

ROMANIAN WINE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ANALYSED IN 2021: PARTICULARITIES OF GENDER, AGE GROUPS AND INCOME GROUPS

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Abstract

The paper analyses the Romanian wine consumer behaviour and expectations in 2021, based on a questionnaire administered online to a representative number of people, including 166 men and 97 women. The analysis is taking into account the gender, age groups and income groups, to point out the segments of consumers who are more interested in wine consumption and to find the most appropriate ways to stay informed and engaged, as well as offer some additional informal education. Evaluated aspects included the wine consumption frequency as a part of the diet, the preference for certain types of wines, the self-assessment of the level of basic knowledge of viticulture and winemaking and the interest to participate to organized wine events. The main findings show that 40.6% of the men and 18.6% of the women drink wine several times a week, most of those drinking wine several times a week being men in the age group of 40-49 years old (23.5%) and with a monthly income of over 5,000 RON. Also, it was observed that men tend to prefer dry red wines, dry white wines, semi-dry whites and semi-dry reds, while the women tend to favour sparkling wines, semi-dry rose wines, semi-dry aromatic wines, dry red wines and sweet white wines. Compared to women, men tend to be more confident around wine, especially those having faculty or master degrees declaring that they have average to above average knowledge on viticultural and winemaking practices. People interested and very willing to participate at wine events are men aged 40-49 and women aged 30-49. The study shows the particularities of the Romanian wine consumers, with implications for the wine market and event organisation.

Key words: Romanian wine consumers, wine preferences, consumption behaviour, wine events

INTRODUCTION

Wine is a traditional and very popular product in Romania, enjoyed by a large segment of population on special occasions or on a daily basis. For many it is a part of life style and is often selected as a companion to food, which is the right choice for a healthy life and well-being. Romania's wine consumption in 2020 was 3.8 million hectolitres, only 1.9% less than in 2019, which makes for a consumption of about 23.5 wine l/capita/year. This is much lower than the first three ranking countries in the world, Portugal 51.9, Italy 46.6 and France 46 l/capita (OIV 2021) [16]. Considering the total alcohol consumption by year Romania is ranking number 10th in the world, with 12.34 l/capita/year, after Latvia, Moldova, Germany, Lithuania, Ireland, Spain, Uganda, Bulgaria and Luxembourg (World

Population Review, Alcohol consumption by country, 2021) [17], but this is rather due to beer and strong alcoholic beverages, not to wine consumption, which, assuming an average of 13% of alcohol in wine, can only account for a maximum of 3 l/capita/year. In beer consumption Romania ranks 14th in the world, with 90.64 l/capita/year (World Population Review, Beer Consumption by Country 2021) [18], which represents, assuming an average of 6% of alcohol in beer, a 5.5 l/capita/year. The difference of 3.84 l of alcohol are coming from hard spirits and possibly from some other fermented beverages. Taking this into account, promoting the wine consumption associated with gastronomy could cut down some of the unhealthy habits of drinking alcohol on its own and in large quantities. There is also a marked difference between women and men

in the total alcohol intake, that is 5.68 vs 19.5 l/capita/year (World Population Review, Alcohol consumption by country, 2021) [17]. To shift the consumption of alcoholic drinks to wine and other lower alcohol content beverages, knowing the local market is of utmost importance. However, only few studies tried so far to identify the consumer preferences for wine (Chivu-Draghia and Antocea 2016; Ladaru and Beciu, 2014; Antocea and Paduraru, 2012a; Antocea 2003 abc) [9, 13, 1, 3, 4, 5] and none is recent enough to help grasp the present state of our wine market segmentation based on age or gender. Worldwide, several papers investigated the influence of age and gender on the wine market segmentation (Kim *et al* 2019; Bruwer and Li 2019) [12, 8] showing that both age (Barber *et al*, 2008) [7] and gender (Ferreira *et al.*, 2019; Nicolson, 1990; Barber *et al.*, 2006) [10, 6] can clearly influence consumer wine preference, but also the choice and the information they use for their selection (Hammond, *et al.*, 2013; Mitchell and Walsh, 2004) [11, 14]. The present study evaluates the segmentation of preferences for wine in accordance to gender, income and age.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on previous experience in designing questionnaires for assessing wine preferences and consumer behaviour (Antocea and Păduraru, 2012b) [2] a cross-sectional survey was designed to collect responses to questions related to wine consumption and preferences in 2021, along with other wine related topics. The survey contained a total of 34 questions uploaded and managed on the www.questionpro.comTM platform. The survey was sent out on social networks to a number of 672 Romanian persons, of which 263 responded: 166 men and 97 women. For this paper only the questions related to wine preferences and behaviour were analysed, taking into account gender, monthly income groups of <1,500 RON, 1,501-3,000 RON, 3,001-5,000 RON and >5,001 RON and age groups of 19-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and > 60. Data were processed by Microsoft Excel

Professional Plus 2019 and statistical analysis performed with OriginLab 2018 applying Mann-Whitney test (U-statistics), for significance levels of 0.05. As the numbers of each gender respondents were not equal, for the analyses and comparisons percentages of the total women and men were used. The demographic profile of the respondents is included in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Specification		No.	Percentage of total respondents
Gender	Women	166	63.0%
	Men	97	37.0%
Location	Urban	238	90.5%
	Rural	25	9.5%
Age group	19-29	31	11.8%
	30-39	84	31.9%
	40-49	115	43.7%
	50-59	26	9.89%
	>60	7	2.66%
Education	Highschool	20	7.6%
	Faculty	120	45.6%
	Master	108	41.1%
	Ph.D.	13	4.9%
	other	2	0.8%
Civil status	Single	64	24.3%
	Married (no children)	63	24.0%
	Married (with children)	122	46.4%
	No answer	14	5.3%
Religion	Christian orthodox	172	65.4%
	No religion or other	91	34.6%

Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Wine consumption frequency

To evaluate how the consumers relate to wine as part of their diet, a question regarding the frequency of wine consumption was used. Figure 1 presents the overall behaviour regarding wine consumption in accordance with the gender.

Women look to be more reserved, 48.5% of them drinking wine rarely, while 40.4% of men are drinking wine several times a week. The two distributions of frequencies for men and women are significantly different at the 0.05 level.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of our respondents belonging to various age groups as a function of their monthly income. It indicates that the higher incomes are generally found in the group ages 30-39 for women (32% of the women respondents) and 40-49 for men (41% of men respondents).

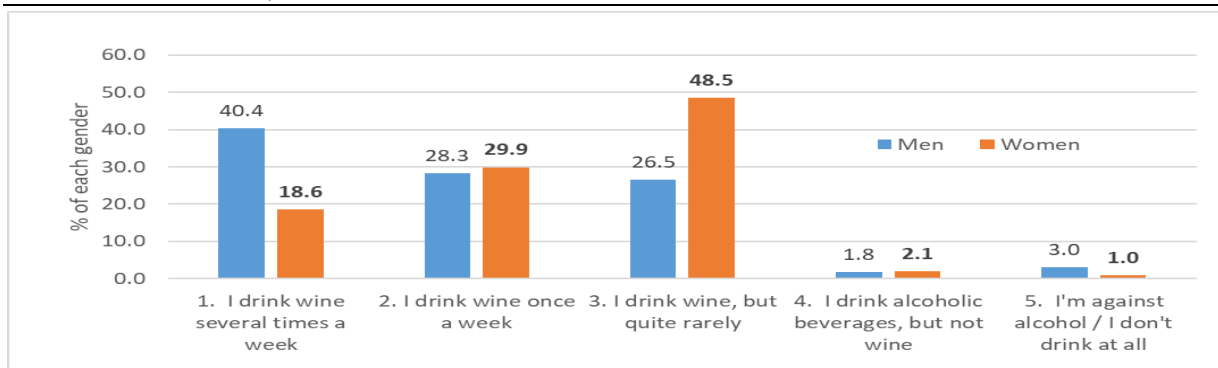


Fig. 1. Wine consumption frequency – gender differences (median for women = 3, median for men = 2, U=3797)
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

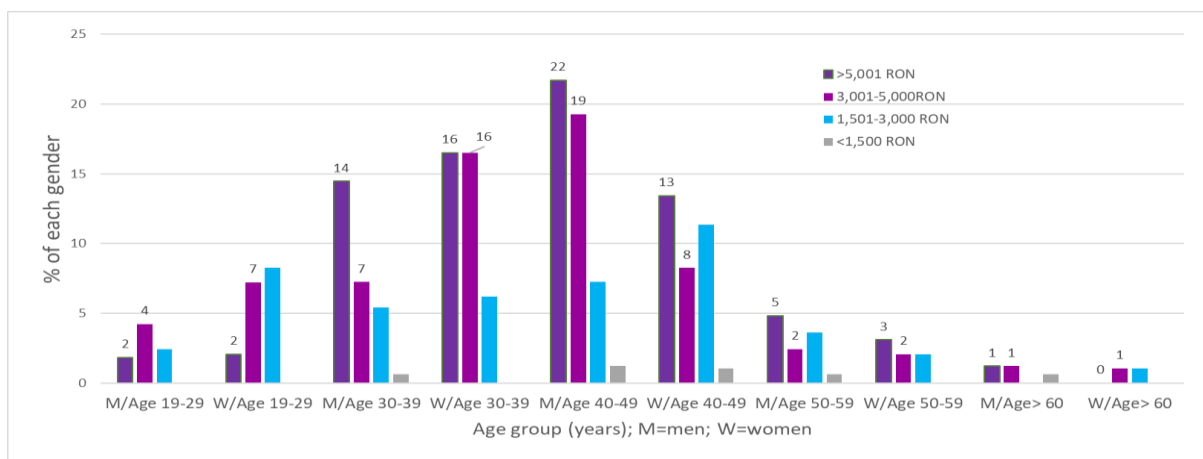


Fig. 2. Income distribution across the age groups and gender (W=women; M=men)
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

These age groups with higher income, as demonstrated later on, are also the ones in which the frequency of wine consumption is higher and knowledge about wine is superior. In Figures 3 and 4 the wine consumption frequency is analysed for income groups and age groups, respectively, in each groups differences between women and men being

also emphasized. In both figures, the segments of people who drink several times a week (dark green bars) and once a week (light green bars) can be considered Core consumers, therefore in the discussion hereafter they will be reported as the sum of the green bars, light and dark.

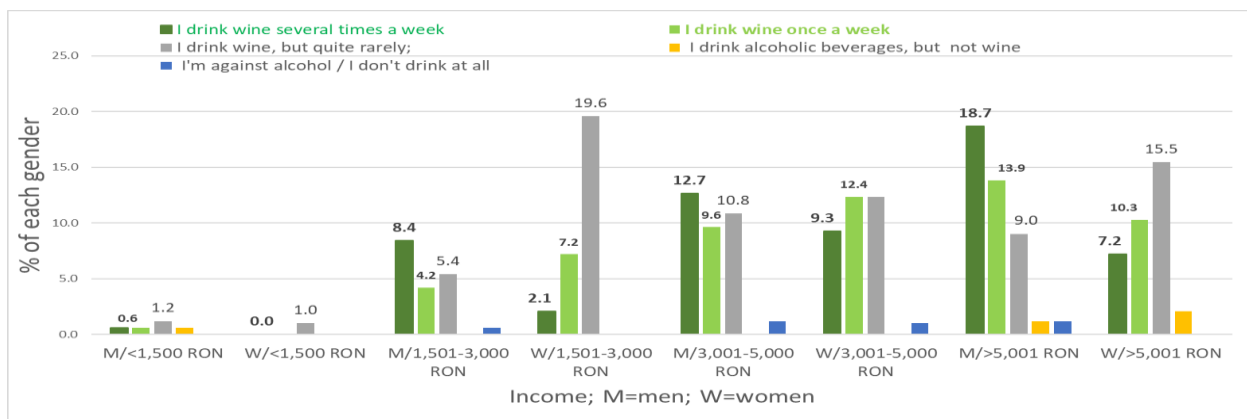


Fig. 3. Wine consumption frequency – income and gender differences
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

The grey bars represent the segment of Marginal consumers, while the yellow and blue bars describe the Occasional and No alcohol consumers, respectively.

The magnitude of each bar is the percentage of responders in that consumption frequency category, within their own gender (the sum of all bars for men is 100%, and same for women).

As seen in Figure 3, this survey indicates that both men and women with average to high incomes (which were identified above in Figure 2 as being mainly men aged 40-49 and women aged 30-39) tend to buy and consume

wine rather constantly, while in the lower income segments (under 3,000 RON) only some men are still found to be interested in wine.

Figure 4 indicates that the segments of people drinking wine rather constantly (sum of dark green and light green bars) are men aged 40-49 (36.2% of all men) and women aged 30-39 (20.6% of all women).

Thus, Figures 3 and 4 are confirming the correlation of wine consumption frequency with the income and age distribution observed in Figure 2.

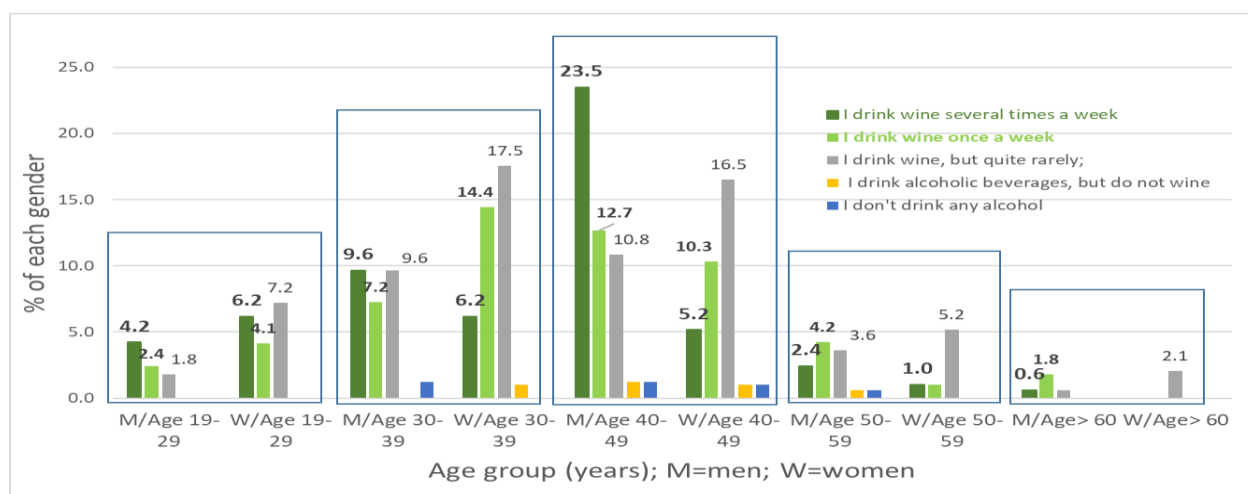


Fig. 4. Wine consumption frequency – age and gender differences
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

Also, Figures 3 and 4 point out that, irrespective of age or income, women tend to drink less than men (the sum of the magnitudes of grey bars, which mean rarely drinking wine, being 48.5% for women as opposed to 26.5% for men).

These results can be interpreted as suggesting that in Romania wine is not perceived as a commodity, which is necessary to be purchased often and irrespective of income for daily meals, but sometimes it is viewed as a luxury product. Therefore, the income is also an important factor for wine consumption and, as a result, men and women with higher incomes tend to also be more frequent buyers and consumers of wine.

2. Preference for type of wine

To assess the preference for the types of wine, the main wine categories in accordance to the colour, sweetness level and flavour were included in the survey as multiple-choice answers.

As shown in Figure 5, there are clear differences regarding the wine categories preferred by women as opposed to men.

Women tend to prefer the sweet white wines, rose wines dry or with sugar, aromatic wines with sugar and surely the sparkling wines. Men prefer dry and semi-dry white and red wines. It is to be noticed as well that the interest for sweet and aromatic wines decreased as compared to the previous two decades in Romania (Antoce, master thesis 2004, unpublished data).

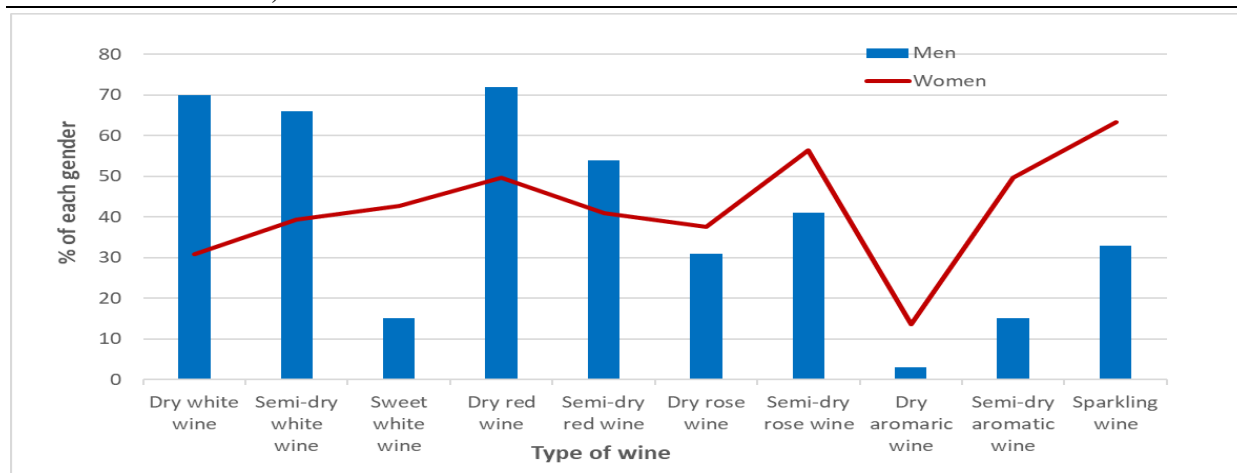


Fig. 5. Wine type preferences - gender differences
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

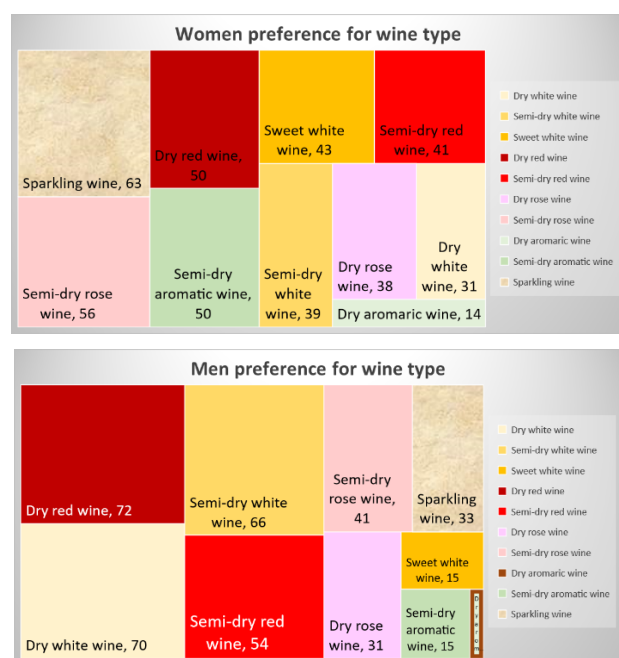


Fig. 6. Tree-map charts of women and men preferences for wine type
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents

3. Interest to participate in wine promotion events

In order to determine the importance of wine promotion, the interest to participate in wine events such as wine fairs and guided wine tastings was evaluated (Figure 7).

It can be seen that the majority of respondents would be interested in wine events, but not very interested. Surprisingly, women (61%) seem to be more interested than men (46%) to participate in wine fairs or tastings, possibly

with an aim to socialize or the learn more about the product.

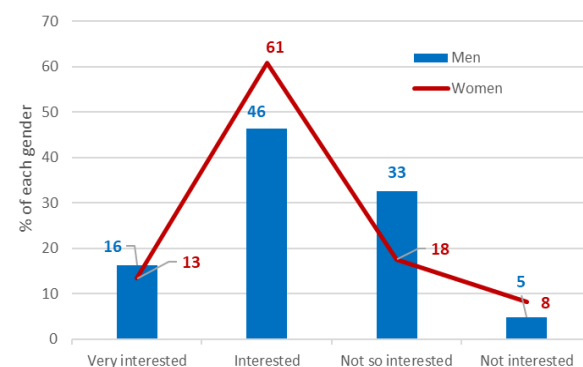


Fig. 7. Interest in wine events
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

The level of basic knowledge about viticulture and winemaking was also considered important in order to understand the degree of interest in wine events (Figure 8).

This level was self-assessed by the respondents and the answers show a higher degree of confidence for men with university and post university studies (29% of the total men respondents), followed by the women with university studies (14% of the total women respondents).

However, it is also important to underline that, even among the persons with higher education, 37% of men and 53% of women declared that they have little knowledge about wine in general.

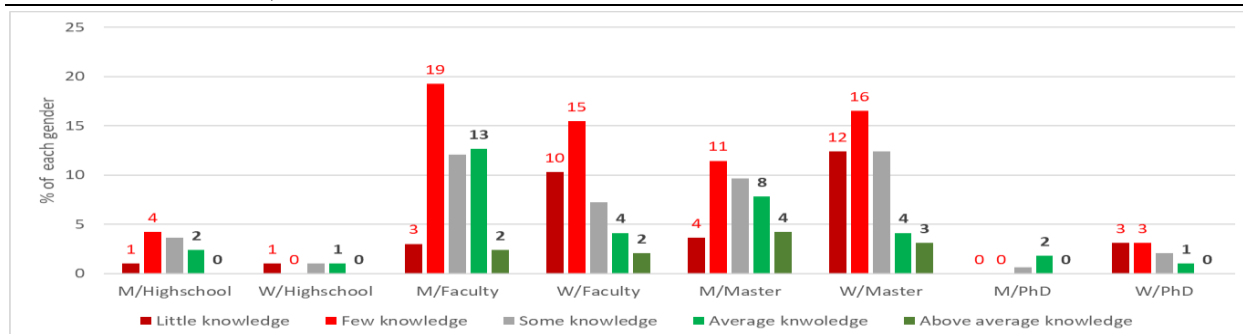


Fig. 8. Level of basic knowledge about viticulture and winemaking
 Source: Own results based on the answers of the respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study and previous statistics, show that in Romania wine is consumed in moderation. The consumption is in direct correlation with the income, as wine is generally expensive, especially when compared to the average income. Because of this, the age groups with a higher wine consumption are those with the higher income (women aged 30-39 and men aged 40-49). Men have more “traditional” preferences, going usually for white and red wines, dry or sometimes semi-dry. Women are less interested in wine, overall, but when they are interested, they show more variability in taste, selecting rather sparkling, aromatic or rose wines, which are easier to understand and more related to emotions and festive events. Furthermore, women are more interested than men to go out and participate in wine events. However, considering the frequency of consumption, preferred types of wine and knowledge about wine, the typical wine consumer is male, 40-49 years old, with a higher education and higher income.

The study also shows a clear need to increase the number of wine events and any other opportunity to provide more wine-related knowledge, which in turn may lead to a higher consumption of wine, instead of other stronger alcoholic beverages.

Limitations:

The respondents come mostly from urban locations, have broad access and usage of the internet tools and, by choosing to complete the survey, showed that they also have some interest in wine. The religion declared by the respondents is mostly Christian orthodox,

which is a religion that values wine, being in this sense no barrier for wine consumption.

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