

PLANNING SUSTAINABLE WINE TOURISM IN TANZANIA: AN EXPERT-WEIGHTED VALUE CHAIN APPROACH

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Abstract

Wine tourism is increasingly recognised as a strategic pathway for diversifying rural economies and enhancing destination competitiveness; however, its development in emerging destinations remains weakly structured and under-researched. This study examines how wine tourism in Tanzania can be planned as a sustainable and integrated value chain. Drawing on Institutional Theory and Experience Economy Theory, the study adopts a quantitative, expert-based research design using Real-Time Delphi, Analytic Hierarchy Process, and a Weighted Scoring Method. Primary data were collected from 46 experts representing key actors across the wine tourism value chain, including production, tourism services, markets, and governance. The analysis identifies and ranks the relative importance of value chain components for sustainable wine tourism development. The findings reveal that institutional, regulatory, and policy support, followed by marketing and branding and wine tourism experiences, are perceived as the most critical drivers, outweighing production-focused factors. It therefore indicates that sustainable wine tourism in emerging contexts is shaped more by governance quality and experiential design than by wine production alone. The study contributes to theory by integrating institutional and experiential perspectives within an expert-weighted value chain framework, and to practice by offering evidence-based guidance for policymakers, planners, and industry stakeholders seeking to develop sustainable wine tourism in Tanzania.

Keywords: Sustainable wine tourism, Institutional and experiential value creation, Expert-weighted value chain analysis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is endowed with diverse tourism assets, including wildlife, iconic landscapes, coral reefs and sandy beaches, positioning tourism as a core pillar of the national economy (World Bank Group, 2024). The sector contributes approximately 17 per cent of gross domestic product, around 30 per cent of foreign exchange earnings, and about 10 per cent of formal employment (Nalyoto & Ngaruko, 2023; World Bank Group, 2024). According to the Maliasili Statistical Bulletin 2024, international tourism receipts increased from USD 1.31 billion in 2021 to USD 2.53 billion in 2022, before rising further to USD 3.37 billion in 2023 and USD 3.90 billion in 2024. This growth closely mirrors the sharp rebound in international visitor arrivals,

which grew from 922,692 in 2021 to 1.45 million in 2022, 1.81 million in 2023, and over 2.14 million in 2024, indicating renewed global confidence in Tanzania as a tourism destination (Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism [MNRT], 2025). Building on this performance, Tanzania has adopted strategic measures to diversify and expand the sector. A key focus is agro-tourism, particularly wine tourism in Dodoma Region, the national capital and a leading grape-producing area in Tanzania (URT, 2025a). Thus, to support this transformation, the Tourism Development Strategy for Dodoma Region (URT, 2025a) has been developed to position the region as an emerging business hub and a strategic growth pole for Tanzania, with wine tourism recognised as a key priority area due to its capacity to stimulate local economic development and its broader contribution to the global wine economy (Chiwawa & Wissink, 2023; URT, 2025; Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024).

Wine tourism refers to a form of food and beverage tourism centred on visits to vineyards and wineries, where visitors experience wine through tasting, consumption, and purchase close to the place of production, while engaging with tourism products, services, and events linked to the identity, heritage, and know-how of the destination (Getz & Brown, 2006; Hall et al., 2000; Oltean & Gabor, 2022). Rather than developing in an ad hoc manner, wine tourism is typically organised through designated wine routes, which spatially connect wine-related activities and stakeholders (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023). In the context of Dodoma, wine tourism is a territorially coordinated system that integrates wine production, tourism services, and visitor experiences, particularly through festivals and periodic events, under a unified governance arrangement (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024). This spatial clustering brings together producers, tourism service providers, and public institutions, enhancing coordination, service efficiency, and the delivery of a cohesive wine tourism experience, while also generating local economic benefits by supporting related community businesses and contributing to the broader development of Tanzania's tourism sector (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024; Marco-Lajara et al., 2023).

Despite its recognised potential, wine tourism in Tanzania remains in its early stages of development. Current wine tourism activities are largely seasonal, relying on festivals and occasional events rather than structured, year-round tourism products (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024). Moreover, these activities are weakly connected to mainstream tourism offerings such as wildlife attractions, coastal destinations, heritage sites, urban tourism, and significant landmarks, and they lack effective integration with essential supporting services, including accommodation, transport, marketing platforms, and domestic value chains (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024; URT, 2025a). As a result, the contribution of wine tourism to sustainable tourism development remains limited (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2023). In contrast, evidence from established wine regions indicates that sustainable outcomes are achieved when wine tourism extends beyond wine sales to develop integrated, experience-based tourism products, including cultural

engagement, sensory tastings, winescape experiences, storytelling, and visitor participation in wine-related activities (Santos et al., 2019). Accordingly, these practices are consistent with the concept of sustainable wine tourism, which emphasises managing wine-related tourism to balance economic viability, environmental protection, and social well-being, thereby securing long-term benefits for wine destinations and local communities (Rosen & Miculan Bradley, 2024).

Recent national and international reports, including the Maliasili Statistical Bulletin, the Economic Survey, the 2024 international visitors' exit survey report and World Bank assessments, consistently show that tourism makes a substantial contribution to Tanzania's national income; however, the specific economic role of wine tourism is not separately identified or measured within official statistics (MNRT, 2025; URT, 2025b; URT, 2025c; World Bank Group, 2024). By 2024, international tourism receipts had risen to approximately USD 3.9 billion, signalling a strong post-pandemic recovery driven mainly by leisure and holiday travel, which continues to dominate visitor arrivals (MNRT, 2025). In contrast, wine tourism remains embedded within broader categories of leisure, cultural, and rural tourism, obscuring its distinct economic value. This lack of disaggregated data and systematic analysis highlights a clear empirical and policy gap, limiting evidence-based planning and undermining informed strategies to unlock the sector's potential for rural income generation, employment creation, and tourism product diversification.

Although events such as the Dodoma Wine Festival have helped link grape growers and wine producers to domestic and international markets and have strengthened Dodoma's emerging image as a wine-producing hub, their economic contribution to the tourism sector remains unquantified (URT, 2025a). Moreover, empirical research on sustainable wine tourism in Tanzania remains limited, constraining the development of evidence-based awareness, strategic planning, and policy interventions necessary to support the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the sector (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024; Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2023).

Thus, to achieve long-term success and sustainability, this study suggests that wine tourism in Tanzania should not be treated as a stand-alone activity but as an integrated component of the broader economic and social system (Bail et al., 2026; Szolnoki et al., 2022). Its sustainability depends on strong linkages with complementary social and economic sectors, including grape production, wine processing, hospitality, transport, marketing, and local value chains (Bole, 2024; Dang, 2017). Furthermore, its sustainability also depends on the traditional tourism market, which in Tanzania relies more on tourists from abroad (MNRT, 2025; URT, 2025c), many of whom are interested in vineyards' sustainability practices, as well as in how environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable their favourite brand is (Alessandri et al., 2024; Amarando et al., 2019a). As a cross-cutting sector, wine tourism both relies on and contributes to the performance of these supporting industries, with an emphasis on stakeholders in the grape value chain

(Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2023). Without coordinated business models and inter-sectoral integration, its economic potential remains limited (Chalkidou & Skourtis, 2024).

Against this background, Amarando et al. (2019b) highlight the need for integrated research that aligns sustainability, experiential design, and institutional support to advance the long-term development of wine tourism. Responding to this call, the present study adopts a quantitative approach to examine how wine tourism can be developed into a sustainable model that enhances value-chain linkages and contributes to national economic development. The analysis is based on survey data from 46 experts and is guided by Institutional Theory and Experience Economy Theory.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical and conceptual framework

This study conceptualises sustainable wine tourism development as an outcome of the interaction between institutional and experiential mechanisms operating across the wine tourism value chain. Drawing on Institutional Theory (IT) and Experience Economy Theory (EET), the framework recognises that sustainability in wine tourism does not emerge from individual activities in isolation, but from the way governance structures enable coordinated market positioning and the deliberate design of visitor experiences. Institutional arrangements provide the enabling conditions for organising and legitimising marketing, hospitality, and experiential components. In contrast, experiential value creation mediates the translation of these institutional conditions into visitor engagement, destination competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. The framework, therefore, positions institutional coordination as a foundational driver and experiential design as a critical transmission mechanism linking policy environments to sustainable tourism outcomes.

2.1.1 Institutional theory

Institutional Theory (IT) conceptualises institutions as the rules of the game that shape social and economic interactions by structuring incentives, reducing uncertainty, and guiding behaviour within societies (North, 1990). Economic activities, therefore, operate within institutional arrangements comprising formal rules such as laws and policies, as well as informal norms, governance systems, and shared social expectations (North, 1990). These arrangements determine how sectors are organised, coordinated, and legally recognised, particularly in activities that require public oversight and multi-stakeholder engagement, such as tourism. In this regard, institutions influence strategic decision-making, investment behaviour, and long-term sectoral performance. As emphasised by North (1990), sustainable

economic development depends more on the quality and stability of institutions than on the mere availability of resources or the presence of policy instruments.

In Tanzania, wine tourism has not yet developed into a sustainable, well-coordinated system that strengthens value-chain linkages under effective government leadership and meaningfully contributes to national economic and sustainable development (Brundtland, 1987). Existing studies indicate that limited government support and weak coordination among relevant institutions remain significant constraints to the adoption of sustainable wine tourism practices (Amarando et al., 2019a). Nevertheless, the literature suggests that establishing a coherent, sustainability-oriented value chain, supported by clear government strategies and coordinated policy interventions, could significantly enhance the performance and economic contribution of wine tourism (Amarando et al., 2019b; Brundtland, 1987). In this emerging context, the relevance of IT is evident, as empirical research on nascent sectors shows that business performance is often shaped more by legal frameworks, policy alignment, and institutional legitimacy than by market forces alone (Balzano et al., 2025). Within wine tourism, sustainability therefore extends beyond basic health and safety compliance, including responsible wine provision and adherence to alcohol regulations, to encompass the long-term economic viability and resilience of host regions (Filopoulos, 2021; Bole, 2024).

Existing evidence demonstrates that by encouraging visitors to engage with multiple attractions and consume locally produced goods and services, wine tourism contributes to increased business revenues, job creation, and local income growth (Paulangelo, 2015; Tafel & Szolnoki, 2019; Szolnoki et al., 2022). As a result, national and subnational authorities play a central role in establishing policy frameworks and regulatory guidelines that tourism operators must follow to operate sustainably (Bole, 2024). The IT, therefore, highlights that the long-term sustainability of wine tourism in Tanzania depends on coherent policies, transparent regulations, and effective coordination among public institutions (North, 1990; Eitrem et al., 2024). Such arrangements facilitate private-sector participation, strengthen destination identity, and encourage long-term investment, whereas weak coordination tends to yield fragmented, short-lived development outcomes (Chalkidou & Skourtis, 2024).

From a value-chain perspective, Institutional Theory views governance quality as an enabling foundation that conditions the performance of downstream tourism activities. In wine tourism, effective institutional coordination supports coherent destination branding, integrated hospitality services, and credible sustainability messaging. Rather than producing sustainability outcomes directly, governance structures shape actor relationships, minimise coordination failures, and provide a stable environment for the consistent design and delivery of visitor experiences. In emerging destinations, where markets and tourism products remain fluid, such institutional arrangements play a decisive role in determining whether wine tourism evolves in a fragmented manner or as an integrated and sustainable destination system.

2.1.2 Experience economy theory

Experience Economy Theory (EET) posits that, in contemporary economies, value is created primarily through meaningful and memorable experiences rather than through goods or services alone (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). From this perspective, sectors such as tourism, hospitality, food and beverage, culture, technology, entertainment, and heritage are essential spaces where experiences play a central role in shaping consumer value (Lorentzen, 2009). By linking business activities with local and regional economies, the experience economy contributes to employment creation and place-based development. It also reflects the changing nature of economic systems, which increasingly generate new forms of value through experiential offerings over time (Ranjan et al., 2022). Existing studies show that modern consumers, particularly tourists, are no longer satisfied with functional consumption alone. Instead, they seek diverse experiences, including travel, cultural participation, high-quality dining, and innovative leisure activities that enhance learning, enjoyment, and personal renewal (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

In wine tourism, value is created through enjoyable and memorable experiences that shape visitor satisfaction, loyalty, and destination competitiveness, emerging from meaningful interactions with places, local communities, hospitality services, and activities such as wine tasting (Oh et al., 2007; Terziyska, 2024). Consequently, destinations are understood not merely as physical locations but as experiential environments in which tourism experiences are deliberately designed, delivered, and interpreted (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012). Within this experiential context, competitive advantage is driven less by pricing or operational efficiency and more by the capacity to offer distinctive, memorable experiences that respond to varying levels of visitor involvement and engagement (Gómez-Carmona et al., 2023).

In the Dodoma Region, wine tourism aligns closely with the principles of the experience economy. Visitors are drawn not only to wine consumption but also to vineyard tours, wine-tasting rituals, storytelling, local gastronomy, social events, and cultural interaction (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024). Experiences often include engagement with indigenous foods such as "ndigwa" (in the Gogo tribe language), participation in community celebrations, and immersion in local traditions. Artistic expressions, such as traditional dances, including masumbi and muheme, as well as traditional Gogo attire known as "nhembelo ye cing'wegwa co mnhogoni", further enrich the visitor experience in Dodoma (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024). Accordingly, festival organisers and policymakers should prioritise the perspectives and cultural values of host communities to foster culturally authentic and sustainable tourism development (Masilela et al., 2024). In this setting, wine functions as a medium through which tourists connect with place, cultural heritage, and social relations (Fantechi et al., 2025). On this basis, the present study adopts EET to examine how experiential elements contribute to the sustainable development of wine tourism within the context of emerging destinations (Yeoman et al., 2019; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012).

Within this framework, EET explains how institutional conditions are transformed into tangible sustainability outcomes through visitor engagement. Experiential components such as wine tasting, vineyard tours, storytelling, festivals, and cultural interaction act as mediating mechanisms that convert regulatory coordination and market organisation into perceived destination value. Visitor satisfaction, emotional attachment, and behavioural intentions emerge not from production processes themselves, but from how experiences are curated and delivered within a supportive institutional context. As a result, experiential design is the primary channel through which governance arrangements influence destination competitiveness, repeat visitation, and the long-term viability of wine tourism systems.

2.1.3 Theoretical integration for sustainable wine tourism

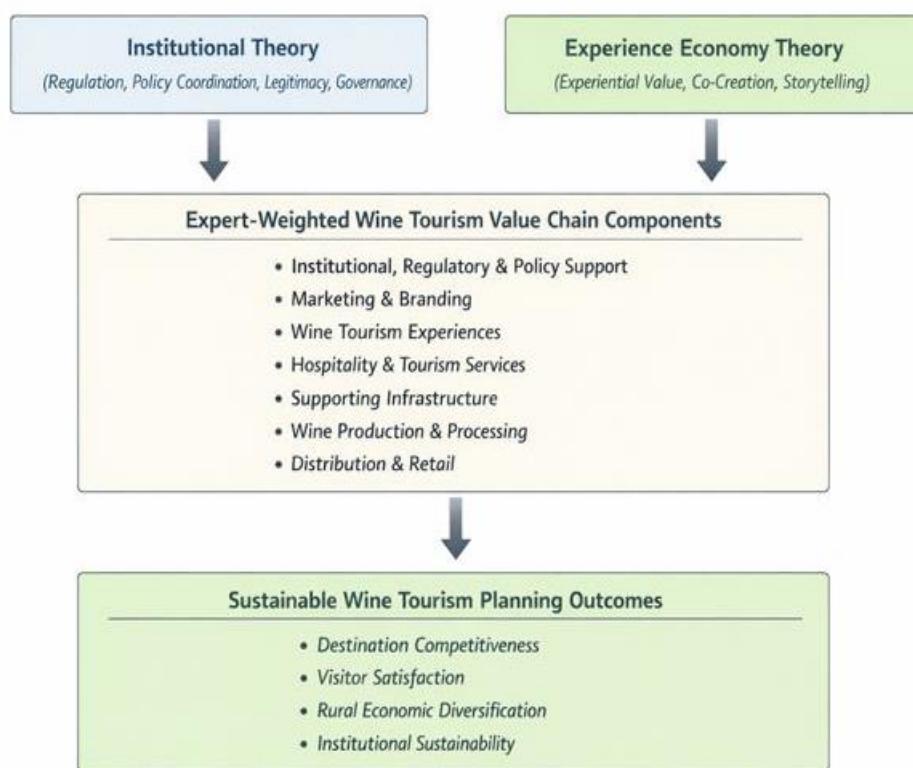


FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE WINE TOURISM PLANNING IN TANZANIA
Source: Author (2026)

The integration of IT and EET provides a coherent explanatory framework for understanding sustainable wine tourism development in emerging destinations. Institutional theory clarifies how regulatory frameworks, policy alignment, and inter-organisational coordination establish the structural conditions necessary for destination-level planning and investment. Experience Economy Theory complements this perspective by explaining how these institutional conditions are operationalised through the design and

delivery of meaningful visitor experiences. Sustainability, therefore, emerges through a sequential and interactive process: institutional coordination enables coherent branding, service provision, and experience design, while experiential value creation mediates the relationship between governance structures and sustainability outcomes. This integrated framework demonstrates that sustainable wine tourism is neither institution-led nor experience-led in isolation, but is produced through their interaction across the wine tourism value chain (Figure 1).

2.2 Empirical evidence

At the global level, empirical studies consistently demonstrate that wine tourism is an important driver of rural development, destination competitiveness, and tourism diversification when supported by strong value chain linkages and well-designed visitor experiences. Evidence from various regions indicates that wine tourism contributes to economic growth by increasing visitor expenditure, generating employment, and strengthening interconnections among the hospitality, transport, retail, and cultural industries (Szolnoki et al., 2022; Marco-Lajara et al., 2023). From a broader perspective, Bole (2024) highlights that sustainable wine tourism emerges from the interaction of supportive institutional frameworks, context-specific best practices, experiential value creation, and the active involvement of local stakeholders across the wine tourism value chain. These studies further emphasise that sustainability should be embedded in core business operations without undermining economic objectives, while also encouraging tourists to adopt more responsible, sustainable behaviours (Bole, 2024; Szolnoki et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence from leading wine-producing countries further illustrates the economic and experiential relevance of wine tourism. Countries such as France, Italy, and Spain continue to attract large numbers of international visitors and are also among the world's major wine producers. Although it is difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between tourist arrivals and wine consumption alone, research clearly shows that wine tourism enhances destination attractiveness. Through wine-related activities and cultural engagement, it stimulates higher tourist spending and enriches visitor experiences, thereby making a meaningful contribution to national economic development and related sectors (Rosen & Miculan Bradley, 2024). Studies also underline the growing importance of sustainability-oriented practices in shaping tourist preferences and destination performance. Tourists increasingly value environmental responsibility, local authenticity, and socially embedded experiences, which influence their willingness to visit, spend, and return to wine destinations (Amarando et al., 2019a; Alessandri et al., 2024; Fantechi et al., 2025). Research grounded in the Experience Economy perspective demonstrates that experiential components such as wine tasting, storytelling, gastronomy, and cultural interaction play a central role in enhancing

visitor satisfaction and destination loyalty (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012; Yeoman et al., 2019; Gómez-Carmona et al., 2023).

Despite these benefits, adopting sustainable practices in wine tourism is not without challenges. Amarando et al. (2019a) show that cost constraints, limited awareness, and weak institutional support often hinder the implementation of environmentally sustainable practices, even where long-term economic and reputational gains are evident. In a related study, Amarando et al. (2019b) argue that the long-term development of wine tourism depends on integrated research and policy approaches that link sustainability, experiential value creation, and institutional coordination.

Empirical work further suggests that collaboration with customers and efficiency in production processes enhance innovation capacity within the wine sector (Dias Lopes et al., 2025). In this regard, Fantechi et al. (2025) provide evidence that wine consumers differ significantly in how they perceive and value environmental labels, depending on their personal priorities, cultural associations, and perceived relevance of specific sustainability attributes. While some consumers show little interest in environmental labels, others selectively value those linked to health or resource conservation. Importantly, for a culturally embedded product such as wine, environmental messages are most effective when communicated in ways that respect tradition, authenticity, and artisanal identity.

The literature emphasises the need to balance tradition and innovation in wine tourism development. Traditional elements, including winemaking heritage, established viticulture practices, and historical narratives, remain central to destination identity and authenticity (Alonso et al., 2023). At the same time, the adoption of modern technologies, innovative service design, advanced management systems, and contemporary marketing approaches is increasingly vital for enhancing efficiency, service quality, and competitiveness. Integrating tradition with innovation enables wine tourism destinations to respond to changing market expectations while preserving cultural distinctiveness, thereby supporting long-term sustainability. Evidence from emerging wine regions further highlights the role of production-side strategies. Masset and Weisskopf (2024) show that grape varietal diversification reduces production and market risks, stabilises revenues, and strengthens competitiveness. In developing contexts, such diversification supports a broader range of tourism experiences and enhances resilience to climatic and market uncertainties.

Empirical evidence on wine tourism in emerging and developing economies remains limited. Existing studies indicate that wine tourism in such contexts often evolves in a fragmented way, shaped by weak institutional coordination, infrastructure constraints, and poor integration with established tourism markets (Bole, 2024; Chalkidou & Skourtis, 2024). In Tanzania, the available literature is scarce and primarily descriptive, providing little quantitative understanding of how value chain components interact to influence sustainability outcomes (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2023, 2024). Moreover, wine tourism is not identified as a

distinct category in official tourism statistics, constraining informed planning. This study responds to this gap by applying an expert-weighted value chain approach to prioritise the key elements required for sustainable wine tourism development in Tanzania.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Research design

This study employed a quantitative, expert-based research design to examine how wine tourism in Tanzania can be developed into a sustainable and integrated value chain. This design was considered appropriate because wine tourism remains at an early stage of development in the country, and sector-specific secondary data are limited and insufficiently disaggregated. In such contexts, systematically collected expert judgement provides a credible and widely accepted basis for empirical analysis and planning-oriented research (Hadjigeorgiou et al., 2022). Thus, the Expert elicitation was considered appropriate because structured and transparent expert judgement can yield scientifically credible evidence in data-scarce contexts (O'Hagan, 2019).

The study was grounded in expert elicitation methods and implemented through a structured questionnaire. Expert elicitation is particularly suitable where conventional datasets are incomplete or unavailable, as it allows informed professional assessments to be translated into quantitative measures for decision-making and planning (Cooke, 1991). This approach enabled the study to capture the complex, context-specific dimensions of wine tourism development that are not readily observable in secondary data alone. The research design focused on generating weighted priorities for key components of the wine tourism value chain rather than on building consensus through iterative rounds. Expert assessments were therefore analysed using a structured aggregation approach combined with multi-criteria decision analysis to support evidence-based planning and policy prioritisation (Saaty, 2008).

3.2 Study area

This study was conducted in Dodoma Region, Tanzania, which is nationally recognised as the country's leading area for grape production and is increasingly emerging as an essential centre for wine production and wine-related tourism activities (Nalyoto & Ngaruko, 2023; URT, 2025a; Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024). The region hosts extensive vineyards, wine-processing facilities, wine festivals, and a range of institutional actors that support tourism and agribusiness development, making it a suitable context for examining the sustainable development of wine tourism (Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2023). In addition, the Dodoma Regional Tourism Development Strategy identifies wine tourism as a priority sector to position the region

as a growing business hub and a strategic economic growth pole for East and Central Africa (URT, 2025a). This policy focus reflects wine tourism's capacity to stimulate local economic development and strengthen Tanzania's integration into the global wine economy (URT, 2025a; Lubawa & Osabuohien, 2024). Although the study area is the Dodoma Region, the expert panel included participants with both region-specific and national or multi-regional experience. This broader expertise was intentionally incorporated to enrich the assessment of wine tourism development in Dodoma through comparative and policy-informed perspectives.

3.3 Expert selection and sampling

This study relied on primary data collected from a purposively selected panel of experts with direct professional involvement in wine tourism and its associated value chain activities in Tanzania. Given the exploratory and planning-oriented focus of the research, a judgement-based sampling strategy was adopted to prioritise informed and context-specific expertise over statistical representativeness. This approach is widely recognised in expert-led and Delphi-type studies, particularly where specialised knowledge is required to support strategic and policy-relevant analysis (Hadjigeorgiou et al., 2022; Palinkas et al., 2015).

The expert identification process followed three sequential stages. First, a mapping exercise was conducted to identify key stakeholder categories across the wine tourism value chain in Dodoma Region and at the national level. These categories included wine producers and processors, tourism and hospitality operators, distributors and retailers, government officials responsible for tourism and regional development, and regulatory or coordinating institutions. Second, clearly defined inclusion criteria were applied to ensure that participation was limited to individuals with demonstrable expertise and decision-relevant knowledge. Eligible participants were required to have a minimum of five years' professional experience within the wine or tourism sectors. In addition, they were expected to occupy managerial, strategic, regulatory, or advisory positions involving substantive decision-making responsibilities. Selection further required evidence of active engagement in key segments of the wine tourism value chain, including wine production and processing, tourism operations, destination planning, marketing and distribution, or institutional governance. Finally, all participants were required to possess direct and context-specific knowledge of the Tanzanian wine tourism environment. These criteria ensured that the expert panel reflected informed, practice-oriented perspectives capable of supporting robust and policy-relevant analysis. Individuals without direct professional engagement in the wine or tourism value chain, or those operating solely in peripheral roles without strategic involvement, were excluded.

Third, experts who satisfied the eligibility criteria were approached through established professional networks, institutional directories and relevant sectoral associations, from which official email addresses

and contact telephone numbers were obtained. The structured questionnaire was distributed electronically via email, and follow-up reminders were sent via mobile to encourage timely completion. The invitation clearly outlined the study's purpose, the methodological framework underpinning the research (RTD-AHP), and the expectation that responses would reflect informed professional judgment. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and the anonymised treatment of their contributions throughout the research process.

In total, 46 experts satisfied the eligibility requirements and consented to participate in the study. This panel size is consistent with established guidance on expert elicitation and Delphi-based methodologies, which prioritise the depth, diversity and relevance of specialist knowledge over numerical scale (EFSA, 2014; O'Hagan, 2019). The final composition reflected a deliberate balance across core segments of the wine tourism value chain, including production, tourism services, market actors and public governance institutions, thereby enhancing the analytical strength and sectoral breadth of the assessment. To further support methodological rigour, detailed background information was collected from each participant, including years of professional experience, institutional affiliation and primary functional role within wine tourism (see Tables 1 and 2). This profiling process provided an additional layer of verification, ensuring that the derived weightings were grounded in informed, practice-based expertise rather than general opinion.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection was undertaken between March 2025 and September 2025. A structured online questionnaire was administered to a purposefully selected panel of experts engaged in wine tourism and its associated value chain in Tanzania. The use of a digital instrument was considered appropriate given the participants' geographical dispersion and the methodological requirements of expert elicitation. Online administration enhances response standardisation, preserves anonymity, and reduces potential dominance bias, thereby supporting the reliability of informed expert judgment (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Rowe & Wright, 2001). The questionnaire was developed following a comprehensive review of the literature on wine tourism, sustainable tourism, and value chains to ensure conceptual alignment with the study's analytical framework. The instrument was carefully structured to reflect the theoretical foundations and decision-support objectives underpinning the RTD-AHP design.

The questionnaire comprised five interrelated sections. Section A collected data on respondents' professional roles, sectoral affiliations, years of experience, and levels of involvement in wine tourism activities. This information was collected to establish the credibility and relevance of expert participation rather than for statistical profiling, consistent with methodological guidance for Delphi-based studies

(Hasson et al., 2000; Palinkas et al., 2015). Section B constituted the core analytical component of the study and employed pairwise comparison questions based on the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). Experts assessed seven elements of the wine tourism value chain using Saaty's 1–9 scale, which facilitates structured evaluation of relative importance among decision criteria. The AHP is widely used in tourism and agribusiness research because it systematically converts qualitative expert judgements into quantitative priority weights and enables the assessment of logical consistency in expert responses (Saaty, 1980).

Section C complemented the AHP structure by incorporating Likert-scale priority ratings, enabling experts to assess the perceived urgency of each value chain component for sustainable wine tourism development. The combined use of pairwise comparisons and rating scales is recognised as an effective way of capturing both relative importance and perceived priority, thereby strengthening analytical robustness in multi-criteria decision-making studies (Belton & Stewart, 2002). Section D included theory-informed perception statements derived from Institutional Theory and Experience Economy Theory, capturing expert views on governance, coordination, experiential value creation, and destination branding. Incorporating theory-based items within expert surveys enhances interpretability and ensures alignment between empirical measurement and conceptual frameworks (North, 1990; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Greenwood, 2007). Section E included optional open-ended questions, enabling experts to articulate critical success factors and policy priorities that structured scales may not fully capture.

The data collection process used a Real-Time Delphi (RTD) approach, a digitally facilitated evolution of the classical Delphi method. RTD enables experts to provide judgments anonymously while receiving immediate, aggregated feedback on group responses, thereby encouraging reflection and informed revision without requiring multiple survey rounds (Gordon & Pease, 2006; Gnatzy et al., 2011). After submitting their initial assessments, participants could review summary statistics reflecting the panel's collective position and, where appropriate, revise their responses. This process reduces dominance bias, supports convergence of expert opinion, and improves efficiency, particularly in complex planning contexts such as sustainable wine tourism (Massuça et al., 2025).

The RTD procedure adhered to the core principles of the Delphi method, including anonymity, controlled feedback, and structured aggregation of responses, which are essential for methodological rigour in expert-based research and are preserved in contemporary Delphi applications (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Hasson et al., 2025). The online, real-time nature of the approach reduced respondent burden and facilitated participation by experts from diverse institutional and geographic backgrounds. Recent applications in the wine sector demonstrate that RTD is particularly well suited to prioritising sustainability-related indicators and value chain components in contexts characterised by limited empirical data and a high reliance on expert knowledge.

3.5 Analytical framework

The analysis was guided by an expert-weighted value chain framework combined with the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). This framework was adopted to support structured decision-making in a complex planning context characterised by multiple interrelated components and competing priorities. AHP is widely applied in tourism planning, value chain analysis, and policy prioritisation because it enables systematic comparison of criteria and the derivation of relative priorities based on expert judgement (Saaty, 1980; Saaty, 2008). Saaty et al. (2022) show that the Analytic Hierarchy Process provides a rigorous framework for structuring complex decisions, quantifying intangible factors through expert judgement, and generating transparent and consistent priority rankings for planning and policy analysis.

To operationalise the analysis, the wine tourism system was organised into a hierarchical decision structure comprising three levels: the overall goal of planning sustainable wine tourism development in Tanzania; key wine tourism value chain components, which serve as decision criteria; and, where applicable, specific activities within each element, which serve as sub-criteria. Hierarchical structuring is a core requirement of AHP and ensures analytical transparency, logical consistency, and replicability (Saaty, 1980; Ishizaka & Labib, 2011).

Experts assessed the relative importance of the identified value chain components using structured pairwise comparisons embedded in the questionnaire. Individual judgements were aggregated and analysed using standard AHP procedures to compute relative weights for each element. These weights reflect experts' perceptions of each component's contribution to sustainable wine tourism development and were integrated into the value chain framework to inform priority setting, strategic planning, and policy formulation (Saaty, 2008).

3.6 Data analysis techniques

Data analysis was conducted using a structured, multi-stage analytical procedure designed to transform expert judgements into quantitative priorities for sustainable wine tourism planning. The approach combined the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) with the Weighted Scoring Method (WSM), both widely applied in tourism planning, sustainability assessment, and policy-oriented decision analysis, where multiple, interrelated criteria must be evaluated simultaneously.

First, the AHP was applied to derive relative weights for the components of the wine tourism value chain based on expert pairwise comparisons. Individual judgements provided by the experts were aggregated using the geometric mean method, which is recommended for synthesising group judgements in AHP applications because it preserves reciprocal properties and reduces the influence of extreme values. The aggregated pairwise comparison matrix was then analysed using the eigenvector method to compute

priority weights, representing the relative contribution of each value chain component to sustainable wine tourism development (Saaty, 1980; Saaty, 2008).

Second, the internal consistency of expert judgements was assessed using the Consistency Index (CI) and Consistency Ratio (CR). Consistency testing is a fundamental requirement of AHP, as it evaluates whether expert comparisons follow a logically coherent pattern. In line with established methodological guidance, a threshold of $CR \leq 0.10$ was adopted to confirm acceptable consistency and reliability of the aggregated judgements. Matrices exceeding this threshold were reviewed to ensure analytical robustness and credibility of the derived weights (Saaty, 1980; Ishizaka & Labib, 2011).

Third, the Weighted Scoring Method was employed to integrate the AHP-derived weights with the mean Likert-scale priority ratings obtained from experts. This step enabled the analysis to capture both the structural importance of each value chain component, as reflected by AHP weights, and its perceived urgency for sustainable wine tourism development, as reflected by expert ratings. Composite priority scores were computed by multiplying each component's AHP weight by its corresponding mean rating. The combined AHP-WSM approach is recognised as an effective technique for enhancing interpretability and policy relevance in multi-criteria sustainability assessments (Belton & Stewart, 2002; de Moraes et al., 2023). Finally, the resulting weighted scores were used to rank the wine tourism value chain components, providing a clear hierarchy of priorities to inform planning, resource allocation, and policy intervention. This integrative analytical approach ensured transparency, methodological rigour, and alignment with best practice in expert-based decision-support research, particularly in contexts characterised by limited empirical data and a firm reliance on professional judgement (O'Hagan, 2019).

Consistent with the integrated theoretical framework, the analysis prioritises value-chain components that reflect both institutional enabling conditions and experiential value creation mechanisms. The AHP-WSM approach, therefore, captures not only the relative importance of individual activities but also the perceived roles of governance and experience design in shaping sustainable wine tourism development at the destination level.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Profile and composition of the expert panel

The analysis is based on 46 purposively selected experts representing key segments of Tanzania's wine tourism value chain, including wine processors, distributors, tourism managers, and senior public officials. The panel demonstrates a high level of professional experience, with 76.1% of respondents reporting more than 10 years of sector experience. In particular, 39.1% had 11–15 years of experience and 37.0% had

over 15 years, indicating strong familiarity with sectoral dynamics and long-term strategic issues, which is essential for robust AHP-based judgements. Regarding institutional affiliation, the panel was predominantly private-sector oriented (54.3%), reflecting the central role of private actors in wine production and the delivery of tourism services. It was complemented by public sector experts (30.4%), who contributed regulatory and policy perspectives, and semi-autonomous agencies (15.3%), which provided technical and coordination insights. This institutional spread ensures balanced representation of market-driven and governance-related viewpoints.

In terms of geographic scope, 60.9% of experts reported experience primarily within the Dodoma Region, the study area, ensuring strong local and context-specific knowledge. The remaining 39.1% possessed national or multi-regional expertise, adding comparative and policy-level perspectives that enhance analytical depth while maintaining a clear regional focus. Finally, the panel included experts engaged in operations and management (45.7%), policy, regulation, and planning (32.6%), and strategic advisory and coordination roles (21.7%). This distribution captures operational realities, institutional frameworks, and strategic considerations, thereby strengthening the credibility and comprehensiveness of the weighted analysis.

TABLE 1. PROFILE OF EXPERTS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Profile characteristic	Category	n	%
Years of professional experience	5–10 years	11	23.9
	11–15 years	18	39.1
	More than 15 years	17	37.0
Institutional affiliation	Private sector	25	54.3
	Public sector	14	30.4
	Semi-autonomous agencies	7	15.3
Geographic scope of expertise	Dodoma Region	28	60.9
	National / multi-regional	18	39.1
Primary role in wine tourism	Operations and management	21	45.7
	Policy, regulation and planning	15	32.6
	Strategic advisory and coordination	10	21.7

Source: Author's research

Table 2 presents the functional distribution of experts across the wine tourism value chain. Wine-processing owners and managers constituted the largest group, with 14 experts (30.4%), underscoring the centrality of production and processing activities in shaping wine tourism development. Government officials accounted for ten experts (21.7%), ensuring a strong representation of policy, planning, and regional governance perspectives relevant to destination development. Experts from tourism enterprises, including tour operators and hospitality providers, comprised nine respondents (19.6%) and contributed operational insights into visitor experiences and service delivery. Wine distributors and large retailers accounted for eight experts (17.4%), reflecting the importance of market access, distribution channels, and consumer linkages within the value chain. The remaining five experts (10.9%) were drawn from regulatory

and institutional agencies, providing technical expertise related to standards, coordination, and institutional oversight. This functional spread demonstrates a well-balanced expert panel, integrating production, market, service, and governance roles. Such diversity strengthens the validity of the AHP-based weighting by ensuring that prioritisation reflects interlinked perspectives across the wine tourism value chain.

TABLE 2. FUNCTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF EXPERTS ACROSS THE WINE TOURISM VALUE CHAIN

Value chain actor category	Description	n	%
Wine processing owners/managers	Family-owned and commercial wine processors	14	30.4
Wine distributors and large retailers	Supermarkets and specialised wine outlets	8	17.4
Tourism enterprise owners/managers	Tour operators and hospitality providers	9	19.6
Government officials	Tourism and regional administration	10	21.7
Regulatory and institutional agencies	Standards and coordinating institutions	5	10.9
Total		46	100.0

Source: Author's research

4.2 Expert-weighted priorities across the wine tourism value chain

Table 3 presents the outcomes of the AHP-WSM analysis, revealing a clear ranking of the value-chain components considered critical to the sustainable development of wine tourism in Tanzania. Institutional, regulatory, and policy support emerged as the highest priority, with an AHP weight of 0.20 (20.0%), a mean priority rating of 4.6, and the highest weighted score (0.92). This result indicates strong expert consensus on the foundational role of effective governance, policy coherence, and regulatory frameworks in enabling coordinated wine tourism development. Marketing and branding ranked second, with a weight of 0.17 (17.0%) and a mean rating of 4.5, yielding a weighted score of 0.77. The results reflect the perceived importance of destination visibility, market positioning, and brand differentiation in enhancing competitiveness. Wine tourism experiences, including tastings, vineyard tours, and experiential activities, ranked third with a weight of 0.15 (15.0%). Despite recording the highest mean rating (4.7) among all components, its overall priority was moderated by its relative weight, yielding a weighted score of 0.71.

Hospitality and tourism services were assigned a weight of 0.14 (14.0%) and a mean rating of 4.6, resulting in a weighted score of 0.64, underscoring their role in shaping service quality and visitor satisfaction. Supporting infrastructure, including transport and utilities, followed closely with a weight of 0.13 (13.0%), a mean rating of 4.6, and a weighted score of 0.60, highlighting its enabling function across the value chain. At the production level, wine production and processing accounted for 0.12 (12.0%) and had a mean rating of 4.5, yielding a weighted score of 0.54. Although recognised as essential, this component was perceived as less critical to tourism sustainability than governance and market-oriented factors. Distribution and retail ranked lowest, with a weight of 0.09 (9.0%), the lowest mean rating (4.2), and a weighted score of 0.38, suggesting comparatively weaker influence on destination-level wine tourism outcomes. The consistency ratio for the final AHP matrix, therefore, remained within the acceptable threshold ($CR \leq 0.10$), confirming the internal coherence of expert judgements. The results

indicate a clear expert preference for institutional and market-enabling components over downstream operational activities in shaping sustainable wine tourism development.

TABLE 3. EXPERT-WEIGHTED VALUE CHAIN COMPONENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE WINE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Value chain component	AHP weight (w_i)	Normalised weight (%)	Mean priority rating (1–5)	Weighted score ($w_i \times S_i$)	Rank
Institutional, regulatory and policy support	0.20	20.0	4.6	0.92	1
Marketing and branding	0.17	17.0	4.5	0.77	2
Wine tourism experiences	0.15	15.0	4.7	0.71	3
Hospitality and tourism services	0.14	14.0	4.6	0.64	4
Supporting infrastructure	0.13	13.0	4.6	0.60	5
Wine production and processing	0.12	12.0	4.5	0.54	6
Distribution and retail	0.09	9.0	4.2	0.38	7
Total	1.00	100.0			

Note. AHP weights were derived from aggregated pairwise comparisons using the geometric mean. The consistency ratio for the final matrix was within the acceptable threshold (CR ≤ 0.10).

Source: Author's research

The prioritisation of institutional, regulatory, and policy support as the most critical value-chain component reflects the foundational role of governance structures within the proposed framework. Marketing and branding, hospitality services, and wine tourism experiences occupy intermediary positions, functioning as transmission mechanisms that translate institutional coordination into destination visibility and visitor engagement. In contrast, production-oriented components are assigned lower priority, reinforcing the view that wine tourism sustainability is shaped less by production capacity and more by the interaction of institutional and experiential elements across the value chain.

5. DISCUSSION

The discussion interprets the empirical findings through the integrated lens of Institutional Theory and Experience Economy Theory, as outlined in the conceptual framework. The results demonstrate that sustainable wine tourism planning in Tanzania is driven by a sequential interaction between governance structures and experiential value creation, rather than by production activities alone. Institutional coordination establishes the conditions under which marketing, hospitality, and experience design can function coherently. At the same time, experiential components mediate the relationship between governance quality and sustainability outcomes, including destination competitiveness, visitor satisfaction, and long-term viability.

The strong priority assigned to institutional, regulatory, and policy support highlights the foundational role of governance in shaping sustainable outcomes across the wine tourism value chain. Institutions do not merely regulate activity; they structure coordination among stakeholders, guide investment decisions, and establish the conditions under which marketing, hospitality, and experience development can function

coherently. Evidence from rural wine regions shows that successful wine tourism development has relied less on expanding production capacity and more on aligning institutional frameworks, coordinating actors, and supporting experience-based differentiation (Almeida et al., 2023). In this respect, institutional support serves as an enabling mechanism that integrates otherwise fragmented value chain components into a functioning tourism system.

This institutional foundation is closely linked to marketing and branding, which emerged as the second-most-important component. Branding does not operate independently of governance; instead, it translates institutional coordination into market visibility and destination identity (Depetris-Chauvin & Meidell, 2025). Prior studies on wine routes demonstrate that destination competitiveness depends on collective branding and coordinated leadership, rather than on the marketing efforts of individual wineries (Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004). When branding is embedded within a coherent institutional framework, it allows local resources, cultural heritage, and wine production to be communicated as a unified destination offering, thereby strengthening market positioning and competitiveness.

The prioritisation of wine tourism experiences over wine production further reinforces the importance of an experience-oriented planning logic. Experiences such as wine tasting, vineyard tours, storytelling, festivals, and cultural interaction provide the primary interface through which visitors engage with wine destinations (Bail et al., 2026). Empirical evidence suggests that wine tourism contributes to sustainability primarily through corporate legitimacy and environmentally responsible practices, rather than through tourism activity alone (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2024). Legitimacy, in this sense, reflects regulatory alignment, stakeholder trust, and social acceptance, all of which are shaped by institutional frameworks and expressed through visitor experiences. It thus helps explain why experts placed greater emphasis on governance and experience design than on production scale or retail capacity.

Within this experiential system, hospitality and tourism services play a critical enabling role, shaping how visitors access, interpret, and sustain wine tourism experiences. While hospitality services such as accommodation, food provision, transport, and visitor management do not generate experiential value in isolation, they strongly influence visitors' comfort, length of stay, and overall satisfaction, thereby amplifying the effectiveness of experience design (Charters & O'Neill, 2001; Shin & Nicolau, 2022). Empirical evidence from wine tourism contexts shows that supplementary services and service quality significantly enhance visitors' behavioural intentions when aligned with core experiential offerings (Byrd et al., 2016), from a destination perspective, supporting services and infrastructure function as enabling conditions that strengthen competitiveness by facilitating access, consistency, and service delivery, rather than as primary attractions in themselves (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007). Hospitality, therefore, operates as a connective layer linking institutional coordination and destination branding with lived visitor

experiences, reinforcing sustainability outcomes without functioning as a stand-alone driver of wine tourism development.

The broader literature supports this integrated perspective. Research on cultural and creative industries shows that wine tourism can simultaneously fulfil visitors' demand for meaningful experiences and contribute to regional economic and social development, provided that tourism and wine activities are strategically integrated (Carrasco et al., 2019). However, these benefits depend on the quality of experiential delivery and the extent to which visitors are emotionally engaged. Behavioural studies further demonstrate that emotions and visitor involvement are central determinants of satisfaction, attachment, and future behavioural intentions (Santos et al., 2022). Experiences that stimulate emotional connection and active participation are therefore more likely to generate repeat visitation and positive destination reputation.

The findings and supporting evidence, therefore, point to a clear conclusion: sustainable wine tourism is primarily an institutional and experiential challenge rather than a production-driven one. Effective governance enables coherent branding, experience design, and hospitality provision, which together generate legitimacy, visitor engagement, and long-term sustainability. For emerging wine tourism destinations such as Tanzania, this implies that planning efforts should prioritise integrated value-chain approaches in which institutions, markets, experiences, and services are developed in tandem rather than in isolation (Bail et al., 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings extend existing wine tourism literature by empirically demonstrating that, in emerging destinations, institutional quality and experiential design outweigh production intensity in shaping sustainable tourism outcomes. By positioning experiential components as mediating mechanisms rather than independent drivers, the study advances an integrated understanding of how governance structures are translated into economic, social, and destination-level sustainability. This contribution responds to calls for more theory-driven, value-chain-oriented analyses of wine tourism in developing contexts.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined sustainable wine tourism development in Tanzania by conceptualising sustainability as the outcome of interactions among institutional and experiential mechanisms across the wine tourism value chain. The findings demonstrate that sustainable wine tourism in new areas is not built on wine production alone, but on strong institutions, sound marketing strategies, and a quality tourist experience, while being considered as a system that cares for the environment, society, and the long-term

development of the region. By applying an expert-weighted AHP–WSM framework grounded in Institutional Theory and Experience Economy Theory, the study advances tourism value chain analysis by showing how governance structures and experiential value creation jointly shape sustainability outcomes. From a practical perspective, the results provide a clear decision-support logic for managers and planners, highlighting the need to prioritise destination branding, experiential offerings, and service quality over narrow production-focused strategies. Wine tourism enterprises and hospitality providers are encouraged to align experience design, service delivery, and infrastructure investment to enhance visitor satisfaction, length of stay, and spending. At the policy level, the findings underscore the importance of coherent and coordinated public leadership across tourism, agriculture, and regional development portfolios, supported by clear regulatory frameworks and effective public–private collaboration. Recognising wine tourism as a cross-sector, experience-led activity is essential for maximising its contribution to rural development, destination competitiveness, and long-term sustainability in Tanzania.

6.1 Limitations and directions for future research

Notwithstanding its contributions to the understanding of sustainable wine tourism planning in Tanzania, this study is subject to several limitations that should be recognised when interpreting the findings. The analysis relies on structured expert judgment within an RTD–AHP framework, which, while appropriate in data-scarce and emerging-sector contexts, does not capture the perspectives of tourists, local communities, or small-scale enterprises, whose experiences and behaviours also shape destination sustainability. In addition, the purposive and criterion-based selection of experts, although methodologically justified, limits the statistical generalisability of the results beyond similar institutional and market conditions. The study's primary empirical focus on the Dodoma Region further constrains the ability to account for regional disparities in infrastructure, governance capacity, and tourism integration across Tanzania.

Future research should extend beyond expert-based assessments by adopting mixed-method and multi-stakeholder approaches, including visitor surveys, firm-level performance data, and community perspectives. Such approaches would strengthen empirical grounding and support more context-sensitive policy and destination planning for sustainable wine tourism development.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The author confirms that there are no financial interests or personal connections that could have influenced the research or the conclusions presented in this paper.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The author declares that no Generative AI tools or AI-assisted technologies were used in writing or preparing this manuscript.

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