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UNDERSTANDING WINE PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR: A MARKET SEGMENTATION PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The main aim of this paper is to propose a market segmentation approach based on all the phases of wine purchase and consumption process. To this aim, we investigated the main components of wine purchasing behavior and the socio-demographic profile of those who are both buyers and consumers of wine.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Starting from consumer behavior literature, we identified six phases in the purchasing process and we operationalized each of them. A structured questionnaire was developed according to such framework and an empirical study was carried out. We realized 630 interviews to wine buyers and consumers in Campania, a region in the South of Italy. Then, we performed a cluster analysis with the specific aim of identifying the most relevant market segments.

Findings: The cluster analysis revealed the existence of four main market segments. We provide adetailed description of demographic and behavior alfeatures characterizing the identified segments.

Practical Implications: The proposed framework may be helpful in addressing effectively marketing strategies. By characterizing different groups of consumers on the base of multiple variables concerning each phase of the purchasing process, the proposed segmentation has implications for strategic (i.e. positioning) and operative (i.e. product, price, place, promotion) marketing decisions.

KEYWORDS: Wine, Market Segmentation, Consumer Behavior, Cluster Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades wine market has been characterized by radical changes on both sides of supply and demand, thus making competition among wine producers more and more complex and challenging. European countries traditionally dominating word wine industry, such as Italy, France and Spain, have increasingly faced an intense competitive pressure along with a decrease of wine consumption, while the “New World” countries, including United States, Australia, South Africa, Chile and Argentina, have experienced a significant growth both in production and consumption (Anderson, 2004). Important changes also affected consumer behavior, that has evolved from traditional to experimental and is always more influenced by complex factors affecting psychological and social needs (Smith and Solgaard, 2000; Groves, Charters, Reynolds, 2000; Moulton and Lapsley, 2001; Howard and Stonier, 2002). Due to the globalization forces, the dissimilarity of wine consumption among geographical areas has significantly narrowed in recent years (Smith and Mitry, 2007). At the same time, quality has become a central element in wine purchase decision, especially in traditional wine-drinking countries, where customers have shifted toward wines with regional or vineyard designations. Within the present scenario, a key challenge for wine producers is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of wine consumer’s behavior and buying habits. Research into this field has made significant strides in recent years, as confirmed by several contributions aimed to determine consumer's attitudes towards wine.

Since heterogeneity seems to be a key element of present wine markets, most studies aimedat understanding wine consumer's behavior are based on segmentation methodologies (Johnson et al., 1991; Bruwer et al., 2002; Thach and Olsen, 2006; Kolyesnikova et al., 2008). Indeed, as clearly stated in marketing studies, in order to better understand wine consumers' needs and buying habits along with wine characteristics that match more closely their preferences it is necessary to divide markets in different segments, to reach with specific marketing instruments (Rouzet and Seguin, 2004).

Given the diversity of objectives within the research stream focused on wine consumers' behavior, several methods have been used to segment wine markets, generally falling into the classic marketing segmentation variables: geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral (Kotlerand Keller, 2006). For instance, in his groundwork on Australian market segmentation, McKinna (1987) identified consumer clusters by using psychographic variables based on lifestyle. His work was then expanded and empirically tested by Spawton (1991), who investigated wine purchase behavior by focusing on consumer's expectations and risk-reduction strategies, thus identifying four major segments: "connoisseurs", "aspirational drinkers", "beverage wine consumers", "new wine drinkers". A segmentation approach based on psychographic variables was also used by Bruwer et al. (2001) that recognized lifestyle as an effective element to understand wine consumption patterns and profiles. More specifically, by using a new wine-related lifestyle measurement instrument they identified the following wine consumers' segments in the Australian domestic market: "purposeful inconspicuous premium wine drinkers", "ritual oriented conspicuous wine enthusiasts", "enjoyment seeking social wine drinkers", "fashion/image oriented wine drinkers" and "basic wine drinkers".

Segmentation based on lifestyle has also been applied in the US, but with the specific aim of highlighting motivations and occasions of consumption (Thach and Olsen, 2005). Geographic variables are constantly adopted by international institutions, such as the Organization Internationale de la Vigne et du Vin (OIV) and the Wine Institute, that usually classify wine consumption data with reference to countries or regions where consumers live. Some remarkable contributions have been produced by adopting a behavioral segmentation approach, which is normally based on variables such as occasions, benefits, brand loyalty, usage rate and so on. For example, Johnson et al. (1991) applied a behaviorally based segmentation scheme coupled with a conjoint analysis, in order to determine critical choice drivers for each specific segment identified through consumer's behavior aspects. In their literature review on wine market segmentation, Thach and Olsen (2006) point out that the Wine Market Council in the United States has conducted some of the most significant behavioral segmentation studies over the past decade. In particular, US market was segmented by rate of consumption and five major segments were identified: "super-core", "core", "marginal", "non-adopters" and "non-drinkers". In most cases, behavioral bases have been often combined with demographic ones, whose role in classifying wine consumer's behavior is also well documented in literature (Spawton, 1991). Indeed, research also embodies several contributions aimed to compare attitudes towards wine according to age or sex. An exploratory study on young wine consumers' behavior is provided by Mattiacci et al. (2006) that investigated the cognitive elements influencing this particular slice of market. Both behavioral and demographic variables were also used in a segmentation study conducted in New Zealand by Thomas and Pickering (2003) that identified consumers' profile substantially basing on volumes purchased.

Even considering such relevant body of literature, research based on behavioral segmentation seems to be still lacking of an holistic analysis of the whole wine purchasing process. As marketing literature recognizes the multi-stage nature of purchasing and consumption process, we realized that in most cases only part of such process has been considered to get to a market segmentation. This study tries to contribute to partially fill this gap by adopting cluster analysis to reach a segmentation based on behavioral characteristics, from pre-purchase to post-purchase behavior, integrated with socio-demographic features. An empirical application of the developed framework is provided.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main aim of this paper is to propose a market segmentation approach based on the consideration of all the phases of wine purchasing process. To this aim, we investigated the main components of wine purchasing behaviour and the socio-demographic profile of those who are both buyers and consumers of wine. In order to gain useful information to guide the formulation and implementation of marketing strategies, marketing scholars and practioners agree on the opportunity to focus on the whole decision-making process of customers rather than solely on the buying decision. It is well known, in fact, that the buying process begins well before the decision itself and it has consequences of great interest that persist over time (Kotler and Keller, 2006). Similarly, we do believe that, in order to achieve a better understanding of the characteristics of different market segments, there is a need to analyse the single phases of the buying process to highlight what really categorizes different types of customers. As noted before, researches in the field of wine market segmentation seem to lack an holistic understanding of the single aspects determining consumer buying decision. We try to contribute to partially fill this gap in the literature by: selecting the variables relating to the whole buying process; and proposing an empirical application of the developed approach.

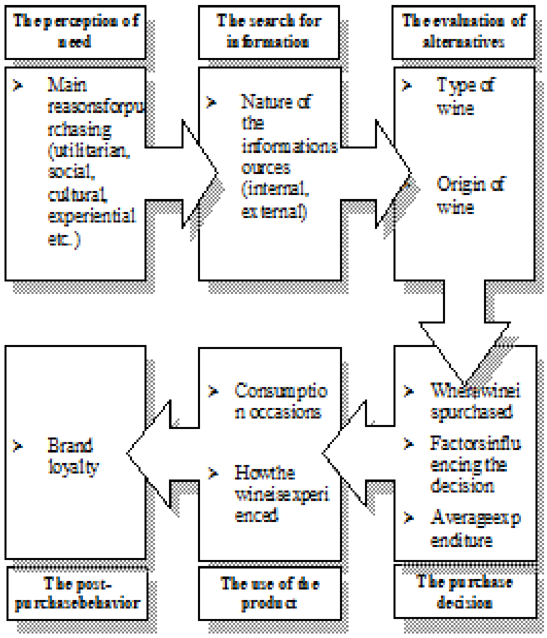

Figure 1: The Phases of Wine Purchasing and Consumption Process: The Concept of the Survey

Starting from consumer behavior literature, we identified six phases in the buying process and we operationalized each of them by selecting the variables to include in the survey figure 1:

- **The Perception of Need:** it is referred to the various situational factors and mental states that trigger the decision making process. We considered the main reasons behind the decision of buying wine, referring to the following components: the utilitarian (eg. “It’s good for my health”), the social (eg. “For reasons of status and social prestige”), the cultural and experiential component (eg. “For personal gratification”).

- **The Search for Information:** it includes all the actions taken by the potential customer to identify the most suitable product to solve the perceived problem. The survey considered two macro-categories of sources of information: internal or empirical sources (i.e. the experiences of consumers already had in the past), and external sources, in turn divided into personal sources (i.e. family and friends), commercial sources (i.e. advertising, promotions etc.) and public sources (i.e. films, books etc.).
- **The Evaluation of Alternatives:** it covers all products that make up the "consideration set" of the buyer. With reference to this aspect, the survey investigated the type of wine that is more often purchased (i.e. red, white etc.) and the origin of the wine purchased (i.e., regional wine, national wine, foreign wine etc.).
- **The Purchase Decision:** it is referred to all the choices and actions that lead to the actual purchase of the product. We considered: the place where the wine is purchased (i.e. winery, supermarket, restaurant etc.), the factors influencing such decision (i.e. price, quality, origin etc.), and the average expenditure for the purchase.
- **The Use of the Product:** it includes all of the factors that determine the overall enjoyment of wine. In particular we considered: the consumption occasions, also in relation to the frequency of consumption, and the way the wine is experienced (i.e. which attributes best describe the wine in the opinion of the consumers).
- **The Post-Purchase Behavior:** as it is well known, satisfaction with the product leads to the repurchase intention. We considered the declared loyalty to the type of wine and the brand loyalty to the wine usually bought.

We applied the developed approach to wine market segmentation in an empirical study, carried out in the Campania region (in the South of Italy). The study was focused on those responsible for the purchase of wine, which were also users of the product. We realized 630 interviews during the summer 2010. All individuals were approached by interviewers and informed about the purpose of the study and then asked if they wanted to participate in the survey. We considered two initial "filter-questions": only those who were both buyers and consumers of wine have been surveyed. We used a structured questionnaire, containing multiple-choice questions on the various stages of the process described before. In the last section major socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were identified. Sampled individuals were representative of the different profiles of wine buyer and consumer Table 1.

Table 1: Major Characteristics of Respondents

Sex	**%**		**Frequency of Purchase**	**%**
Male	57,3		Daily	8
Female	42,7		Once a week	35
			Once a month	25
Age	**%**		Rarely	32
18-24	14,4			
25-34	31,2		*"OccasionalBuyers"*	*57*
35-44	18,7		*"Regular Buyers"*	*43*
45-54	19,2			
55-64	10,9		**Frequency of Consumption**	**%**
65 and more	5,6		Daily	35
			Once a week	33
Education	**%**		Once a month	11
Primaryschool	3,3		Rarely	21
Secondaryschool	12,5			
High school	52,9		*"LightUsers"*	*32*
Degree	28,4		*"HeavyUsers"*	*68*
Post-Graduate	2,9			

In order to identify the most relevant segments of wine consumers, we performed a cluster analysis by using the software SPAD v56. Criteria used in hierarchical classification included both socio-demographic characteristics and behavioral variables.

PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR OF WINE

In line with our research aims, we collected information related to each of the six steps of the wine purchasing and consumption process. The main results of the survey are discussed below.

The Perception of Need

In order to evaluate the kind of need associated to wine purchase, we examined the reasons at the base of the buying-decision. To match the wine with the meals is the main reason to buy the product for the majority of respondent (66% of the sample), followed by the fact that wine is consumed by relatives, friends or partner (33%), it is used as a gift (28%), it is preferred to other alcoholic beverages (22%). It is also relevant the share of who decide to buy wine because it is considered healthy (15%), as a habit (9%), because it is satisfying (8%) or to appreciate its organoleptic properties. Other reasons, like social prestige, are less mentioned (4%). To the emotional-level, the decision to buy wine is related to the possibility to match it with the meals and, more generally, to family habits, that represent a clear signal of social and personal feeling.

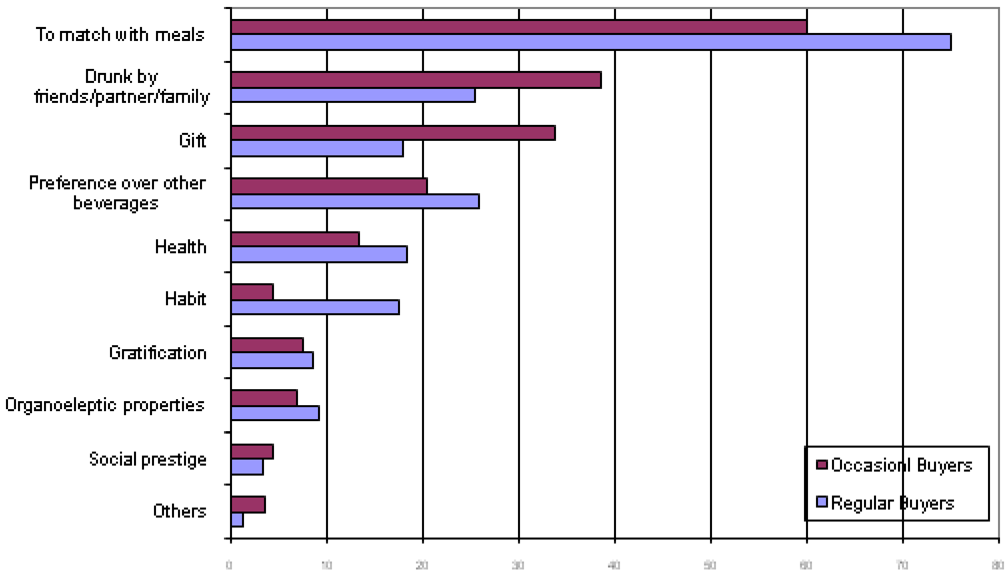

Figure 2: Distribution of the Respondents Ordered by the Reason to Purchase Wine

Some divergences can be observed when analysing separately the regular buyers from the occasional ones figure 2. On the one side, it is clear that for the occasional buyers it is important the influence of relatives and friends and also the choice to buy wine as a gift. On the other side, for the regular buyers the "cognitive" and rational reasons, like health, organoleptic properties and the preference over other alcoholic beverages, are much more important.

The Search for Information

The main sources to collect information about wine are the personal and empirical ones: past experiences of purchasing and consumption are the main sources of information (68%), followed by the word of mouth of friends and relatives (58%) and festivals (20%). The results show the lack of effectiveness of the traditional "above the line" communication activities: TV spot (4%), radio spot (0,3%) and billposting (2%). Very limited it is also the percentage of who consults newspaper and weekly magazines. Relatively more significant it is the percentage of who reads and consults specialized magazines (7%). It is also relevant, even though not comparable to the personal sources, the role played by Internet as source of information: it is, in fact, the channel used by the 9% of the respondents.

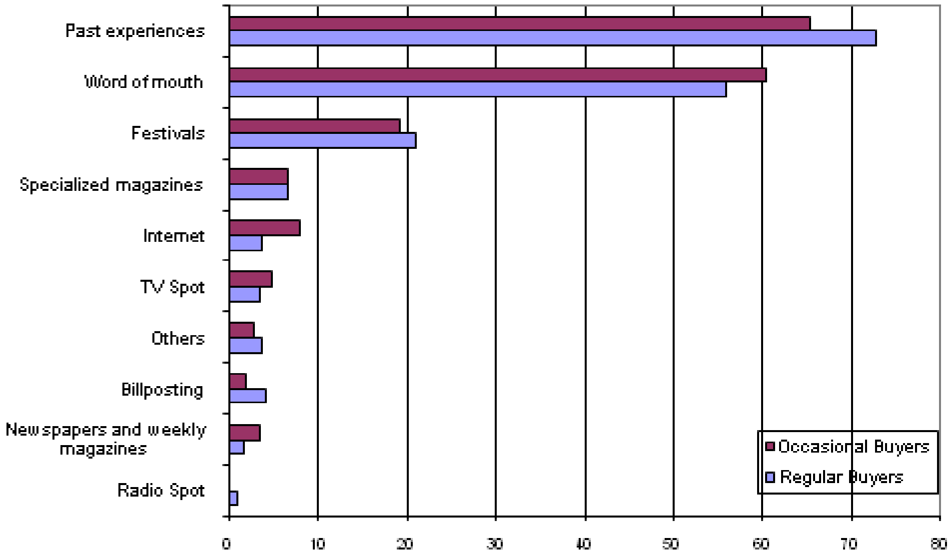

Figure 3: Distribution of the Respondents Ordered by the Source of Information

Internet plays a more significant role for the occasional buyers than the regular ones, considering that – as we expected – the impersonal sources have a relatively greater incidence over who had a less number of past and direct experiences of consumption figure 3.

The importance and effectiveness of the traditional commercial and public sources is, definitely, much more limited than the internal, personal and, also if not so evident, the web sources.

The Evaluation of Alternatives

We investigated the typology and the origin of the wine purchased. Considering the typology, a broad majority of the respondents (70%) expressed their preference for the red wine, instead of the white wine (20% of the sample), the sparkling wine (5%), and the rosé (about 2%).

Considering the origin of the wine, the majority of the respondents maintained to buy only Italian wines (64%). Important it is also the percentage of who buys only wine from his/her own region (20%). This percentage is superior to the percentage of who is indifferent between national or foreign wine (16%). Substantially valueless is the relevance of who claimed to prefer only foreign wines (0,2%). The localism and the affinity/proximity play, without doubt, a crucial role in the purchase decision.

The Purchase Decision

For this phase of the process we investigated the place where the wine is purchased, the factors taken into account at the moment of the choice and the average expenditure. Considering the place, our results clearly show the role played by the mass distribution channel (indicated by 38% of the respondents): the most common place where wine is purchased is the super- or hyper-market (38,4%), while it has any importance the role of the discount (0,1%), probably as an evidence of the attention paid to the quality of the product. The second preferred distribution channel is the direct one, by the producer or the cantina (28%). Also important is the horeca channel (23%): specifically the 18% purchases wine mainly at the wine bar and wine house and only the 5% usually buy it in a restaurant or hotel. Other channels are not relevant. Among these, an important role is played by the non-mass distribution chain (the small grocery store is preferred by the 5,5% of the respondents) instead of other alternative channels that have not a substantial role (for instance, Internet is preferred only by the 0,1%).

Some divergences can be observed when analysing separately the regular buyers from the occasional ones Table 2. For the regular buyers the mass-distribution is the preferred channel (indicated by an half of the respondents), followed by the horeca channel (20% of the respondents, considering restaurant and wine shop together) that has, more or less, the same share of the direct channel (slightly less than 20%). For the occasional buyers it is the direct channel that plays a crucial role (over the 30% of respondents), followed by the mass-distribution and the horeca channel (that, having over the 24% of the respondents, has a relative consistent incidence). These data show that the regular buyer shows a stronger ability of self-determination than the occasional buyer because, basing his/her choice on the past experiences, he/she can buy wine in the distribution channel, conscious of what is looking for. On the other side, the occasional buyer trusts in the recommendations and knowledge of the producer or restaurateur.

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondent Ordered by the Place of Purchase

Where do you Primarily Buy Wine?	Total of the Resopondents	Regular Buyers	Occasional Buyers
Super or Hyper Market	38,4%	47,5%	32,6 %
Producer/Cantina	28,2%	18,9%	33,9 %
Winehouse/Wine Bar	17,7%	18,4%	17,3 %
Grocery store	5,5%	8,4%	3,9 %
Restaurant/Hotel	5,2%	2,6%	6,8 %
Trattoria/Osteria/Country House	1,7%	1,6%	1,8 %
Others	1,7%	1,3%	1,8 %
Festival	0,9%	0,8%	1,1 %
Pizzeria	0,5%	0,3%	0,6 %
Discount	0,1%	0,2%	0 %
Internet	0,1%	0%	0,2 %
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

The analysis of the factors taken into account at the moment of buying confirms what we stated before. Considering the buyers of the mass-distribution (Table 3) it is immediately clear that quality, price and origin of the wine are key-factors in the choosing-process. All these three factors have an even greater relevance considering the regular buyers who, probably, know the product they are buying and are able to evaluate the different offers, based on the price.

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents Who Buy Wine Using the Mass-Distribution Channel, Ordered by Factor of Choice

Buying Wine in a Super/Hyper-Market, Which are the Main Factors Influencing Your Choice?	Total of the Respondents who Buy in a Super/Hyper-Market	Regular Buyers	Occasional Buyers
Price	30,6%	32,6%	28,7%
Quality	28,7%	30,1%	26,8%
Origin	15,0%	16,4%	13,9%
Quality certification	6,3%	5,1%	7,8%
Brand	5,2%	2,3%	6,9%
Kind of wine	4,1%	4,3%	3,9%

Table 3: Contd.,

Satisfaction frompastexperiences	2,7%	3,1%	2,7%
Matchingwithmeals	2,2%	2,3%	2,1%
Promotion	1,4%	1,1%	1,9 %
Taste/Flavor/Smell	1,1%	1,2%	1,0 %
Partner/family/friends recommendation	1,1%	0,5%	1,9 %
Trust in the producer	1,1%	0,9%	1,7%
Strenght	0,5%	0,1%	0,6%
Packaging	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Considering the occasional buyers, other factors play a greater importance: for instance, the presence of a quality certification (IGT, DOC, DOCG), brand awareness, promotion and recommendation of relatives and friends; all indirect signals that work as drivers in the choice for who have no familiarity with the product. Anyway, these factors (together with the others examined) have less importance than the first three mentioned.

Considering the acquirers who are used to buy wine in the horeca channel Table 4, it comes to light that the main factor influencing the choice is the quality, while the price does not playa key-role. Among the different factors investigated, the origin of the wine plays a primary role; the recommendations of the sommelier (or restaurateur), as the ones from family and friends are also critical factors, especially for the occasional buyers. As we expected, also the kind of wine and the matching with meals turn out to be important elements in the selection process, especially among the regular buyers.

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents Who Buy Wine Using the Horeca Channel, Ordered by Factor of Choice

Buying Wine in a Winehouse/Hotel/Restaurant, Which are the Main Factors Influencing Your Choice?	Total of the Respondents who Buy in a Winehouse/Hotel /Restaurant	Regular Buyers	Occasional Buyers
Quality	24,8%	24,1%	25,5%
Price	16,6%	18,8%	14,4%
Origin	14,6%	13,9%	15,3%
Sommelier/restuarateurrecommendation	11,2%	8,9%	13,6%
Kind of wine	6,8%	7,3%	6,4%
Matchingwithmeals	5,4%	5,9%	5,0%
Quality certification	5,1%	4,9%	5,3%
Satisfaction frompastexperiences	3,7%	4,5%	2,8%
Brand	3,4%	2,9%	3,9%
Taste/Flavor/Smell	2,4%	4,1%	0,7%
Promotion	2,4%	1,5%	3,3%
Strength	1,7%	1,6%	1,8%
Trust in the producer	1,4%	0,9%	1,7%
Others	0,5%	0,7%	0,3%
Packaging	0%	0%	0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Another examined element related to the purchase of the product is the average expenditure per bottle of wine. Obviously, the results are strongly influenced by the distribution channelused by respondents figure 4.

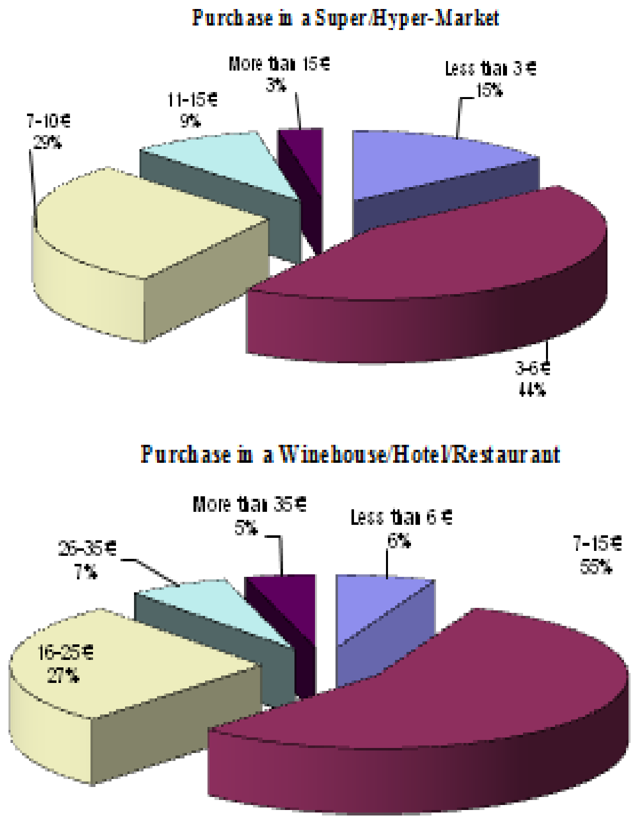

Figure 4: Distribution of the Respondents Ordered by the Average Expenditure per Bottle of Wine

Almost all the buyers who prefer the mass-distribution channel (88%) claim not to spend more than 10€ per bottle, with a very restricted share of consumers (3%) that usually spends over than 15€. More specifically, for these buyers the most common price range is between 3 and 6€(44% of the respondents).The results change significantly considering the buyers who use the horeca channel: in this case, almost all the respondents (89% of the total) usually afford an expenditure that, on average, is over than 25€ per bottle and a not negligible share (about 5%) spends usually more than 35€. Particularly, the most cited price range is between 7 and 15€.

Based on the above data, it seems possible to maintain the relevance of the traditional places where consumers buy wine, whereas the alternative channels (eg. Internet) still show difficulties. The factors of choice also reveal a "traditional" behavior, with a great attention to the quality and, above all, to the origin of the product. The behavior tends to vary consistently depending on the channel used, as shown from the different attitude to the expenditure of the acquirersin the mass-distribution channel compared to the horeca channel. It appears crucial trying to improve the value created for the customers through the evolution from a "mass-approach", finalized only to create awareness among an undifferentiated community, to a "customized" strategy, able to create preferences, offering solutions with an high added-value for each specific target.

The Use of the Product

We examined the occasions of consumption, also related to the frequency of consumption, and the way the product is experienced. Considering the occasions of consumption, over a half of the respondents (about 58%) claimed that usually drinks wine at home with guests; a little bit less is the share of who states to drink wine usually during meals (50%) or when they go out with friends or relatives (47%). Among the other motivations, the involvement in informal parties with friends and relatives (30%) or in formal or important events (22%) are frequently mentioned as well. Other reasons related to a "non-traditional" use of wine are not vey common: only few consumers drink wine as an aperitif (6%) or after job to relax (2%). These responses are perfectly aligned with the motivations at the basis of the purchase examined and interpreted before.

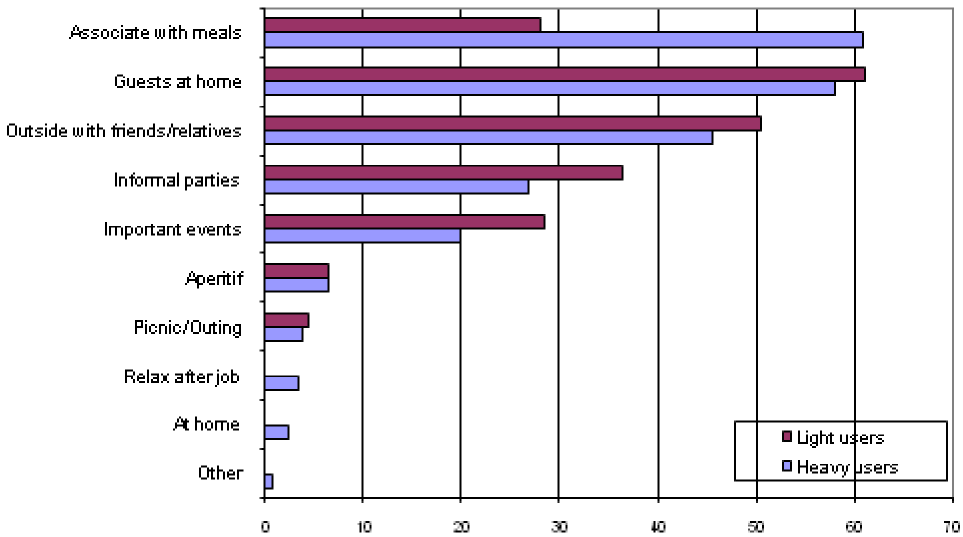

Figure 5: Distribution of the Respondents Ordered by Occasions of Consumption

Some interesting differences emerge if the analysis is split between the regular consumers of wine –"heavy users" who drinks it at least once a week or daily– and the occasional consumers –"light users" who drinks it once a month or less often figure 5. It follows that, as we expected, the home consumption in association with meals (61%) or to welcome guests (58%) are the main occasions for the regular drinkers, with a relevant share who also claims to drink it during lunches and dinners outside, together with friends and relatives. For the occasional consumers, the main occasions to consume wine are represented by the "special" moments, like a visit of guests (61%), dinners and lunches out (50%), parties (36%) and important events (28%). Generally speaking, the occasional drinkers associate the consumption of wine to the social-status or social image, giving it more importance and relevance than the regular drinkers, for whom the consumption of wine is more related to the pleasure and taste of the product.

Considering the way the wine is experienced, we examined which attributes best describe the wine in the opinion of the consumers. In particular, we submitted to respondents some statements associated to the consumption of wine and we asked them to rate their level of agreement/disagree menton a 5-point scale (where the value 1 = totally disagree; 5= completely agree). It emerges an extremely positive perception of the wine, that justify the choice to consume it, as a traditional product that perfectly fits with the Mediterranean diet, genuine and healthy; conversely, it is not perceived as a sophisticated product suitable only for the special occasions; as well as it is not considered as the main reason for which select the destination of a journey. More specifically, wine is considered "a product of our tradition" (72% of the respondents gives the value 5 to this statement); "suitable for a lot of meals" (61% of the respondents gives the value 5 to this statement); "more healthy than other alcoholic beverages" (48% of the respondents gives the value 5 to this statement). Wine is not considered: "suitable only for special occasions" (59% of the respondents gives the value 1 to this statement); "a good reason for a journey" (59% of the respondents gives the value 1 to this statement); "a young and modern product" (53% of the respondents gives the value 1 to this statement).

The Post-Purchase Behavior

As final phase of the purchase and consumption process, we examined the loyalty to the brand of the wine usually bought Table 5. It emerged the clear preference among the respondents to choose among 2 or 3 brands that register a high level of fidelity (about 66%). The percentage of who claims to purchase always and only the same brand is also significant (about 15%). However, it is less than the percentage of who claims to not have any loyalty to specific brands (about 18%); these consumers take their decision, from time to time, based on the availability of the sellers or on other elements.

Table 5: Distribution of the Respondents, Ordered by Fidelity to the Brand of Wine

Referring to the Brand of Wine, You	Total Respondents	Regular Buyers	Occasional Buyers
Buy always the same brand	15,4%	16,6%	13,7%
Chose among 2-3 brands	66,2%	71,9%	62,8%
Are indifferent to the brand	18,4%	11,3%	23,5%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Some interesting differences emerge from a separated analysis between regular buyers and occasional ones. Even if it is confirmed the tendency to chose among a very restricted range of alternative brands, it is higher the percentage of who claims to be loyal to a brand among the regular buyers (17% compared to the 14% of the occasional buyers); conversely, the percentage of who is indifferent to the brand among the occasional buyers is more than twice compared to the regular ones (23% compared to 11%).

In sum, from the analysis of the post-purchase behavior emerges a usual and loyal approach, where the choice of the wine to buy is focused on a few relevant brands, for which a good level of confidence and satisfaction has been reached.

CLUSTER ANALYSIS AND EMERGING SEGMENTS

The results we obtained from cluster analysis showed four market segments: "*Home Hedonists*", that represent 31,34% of sampled individuals; "*Image-oriented Drinkers*", that represent 20,36% of sampled individuals; "*Eclectic Consumers*", that represent 30,12% of sampled individuals; "*Conservative Consumers*", that represent 18,18% of sampled individuals.

In order to assure a better understanding of different features characterizing the identified segments, we put them on a two-dimension map figure 6. The first dimension we considered (vertical axe) is related to the benefits associated to wine purchase and consumption: on the top we find consumers mainly motivated by functional and utilitarian reasons; on the bottom we find consumers mainly motivated by esthetic and symbolic reasons. The second dimension we considered (horizontal axe) is related to the typology of consumption of wine, considering both the occasions and the places where it is usually drunk: on the right we find consumers usually drinking wine outside, in public places and/or in social events; on the left we find consumers usually drinking wine at home, at lunch/dinner or with friends.

Figure 6: Segments of Wine-Consumers

The main characteristics of the identified segments are the followings:

- **Home Hedonists:** consumers in this segment are mainly women, middle-aged (34-55) and tertiary educated. They only drink wine on the weekends when they invite friends and relatives to share lunch or dinner, which is consistent with a "social-oriented" view of wine consumption. They have a number of "safe brands" from which they choose their wine and show a relevant interest in the origin of the wine they drink.
- **Image-Oriented Drinkers:** consumers in this segment are young men/women (less than 34) who drink wine at restaurants and in public places. They get enjoyment and satisfaction from choosing and drinking the "right" wine and like the image that drinking wine portrays towards the others. For this kind of consumer wine is a "status symbol"; therefore he/she tends to have the view that the more expensive the wine, the better it is. Image-oriented drinkers also pay much attention to the place of origin and to the different combinations between food and wine. They're often in the first stages of wine consumption: as a consequence when choosing wine, they seek information and are often guided by the sommelier and other opinion leaders.
- **Eclectic Consumers:** consumers in this segment are comparatively well educated relative to the general population and aged on average in the 45-54. When purchasing wine, they don't take into account the occasion during which the wine will be drunk and they seek little information. Eclectic consumers drink wine because they enjoy it and they consider wine consumption as a natural and genuine habit. They're keen on price, quality and place of origin. They have 2-3 safe brands from which they choose their wine and they make the best choice on the basis of previous experience.
- **Conservative Consumers:** the average age of this segment is higher than the others (more than 45), while the average level of education is lower. People belonging to this segment are heavy wine consumers: they drink wine every day at lunch/dinner time because they like it and they think that wine is the best drink for food. Their consumption behavior is very traditionalistic: they don't seek information or advice when purchasing wine and are somewhat reluctant to purchase wines that they have not tried before. They tend to choose always the same domestic brand and very often they prefer to buy directly from small local wineries.

Main implications of this study are discussed in the next section.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As the wine market scenario is becoming more and more challenging, with a growing number of new global players and a changing consumer behavior, the definition and implementation of an effective marketing strategy requires the real understanding of consumer characteristics, habits, needs and expectations. Therefore, the need to use market segmentation in order to reach a better consideration of different typology of demand has been recognised as a vital ingredient for the implementation of marketing strategy in this industry. Academic literature however seems to be still lacking to provide insights for a market segmentation based on the consideration of the whole buying process, beside the socio-demographics features. Most of the existing studies, when based on behavioral approach, make use of variables concerning single phases of the process, rather than promote an holistic understanding of consumer behaviour (from pre-purchase to post-purchase behavior).

Arising from the above considerations, our study seeks to provide a contribution to fill this gap in the literature and it has significant implications both for practitioners and for academics. From the management perspective, the proposed framework may provide a clear guidance to reach a wine market segmentation able to address effectively the marketing strategies. By characterizing different groups of consumers on the base of multiple variables concerning each phase of the decision-making process, the proposed segmentation has evident implications for strategic marketing decisions (i.e. positioning) and operative marketing decisions (i.e. product, price, place, promotion). From the research prospective our study addresses a gap in the academic literature by using the whole purchase and consumption process for market segmentation and integrating it with socio-demographic variables. Such framework can be utilized in further research on wine market segmentation; for example new studies could investigate potential differences between geographic areas, since our study is focused on a specific area, in the South of Italy.

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