

## MARKETING STUDY ON WINE CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOR FROM IASI

Andy Felix JITĂREANU, Aurel CHIRAN, Elena GÎNDU

e-mail: andyj@uaiasi.ro

### Abstract

Research indicates that there is no such thing as a well defined market for wine, as there are no typical wine consumers. Wine market consists of several segments that are influenced by demographics, psychographics and the context in which it is consumed. Given the complex nature of the product itself, but also of the market, wine is one of the consumer products that are most difficult to address from a marketing perspective. Understanding how consumers choose a brand of wine continues to be a complex problem. Wine is a product that generates confusion among consumers, due to the large number of indexes on the label, such as brand name, region or grape variety. Unlike most foods products, wine taste may vary in a given year depending on the harvest, even if the brand and other extrinsic information remain the same. For other food categories, consumers easily switch between different brands according to market share and are not very concerned about the differences in taste or quality behind the labels. The study on which this paper is based aims to analyze the wine consumers' behavior from the Iasi market. Research objectives include: evaluating the main characteristics of the wine purchasing behavior, determination of preferences regarding the main characteristics of the product, evaluation of the main characteristics of consumer behavior and identifying features of the acquisition, consumption and preferences based on gender, age, education, number of family members and income.

**Key words:** segmentation, consumer behavior, market research

Wine brands offer consumers a great advantage, as the wine market is one of the most fragmented in the world. We cannot neglect the aesthetic dimension of this product and the social status it offers, but also the prestige that some people acquire in the eyes of others when they consume a certain type of wine. In the UK, it was found that 48% of the consumers indicated the brand as the main criterion of selection, while 25% of them base their decision mostly on price. Country of origin, variety and region have less importance. Taste and level of familiarity with the wine offer a high degree of security, rather than price and provenance of the wine (Evans R., 2004).

Today there is much more focus on branding activities to enhance product value. Dynamic branding, often aiming to simplify choosing a particular type of wine, was a major feature of product management in the last half century. It is generally agreed, however, that the wine has lagged behind other products, in terms of marketing, mainly due to fragmented market and consumer segments heterogeneity (P. Duguid, 2003).

Segmentation is a marketing tool that is not related to motivation, but rather a form of division of consumers into categories to allow managers to market the products easier and more effective to the final consumers. Segmentation applies, primarily, demographic, psychographic (emotional

characteristics based on values and attitude of the consumer) and purchase (such as the price paid for a product or service) criterion, in order to delineate a potential market, based on generic differences between consumers. (Spawton T.J., 1991)

- **Connoisseurs:** possess knowledge in the field, consume regularly and have a wide range of tastes. They are loyal to certain brands, they make the purchase decision in advance and prefer to buy from specialized stores, not being sensitive to price.

- **Aspirational drinkers:** they focus on the social aspects of wine consumption, they prefer brands that are somehow fashionable, are concerned about the opinions of others and about the status that a particular brand of wine offers. They are easily influenced by various "opinion leaders" and need more time to decide on the product they purchase.

- **"Drinker - consumers":** consume large quantities, do not appreciate the quality of the drink, loyal to a certain consumption style and reluctant to try something new. They prefer some "safe brands", that provide a consistent taste and some promotions or discounts.

- **"New consumers (drinkers)":** attracted to wine because of the example given by parents or social group, do not have clearly defined preferences and tend to consume in a social manner, according to a specific context or

occasion. There are not sophisticated consumers and the main selection criterion is price.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study aimed to analyze consumers' behavior for the product "wine" on the Iasi market. Analysis was conducted on a total of 152 questionnaires, applied on respondents from Iasi, urban setting, that are wine consumers and are over 20 years old. For the sample structure, the following elements were used as segmentation criteria: sex, age, education level, number of family members and monthly family income.

To obtain the results we used the questionnaire survey applied "face to face" by interviewers with random selection of respondents with step 3 (every 3rd person was questioned) in representative locations for the subject study and targeted sector (close to supermarkets, hypermarkets, convenience and specialty stores).

For data collection we used a questionnaire consisting of 13 closed questions with one answer acceptable option, which addressed four categories of items: purchase behavior, product features, consumer's behavior and segmentation criteria.

Data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics 20.0, using Frequencies, Crosstabs and Explore procedures.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study shows that wine is a product that is purchased with a relatively low frequency. 82.78 % of the responses indicate that wine is purchased not more than 2-3 times per month (23.84% - two-three times per month, 58.94% - once a month or less). Only 17.22% of respondents buy wine every week.

Purchase frequency analysis by gender shows, as expected, a higher frequency of purchase for men to women associated frequency. Most women (46.80%) buy wine once a month or less, followed by the percentage of women who buy wine once a week. Regarding purchasing behavior of men, most of them (31.7%) purchase wine 2-3 times a week, followed by those that purchase 2-3 times per month (22.1%) and monthly or less (20.2%).

Results of the analysis influenced by level of education show an increased frequency of purchase for the segment of those who graduated a vocational school. For this segment all feedback indicates a purchase frequency of at least once a week. The percentage of those who buy wine daily decreases with increasing education levels.

Regarding buying locations for wine, 32.40% of respondents said they prefer hypermarkets, an equal percentage was associated with specialty shops, 26.40 % of respondents

indicated that supermarkets are the most frequent location of purchase and only 8.80 % buy from smaller convenience shops.

Small shops and supermarkets are purchase locations used to a greater extent by women than specialty stores and hypermarkets. The consumers that find themselves in the 51-60 years segment, the store type that is most commonly indicated is the supermarket and specialty shops, while for the 20-30 years and 31-40 years segment it's the hypermarket, followed by specialty stores.

As for the level of education, the supermarket, hypermarket and specialty shops are the type of stores that are most often mentioned by respondents with university and post university studies, while respondents with high school and professional education purchasing more from small shops.

Of the respondents who indicated the supermarket and hypermarket as the type of stores where they like to buy wine from, those with a family monthly income of over 5000 RON represent the highest percentage, small shops were most often mentioned by people with an income between 4000 and 5000 RON and not mentioned at all by income segment below 1000 RON.

Most respondents (76.1%) typically allocate between 11 and 30 RON for the purchase of a bottle of wine (48.30% allocated between 11 and 20 RON, 27.80% allocated between 21 and 30 RON). Only 5.30% spend more than 40 RON for a bottle of wine. On average, women tend to pay more for a bottle of wine than men.

Most preferences headed towards semi-dry wine (45.50%), followed by dry wine (27.60%) and semi-sweet wine (23.00%). The least popular turned out to be the sweet wine - 3.90%.

As for color, most of the dispute is taken between white wine (39.50 %) and red wine (46.10 %), a much smaller percentage (14.50 %) indicating they prefer rose wine.

Of the five evaluated parameters - appearance, taste, brand, price and provenance, taste was evaluated in most cases (99.30%) as "important" and "very important". The following evaluation factor is appearance, which has been shown to be "important" and "very important" by 82.70% of the total consumers. In last place comes the price, with a 66.70% evaluation regarding the "important" and "very important" answer categories.

For men, provenance and price are more important than for women, while brand, taste and appearance recorded average levels of relatively equal importance for both sexes.

Respondents between 20 and 30 years old showed a higher level of interest towards the taste

factor, compared to other age groups. The 31-40 age segment recorded the highest average level of interest assigned to wine provenance factor, compared to the rest of the age segments. Regarding income levels, it appears that the importance given to the origin of the wine decreases with it.

*Consumer Behavior*

Overall sample preferences are relatively uniformly distributed on the questioned consuming versions. Variations by gender, where nearly half of women (46.80%) said they drink wine monthly or less and only 12.8 % 2-3 times per week, while 39.4% of men said they drank wine daily or 2-3 times a week.

Regarding the age groups that have been observed, consumption increases as people pass to the upper age categories.

As for the level of education, it can be observed that the respondents that graduated a vocational school recorded the highest frequency of consumption and the percentage of those who consume wine every day decreases with the rising of the education level.

In terms of income levels, there are no statistically significant differences, but we are able to see that the level of income below 1000 RON has the highest percentage associated with the lowest consumption frequency: monthly or less.

Most of the respondents consume wine at home (4.70%), 20.50% - at festive events or special occasions, only 18.50% - when they go out and 13.20% - when they visit friends or relatives. Men consume wine at home in a higher percentage than women, who prefer to do so mostly when they participate at various events, parties or when they just go out in restaurants, bars or clubs. For all ages, the most common situation is the home consumer. For people aged 20-30 years, the second most frequent place to have wine is bars or restaurants and for those over 60 years old - events and parties. Consumption of wine in a festive setting is representative for an income level of 2000-4000 RON and over 5000 RON, while consumption when visiting friends or relatives is observed mainly at people with income levels between 1000 and 2000 RON.

Frequency of purchase: the respondents' answers show that wine is a product that is purchased with a relatively low frequency (*figure 1*). 82.78% of the responses indicate wine purchase more than 2-3 times per month (23.84% - 2-3 times per month, 58.94% - once a month or less). Only 11.92% buy wine every week.

In terms of frequency of purchase by age (*figure 2*), it has been observed that for the over 60 years old segment, the specific purchase frequency

for wine is 2-3 times a month. Purchase of wine up to 2-3 times a week is the most common frequency for age groups 41-50 and 51-60 years old, while once we go down to 20-30 and 31-40 segments, there is an increase in the share for purchases made 2-3 times per month, once a month or less than that.

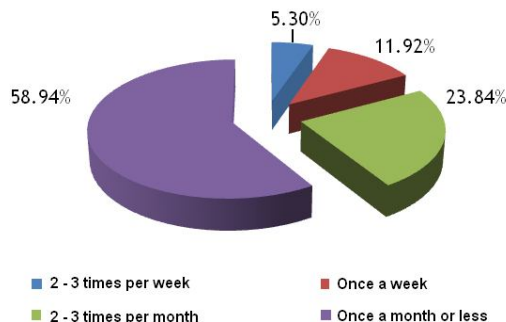


Figure 1 Frequency of purchase

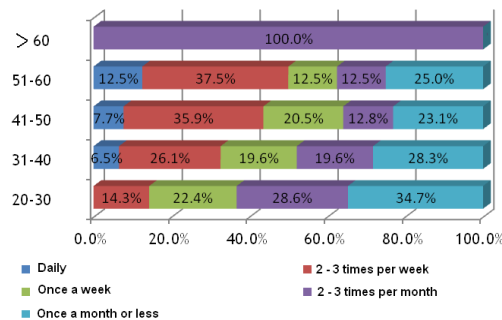


Figure 2 Frequency of purchase by age

The results of the analysis show an increased frequency of purchase for the vocational school segment (*figure 3*), all answers indicating a frequency of at least once a week. The percentage of those who buy wine daily decreases with increasing education levels.

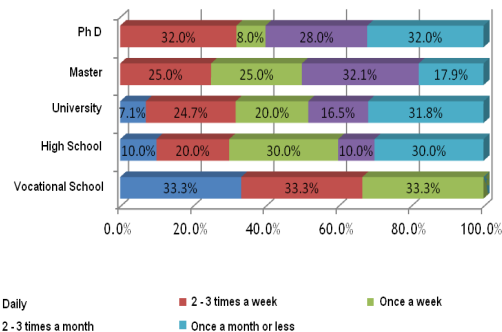


Figure 3 Frequency of purchase by education

People with a monthly family income below 1,000 RON purchase less frequently (25% - 2-3 times per month and 75% - once a month or less). The 1000-2000 RON segment has the highest

percentage of responses for purchasing 2-3 times a week (figure 4).

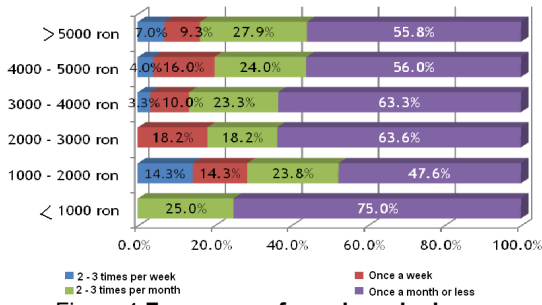


Figure 4 Frequency of purchase by income

Type of store: 32.40% of respondents choose hypermarkets, an equal percentage prefers associated specialty shops, 26.40% of respondents indicated that supermarkets are the most common location for wine acquisition, while small shops are chosen by 8.80% (figure 5).

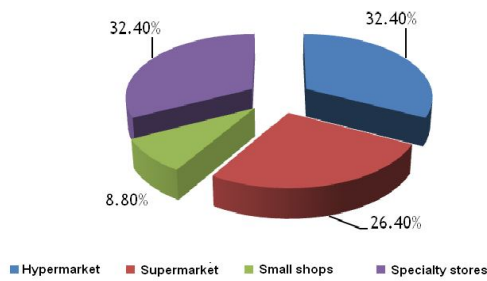


Fig. 5 - Purchase location

Regarding the type of store choice for the purchase of wine for women and men (figure 6), the difference between the two categories of sex is that small shops and supermarkets are used to a greater extent by women than specialty stores and hypermarkets.

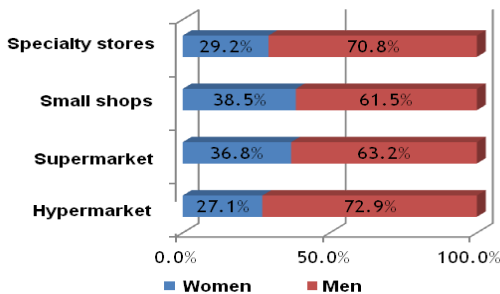


Figure 6 Type of store by sex

As for the type of store for purchasing wine by age (figure 7), it appears that people over 60 years old mentioned only specialized shops. For the 51 - 60 years old segment, the type of stores most frequently indicated (43.80%) were

supermarkets and specialty shops (37.50%). For the 20-30 and 31-40 years old segments, the main places where they purchase wine from are the specialty stores, followed by hypermarkets.

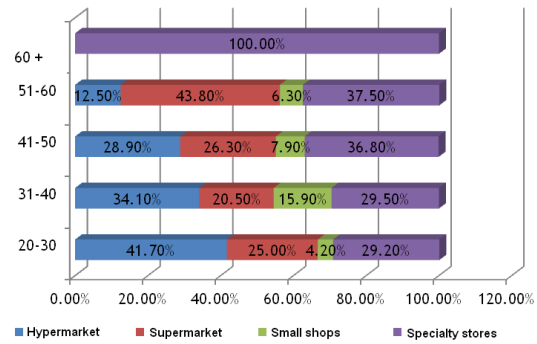


Figure 7 Type of store by age

Regarding the education level (figure 8), supermarkets, hypermarkets and specialty shops are the most often mentioned types of stores by respondents with university and post university studies, while those with high school and professional degrees purchase more from small shops.

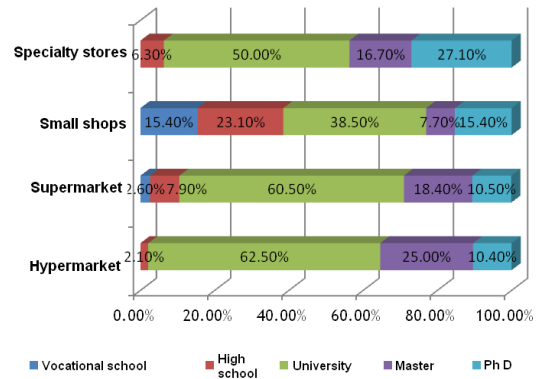


Figure 8 Type of store by education

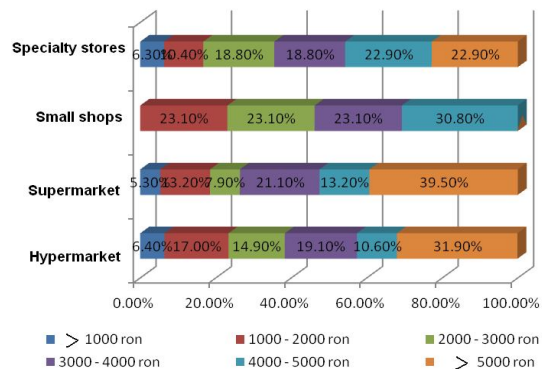


Figure 9 Type of store by income

Associated price: most respondents (76.1%) typically allocate between 11 and 30 RON for the purchase of a bottle of wine (11-20 RON allocated by 48.30%, while 27.80% spend between 21 and

30 RON). Only 5.30% spend more than 40 RON for a bottle of wine (figure 10).

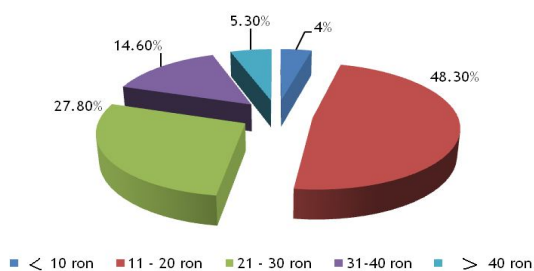


Figure 10 Price

In terms of education level (figure 11) for those with vocational school and 80% of those with high school, the price paid for the product is under 20 RON. The 11-20 RON price bracket is mentioned by most people on all levels of education, with percentages ranging from 33.30% to 60%. Between 15% and 20% of those with undergraduate and graduate studies indicated a price between 31 and 40 RON.

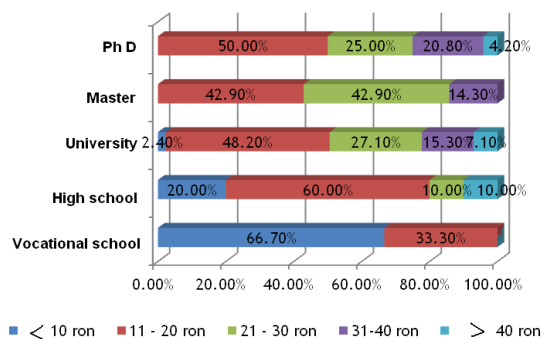


Figure 11 Price by education

Product features: The amount of sugar is a feature clearly influenced by sex. Only women showed preference for sweet wine and 65.70% of respondents that prefer semisweet wine are women. The situation changes when it comes to semi-dry and dry wines, listed as preferred options by over 80% of men (figure 12).

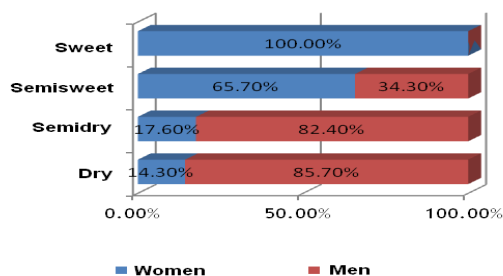


Figure 12 Sugar level by sex

Regarding the wine type preferences by age, the proportion of those who prefer dry wine decreases with decreasing age. Semi-sweet wine is mentioned mostly by respondents aged between 20 and 30 (34.70%). Semi-dry wine is the most popular, being mentioned by most respondents between 20 and 60 (31.30 % and 52.20%) (figure 13).

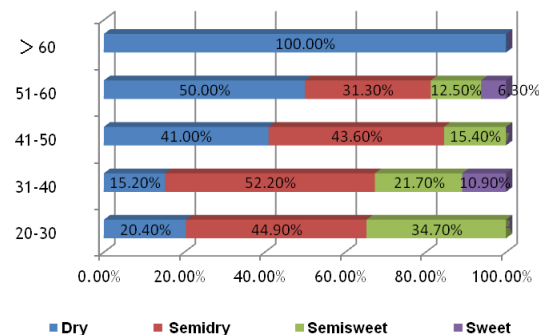


Figure 13 Sugar level by age

In terms of age, those aged over 60 years old have shown a 100 % preference for red wine, being the most mentioned type of wine on the overall sample. Rose wine preferences increase with decreasing of age, while white wine has been mentioned by more than half of respondents aged between 41 and 50 years old (figure 14).

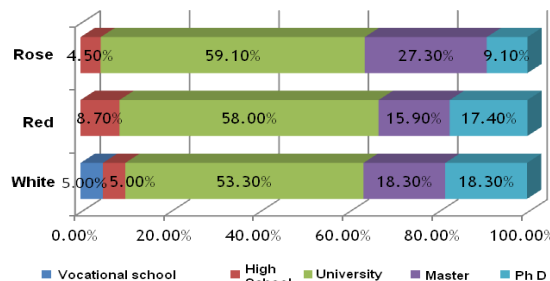


Figure 14 Color by education

Purchase frequency analysis by gender shows, as expected, a higher frequency of purchase for men, compared to women. 46.80 % of women buy wine once a month or less, followed by the percentage of women who buy wine once a week. Regarding purchasing behavior of men, 31.7 % of them purchase wine 2-3 times a week, followed by segments that purchase 2-3 times per month (22.1 %) and once a month or less (20.2 %).

Results of the analysis by level of education show an increased frequency of purchase for the segment that graduated a vocational school. For these consumers, all feedback leads to a frequency of at least once a week. The higher the education level is, the smaller is the percentage of those who buy wine on a daily basis.

Regarding locations for wine purchasing, 65 % of respondents equally prefer hypermarkets and specialty shops, over 26% indicated the supermarkets and less than 10% like to buy from smaller shops. These small shops and the supermarkets seem to be more suitable for women than specialty stores and hypermarkets when it comes to wine.

People between 51 and 60 years old buy it from supermarkets and specialty shops, while the 20-30 years old and 31-40 years old prefer hypermarkets and then specialty stores.

The supermarkets, hypermarkets and specialty shops (in this order) are the best places to buy wine for consumers with university and post university degrees, while those with high school and professional schools purchase more often from small shops.

The consumers who prefer supermarkets and hypermarkets as places they usually purchase wine from, those who earn over 5000 RON a month per family represent the highest percentage, small shops were most often mentioned by people with an income between 4000 and 5000 RON and were not mentioned at all by the income segment below 1000 RON.

## CONCLUSIONS

76% of the population usually spends between 11 and 30 RON for a bottle of wine and only 5.30% spend more than 40 RON. On average, women tend to pay more for a bottle of wine than men.

The share of those who prefer dry wine decreases with decreasing age. Semisweet wine is preferred by respondents aged between 20 and 30 years old (34.70%). Most preferences lead to semi-dry wine (45.50%), followed by dry (27.60%) and sweet (23.00%). The last place is for the sweet wine, with only 3.90%.

The amount of sugar in the wine is a feature clearly influenced by sex. Only women showed preference for sweet wine, and 65.70% of respondents that indicated semisweet wine were women. The situation changes for semi-dry and dry wines, listed as preferred options by over 80% of men.

Regarding education, the vocational school graduates recorded the highest frequency of consumption. The number of those who consume wine every day decreases with increasing education levels.

Consumers whose level of income is below 1000 RON have the highest percentage associated with the lowest consumption frequency: monthly or less frequently.

As for color preferences, the rule is played between white (39.50%) and red wine (46.10%), while a smaller share (14.50%) goes to rose wines.

Of the five evaluated characteristics - "aspect", "flavor", "brand", "price" and "origin", the taste was evaluated in almost all cases (99.30 %) as "important" and "very important". The next factor is the appearance evaluation, which was indicated as "important" or "very important" in 82.70% of the answers. The price was chosen by 66.70% for the "important" and "very important" categories.

## REFERENCES

- Duguid, P., 2003** - *Developing the brand: the case of alcohol, 1800-1880*, Enterprise and Society, 4(3), 405-441.
- Evans, R., 2004** - *Wine lovers influenced by brands, not prices*, Off Licence News, 1st October.
- Lewis, D., Bridger, D., 2000** - *The Soul of the New Consumer: Authenticity – What We Buy and Why in the New Economy*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Spawton, T.J., 1991** - *Of wine and live asses: an introduction to the wine economy and state of marketing*, European Journal of Wine Marketing, 25(3), 1-48.
- Walker, L., 2001** - *Wine by the glass: A key marketing tool*, Wines and Vines, Marc