourism and the sense of ownership felt by residents, and suggests that social embeddedness remains partial and fragile.

In connection with the above, employment creation constitutes the most visible social contribution of wine tourism, and in this sense, Winery Magoni has experienced a gradual increase in staff linked to tourism activities, growing from a very small team to a more structured workforce as visitor flows intensified. However, the social implications of employment extend beyond numerical growth, since as the interviewee states, “we struggle to find local people, especially at intermediate and higher levels, most have to come from Ensenada”, emphasizing that one of the main difficulties is not job creation itself, but the availability of locally rooted human capital, and therefore the limitations of the local labour market and the role of structural factors, such as education and training, in shaping the social outcomes of wine tourism. In this vein, he repeatedly highlighted that education is key for deeper social integration, and that long-term social sustainability depends on cultivating pride and identification with the territory from an early age, by saying “if you do not feel proud of where you are from, it is very difficult to build anything lasting”, thus shifting the focus from short-term employment benefits to intergenerational processes of identity formation, and positioning wine tourism as a potential but insufficient driver of social transformation unless accompanied by broader educational efforts.

The company has engaged in several initiatives aimed at strengthening social ties with the community, particularly through knowledge transfer, cultural dissemination, collaborations with educational institutions, and informal training experiences, which have allowed young people to enter the winery workforce and develop professional trajectories, e.g., former students from a local preparatory school who later joined the winery team. “Some of the young people who work with us today were students who heard about these possibilities and decided to get involved” he affirms, which demonstrates how wine tourism can function as a gateway to social mobility when linked to educational exposure and mentorship, but he underscores the fragility of such initiatives when continuity is lacking, since programs depend heavily on individual commitment and institutional stability, and their interruption undermines cumulative social impact. He also says that “when the people who drive these projects change, the ideas often disappear as well”, revealing a structural weakness in the social governance of wine tourism, where initiatives are insufficiently institutionalized and therefore vulnerable to discontinuity.

Beyond employment and education, wine tourism influences social dynamics by reshaping relationships among regional actors. The interviewee underscores the importance of collaboration across wineries, service providers, and local institutions to create a coherent and welcoming social environment, by using a mechanical metaphor to describe this interdependence, “a car can have a perfect engine, but if the transmission is not connected, it will not move”, so that social value emerges from coordination and reinforces the collective nature of wine tourism as a social system. In addition, Camillo Magoni expresses concern that residents may perceive wine tourism as an external imposition rather than as a shared project, by stressing that “the valley should first and foremost be a value for those who live here”, thus situating social acceptance as a prerequisite for sustainable

tourism development and aligning with the notion that tourism must go beyond attracting external consumption and enhance residents' quality of life. He also reveals a normative dimension to social embeddedness, emphasizing responsibility and shared accountability, repeatedly rejecting the idea that social challenges can be delegated solely to public authorities, and arguing that "it does not make sense to blame the authorities for everything, responsibility is ours as well". This stance reflects a participatory view of social governance, where wineries are expected to act as proactive contributors to community well-being rather than passive beneficiaries of territorial branding.

Through storytelling, historical narratives, and the promotion of local products, the winery seeks to reconnect visitors and residents with regional heritage, and foster cultural valorisation, since cultural practices, gastronomy, and agricultural traditions can be used to reinforce identity and social meaning. Camillo Magoni highlights the importance of recognizing everyday local knowledge, noting that "true gastronomy and culture are often preserved by people who may not even be aware of their value", elevating local traditions as central elements of social sustainability rather than peripheral attractions. Nevertheless, he acknowledges persistent social tensions associated with the rapid transformation of the region, inasmuch as the arrival of new businesses, events, and investors has altered social rhythms and expectations, generating both opportunities and frictions, and stresses the importance of regulation and shared norms to prevent social fragmentation, by saying "everything is welcome, as long as it is regulated", so that it is important to balance inclusiveness with social order, since unregulated growth can erode community trust. In this vein, social development is framed in terms of generational continuity, and young people should perceive viable futures within the region. As he states, "if young people do not see a future here, then all of this loses meaning", showing the potential of wine tourism as a catalyst for long-term social reinforcement, provided that it contributes to stable livelihoods, education, and a sense of belonging, and suggesting that social sustainability in wine tourism requires intentional efforts to integrate residents, cultivate identity, and align individual initiatives with collective regional projects.

3.4. Environmental implications of wine tourism

The environmental dimension of wine tourism at Winery Magoni is framed by a strong awareness of ecological limits and by a pragmatic understanding of the fragility of the territorial ecosystem in Ensenada and its surrounding wine-growing areas. Instead of presenting wine tourism as an automatic driver of environmental improvement, Camillo Magoni reveals a more cautious perspective, in which tourism can reinforce sustainability only if it is intentionally aligned with local environmental realities and collective responsibility. In this regard, he underscores that water scarcity is a particularly important environmental constraint, by saying "if we practically do not have water, then we are forced to be efficient", so that sustainability practices are not adopted primarily for reputational reasons but out of necessity, which reflects how environmental conditions shape operational decisions and underscore the material limits within which wine tourism and viticulture must operate, e.g., the winery's reuse of treated wastewater for limited green areas reflects an adaptive strategy grounded in environmental realism rather than symbolic sustainability claims. Furthermore, the importance of preserving native vegetation and respecting ecological heterogeneity within vineyards is highlighted, "if I find an endemic plant in the middle of a vineyard, I go around it and conserve it", which is a practice that reflects a place-based environmental ethic, in which biodiversity is not treated as an obstacle to production or tourism but as an integral component of territorial value.

Wine tourism reinforces this orientation by turning landscape explanation into part of the visitor experience, thereby linking environmental stewardship to educational and interpretive functions. The interview also reveals a critical stance toward homogenized or imported aesthetic models that conflict with local ecology, since Camillo Magoni argues that environmental sustainability cannot be reduced to visual appeal, noting that "people see the native vegetation dry in summer and think it is useless, when in fact it is perfectly adapted to this environment", pointing to a broader challenge in wine tourism, that is reconciling visitor expectations with ecological authenticity. From this perspective, tourism can either exacerbate environmental pressure by encouraging artificial landscaping or

contribute positively by reshaping perceptions of what constitutes a valuable and sustainable landscape. Moreover, he offers a detailed reflection on packaging choices, particularly bottle weight, as an overlooked source of environmental impact, stating that “a heavier bottle has nothing to do with wine quality, but it generates more carbon because it requires more energy to produce”. This critique extends beyond the winery to the entire value chain, highlighting how consumer perceptions influence environmentally inefficient practices, and in this context, wine tourism becomes a potential educational channel to challenge misconceptions and promote more sustainable norms among visitors.

Despite these efforts, the interviewee expresses scepticism about the depth of environmental awareness among tourists, questioning whether visitors really understand environmental concepts such as carbon footprint, remarking that “many people do not even know what carbon footprint means”, which underscores a key limitation of wine tourism as an environmental tool, since without intentional interpretation and communication, sustainability practices may remain invisible or misunderstood, and therefore environmental impact depends both on internal practices and on the capacity to translate them into meaningful narratives for visitors. The expansion of wine tourism and associated investment raises significant environmental risks, particularly related to land use and urban pressure, and uncontrolled development is identified as one of the main threats to the ecological integrity of the region, since he warns that “the biggest risk is that vineyards become decorative gardens instead of productive agricultural units”, so that tourism-driven real estate development may displace viticultural activity, undermining both environmental sustainability and the very foundations of the wine tourism appeal. This risk is compounded by regulatory gaps and fragmented governance, inasmuch as while protected areas exist in theory, their enforcement is uneven, leading to selective compliance, “sometimes protection is respected only halfway, depending on convenience”. This critique highlights the limits of firm-level environmental commitment in the absence of coherent territorial regulation.

Wine tourism, by attracting investment and visibility, intensifies the need for coordinated environmental governance that extends beyond individual wineries, because sustainability is a shared responsibility, not a task delegated to public authorities, but Camillo Magoni explicitly rejects the tendency to externalize accountability, stating, “it is very easy to blame the authorities, but the first responsibility is ours”, thus aligning environmental outcomes with ethical agency at the firm and community levels, and suggesting that wine tourism can only contribute positively if actors internalize the consequences of their decisions. To foster these outcomes, environmental education is an essential long-term process that begins with employees and residents before reaching visitors, and he underscores that respect for the environment is rarely taught systematically and must be cultivated through everyday practices, since “people are not educated from childhood to value order, cleanliness, and conservation”, so that wine tourism offers a platform to reinforce these values, but only insofar as sustainability is embedded in organizational culture. In connection with the above, the interviewee also explained that there have been missed opportunities for collective environmental initiatives, such as the promotion of endemic species and the development of local nurseries, and suggests that “why not promote endemic plants that require little water and are part of our identity?”, suggesting how wine tourism could support broader environmental strategies by aligning landscape aesthetics, biodiversity conservation, and territorial branding.

In addition, he notes that while Baja California lacks historical architecture, it has the opportunity to build a distinctive and durable environmental identity, arguing that “we do not have gothic churches, but we can create our own long-lasting architecture and environmental style”, which is a forward-looking perspective that positions environmental sustainability as a cultural project, capable of generating future heritage, and makes clear that environmental implications of wine tourism extend beyond ecological metrics to encompass values, perceptions, and long-term territorial trajectories. Wine tourism increases visibility and pressure on natural resources, but it also creates incentives to conserve what attracts visitors in the first place, “wine tourism is the consequence of

something that was attractive, the challenge is how to conserve that interest”. This interview suggests that wine tourism can reinforce environmental awareness, resource efficiency, and landscape preservation when it is grounded in local ecological knowledge and collective responsibility but, without regulation and long-term planning, it risks accelerating environmental degradation through overdevelopment and misaligned incentives, thus showing that environmental sustainability in wine tourism is ultimately a process of continuous negotiation between economic aspirations, social values, and ecological limits.

Figure 2 shows an overview of the influence of wine tourism activities in each of these dimensions.

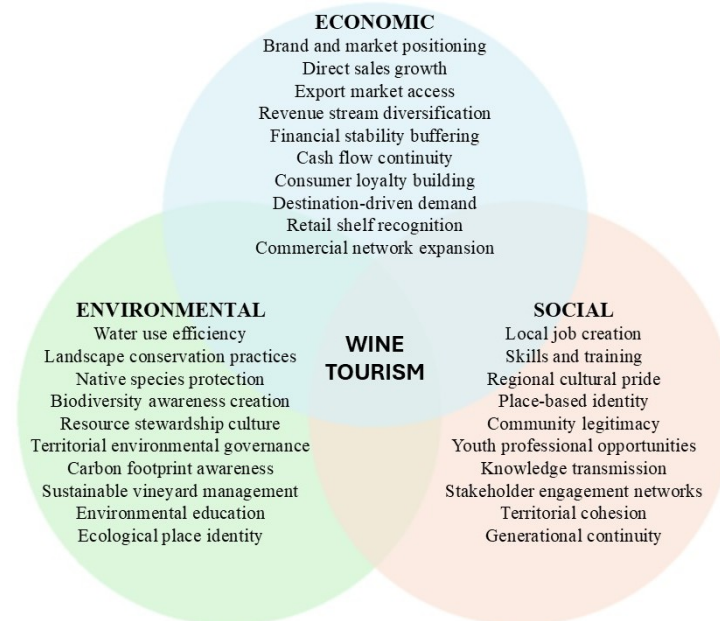


Figure 2. Influence of wine tourism at the firm and regional levels.

Source: Own elaboration.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study show that wine tourism should be interpreted as a relational and place-based mechanism through which firms connect their strategic objectives with broader territorial dynamics. In the case of Winery Magoni, wine tourism represents a relatively small proportion of direct income, but it plays a strategically important role in strengthening brand positioning, generating stable cash flows, fostering consumer loyalty, opening commercial opportunities, and reinforcing the symbolic association between wine, landscape, and regional identity. At the same time, the results reveal that wine tourism produces effects that go beyond the firm, since visitor flows activate complementary activities in accommodation, restaurants, transport, gastronomy, artisanal products, and destination promotion. Therefore, the case shows that the value of wine tourism should be understood through its capacity to connect wineries, consumers, local actors, institutions, and territorial narratives.

These findings are consistent with previous research that has analysed the sustainable contribution of wine tourism from a triple bottom line perspective. Martínez-Falcó *et al.* (2024) examined the effect of wine tourism on the sustainable performance of Spanish wineries through a quantitative structural equation model based on survey data from wineries. Their results showed that wine tourism positively contributes to economic, social, and environmental performance, suggesting that wine tourism activities can become a driver of sustainable value creation in the wine sector. The present study supports this general conclusion but adds a more qualitative and interpretive explanation of how these effects occur in practice. In Winery Magoni, economic performance is not mainly produced by the direct income obtained from tastings or visits, but through indirect mechanisms such as consumer memory, brand familiarity, market access, and the capacity to position the winery in restaurants and

external markets. This shows that wine tourism may be economically relevant even when its direct contribution to turnover is modest.

The findings also align with Sorcaru et al. (2024), who analysed Romanian wineries through survey data and PLS-SEM to examine the relationships among innovation, wine tourism experience, and sustainable wine tourism development. Their study highlighted the importance of innovation in products, services, and financing, as well as the relevance of wine tourism experiences for the sustainable development of wineries. The case of Winery Magoni underscores the importance of innovation while showing that, in emerging wine tourism destinations, being innovative does not always require large-scale investment or spectacular facilities. Instead, innovation may emerge through incremental improvements in the visitor experience, such as the creation of a technical library, experimental vineyard explanations, balsamic production spaces, storytelling activities, or interpretive narratives around grape varieties, landscape, and local history. These examples illustrate that small-scale experiential innovation can reinforce differentiation while preserving financial flexibility and territorial coherence.

Through a systematic literature review, Nave et al. (2021) showed that sustainability in wine tourism has become a central research area, but also that its development requires a multidimensional understanding of economic, social, and environmental effects. Similarly, Brito et al. (2024) reviewed strategies for achieving the sustainable development goals across the wine chain, emphasizing that sustainability requires action throughout production, tourism, consumption, and territorial systems. This study reinforces that perspective by showing that environmental sustainability in wine tourism is not limited to visible practices designed for tourists. In Winery Magoni, environmental responsibility is connected to daily operational decisions, including water reuse, preservation of endemic vegetation, efficient resource use, and reflection on the environmental effects of packaging, particularly bottle weight. These findings suggest that wine tourism can become an educational channel through which wineries communicate environmental values to visitors.

However, the findings also reveal the ambivalent nature of wine tourism. Sun and Drakeman (2022), in their study of Australia, analysed wine tourism through an environmentally extended input-output model and showed that wine tourism generates economic benefits but also considerable environmental impacts, particularly in relation to carbon emissions. Their work conceptualizes wine tourism as a “double-edged sword”, since it can support regional economies while increasing environmental pressure. The present study reaches a similar conclusion from a qualitative and territorial perspective. In Valle de Guadalupe, wine tourism contributes to regional visibility and economic activity, but it also increases pressure on water resources, land use, roads, landscape coherence, and ecological preservation. A practical example is the risk that vineyards become decorative elements for real estate or leisure developments rather than productive agricultural units. In this sense, wine tourism may preserve the landscape that attracts visitors, but it may also accelerate its degradation if growth is not properly regulated.

The social dimension of the findings is also closely connected to studies on residents, community support, and social embeddedness. Back et al. (2025) investigated resident stakeholders’ perceptions and support for wineries and wine tourism in Florida, a non-traditional wine tourism destination. Their study is relevant because it highlights that resident support is an essential condition for the success of wine tourism, especially in emerging or non-consolidated destinations. The present study supports this argument and shows that community involvement cannot be assumed as an automatic consequence of tourism growth. In Winery Magoni, wine tourism creates employment and learning opportunities, but the interview also reveals a gap between the expansion of the wine tourism economy and the degree of local resident integration. The difficulty of finding local workers for intermediate or higher-level positions illustrates that job creation alone is insufficient if the local population lacks access to training, professional development, and a strong sense of territorial belonging. Therefore, wine tourism becomes socially sustainable only when it contributes to education, identity building, and long-term community participation.

This point also connects with da Silva Flores et al. (2024), who emphasized the role of community sentience in wine tourism, and with Turčinović et al. (2025), who analysed community-led sustainable tourism in rural areas as a source of competitiveness and local empowerment. The case of Winery Magoni shows that wine tourism can strengthen local identity through storytelling, historical narratives, local gastronomy, traditional knowledge, and the valorisation of everyday cultural practices, e.g., when the winery incorporates regional products, explains the history of viticulture in Baja California, or connects visitors with the cultural meaning of the landscape, it contributes to transforming tourism into a platform for heritage transmission. However, the case also shows that this process requires continuity. Educational initiatives, training programmes, and community projects may disappear when they depend too heavily on individual actors and are not institutionalized. This finding suggests that social embeddedness requires stable governance structures.

The study also contributes to research on coopetition and territorial collaboration in wine tourism. Crick and Crick (2024), using evidence from the Canadian wine industry, analysed regional-level coopetition and its relationship with company performance, showing that collaboration among competitors in wine regions can improve performance under certain conditions. Amaral et al. (2024), through a literature review on coopetition in the wine business ecosystem, also emphasized the relevance of territorial networks, business ecosystems, and competitive advantages in vitiviniculture and wine tourism. The present study supports this view by showing that Winery Magoni understands itself as one link in a broader regional chain. Its decision not to develop a large gastronomic facility is a deliberate choice to avoid competing with restaurants and to reinforce territorial complementarity, which shows how a winery can contribute to the regional ecosystem by specializing in wine production and visitor interpretation while allowing other local actors to capture complementary value.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the wine tourism literature, extending triple bottom line approaches by showing that economic, social, and environmental impacts are interconnected processes mediated by territorial relationships. In this regard, maximizing economic value depends, to a great extent, on cooperation with restaurants, hotels, distributors, and tourism operators, while social value is shaped by education, identity formation, and community participation, and environmental value relies on shared responsibility, effective regulation, and the capacity to translate sustainability practices into meaningful visitor interpretation. Moreover, this research advances the understanding of wine tourism in emerging destinations by providing empirical evidence from Mexico, a context that remains less explored than European and Australian wine tourism regions. In this vein, it contributes to place-based and relational perspectives by showing that wine tourism acts as a connective tissue between firm strategy and regional sustainability outcomes, e.g., Winery Magoni acts as a producer of wine and a provider of tourism experiences, but also as a territorial actor whose decisions influence and are influenced by the wider development of Valle de Guadalupe.

The managerial implications are also relevant. Wineries in emerging destinations should not evaluate wine tourism only according to immediate income from visits, tastings, or direct sales. Managers should also consider its indirect strategic value in terms of brand recall, consumer education, market access, reputation, and loyalty. For example, a visitor who tastes a wine at the winery may later choose the same brand in a restaurant or supermarket because the visit created an emotional and cognitive connection with the product. Managers should therefore design wine tourism experiences as long-term brand-building mechanisms. This requires trained and motivated staff, coherent storytelling, authentic environmental practices, and continuous but manageable innovation. In practical terms, a winery can enrich the visitor experience by incorporating small interpretive elements, such as vineyard walks focused on native vegetation, explanations about water reuse, tastings linked to local food products, or narratives about the historical evolution of the region.

Another managerial implication concerns cooperation. The results suggest that wineries should avoid excessive internal diversification when it weakens the regional ecosystem. Instead of trying to control all parts of the visitor experience, wineries can build alliances with restaurants, hotels, transport providers, local artisans, educational institutions, and tour operators. For example, Winery Magoni's refusal to replace professional gastronomy with its own restaurant activity shows how strategic restraint can support regional complementarity. This approach allows wineries to focus on their core capabilities while helping other local actors benefit from visitor flows. Managers should therefore understand wine tourism as part of an ecosystem rather than as an isolated firm-level activity.

Regarding the policy implications of this investigation, public authorities should recognize that wine tourism development requires coordinated territorial governance. Infrastructure, access roads, signage, water management, safety, environmental regulation, landscape protection, and land-use planning cannot be solved by individual wineries alone. The case shows that a premium wine tourism destination cannot be consolidated if basic infrastructure and regulatory frameworks remain weak. Therefore, policymakers should promote integrated plans that protect vineyards, regulate real estate pressure, preserve endemic vegetation, support local training, and involve residents in tourism development, e.g., public programmes could support nurseries for endemic plants, training schemes for young residents, certification systems for sustainable wine tourism practices, or collaborative platforms where wineries, residents, restaurants, and authorities jointly define development priorities.

In connection with the above, it is suggested that wine tourism policy should move beyond destination promotion and focus on territorial sustainability. Attracting visitors is not enough if tourism growth generates environmental degradation, social exclusion, or fragmented development. In emerging wine regions such as Valle de Guadalupe, the main challenge is not only to increase the number of tourists, but to ensure that tourism strengthens the economic resilience of wineries, improves opportunities for local communities, and protects the ecological and cultural resources on which the destination depends. Wine tourism should therefore be managed as a regional development strategy, not merely as a marketing tool for wineries. The case of Winery Magoni shows that this is possible when wine tourism is grounded in authenticity, environmental realism, social responsibility, and cooperative territorial governance.

Conclusions

This study set out to analyse the economic, social, and environmental implications of wine tourism through an in-depth case study of Winery Magoni, located in Baja California, Mexico, and by adopting a qualitative case study approach, it provides a contextualized and process-oriented understanding of how wine tourism operates as a strategic and territorial phenomenon rather than as a standalone commercial activity. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative perspective and in its empirical focus on Mexico, a context that remains underrepresented in the international wine tourism literature, particularly with regard to the interaction between wineries and regional systems in terms of sustainability. The findings provide empirical evidence on the contribution of wine tourism to value creation in a differentiated and asymmetric manner across the three dimensions of the triple bottom line. Economically, wine tourism does not function as the main revenue engine of the winery but plays a strategically relevant role in enhancing financial stability, supporting brand positioning, and facilitating market access, while in social terms, it creates employment opportunities and fosters cultural exchange, yet its capacity to generate deep social embeddedness relies on education, continuity, and the active inclusion of local residents.

Environmentally, it reinforces awareness of ecological limits and incentivizes conservation practices, while simultaneously increasing pressure on fragile ecosystems if territorial governance and regulation are insufficient, which suggests that wine tourism can positively contribute to the triple bottom line when it is embedded within a coherent territorial vision and supported by collective

responsibility. From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the wine tourism literature by reinforcing the view of wine tourism as a relational and place-based process that links firm-level strategies with regional development dynamics, showing how it operates as a connective mechanism between production, market positioning, social identity, and environmental management, highlights the importance of adopting a longitudinal and interpretive lens to understand sustainability outcomes, as many of the effects of wine tourism unfold gradually and depend on cumulative interactions rather than immediate results, and unveils how emerging wine regions face distinct challenges compared to consolidated destinations, particularly regarding infrastructure, governance, and social integration, thereby extending existing theoretical frameworks to less-studied contexts. The managerial implications of this research can be of value for winery owners, managers, and workers, since it shows that wine tourism does not need to be maximized in quantitative terms to generate strategic value, but its effectiveness may require coherence with the winery's core identity, product quality, and long-term objectives.

Managers are encouraged to view wine tourism as a brand-building and learning platform, and investment decisions should prioritize service quality, staff training, and incremental innovation, while avoiding overexpansion that may compromise financial flexibility or territorial balance. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of collaboration with other local actors, reinforcing complementarities. From a policy perspective, the study underscores the need for integrated and place-sensitive approaches to wine tourism development, and the key role of public authorities in providing basic infrastructure, ensuring safety, and establishing clear regulatory frameworks that balance conservation with economic dynamism, and suggests that fragmented or reactive governance limits the potential of wine tourism to contribute to sustainable regional development. Policies aimed at supporting wine tourism should therefore extend beyond promotional initiatives to include education, land-use planning, and the preservation of agricultural landscapes, and fostering cooperation between wineries, educational institutions, and local communities emerges as a key lever for strengthening social legitimacy and long-term resilience.

Regarding limitations, this study is based on a single case and a primary interview with a highly experienced and influential actor, which provides depth but limits the diversity of perspectives captured, the qualitative nature of the research does not allow for statistical generalization of the findings, and while the interview offers rich insights into strategic intentions and perceptions, future studies could benefit from incorporating additional stakeholder voices, such as employees, residents, tourists, and public officials, to further triangulate the analysis. These limitations, however, are consistent with the exploratory and theory-building objectives of the research and do not detract from its analytical contribution. Considering these limitations, future research could develop comparative case studies across multiple wineries or regions in Mexico and other emerging wine-producing countries to identify patterns and contextual differences in wine tourism development, while longitudinal research designs could capture how economic, social, and environmental impacts evolve over time as destinations mature, and mixed-method approaches combining qualitative insights with quantitative indicators could further strengthen empirical robustness. Moreover, further research could explore the role of education, governance, and resident perceptions in greater depth, shedding light on the conditions under which wine tourism becomes an inclusive and sustainable driver of regional development.

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