# The Thesis of the PhD Dissertation

Gvantsa Sekhniashvili
GÖDÖLLŐ
2023

# Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

# Developing Wine Tourism Destination Image Measurement Scale on The Example of Georgia

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# I.INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the work

Research about destination image (DI) concept in tourism was initiated in the early 1970s (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Stepchenkova and Mills, 2010) and after almost a half-century-long popularity, now it occupies an important role in tourism-related studies. Authors have covered wide range of topics among which some of the most dominant ones are related to the conceptualization (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002), DI formation (Baloglu and Mccleary, 1999; Gartner, 1994; Santos, 1998), DI measurement (Chen and Hsu, 2000; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Gartner, 1989), changes in DI (Gartner and Gartner, 1986; Gartner and Hunt, 1987), and destination positioning (Ahmed, 1991; Alford, 1998; Calantone *et al.*, 1989; Guthrie and Gale, 1991). Researchers' extended interest in DI is linked to its importance for individual's behaviour regarding travel decision-making (Chon, 1990; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Stepchenkova and Mills, 2010; Tasci *et al.*, 2007). The results of DI studies are often used by destination marketing organizations (DMO) as they realize that "in order to be successfully promoted in the targeted markets, a destination must be favourably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned, in the minds of the consumers" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, p. 37). Exploring and monitoring DI enables DMOs to better manage perceived or projected DI in target travel markets (Stepchenkova and Mills, 2010). The significance of tourism destination imagery for wine regions has been recognized by several authors (Bruwer *et al.*, 2016; Bruwer and Gross, 2017; Scorrano *et al.*, 2018), who note that wine tourism destination image (WTDI) research is limited. In his study about WTDI Williams (2001b, p. 53) notices that wine regions manage to be differentiated from other kinds of destinations, but "they may fail to distinguish how one wine area is distinguished from the next". He suggests that for the successful positioning of wine tourism destinations (WTD), the projected images should match the wine tourists' preferences (Williams, 2001a). Bruwer et al. (2016) consider that wine

tourism product and experience need a research perspective adapted to their nature and differentiated from the generic DI studies. To make sure that one wine region is differentiated from the other, it is not enough to promote it in a unique way. It is crucial to measure the perception of the imagery that potential wine tourists have about the wine region. In our research we will try to develop a scale adapted to the nature of WTD and measure the image of Georgia as one of the WTDs.

### 1.1.1 Destination image

Crompton (1979, p. 18) defines an image as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination". The image is formed based on different information sources. The sources can be primary resulted by ones' own visitation to the destination, or secondary – gathered from other information sources (Phelps, 1986). The secondary sources are varied and include travel guides, advertising, friends and family, Internet, destination management organizations, different media and so forth (Llodrà-Riera *et al.*, 2015). Each traveller perceives the information from these sources differently and therefore they have subjective expectations (Buhalis, 2000), "actual visitation will depend on the match between tourist preferences and perceived destination product offerings" (Dwyer *et al.*, 2004, p. 3). It means that the stronger DI is, the more attractive it is for the travellers (Gartner, 1994). Therefore, DMOs should be focused on positioning and monitoring the image. Our research significantly contributes to the goal of monitoring WTDI as we design a scale adapted to WTD and tested it on one of the WTDs.

DI definition has often been unclear or even omitted (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991), which lead Echtner and Ritchie (1991) to design a conceptual framework of DI involving its attribute-based and holistic perception, functional and psychological characteristics, and common and unique features. This structure requires the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies for proper

measurement of DI (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). In other words, structured methods should be dealing with functional and psychological attributes, while unstructured methods such as open-ended questions should be exploring the holistic perceptions and unique component of the DI (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). After more than a decade from Echtner and Ritchie's (1991, 1993) framework proposal, the studies still were not using a uniform definition and measurement of DI (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Tasci *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, Tasci et al. (2007) synthesized the components of the DI and proposed a system, which has a cognitive knowledge of destination's common and unique attributes and the affective feelings about them at its core; based on these aspects, a holistic image is formed and assists the individual in travel decision-making. In this system "factors cannot be comprehended in isolation; therefore, they should be studied in an integrated manner. Thus, a DI is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination" (Tasci et al., 2007, p. 200). As a result of an overview of DI constructs, Stepchenkova and Mills (2010) also concede with cognitive, emotional or affective, and conative or behavioural elements of DI, as well as its overall impression.

## 1.1.2   Wine tourism

Today's independent traveller seeks tailor-made experiences, authentic culture and more involvement with locals (Fang, 2020). As it is predicted by Fang (2020), travellers who are increasingly curious will keep pursuing special interest, intriguing adventures. Wine tourism is one of these special interests which introduces the culture of the wine regions to the tourists in a fascinating way.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) declares wine tourism as an essential constituent of gastronomy tourism, which can contribute to the conservation of cultural and natural resources and to the sustainable economic and social development of the destinations (UNWTO, 2016). Tourism fosters

wineries' promotion, sales, brand loyalty and customer relationships and stimulates rural development, destination marketing opportunities and sustainable regional development (Alonso *et al.*, 2015; Carlsen and Charters, 2006; Koch *et al.*, 2013). Wine tourism directly and indirectly facilitates job creation and progress of the local businesses (Carlsen and Charters, 2006).

Based on the added value for the wine industry, the development opportunities for the rural areas and regions, and its nature of being a special interest for curious tourists, wine tourism will very likely keep flourishing in future. Hence, DMOs of the areas with wine tourism resources will need to reinforce their positioning strategies to overcome the augmented competition for target travel markets. However, it is unrealistic to start reinforcing positioning strategies without measuring the results of the past strategies. This is why our research will enable DMOs use a scale that has been developed specifically for measuring WTDI. This scale can measure how do wine tourists perceive a WTD and whether it matches the projected imagery DMOs aimed for.

### 1.1.3 Wine tourism destination image

WTDI papers (Madeira *et al.*, 2019; Scherrer *et al.*, 2009; Sottini *et al.*, 2019) often study wine-producing regions as a type of destination in interest. In other words, from travel perspective, wine region and WTD terms could probably be used interchangeably. One more term which intends to describe a similar concept is winescape. Wine region is a place where wine is produced and with appropriate facilities it can become a travel destination (Dávid and Bujdosó, 2007; Nemethy *et al.*, 2016). WTD could be a wine region or any other place where wine tourism activities take place. Quintal et al. (2015. p. 597) refer to winescape as a "grape wine environment", Johnson and Bruwer (2007, p. 277) define it as a connection of "vineyards; wineries and other physical structures; wines; natural landscape and setting; people; and heritage, town(s) and buildings and their architecture and

artefacts within, and more". Winescape is studied from macro (wine region) and micro (winery) approaches (Quintal *et al.*, 2015). Hall et al. (2000, p. 4) interpret winescape as "the attributes of a grape wine region". Researchers who assess WTDI (Bruwer and Gross, 2017; Scorrano *et al.*, 2018; Williams, 2001b) use all these three concepts. Therefore, WTDI studies beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, ideas, expectations, and knowledge about a WTD, in other words, wine region or winescape, that is projected by destination management bodies and perceived by wine tourists. Thus, for proper research of WTDI it is important to establish a framework suitable for wine tourism product (Bruwer *et al.*, 2016).

### 1.1.4   Georgia as a wine tourism destination

Georgia, located in the Caucasus, is rich with natural and cultural resources. It is a trendy touristic spot frequently positioned as a WTD by Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA)–the main tourism management body in the country. Georgia is counted as a cradle of wine based on the archaeological discoveries and results of research conducted by McGovern et al. (2017). As Georgia's wine export and marketing efforts increase (National Wine Agency of Georgia, 2019), awareness of the travellers about Georgian wine heritage is expanding too.

Georgia, a country with a rich winemaking heritage, holds significant potential for wine tourism. Its unique winemaking traditions, diverse grape varieties (National Wine Agency of Georgia, n.d.), and stunning landscapes create a captivating experience for wine enthusiasts. Georgia's potential in terms of wine tourism is related to its distinct wine culture, the allure of its wine regions, and other characteristics.

Being the fourth largest export commodity (Geostat, 2020), wine occupies an important part of Georgian economy. The uniqueness of Georgian wines roots in

the winemaking technology which has been practiced for at least 8000 years (Anderson, 2013; Azmaiparashvili, 2018; McGovern *et al.*, 2017). The traditional winemaking technology is utilized to produce several styles of wines, however, two of them are the most common: wines of the West and the East of the country. In the East, the wines tend to be stronger while the West offers lighter-bodied wines. Wine is produced almost everywhere in Georgia except in high mountains.

The wine regions of Georgia collectively represent the diversity and heritage of Georgian winemaking. From the traditional qvevri wines to modern interpretations, Georgia's wine regions offer a captivating journey for wine enthusiasts, blending history, culture, and exceptional wine experiences. According to National Wine Agency of Georgia (no date c), in Georgia there are five wine regions with unique characteristics. The wine regions of Georgia can be observed on Georgian wine map in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Georgian wine map.
Source: Malkhaz Kharbedia / Georgian wine guide (2014)

Wine, a niche attraction of Georgia is actively used in the positioning of the country by GNTA targeting tourists from the world's highest-spending travel markets (GNTA, 2015a). GNTA (2015), as well as World Bank (2019), consider wine traditions and culture as an important attractor of the travel markets which are eager to experience something authentic and distinctive. Having potential for differentiation among the WTDs of the world greatly pushes forward the competitiveness of Georgia (Carmichael and Senese, 2012; Dimoska and Trimcev, 2012).

DI research is crucial for reaching the goals that GNTA has. If the country has an attractive image, it will receive more visitors from its target markets; if Georgia's awareness will increase in higher-spending markets, they will start visitations and the expenditures received from the international visitors will grow; if the tourists will be satisfied, they will either come back or spread a positive word of mouth and so forth; as a result, with the above-mentioned objectives country's tourism development and higher standard of living for the residents can be reached. This is how DI research can contribute to the more profound goals.

## 1.2 Objectives

The goal of this research is to develop WTDI scale using an example of Georgia. Also, we would like to study image of Georgia with quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It would have been a simpler task if we had all the necessary tools for doing that. But based on literature review, we found out that the measurement techniques of WTDI have some gaps that require us to fill in before we measure any WTDI. In the literature that we reviewed we did not find a scale which could be used to measure image of a WTD. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

O1: Developing WTDI scale that could be used to measure image of different WTDs.
O2: Measure WTDI of Georgia using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Our research questions are the following:

Research question 1: What are the attributes in WTDI scale that should be used for measuring WTDI? This question should be answered by testing the validity and reliability of our scale/survey.

Hypothesis 1: Any WTD's image can be measured with a scale that we developed.

Research question 2: What are the most important image characteristics of Georgia as a WTD?

Hypothesis 2: Wine is a core of holistic image of Georgia.

Hypothesis 3: Hospitality of Georgian people is a core of holistic and psychological component of Georgia's image.

Hypothesis 4: Georgian wine regions are core of holistic and unique component of Georgia's image.


As we found during the literature review, the most reliable way of studying destination's image is doing it by a combined methodology. It means using qualitative and quantitative techniques. These two methods supplement each other. Qualitative or holistic method is used to define holistic and unique aspects of the image, while quantitative is measuring attribute-based and common image features as well as functional and psychological dimensions (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). In our research we combine these methods to capture all the components of WTDI as recommended by Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993), Ritchie and Crouch (2003) and Jenkins (1999). This methodology is still widely used by DI researchers (Scorrano *et al.*, 2019; Stepchenkova and Shichkova, 2017). Jenkins (1999) recommends using a two-phase methodology. It would start with qualitative research of a relevant market to determine the attributes that can be

used on the second stage of the quantitative data collection. The initial research is important as it helps in designing a reliable scale suitable for the target audience.

As this kind of research requires large funds and time, often WTDI research simply incorporates literature review as a tool to develop attributes for the quantitative research. Also often studies either use qualitative or quantitative methods which means that in such case the image is only partially explored. In WTDI studies attributes are mainly selected based on the literature review. As the image of a WTD can be properly researched only with the combined methodology, developing a scale incorporating all the winescape attributes is crucial.

Methodology, used in our research to answer the first research question and hypothesis, has two phases. On the first stage we will try to develop attribute scale with the inputs from the literature review and the wine tourists' perceptions of different WTDs. At this point we design a scale which covers common and attribute-based image components along psychological and functional dimensions (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993).

At the second step, we use this scale to collect the quantitative data about WTDI of Georgia. This way we can test the validity and reliability of our scale.

To answer the second research question, we used the quantitative data collected about WTDI of Georgia. To complement the quantitative methodology, we will also use the open-ended questions to detect holistic and unique WTDI along functional and psychological dimensions (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). This process enables researching all the elements of WTDI, but as well lets us design the scale which can be used in future for measuring WTDI of any wine region. Below we describe the process step by step.

**3.1 Developing WTDI scale**

Each step of WTDI scale development is reviewed separately below. The scale was developed by following the similar methodology as used by Echtner and Ritchie (1993):

1. Literature review to identify attributes.
2. Qualitative data collection to gather more attributes.
3. Content analysis to determine the list of the attributes collected.
4. Merge the attributes into a new scale.
5. Quantitative data collection.
6. Qualitative data collection to complement the quantitative techniques for measuring the image of Georgian WTD.
7. Data analysis resulting in final scale and perceived image of Georgia as a WTD.

**3.2 Literature review to identify attributes**

In the beginning literature about WTDI was reviewed and the attributes were collected. The authors of these articles mainly used literature review and free elicitation when collecting the attributes. The attributes are both functional and psychological.

**3.3 Qualitative data collection to gather more attributes**

Next step in scale designing was to collect the data with qualitative research. The research instrument was focus group interviews with 47 respondents. The study subject at this stage was decided to be wine tourists who had travelled to wine regions and / or participated in wine tourism activities at least once in the past three years. The respondents were found online through social media, and interviews were held in zoom. In each focus group there were on average 3-4

participants. We recorded the interviews to use the script later during data analysis.

In this section wine tourists were asked to provide their images of five wine regions as travel destinations. The wine regions were chosen both from New and Old Worlds to ensure that the final scale would be relevant to different kind of WTDs globally. We consulted with 3 different wine tourism professionals to decide which 10 wine regions to include in our research. Main goal was to include versatile regions, with different sizes, on different continents, with different wine culture, wine style and history. The wine regions that we chose are Mendoza (in Argentina), Napa Valley (in USA), Barossa Valley (in Australia), Marlborough (in New Zealand), Kakheti (in Georgia), Colchagua Valley (in Chile), Tokaj (Hungary), Peloponnese (in Greece), Chianti (in Italy), Stellenbosch (in South Africa). A different group of five regions from the ten were used in the interviews.

We selected different wine regions to make sure that the new scale would be appropriate for measuring an image of various WTDs. We also made sure that the respondents never visited the region that they were evaluating. Finally, we received 150 responses for each destination.

## 3.4 Content analysis to determine the list of the attributes collected

We had many analysis options for the data received from the focus group interviews. Mainly, we had to choose whether to do it manually or with software. We decided to code the words and phrases collected during the interviews manually. Firstly, we transcribed the interviews in Excel. After that, two different experts coded and labelled the words and phrases. Each word and phrase were assigned to one of the labels. As a result, we got 41 attributes/labels.

### 3.5 Merge the attributes into a new scale

The final step was to merge the list of attributes generated by literature review with the ones derived from the wine tourists' replies and content analysis. We got 70 attributes after merging. Some of the labels were overlapping, so we did not include the duplicate attributes. We also got rid of the attributes that resembled the same concepts.

### 3.6 Quantitative data collection

Afterwards we used quantitative method with survey as an instrument. This questionnaire had two goals, to validate the scale and to study Georgia's WTDI. The online survey had close-ended questions. The survey was designed in Google Forms. It was posted in different social media (Facebook) groups to collect responses. On Facebook there are various travel related groups where people exchange experiences, advice, and information. We posted our survey in such groups to reach travellers. The nationalities of the sample were varied but it excluded Georgians. The questions of the survey were grouped in different sections. The questionnaire was tested on 20 students to eliminate any bias. We slightly corrected the survey after our test. More precisely, we received feedback from the respondents that they were missing an option of "no opinion" when we used 7-point Likert scale in third section. So, we decided to add "no opinion" as an option. We also decided to add an open-ended answer option to the question related to gender as not all the respondents might identify themselves with one of the genders that common questionnaires include. We collected 298 responses to our questionnaire.

The questions of the interview were grouped into different sections. First section asked whether respondents ever visited Georgia or not.

Second section learned a demographic information such as nationality, age, gender, education, marital status, and occupation.

Third section asked respondents about characteristics of Georgia as a WTD. We used 7-point Likert answer formats with an additional response being 'no opinion'. We decided to use 7-point Likert answer format as it is the most commonly used format in DI studies (Dolnicar and Grün, 2013). The example of our scale's answer format is demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Example of the answer format in online survey.
Source: Author's elaboration

| I think that as a wine tourism destination, Georgia has | Interesting history/customs/culture |
|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | |
| Disagree | |
| Somewhat disagree | |
| Neither agree nor disagree | |
| Somewhat agree | |
| Agree | |
| Strongly agree | |
| No opinion | |

## 3.7 Qualitative data collection to complement the quantitative techniques for measuring the image of Georgian WTD – free text approach

To find the image of Georgia through qualitative research, an online survey with open and close-ended questions was used. The study was conducted in spring of 2020 between March 24th and May 6th. The survey was designed in Google Forms and tested with five respondents to find out any bias or misunderstandings. Later, the final version was shared on different Facebook groups to collect the answers from the travellers. The profile of those groups was mainly travel related, groups of expatriates and some university student groups. The nationalities of the sample were varied but it excluded Georgians. We collected 342 responses to the questionnaire, from which 265 (77%) were eligible for data analysis. Qualitative

data was collected with the help of the questions that were used by Echtner and Ritchie (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993):

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a travel destination?

2. Please describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX?

3. Write distinctive or unique attractions what comes in your mind when thinking of XXX as a travel destination.

In this way we gathered the perceptions of wine tourists about Georgia as a WTD. The results show that this methodology can explore the dimensions of DI that the attribute-based methods cannot discover alone. Mainly it is very useful when studying the unique component of the image.

## 3.8 Data analysis resulting in final scale and perceived image of Georgia as a WTD

### 3.8.1 Quantitative data analysis

We used SPSS to analyse the data that we collected using the questionnaire. In the beginning of the process, we checked the convenience of factor analysis (FA). We wanted to examine how suitable our data was for FA, so we tested our data with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's sphericity test.

To analyse the data and reduce dimensionality, we used FA. Promax with Kaiser Normalization has been used here to standardize the data before FA. This rotation technique gave us the cleanest results. Our minimum factor loading was set at 0.3.

We measured the internal consistency reliability of a collection of items or variables by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Examining the Cronbach's Alpha

values for each component is crucial, in addition to looking at the overall Cronbach's Alpha value.

### 3.8.2 Qualitative data analysis

We adopted the methodology for data analysis from the research Ritchie and Crouch (2003a). The words and short phrases were collected. We had three different groups of words and phrases as a result of collecting answers on three different questions. We analysed them separately and grouped the similar words and short phrases together. Each group was labelled with the words best describing its components. Then we used their shares calculated by frequency to create word pools and present the results this way. As a result of this methodology, we studied the image of Georgia in full spectrum.

# III.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Attributes identified by literature review

The attributes were identified from the literature about WTDI. The attributes that were collected are displayed in Table 2. These attributes are functional and psychological. For example, "purchasing good wine" or "accommodation" is functional or tangible, while "exciting" and tranquil" are more psychological or intangible.

Table 2. List of the attributes used in WTDI studies.
Source: Author's elaboration

| # | Attributes | # | Attributes | # | Attributes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Variety of nature | 34 | Appealing interior design of the buildings | 67 | Good availability of wineries |
| 2 | Beautiful scenery and landscape | 35 | Proximity of the region to a main city | 68 | Winery staff knowledgeable about wine |
| 3 | Good settings of the wineries | 36 | Reputation | 69 | Wineries are visitor friendly |
| 4 | Great vineyard landscapes | 37 | Local transportation | 70 | Purchasing good wine |
| 5 | History and culture | 38 | Peaceful | 71 | Opportunity to taste lots of wine |
| 6 | Customs | 39 | Slightly crowded. | 72 | Wines from this region are of high quality |
| 7 | Cultural activities | 40 | Relaxing | 73 | Positive references to wine quality, value, price, etc |
| 8 | Towns/villages | 41 | Quality of life | 74 | There is sufficient signage to the winery |
| 9 | Rich wine culture | 42 | Safety | 75 | The signage is large enough to be seen |
| 10 | Availability of tourist information | 43 | Cleanliness | 76 | The signage makes it easy to find your way |
| 11 | Shopping | 44 | Climate | 77 | The signage is easy to be understood |
| 12 | Lack of urbanization | 45 | Unpolluted environment | 78 | The layout makes it easy to get to the winery |
| 13 | Good value for money | 46 | The odours /scents are pleasant | 79 | Signage to get to and move through the region |
| 14 | Gastronomy | 47 | Friendly people | 80 | Employees give prompt service |
| 15 | Other local products/cottage industries | 48 | Prices | 81 | Employees are always willing to help |
| 16 | Nightlife | 49 | Exciting | 82 | Employees are neat in appearance |
| 17 | Entertainment | 50 | Pleasant | 83 | Employees have knowledge to answer queries |
| 18 | Quality of the restaurants/pubs | 51 | Interest arousing | 84 | Employees are consistently courteous |
| 19 | Leisure and recreation | 52 | Fun | 85 | Employees give individual attention to me |
| 20 | Infrastructures | 53 | Tranquil | 86 | Service staff and local residents / People and hospitality great |

| 21 | Accommodation | 54 | A sense of escapism | 87 | Accessibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Appealing architecture of the buildings | 55 | A sense of discovery | 88 | Personal safety |
| 23 | Tourist sites/activities | 56 | Cities | 89 | Ease of communication |
| 24 | National parks/wilderness activities | 57 | Accommodation/restaurants | 90 | Customs/culture |
| 25 | Historic sites/museums | 58 | Architecture/buildings | 91 | Different cuisine/food and drink |
| 26 | Beaches | 59 | Costs/price levels | 92 | Hospitality/friendliness/ receptiveness |
| 27 | Fairs, exhibits, festivals | 60 | Climate | 93 | Restful/relaxing |
| 28 | Scenery/natural attractions | 61 | Crowdedness | 94 | Atmosphere (familiar versus exotic) |
| 29 | Nightlife and entertainment | 62 | Cleanliness | 95 | Opportunity for adventure |
| 30 | Shopping facilities | 63 | Degree of urbanization | 96 | Opportunity for increase knowledge |
| 31 | Facilities for information and tours | 64 | Economic development/affluence | 97 | Family or adult oriented |
| 32 | Sports facilities/activities | 65 | Extent of commercialization | 98 | Quality of service |
| 33 | Local infrastructure/transportation | 66 | Political stability | 99 | Fame/reputation |

## 4.2 Attributes identified through qualitative methodology

We used focus group interviews to collect data and find additional attributes. We had 47 respondents. The study subject was wine tourists who had travelled to wine regions and / or took part in wine tourism activities at least once in the past three years. We found respondents online on social media, and interviews were held in zoom. We asked three questions to the respondents. Overall, 567 words and short phrases were collected after we scripted the interviews manually. The nationalities of the sample were varied (from all the continents).

The questions that were asked to the respondents to gather the characteristics of the regions were adapted from Echtner and Ritchie (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993):

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a travel destination?

2. Please describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX?

3. Write distinctive or unique attractions what comes in your mind when thinking of XXX as a travel destination.

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By asking these questions, we were able to collect data about functional and psychological holistic elements of DI perceived by wine tourists. This information helped us to collect a list of attributes for WTDI scale that we aim to develop. This step was necessary as using only literature review does not ensure a full list of the attributes.

We asked wine tourists to provide their perceptions of five wine regions as travel destinations. The wine regions were chosen both from New and Old Worlds to ensure that the final scale would be relevant to different kinds of WTDs globally. We consulted with 3 different wine tourism professionals to pick 10 wine regions to be included in our research. A different group of five regions from the ten were used in the interviews.

We analysed the data received from the focus group interviews manually. Meaning that we coded the words and phrases collected during the interviews manually. In the beginning, we transcribed the interviews in Excel. Later, two different experts coded and labelled the words and phrases to make sure that the analysis was less biased due to being done by a single researcher. Each word and phrase were assigned to one of the labels. As a result, we received 41 attributes/labels.

## 4.3 Results of merging the attributes derived from literature review and from qualitative research

Through focus group interviews we collected 567 words and short phrases. We collected data about functional and psychological elements of DI as perceived by wine tourists. We analysed this information manually resulting in 41 attributes. As some of these attributes were overlapping with the ones originating from the literature review, we filtered them and got rid of the duplicate labels. We also got rid of the items from the initial scale which resembled the same concepts. We created a list of 70 attributes after merging. It is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. List of the attributes created by merging.
Source: Author's elaboration

| # | Attributes | # | Attributes | # | Attributes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Nice Scenery/natural attractions | 25 | Good opportunity for increase knowledge | 49 | Fun environment |
| 2 | Good settings of the wineries | 26 | Interesting fairs, exhibits, festivals | 50 | A sense of escapism |
| 3 | Great vineyard landscapes | 27 | Interesting sports facilities/activities | 51 | A sense of discovery |
| 4 | Nice beaches | 28 | Interesting tourist sites/activities | 52 | A sense of nostalgy |
| 5 | Interesting history/customs/culture | 29 | Interesting national parks/ wilderness/ outdoor activities | 53 | A sense of freedom |
| 6 | Interesting cultural activities | 30 | Interesting historic sites/museums | 54 | A sense of happiness |
| 7 | Interesting cities/Towns/villages | 31 | Variety of offers / discounts / sales | 55 | A sense of calmness/peaceful |
| 8 | Rich wine culture | 32 | Good level of safety | 56 | Restful/relaxing environment |
| 9 | Good availability of tourist information | 33 | Good level of cleanliness | 57 | Good quality of life |
| 10 | Good shopping facilities | 34 | Nice climate | 58 | Familiar/Friendly atmosphere |
| 11 | Good value for money | 35 | Unpolluted environment | 59 | Good availability of wineries |
| 12 | Rich gastronomy | 36 | Pleasant odours/scents | 60 | Wineries that are visitor friendly |
| 13 | Interesting local products/cottage industries | 37 | Good Price levels | 61 | Availability of purchasing good wine |
| 14 | Attractive nightlife and entertainment | 38 | Good level of economic development/affluence | 62 | Opportunity to taste lots of wine |
| 15 | Good quality of accommodation/restaurants | 39 | Acceptable extent of commercialization | 63 | High quality wines |
| 16 | Suitable atmosphere/facilities for leisure and recreation | 40 | It's easy to communicate with locals | 64 | Interesting wineries |
| 17 | Comfortable local infrastructure/transportation | 41 | Politically stable | 65 | Interesting wine tasting experiences |
| 18 | Nice architecture/buildings | 42 | Easily accessible | 66 | Interesting wine Styles |
| 19 | An acceptable proximity of the region to a main city | 43 | Hospitable/friendly/receptive | 67 | Great wine tourism destination |
| 20 | Good fame/reputation | 44 | Crowded | 68 | Winery staff is knowledgeable about wine |
| 21 | Family oriented environment | 45 | Urbanized | 69 | Wine quality is good |
| 22 | Adult oriented environment | 46 | Exciting environment | 70 | Wines are good value for money |
| 23 | Good quality of service | 47 | Pleasant environment | | |
| 24 | Good opportunity for adventure | 48 | Interest arousing environment | | |

## 4.4 Results of the quantitative data analysis

### 4.4.1 Study sample

We collected 298 responses to our questionnaire. In Table 4 we demonstrate the demographic data of our sample.

Table 4. Demographic data of the survey respondents.
Source: Author's elaboration

| Visitors and non-visitors | Share in total responses |
|---|---|
| No | 85% |
| Yes | 15% |
| **Age** | **Share in total responses** |
| 18-24 years | 41% |
| 25-34 years | 38% |
| 35-44 years | 13% |
| 45-54 years | 4% |
| 55-64 years | 3% |
| Age 65 or older | 1% |
| **Gender** | **Share in total responses** |
| Agender | 0.3% |
| Female | 60% |
| I don't wish to answer | 2% |
| Male | 38% |
| **Highest degree or level of education completed** | **Share in total responses** |
| Bachelor's degree | 39% |
| High school graduate | 13% |
| I don't wish to answer | 1% |
| Less than high school | 3% |
| Master's degree | 30% |
| PhD | 4% |
| Some college, no degree | 10% |
| **Occupation** | **Share in total responses** |
| Employee | 39% |
| I don't wish to answer | 1% |
| Intern | 1% |
| Retired | 0.7% |
| Self-employed | 7% |
| Student | 51% |
| Unemployed | 1% |
| **Marital status** | **Share in total responses** |
| Divorced | 1% |
| I don't wish to answer | 1% |
| In a relationship | 35% |
| Married | 17% |
| Registered partnership | 0.3% |
| Separated | 0.7% |
| Single | 43% |
| Widowed | 1% |
| **Nationalities** | **Share in total responses** |
| Hungarian | 18% |
| British | 17% |
| American | 12% |
| German | 4% |
| Indian | 4% |
| Dutch | 3% |

| Italian | 3% |
| Other | 38% |

### 4.4.2  Descriptive analysis and factor analysis

We used SPSS to analyse the data that we collected using the questionnaire. FA helps us to determine the most significant characteristics of the destination in general. It also helps us to find the image components of Georgia. To analyse the data and reduce dimensionality, we used FA. Promax with Kaiser Normalization has been used here to standardize the data before FA. This rotation technique gave us the cleanest results. We used reliability analysis in a form of Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of our scale. However, initially, before FA and reliability analysis, we performed descriptive analysis.

As we already mentioned in the methodology section the respondents were asked about characteristics of Georgia as a WTD. We used 7-point Likert formats with an additional response being 'no opinion'. We used 7-point Likert answer format as it is the most commonly used format in DI studies (Dolnicar and Grün, 2013).

The mean scores for the variables vary from 2.91 to 4.80, showing that respondents' perceptions of the destination under review were usually favourable. The range of responses and some variation in respondents' perceptions is indicated by the standard deviations for the variables, which run from 2.084 to 2.755.

In the beginning of the process, we checked the convenience of FA. We wanted to examine how suitable our data was for FA. We found KMO test for sampling adequacy valued 0.967. As this value is close to 1, it means our data is convenient for FA.

We also did Bartlett's sphericity test to determine whether there was enough strong correlation in our data to use FA and principal components analysis (PCA) to reduce dimensionality. Bartlett's Sphericity test determines whether the correlation matrix of the variables is an identity matrix. The correlation matrix is

not an identity matrix in our analysis, as shown by the Bartlett's Test result, which also reveals an ap-proximate chi-square value of 24721.075 with 2415 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the data can be used for FA. The results of KMO and Bartlett's test are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett's Test.
Source: Author's elaboration

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | | 0.967 |
|---|---|---|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 24721.075 |
| | df | 2415 |
| | Sig. | 0.000 |

The communalities for each variable indicate how much of each variable's variance can be attributed to the factors that the principal component analysis extracted. It is used to assess the total value of the analysis's variables. The analysis in Hypothesis 1 seeks to pinpoint the variables that are useful for measuring the WTDI. The communalities show that all variables have a high degree of communality with the extracted factors, suggesting that they can be used to explain the underlying factors defining WTD's image. Low communality variables might not be included in further analysis because the factors extrapolated from the data do not adequately describe them. We did not eliminate any variables as communalities were all above 0.491.

Communities calculate the percentage of each variable's variance that can be accounted for by all the other factors in the study. In this instance, the communalities were determined after the data underwent principal component analysis (FA).

Given that each variable has a perfect correlation with itself, it is not surprising that the original communalities are all 1.0. The values that were kept after the FA are represented by the extraction communalities, and they vary from 0.491 to

0.835. These numbers represent the proportion of variance that each variable shares with the other variables under consideration in the study. The degree to which a variable is related to other variables depends on how strong the communalities are.

The survey's variables may be assessing related constructs because of the survey's overall high extraction communalities. This suggests that many of the variables are measuring the same things, which supports the use of FA to decrease the dimensionality of the data.

The eigenvalue is a measure of the amount of variance explained by each factor. Generally, factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are considered significant and are retained for further analysis.

The overall variance explained by each component derived using principal component analysis is shown in the Table 6. The extraction sums of squared loadings column display the percentage of variation explained by each component following extraction, whereas the initial eigenvalues column displays the eigenvalues prior to extraction. The initial and extracted eigenvalues are each given the cumulative proportion of variance explained.

There are 70 components in total that have starting eigenvalues. However, only the first six components are retained for analysis because they have eigenvalues higher than 1. Together, these six elements account for 71.66% of the variance.

By highlighting the most crucial elements that contribute to defining the most important characteristics of the WTD, this table assists in answering question 1. These elements are probably connected to the six components that account for the greatest amount of variation. To solve our first hypothesis, we can say that our scale is valid to be used in measuring WTDI in the future. Cronbach's Alpha is a test that we took below, which confirms that the scale is valid and reliable.

Table 6. Total variance explained.
Source: Author's elaboration

| | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Variance Explained** | | | | | | | |
| Component | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total |
| 1 | 39.641 | 56.630 | 56.630 | 39.641 | 56.630 | 56.630 | 30.344 |
| 2 | 3.274 | 4.677 | 61.306 | 3.274 | 4.677 | 61.306 | 30.826 |
| 3 | 2.702 | 3.860 | 65.166 | 2.702 | 3.860 | 65.166 | 27.755 |
| 4 | 1.694 | 2.421 | 67.587 | 1.694 | 2.421 | 67.587 | 25.482 |
| 5 | 1.497 | 2.138 | 69.724 | 1.497 | 2.138 | 69.724 | 23.917 |
| 6 | 1.357 | 1.939 | 71.663 | 1.357 | 1.939 | 71.663 | 23.795 |
| 7 | 1.129 | 1.613 | 73.277 | | | | |
| 8 | 0.985 | 1.407 | 74.683 | | | | |
| 9 | 0.928 | 1.326 | 76.009 | | | | |
| 10 | 0.857 | 1.224 | 77.234 | | | | |
| 11 | 0.764 | 1.091 | 78.325 | | | | |
| 12 | 0.721 | 1.030 | 79.354 | | | | |
| 13 | 0.712 | 1.017 | 80.371 | | | | |
| 14 | 0.670 | 0.957 | 81.328 | | | | |
| 15 | 0.597 | 0.854 | 82.181 | | | | |
| 16 | 0.594 | 0.848 | 83.030 | | | | |
| 17 | 0.564 | 0.805 | 83.835 | | | | |
| 18 | 0.539 | 0.771 | 84.605 | | | | |
| 19 | 0.517 | 0.739 | 85.345 | | | | |
| 20 | 0.500 | 0.714 | 86.059 | | | | |
| 21 | 0.475 | 0.679 | 86.738 | | | | |
| 22 | 0.446 | 0.637 | 87.375 | | | | |
| 23 | 0.428 | 0.611 | 87.986 | | | | |
| 24 | 0.413 | 0.590 | 88.576 | | | | |
| 25 | 0.410 | 0.586 | 89.162 | | | | |
| 26 | 0.383 | 0.547 | 89.709 | | | | |
| 27 | 0.372 | 0.531 | 90.240 | | | | |
| 28 | 0.340 | 0.486 | 90.726 | | | | |
| 29 | 0.328 | 0.469 | 91.195 | | | | |
| 30 | 0.320 | 0.457 | 91.652 | | | | |
| 31 | 0.312 | 0.446 | 92.098 | | | | |
| 32 | 0.297 | 0.424 | 92.522 | | | | |
| 33 | 0.288 | 0.412 | 92.934 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | 0.264 | 0.377 | 93.311 | | | | |
| 35 | 0.253 | 0.362 | 93.673 | | | | |
| 36 | 0.249 | 0.356 | 94.028 | | | | |
| 37 | 0.235 | 0.335 | 94.363 | | | | |
| 38 | 0.229 | 0.327 | 94.690 | | | | |
| 39 | 0.218 | 0.311 | 95.001 | | | | |
| 40 | 0.214 | 0.305 | 95.306 | | | | |
| 41 | 0.201 | 0.288 | 95.594 | | | | |
| 42 | 0.199 | 0.284 | 95.877 | | | | |
| 43 | 0.188 | 0.268 | 96.145 | | | | |
| 44 | 0.184 | 0.262 | 96.408 | | | | |
| 45 | 0.167 | 0.238 | 96.646 | | | | |
| 46 | 0.164 | 0.234 | 96.880 | | | | |
| 47 | 0.160 | 0.229 | 97.109 | | | | |
| 48 | 0.144 | 0.206 | 97.315 | | | | |
| 49 | 0.136 | 0.194 | 97.509 | | | | |
| 50 | 0.134 | 0.191 | 97.701 | | | | |
| 51 | 0.125 | 0.178 | 97.879 | | | | |
| 52 | 0.123 | 0.176 | 98.055 | | | | |
| 53 | 0.122 | 0.174 | 98.228 | | | | |
| 54 | 0.108 | 0.154 | 98.382 | | | | |
| 55 | 0.105 | 0.150 | 98.532 | | | | |
| 56 | 0.098 | 0.140 | 98.672 | | | | |
| 57 | 0.095 | 0.136 | 98.808 | | | | |
| 58 | 0.089 | 0.127 | 98.935 | | | | |
| 59 | 0.082 | 0.117 | 99.052 | | | | |
| 60 | 0.081 | 0.116 | 99.168 | | | | |
| 61 | 0.076 | 0.109 | 99.277 | | | | |
| 62 | 0.074 | 0.105 | 99.382 | | | | |
| 63 | 0.068 | 0.097 | 99.480 | | | | |
| 64 | 0.064 | 0.092 | 99.571 | | | | |
| 65 | 0.059 | 0.084 | 99.655 | | | | |
| 66 | 0.057 | 0.082 | 99.737 | | | | |
| 67 | 0.051 | 0.073 | 99.809 | | | | |
| 68 | 0.050 | 0.071 | 99.880 | | | | |
| 69 | 0.048 | 0.068 | 99.949 | | | | |
| 70 | 0.036 | 0.051 | 100.000 | | | | |

The factor loadings for each variable on the six components are displayed in the pattern matrix in Table 7 (Labelled as 1 through 6). We chose the minimum factor

loading of 0.3. The correlation between the variable and the underlying factor is greater the higher the factor loading.

Table 7. Pattern matrix.
Source: Author's elaboration

| | Pattern Matrix | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Component | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Opportunity to taste lots of wines | 0.870 | | | | | |
| Interesting wine tasting experiences | 0.848 | | | | | |
| Interesting wineries | 0.847 | | | | | |
| Availability of purchasing good wine | 0.825 | | | | | |
| Good availability of wineries | 0.813 | | | | | |
| Interesting wine Styles | 0.763 | | | | | |
| High quality wines | 0.749 | | | | | |
| Wineries that are visitor friendly | 0.743 | | | | | |
| Winery staff is knowledgeable about wine | 0.720 | | | | | |
| Wine quality is good | 0.704 | | | | | |
| Wines are good value for money | 0.673 | | | | | |
| Great wine tourism destination | 0.652 | | | | | |
| Exciting environment | | 0.869 | | | | |
| Interest arousing environment | | 0.851 | | | | |
| Fun environment | | 0.809 | | | | |
| A sense of happiness | | 0.791 | | | | |
| A sense of calmness/ peace | | 0.775 | | | | |
| A sense of escapism | | 0.769 | | | | |
| Pleasant environment | | 0.734 | | | | |
| A sense of discovery | | 0.711 | | | 0.342 | |
| Restful/ relaxing environment | | 0.684 | | | | |
| A sense of freedom | | 0.670 | | | | |
| A sense of nostalgy | | 0.496 | | | | |
| Hospitable/ friendly/ receptive | 0.376 | 0.494 | | | | |
| Good quality of life | | 0.411 | | 0.384 | | |
| Easily accessible | | 0.398 | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nice architecture/ buildings | | 0.393 | | | | 0.371 |
| Familiar/ Friendly atmosphere | 0.316 | 0.379 | | | | |
| Unpolluted environment | | | 0.824 | | | |
| Good level of cleanliness | | | 0.750 | | | |
| Good level of safety | | | 0.749 | | | |
| Good level of economic development/ affluence | | | 0.718 | | | |
| Pleasant odours / scents | | | 0.718 | | | |
| Acceptable extent of commercialization | | | 0.705 | | | |
| Good Price levels | | | 0.639 | | | |
| Variety of offers / discounts / sales | | | 0.578 | | | |
| Nice climate | | 0.361 | 0.543 | | | |
| Interesting sports facilities/ activities | | | | 0.735 | | |
| Good shopping facilities | | | | 0.707 | | |
| Good availability of tourist information | | | | 0.654 | | |
| Politically stable | | | | 0.640 | | |
| Interesting fairs, exhibits, festivals | | | | 0.617 | | |
| Good quality of service | | | | 0.572 | | |
| Urbanized | | | | 0.539 | | |
| Crowded | | | | 0.527 | | |
| Family oriented environment | | | | 0.510 | | |
| Nice beaches | -0.365 | | | 0.468 | 0.324 | |
| It's easy to communicate with locals | 0.305 | | | 0.389 | | |
| Adult oriented environment | | | | 0.342 | | |
| Interesting history/ customs/ culture | | 0.322 | | | 0.703 | |
| Nice Scenery/ natural attractions | | | | | 0.681 | |
| Great vineyard landscapes | 0.478 | | | | 0.640 | |
| Interesting cities/ Towns/ villages | | 0.452 | | | 0.639 | |
| Rich wine culture | 0.553 | | | | 0.636 | |
| Interesting cultural activities | | 0.316 | | | 0.601 | |
| Interesting national parks/ wilderness/ outdoor activities | | | | 0.316 | 0.568 | |
| Good settings of the wineries | 0.496 | | | | 0.552 | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interesting historic sites/ museums | | | | | 0.480 | |
| Good opportunity for adventure | | 0.362 | | | 0.460 | |
| Interesting tourist sites/ activities | | | | | 0.423 | |
| Good opportunity for increasing my knowledge | | | | | 0.372 | |
| Good quality of accommodation/ restaurants | | | | | | 0.727 |
| Comfortable local infrastructure/ transportation | | | | 0.335 | | 0.695 |
| Attractive nightlife and entertainment | | | | 0.302 | | 0.634 |
| Suitable atmosphere/ facilities for leisure and recreation | | | | | | 0.534 |
| An acceptable proximity of the wine regions to a main city | 0.322 | | | | | 0.517 |
| Interesting local products/ cottage industries | | | | | | 0.499 |
| Rich gastronomy | | | | | | 0.477 |
| Good fame/ reputation | | | | | | 0.386 |
| Good value for money | | | | | | 0.324 |

In our analysis 6 components had eigenvalues greater than 1 and they were retained. Together, these six elements account for 71.66% of the variance, which indicates that they represent the most important variables in the dataset. Our minimum factor loading was set at 0.3.

The relationship between each item and the scale's overall number is explained in the Item-Total Statistics table displayed in Table 8. It displays the item-total correlation that has been adjusted for each item's contribution, which is the correlation between each item and the overall number. The item is highly related to the overall score and is a solid indicator of the construct being measured if the corrected item-total correlation is higher.

The squared multiple correlation, which represents the percentage of variation in the item explained by the total score, is also shown in the table, along with the

scale mean and variance if each item were deleted. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is also displayed in the Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted section for each item on the scale. A high value in this column means the item makes a good contribution to the scale's dependability.

All the items in this specific table have high corrected item-total correlations, demonstrating their close ties to the overall scale. The scale appears to have a high degree of internal consistency reliability as indicated by the high Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 8. Retained attributes that are part of 6 factors as a result of FA.
Source: Author's elaboration

| Item-Total Statistics | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Squared Multiple Correlation | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
| (1) Winery staff is knowledgeable about wine | 45.29 | 675.150 | 0.820 | 0.738 | 0.974 |
| (1) Wine quality is good | 44.84 | 676.957 | 0.837 | 0.802 | 0.974 |
| (1) Wines are good value for money | 44.99 | 670.933 | 0.860 | 0.786 | 0.973 |
| (1) Great wine tourism destination | 44.78 | 679.722 | 0.823 | 0.719 | 0.974 |
| (1) Good availability of wineries | 45.17 | 664.223 | 0.879 | 0.807 | 0.973 |
| (1) Wineries that are visitor friendly | 45.26 | 665.120 | 0.864 | 0.802 | 0.973 |
| (1) Availability of purchasing good wine | 45.05 | 664.240 | 0.869 | 0.800 | 0.973 |
| (1) Opportunity to taste lots of wine | 44.95 | 659.990 | 0.900 | 0.850 | 0.972 |
| (1) High quality wines | 44.98 | 665.323 | 0.882 | 0.823 | 0.973 |
| (1) Interesting wineries | 44.92 | 661.553 | 0.899 | 0.867 | 0.972 |
| (1) Interesting wine tasting experiences | 45.19 | 661.670 | 0.884 | 0.837 | 0.973 |
| (1) Interesting wine Styles | 45.21 | 666.239 | 0.852 | 0.798 | 0.973 |
| (2) Nice architecture/ buildings | 62.50 | 921.254 | 0.741 | 0.563 | 0.970 |
| (2) Easily accessible | 63.14 | 938.290 | 0.656 | 0.561 | 0.971 |
| (2) Hospitable/ friendly/ receptive | 62.57 | 916.832 | 0.760 | 0.686 | 0.969 |
| (2) Exciting environment | 62.53 | 903.691 | 0.855 | 0.812 | 0.968 |
| (2) Pleasant environment | 62.36 | 904.681 | 0.859 | 0.822 | 0.968 |
| (2) Interest arousing environment | 62.53 | 900.607 | 0.863 | 0.834 | 0.968 |
| (2) Fun environment | 62.99 | 903.421 | 0.847 | 0.794 | 0.968 |
| (2) A sense of escapism | 62.53 | 901.637 | 0.815 | 0.750 | 0.969 |
| (2) A sense of discovery | 62.26 | 906.724 | 0.800 | 0.723 | 0.969 |
| (2) A sense of nostalgy | 63.24 | 916.743 | 0.725 | 0.559 | 0.970 |
| (2) A sense of freedom | 62.86 | 898.752 | 0.859 | 0.782 | 0.968 |
| (2) A sense of happiness | 62.74 | 899.113 | 0.872 | 0.815 | 0.968 |
| (2) A sense of calmness/ peace | 62.53 | 904.586 | 0.837 | 0.746 | 0.968 |
| (2) Restful/ relaxing environment | 62.55 | 899.702 | 0.869 | 0.807 | 0.968 |
| (2) Good quality of life | 63.22 | 910.764 | 0.789 | 0.705 | 0.969 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (2) Familiar/ Friendly atmosphere | 63.02 | 908.023 | 0.780 | 0.725 | 0.969 |
| (3) Variety of offers / discounts / sales | 30.30 | 232.519 | 0.698 | 0.542 | 0.941 |
| (3) Good level of safety | 29.92 | 229.091 | 0.811 | 0.723 | 0.935 |
| (3) Good level of cleanliness | 29.84 | 226.838 | 0.855 | 0.781 | 0.932 |
| (3) Nice climate | 29.00 | 237.202 | 0.710 | 0.559 | 0.940 |
| (3) Unpolluted environment | 29.79 | 228.753 | 0.796 | 0.709 | 0.936 |
| (3) Pleasant odours/ scents | 29.89 | 226.864 | 0.798 | 0.647 | 0.936 |
| (3) Good Price levels | 29.52 | 228.951 | 0.765 | 0.650 | 0.937 |
| (3) Good level of economic development/ affluence | 30.10 | 231.778 | 0.802 | 0.708 | 0.935 |
| (3) Acceptable extent of commercialization | 29.87 | 228.455 | 0.790 | 0.685 | 0.936 |
| (4) Nice beaches | 37.33 | 440.221 | 0.553 | 0.346 | 0.943 |
| (4) Good availability of tourist information | 37.08 | 415.509 | 0.793 | 0.737 | 0.934 |
| (4) Good shopping facilities | 37.46 | 417.953 | 0.787 | 0.734 | 0.934 |
| (4) Family oriented environment | 37.15 | 424.957 | 0.729 | 0.626 | 0.936 |
| (4) Adult oriented environment | 36.69 | 423.411 | 0.710 | 0.582 | 0.937 |
| (4) Good quality of service | 36.83 | 413.750 | 0.835 | 0.735 | 0.932 |
| (4) Interesting fairs, exhibits, festivals | 36.79 | 418.536 | 0.746 | 0.664 | 0.936 |
| (4) Interesting sports facilities/ activities | 37.32 | 418.589 | 0.801 | 0.722 | 0.934 |
| (4) It's easy to communicate with locals | 37.27 | 430.609 | 0.720 | 0.565 | 0.937 |
| (4) Politically stable | 37.33 | 436.505 | 0.676 | 0.511 | 0.938 |
| (4) Crowded | 37.66 | 437.593 | 0.715 | 0.583 | 0.937 |
| (4) Urbanized | 37.28 | 434.053 | 0.734 | 0.645 | 0.936 |
| (5) Nice Scenery/ natural attractions | 48.41 | 525.030 | 0.785 | 0.685 | 0.947 |
| (5) Good settings of the wineries | 49.33 | 520.188 | 0.754 | 0.772 | 0.948 |
| (5) Great vineyard landscapes | 49.06 | 517.320 | 0.787 | 0.808 | 0.947 |
| (5) Interesting history/ customs/ culture | 48.41 | 522.445 | 0.813 | 0.747 | 0.947 |
| (5) Interesting cultural activities | 48.80 | 522.190 | 0.784 | 0.679 | 0.947 |
| (5) Interesting cities/ Towns/ villages | 48.57 | 521.425 | 0.805 | 0.734 | 0.947 |
| (5) Rich wine culture | 49.10 | 522.811 | 0.721 | 0.607 | 0.950 |
| (5) Good opportunity for adventure | 48.66 | 528.489 | 0.776 | 0.684 | 0.948 |
| (5) Good opportunity for increasing my knowledge | 48.59 | 529.959 | 0.728 | 0.587 | 0.949 |
| (5) Interesting tourist sites/ activities | 48.67 | 526.355 | 0.792 | 0.697 | 0.947 |
| (5) Interesting national parks/ wilderness/ outdoor activities | 48.91 | 531.227 | 0.708 | 0.642 | 0.950 |
| (5) Interesting historic sites/ museums | 48.71 | 524.292 | 0.785 | 0.732 | 0.947 |
| (6) Good value for money | 31.53 | 229.085 | 0.685 | 0.557 | 0.929 |
| (6) Rich gastronomy | 31.26 | 227.807 | 0.731 | 0.578 | 0.926 |
| (6) Interesting local products/ cottage industries | 31.16 | 224.654 | 0.761 | 0.597 | 0.924 |
| (6) Attractive nightlife and entertainment | 32.08 | 227.125 | 0.757 | 0.655 | 0.924 |
| (6) Good quality of accommodation/ restaurants | 31.56 | 221.668 | 0.855 | 0.759 | 0.918 |
| (6) Suitable atmosphere/ facilities for leisure and recreation | 31.38 | 226.668 | 0.774 | 0.640 | 0.923 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (6) Comfortable local infrastructure/ transportation | 32.09 | 229.066 | 0.756 | 0.632 | 0.924 |
| (6) An acceptable proximity of the wine regions to a main city | 31.76 | 223.647 | 0.777 | 0.620 | 0.923 |
| (6) Good fame/ reputation | 31.56 | 238.719 | 0.642 | 0.478 | 0.931 |

We measured the internal consistency reliability of a collection of items or variables by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Examining the Cronbach's Alpha values for each component is crucial, in addition to looking at the overall Cronbach's Alpha value. We found that all the results of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were closer to 1. As the reliability is high, we did not get rid of any item.

We displayed the results of the FA and reliability analysis in Table 9. As a result of our tests, more precisely FA and reliability test, we can confirm that our scale is valid and reliable to be used to measure wine regions attribute-based image. Hypothesis 1 aims to identify the variables that are valuable for assessing the image of a WTD. The communalities indicate that all variables have a strong association with the factors identified, demonstrating their ability to elucidate the underlying factors that define the image of a WTD. As the reliability of our factors are high and FA also had acceptable results, we can accept the hypothesis 1.

Table 9. Results of FA and reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha).
Source: Author's elaboration

| Factor | Number of items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Wine and wine tourism | 12 | 0.975 |
| Atmosphere/environment | 16 | 0.971 |
| Security/cleanliness/economic situation/prices | 9 | 0.944 |
| Tourism facilities | 12 | 0.942 |
| Natural and cultural attractions | 12 | 0.952 |
| Comfort and infrastructure | 9 | 0.932 |

The first component is linked to wine and wine tourism experience. It includes factors such as wine quality, availability of wineries, opportunity to taste lots of

wine, interesting wine styles and tasting experiences etc. It is not surprising that a WTD's image is strongly defined by wine and wine related characteristics.

The second component explains the atmosphere and environment of the WTD. It includes factors i.e., sense of freedom, discovery, escapism, happiness, as well as pleasant, hospitable, and easily accessible environment. It seems like the affective characteristics of the destination are an important part of its image.

The third component includes factors related to cleanliness, nice climate, price levels, level of safety etc. As for any other type of destination, safety, cleanliness, and other social factors are crucial.

The fourth components are all about tourism facilities i.e., shopping facilities, nice beaches, availability of tourist information, crowdedness, urbanization levels, quality of service. While the fifth component is linked to cultural and natural attractions such as rich wine culture, nice scenery, vineyard landscapes, winery settings, opportunity for adventure and increasing knowledge.

The sixth factor explains the comfort and infrastructure in the WTD. For example, variables such as quality of accommodation and restaurants, interesting local products, gastronomy, nightlife, and entertainment seem to be an important part of WTDI.

## 4.5 Results of the qualitative data analysis

The questions of a survey were grouped in seven sections. The first section defined the eligibility of the respondent by asking them whether they had heard about Georgia as a tourism destination or not. Responding "no" to this question meant ineligibility of the respondent. This section lets us learn about the awareness of Georgia as a tourism destination. Overall, 342 respondents submitted the answers to the questionnaire, from which 265 (77%) were eligible.

This result proves that Georgia has low awareness as a tourism destination (ECORYS Polska, 2018).

Second section learned a demographic information such as nationality, age, gender, education, marital status, and occupation. Most of the respondents was female (64%), 25-34 years old (49%), either with Bachelor's (37%) or Master's (48%) degree; the most of them were employees (53%) and students (25%); 43% were single, 26% married and 23% in a relationship. The range of nationalities was very wide; therefore, they were grouped in four different regions from which Europe and Eurasia had the highest share (75%).

The third section aimed to find out the frequency of travel in a year to make sure that the study sample was comprised of the people who travel. The highest share of the respondents (39%) travel 1-2 times, followed by 29% share of the people who travel 3-4 times and 29% of those who travel 5 or more times; the smallest share (3%) was of those who do not travel. The survey responses of the latter group were included in the analyses as it is a very low percentage and people might start traveling in future, considering that the age of this group was between 18-44 years old. To summarize, our aim to have a sample of travellers was successfully accomplished.

### 4.5.1 The holistic image of Georgia as a tourism destination

In the fourth section, unstructured method of the open-ended question, adopted from Ritchie and Crouch (2003a, p. 193), was used to explore the holistic image of Georgia as a tourism destination. The methodology to analyse the data was as well adopted from the same research by Ritchie and Crouch (2003a). The respondents were asked to answer the following question "Write three words what

comes in your mind when thinking of images or characteristics of Georgia as a travel destination".

As a result, the pool of 791 words was collected, which was then analysed, and the similar words or short phrases were classified together in 14 groups; each group was labelled with the most expressive names. The groups and their share importance (visualized with font sizes) in the total word pool is presented in the word cloud in the Figure 2. From this illustration, we understand what kind of image Georgia has as a tourism destination and whether it is connected to wine or not. The results help us answer the hypothesis 2. The holistic image of Georgia is strongly dominated by the words associated with mountains, nature and landscapes (28%), followed by the 14% of words associated with wine (the majority of these words was "wine" itself), cuisine (13%), positive characteristics (10%), people and hospitality (7%), heritage and architecture (6%), culture and traditions (6%), history (4%), geographical places (4%), unlisted (2%), adventure (2%), negative (2%), affordability (2%) and colour green (1%).



Figure 2. Word cloud illustrating the holistic image of Georgia as a travel destination (a).
Source: Author's elaboration

To summarize, Georgia is strongly positioned in travellers' minds as a destination with natural endowments, mountains and landscapes, which offers unique wine and cuisine, has welcoming, hospitable and friendly people, interesting heritage

and architecture, culture and traditions and history; some of the travellers associate Georgia to the geographical words like Asia, Europe, Caucasus or even particular destinations such as Tbilisi and Batumi etc.; few people associate Georgia to adventure like hiking or skiing, and for some it is an affordable/cheap destination; interestingly, the large part of the respondents described Georgia with positive characteristics such as beautiful, unique, diverse, authentic and so forth.

The Figure 3 with another word cloud demonstrates all the words and their importance in Georgia's image. This cloud proves that wine is a core product of the destination. Unfortunately, 2% of associations were negative related to cleanliness, false advertisement, war, driving habits, service quality and so on; it is important to better study the negative associations of the travellers and work on solving the problems that cause the negative associations and then try to modify the negative impressions of the travellers. However, probably it is impossible to have always positive results when asking people about their perceptions of a particular destination. It's because people's perceptions are very complex and different factors may affect them.



Figure 3. Word cloud illustrating the holistic image of Georgia as a travel destination (b).
Source: Author's elaboration

The hypothesis 2 that we formulated is the following: Wine is a core of holistic image of Georgia. All the 14 groups that emerged during the content analysis represent and altogether determine Georgia's holistic image in people's mind. Based on the results displayed in the Figure 2, Georgia's image is predominated by words associated with mountains, nature, and landscapes. 28% of the words and phrases were grouped under this label. Wine related words accounted 14% of the words and phrases, occupying the second important role in the holistic image of Georgia. On the other hand, the Figure 3 clearly shows that the word wine itself was the core of holistic image of Georgia. As a result of our analysis, we can accept the hypothesis 2 and say that wine is a core of Georgia's holistic image.

### 4.5.2 The holistic and psychological components of Georgia's destination image

The fifth section assisted the research in exploration of Georgia's DI components. An open-ended question was adopted from Ritchie and Crouch (2003a, p. 193) to discover the holistic and psychological components of destination's touristic image: "Write three words what comes in your mind when thinking of the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Georgia.". A methodology that was used to analyse the results was suggested by Ritchie and Crouch (2003a) too. Each respondent provided words or short phrases as it was asked in the question, overall 756 words were accumulated and analyzed by the author. Firstly, the words were read and any obvious spelling mistakes were corrected, then the same or similar words were grouped together and labelled with a representative names. As a result, 15 classified groups emerged. Even though the question was clearly asking to state words related to atmosphere and mood which aimed to study the psychological component of the DI, few words were still more functional than psychlogical such as "Khinkali" which is a Georgian dish, "wine", "food" and so on. To visualize the results, two word clouds were

created, one demonstrating the classified groups and their significance shown in Figure 4, and another word cloud in Figure 5 which is an illustration of the pool of words without classification. The Figure 5 was needed to not miss any specific word which had a key role and high frequency but was grouped under more general labels.



Figure 4. Word cloud illustrating the holistic and psychological image of Georgia as a travel destination (a).
Source: Author's elaboration



Figure 5. Word cloud illustrating the holistic and psychological image of Georgia as a travel destination (b).
Source: Author's elaboration

The holistic and psychological imagery of Georgia is clearly predominated by the hospitable, friendly, and welcoming nature of Georgian people; 19% of the respondents provided words and phrases related to *welcoming* atmosphere, such as "warm", "hospitable", "open", "generous". Among answers the highest share belongs to the more psychological descriptions; therefore, it is clear that the goal of discovering more psychological image was successfully accomplished.

The second largest group with 14% of words and phrases was labelled as *relaxing*; this group involved words like "calm", "peace", "peaceful", "silent".

Later, comes a group classified as *happy, lively*, which consisted of words like "happiness", "joy", "fun", "lively" etc. 8% of words and phrases were labelled as *positive*; they either described atmosphere, mood or some characteristics of Georgian people, for example, "knowledgeable", "free", "safe", "inspiring", "proud", "clean" and so forth.

The hypothesis 3 that we formulated is the following: Hospitality of Georgian people is a core of holistic and psychological component of Georgia's image. All the 15 groups that emerged during the content analysis represent and altogether determine Georgia's holistic and psychological image in people's mind. Based on the results displayed in the Figure 4, the holistic and psychological imagery of Georgia is clearly predominated by the hospitable, friendly, and welcoming nature of Georgian people. As we already mentioned, 19% of the words and phrases were related to *welcoming* atmosphere, such as "warm", "hospitable", "open", "generous". The Figure 5 confirms our findings and demonstrates that friendly, warm, and welcoming atmosphere is core of the country' holistic and psychological image. As a result of our analysis, we can accept the hypothesis 3 and say that hospitality of Georgian people creates welcoming, warm and friendly atmosphere meaning that it is a core of holistic and psychological image of the country.

### 4.5.3 The unique characteristics of Georgia's destination image

The purpose of the sixth section was to find out Georgia's unique characteristics as part of its image. An open-ended question which was asked to the sample was adopted from Ritchie & Crouch (2003, p. 193) and it was formulated as follows: „Write three distinctive or unique attractions what comes in your mind when thinking of Georgia as a travel destination". With this question we explored the uniqueness of Georgia which differentiates it from other destinations. The respondents provided overall 687 words and, in some cases, short phrases. Initially, the words were read, and the same or alike ones were grouped together by the authors. Each group then was labelled with the most representative titles. Consequently, 20 labelled groups have been formed.

The unique characteristics of Georgia's DI are listed in Table 10 which demonstrate the most important groups of words and short phrases that were provided by the online survey respondents. A group of words related to *wine and food* has highest share (18.5%) in the Table 10 which means that Georgian gastronomy and wine are key unique attractions in travellers' opinion. This group involved words such as "wine", "wineries", "food", and names of few dishes, such as "Khachapuri" and "Khinkali".

Table 10. The unique characteristics of the image of Georgia as a travel destination (Own construction based on the survey results)
Source: Author's elaboration

| Wine and food | 18.5% |
|---|---|
| Tbilisi | 14.3% |
| Mountains and nature | 14% |
| Sights (general & specific) | 8% |
| Adventure | 5.7% |
| No information | 4.8% |
| Churches (general & specific) | 3.9% |
| Culture, history | 3.5% |
| Kazbegi | 3.3% |
| Batumi | 3.3% |
| Black Sea | 3.3% |
| Not classified | 2.9% |
| Svaneti | 2.8% |

| Stalin, soviet | 2.3% |
|---|---|
| Vardzia | 1.9% |
| Villages | 1.9% |
| Kakheti | 1.9% |
| People | 1.6% |
| Mtskheta | 1.5% |
| Negative | 0.6% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

2 word clouds were created for better visual representation of our results. The Figure 6 is built on the results of the 20 groups which were classified from the pool of 687 words, while Figure 7 displays words without any classification. The Figure 7 was necessary to show the most important words which might have been hidden behind the labels.



Figure 6. Word cloud illustrating the unique image of Georgia as a travel destination (a).
Source: Author's elaboration

Figure 7. Word cloud illustrating the unique image of Georgia as a travel destination (b).
Source: Author's elaboration

The hypothesis 4 that we formulated is the following: Georgian wine regions are core of holistic and unique component of Georgia's image. All the 20 groups that emerged during the content analysis represent and altogether determine Georgia's unique image in people's mind. Based on the results displayed in the Figure 6, the unique imagery of Georgia is not related to any Georgian wine region. The Table 10 also shows that only one group related to wine region emerged. This wine region is called Kakheti and it is the largest and most famous one in the country. However, the words and phrases related to Kakheti only accounted 1.9% which is too low to accept the hypothesis 4. The Figure 7 also shows that some cities and location names appear among the unique characteristics of Georgia's image, but wine regions did not emerge here neither. Only wine region mentioned is Kakheti. The rest of the locations and destinations are famous cities and cultural sights. It seems like even though Georgia's image is strongly related to wine, people's awareness of wine regions is low. It's understandable as Georgia as a WTD is promoted as a whole country and promotions of each small region are rarer. As a result, we rejected hypotheses 4.

# IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Wine tourism becomes an important part of many destinations' positioning strategies. However, as the number of WTDs grow rapidly, there is an increasing need of unique and clear positioning (Williams, 2001a). Uniquely positioned WTDs have more chance to attract their target travel markets, while "images are more important than tangible resources and perceptions, rather than reality are what motivate consumers to act or not to act" (Guthrie & Gale, 1991, p. 555). As a result, an image is a driving force for the destination competitiveness. Researchers called for an image measurement scale adapted to WTD to be developed.

The first objective of our research was to create a uniform scale for measuring an image of any WTD. We successfully reached our goal. As an answer to our first research question, we created a WTDI scale which is valid and reliable.

In our research we created a reliable WTDI scale that can be used uniformly by any WTD. It can have various purposes. We recommend our WTDI measurement scale to be used by WTDs to measure their image and plan future strategies and promotions. They can compare their image with their competitors', the image can also be studied during the specific period and observe any changes. The scale has many uses and destination management organizations as well as wine region development organizations can benefit from it.

The second objective of the research was to find the image of Georgia as a WTD. We found the most important characteristics of Georgia's image as a WTD. To answer the second research question, our research explored Georgia's WTDI.

In Georgia, where the winemaking is 8000 years old, a new way of development in a form of wine tourism has been reinforcing through the last decade. Wine tourism does not only influence the wine industry, but also social and regional development. Wine tourism has often played a principal role in the revival of the

rural areas and regions. However, for significant results, WTDs need to be more competitive and attractive than their rivals. While DI is one of the determinants of competitiveness of these areas, DMOs try to understand the image perceptions of their targeted travel markets. In case of Georgia, DI has been scarcely studied. Our research contributed to the existing and ongoing research about wine tourism and DI of Georgia.

According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991), to fully comprehend an imagery of a destination, it is important to research both attribute-based and holistic components. This is why we researched both holistic and attribute-based components of Georgia's WTDI. Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) advise that a holistic component of DI includes functional/psychological, common/unique and attribute-based/holistic dimensions. Exploring these dimensions of Georgia's image in addition to the quantitative research contributed to the full understanding of its WTDI.

Georgia's *holistic image* dimension was mostly related to the „mountains, nature and landscapes", „wine" and „cuisine". These were the first three most frequent associations when asking the respondents about the images or characteristics of Georgia as a travel destination. We can clearly see that most of the associations are more functional or tangible than psychological.

In terms of *psychological image dimension*, travellers perceive Georgia as a welcoming, relaxing, lively, happy, natural, historical, traditional, interesting, authentic, and cultural destination with many other positive characteristics. To be successful, the negative images which comprised 5% in our image research should be monitored and modified by careful positioning by GNTA; in addition, the perceptions of the travellers can be used as the core of the further promotional and positioning activities to strengthen the attractive image of destination in target markets where the awareness is yet law.

We also explored the *unique dimension* of the Georgia's holistic DI from travellers' perspective. In this way we contributed to the goal to study WTDI of Georgia. Georgia's distinctive attractions from the travellers' perspective are not only some particular sights, but also its mountains, nature, food, wine, villages and others in general. The respondents mentioned such specific attractions like Tbilisi, Batumi, Black Sea, Svaneti, Vardzia and so forth. GNTA or other interested organizations can use this information and strengthen the promotion of any attraction that is not firmly represented in our results.

Based on quantitative research the most significant characteristics of Georgia's image as a WTD are wine and wine tourism; atmosphere and environment; security, cleanliness, economic situation and prices; tourism facilities; natural and cultural attractions; comfort and infrastructure. We can see that quantitative and qualitative methodologies are complementing each other and they must be used together when measuring WTDI. Our recommendation for Georgia as a WTD is to keep measuring its image from time to time to observe any changes and plan promotion strategies accordingly.

# V.  NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

Two main goals of our research were to develop a WTDI measurement scale that could be used by any WTD to measure their image, and to measure an image of Georgia as a WTD. The main findings of our research have been summarized in the previous section discussing the main achievements and recommendations. A short summary about the main novelties of our research is provided below:

1.      WTDI measurement requires a different approach from the general DI measurement techniques as wine regions have different characteristics. As in the literature there was a gap and no uniform WTDI measurement scale existed, we created one. We reviewed literature and collected the attributes this way. We also organized focus groups and gathered additional attributes for our scale. After collecting the data and analysing the results, we got a final WTDI scale. This is a new scientific result that can be used by different WTD management organizations to promote the wine regions or plan their marketing strategies accordingly.

2.      We also studied WTDI of Georgia using both qualitative and quantitative techniques to make sure we capture all the characteristics of its image. This is the first time when Georgia's WTDI has been measured, and it could be very useful for this wine producing country. Georgia projects its image as a WTD and knowing perceptions of its visitors can only help it develop the marketing strategies accordingly. It can also help Georgia learn how its image will change in the future if the researchers keep using the same scale.

3.      Finally, it's worth mentioning that we performed a comprehensive review of all the WTDI related literature written between 2001-2020. This is a novelty, as this kind of literature review synthesizing the literature about the WTDI did not exist. The results are displayed in the literature review section, and it can be used by researchers to understand WTDI topic's current state of knowledge. We believe that at some point in the future it will be necessary to continue monitoring its state of knowledge by the similar kind of literature review.

# PUBLICATIONS

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2. Sekhniashvili, G. and Bujdosó, Z. (2020) 'Wine tourism destination image: the case of Georgia', in *4th International Scientific Conference on Rural Development*. ISBN 978-963-269-947-9.

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