

## MARKETING RESEARCH ON WINE CONSUMERS PREFERENCES IN ROMANIA

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### Abstract

*The paper is based on a research that aimed to make some assumptions regarding wine consumer preferences in Romania. The research method was survey made through questionnaires administered to a relevant number of respondents. In order to establish the main goals of this research, we considered aspects as: identification of purchase and consume frequency of wine, the preferred consumer's places for serving or buying wine, the average quantity of wine that is usually bought, the level of price accepted by the consumer, the type of wine preferred by consumer in relation with wine color and taste, the preferred package, time spent for wine shopping, preferred producers, brands, grape variety, quality influence in choosing wine categories, identifying wine consumers profile. The analysis and interpretation of results revealed that decision factors in buying wine are the type of the wine, the price, followed by color, packaging and advertisement.*

**Key words:** consumer preferences, market, Romania, wine

### INTRODUCTION

The relation between food and wine is very close in the human history. The wine is part of the world history, having an important role in agriculture development, a strong influence of the people's culture. Measuring consumer preferences can be made based on sensory or non-sensory attributes of the wine. The second category is relevant for the market research and can include aspects regarding price, region of origin and grape variety, brand name, label and package attractiveness. Worldwide Romania ranks 11 in terms of area cultivated with vines, respective 5th place in the European Union. Also in terms of grapes production, Romania ranks 19 at world level, respective 5th place in the European Union. According to National Institute of Statistics from Romania, wine consumption ranks second in consumption and purchase of alcoholic beverages, after beer. A Romanian consume on average about 2 liter of wine per month, which indicates that Romania is in the top ten wine consumers worldwide. Some studies revealed that consumers couldn't find

sensory differences between commercial wines while perceptions on closures varies, depending on use of the natural, synthetic cork or screw cap [3]. The relations between price and quality in the consumers' perceptions was considered not so accurate, especially in the case of consumers who have limited time to think about what they choose in the marketplace, where they usually face vast amounts of information about the good which they intend to buy and consume [1]. It is also well-known the role of advertising in consumer decision, based on idea that consumers choose in conditions of incomplete information, taking the risk in deciding what seems to be the best satisfying trade off among a huge range of similar products [5]. The colors and shapes of the wine labels have also influence on consumers' perceptions, and it seems that that there are strong preferences for selected combinations of colors and shapes in the composition design of wine labels [4]. The color of wine is seen as a part of a hierarchical structure that exists in the consumer choice process but also has its influence as a cultural value [2].

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

For this paper, questionnaires have been used in order to make some conclusion regarding wine consumer preferences and their perceptions in relation with aspects as wine quality-price ratio or wine buying and consume habits. This study was conducted on a sample with different demographic and socio-economic conditions. We accounted a total of 1200 respondents to the questionnaire. The specific objectives of marketing research were: identifying the frequency of purchase and consumption of wine among consumers; determine the places where consumers prefer to serve wine or to purchase; ascertain the amount of wine that the consumers buy at a purchase; establishing the price that a consumer would pay for a bottle of one liter; determining the type of wine bought by consumers according to color and taste; determining the type of packaging that consumers prefer when buying wine; identification of time spent by consumers in front of the stands for choosing wine; determining of brands and varieties of wine that consumers prefer to purchase and also manufacturers that they prefer; identifying the category of wine that consumers prefer, depending on quality; identifying criteria that consumers consider important in the purchasing decision of wine and the factors that influence consumer opinion on its quality; determining the wine consumer profile.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Research hypotheses from which we started to make this research were: 75 % of consumers taste wine once a week, 15% consume once a month, 7% consume wine 2-3 times per week, and only 3% consume wine once a year; 75% of consumers prefer to buy wine once a month and only 25% prefer to buy annual or weekly; 65% of consumers prefer to drink wine on occasion and about 35% in weekend; most consumers buy a bottle of one liter at a purchase; much would pay for a bottle of wine 10-25 lei; specialized stores (wine cellars) are

the most preferred by wine consumers when purchasing this product because here more information can be obtained; 42% of consumers prefer white wine, 48% red wine, and only 10% rose wine. In terms of taste, sweet and semi-dry wine is preferred by most consumers and only a few prefer dry wine and sweet; 65% of consumers prefer wine glass, 20% wine in pet bottle and 15% bag in box; most consumers spend on stand 2-5 minutes; consumer opinion on wine quality influences the following factors: the varieties of grapes used for wine place and year of harvest; most consumers of wine are male, farmers, aged between 25-50 years old and live in rural areas; personal monthly net income consumers on average is 900 lei or less, most of them are unmarried and in general secondary education is the latest completed studies. In the table 1 it can be seen the structure of socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1. The structure of socio-economic characteristic of respondents

Indicator	Characteristic	Number	%
Age	18-24	380	31.66
	25-29	216	18
	30-49	254	21.16
	>50	350	29.16
Gender	M	675	56.25
	F	525	43.75
Environment	Urban areas	635	52.91
	Rural areas	565	47.08
Occupation	Student	301	25.08
	Employee	394	32.83
	Farmer	230	19.16
	Unemployed	164	13.66
	Retired	111	9.25
Net income	900 lei or less	365	30.41
	900-1499 lei	305	25.41
	1500-1999 lei	271	22.58
	Over 2000	259	21.58
Civil status	Married	555	44.58
	Unmarried	645	55.41
Studies	Primary school	207	17.25
	Secondary school	594	49.5
	Higher education	399	33.25

Source: Own calculation, based on data base research

To find out consumer preferences for wine we used a questionnaire consisting of 18 questions related to wine consumption. The first question asked respondents to indicate whether or not consume wine. Most respondents 85% responded that they consume wine, while 15% of respondents said they don't prefer to drink wine. Of those who

prefer not to consume wine, most responded with the reason that the doctor forbids them because they have health problems while others have said the reason that they don't usually consume alcohol and minority responded that they don't like the taste of wine. For those who don't consume wine we went straight to socio-economic questions. Most consumers responded that they prefer to drink wine once a month (35%), while 26% use to consume wine once a week. Approximately 22% of them consume wine once a year and 17% drink wine 2-3 times a week. As it can be seen in the Fig.1, most wine consumers purchase wine once a year (53%), while 25 % of them use to buy wine once a week. Around 13% of them use to buy wine once a month, while 9 % buys wine 2-3 times a week.

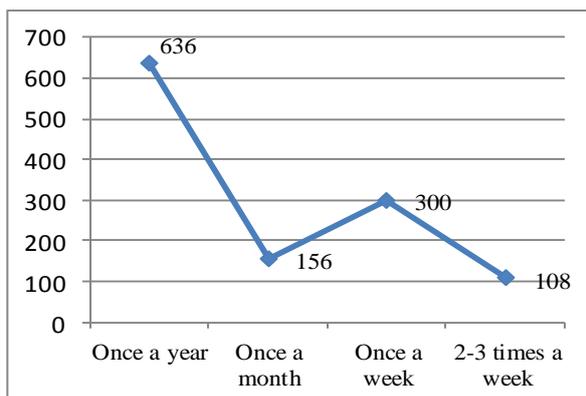


Fig.1. Frequency of wine purchasing

It can be noticed that most consumers buy wine at occasions followed by those who buy wine in weekend. If we analyze the consumption and purchase of wine, we can see that is consumed more wine than is bought. Most respondents consumed wine once a month, but they bought once a year, which means that they received wine as gift or they were small producers of table wine. When were asked about the preferences about wine consumption place, most consumer (41%) said they prefer to drink wine at home because it's the perfect place to enjoy a glass of wine. A proportion of 33% prefer to consume wine regardless of location, while a smaller proportion opts for bar, restaurant or other meeting places with friends. Most wine consumers (55%) purchase bottles of 0.75

liter because it is more practical, it ends quickly and the wine hasn't time to ferment or to change its taste and smell. In the second place are the people who buy more than 2 liters of wine (24%). These people are buying several bottles of 0.75, 1 or 2 liter wine or buy a metal box or bag-in-box. Those who buy more than 2 liters of wine purchase for a party, or to have enough wine for the whole week, or as the case a month or even a year. When consumers were asked how much would they pay for a bottle of 0.75 liters of wine, most of them indicated that they are willing to pay between 20-50 lei (543 people), while a significant number of them indicated that can pay between 10 and 20 lei (413 lei). (Fig.2.)

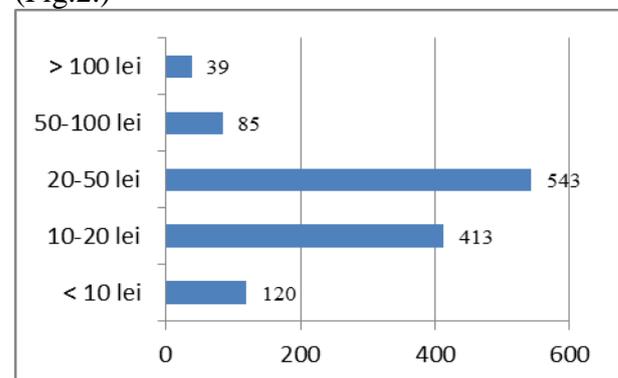


Fig.2. Money that consumer are willing to spend on a wine bottle of 0.75 liters

To know consumer habits, respondents were asked where they prefer to purchase wine. (Fig.3.)

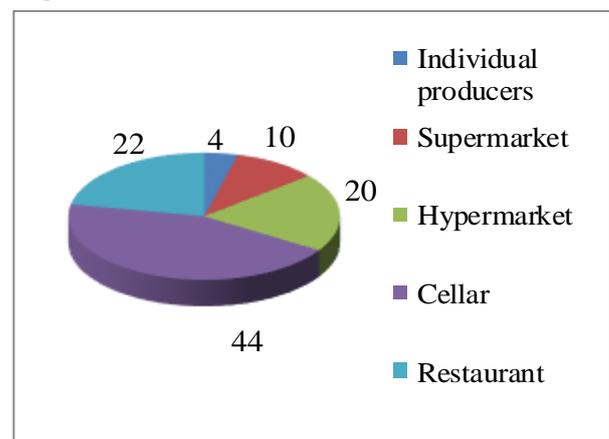


Fig.3. Places to purchase wine (%)

Most of those surveyed (44%) responded that they prefer to buy wine from the cellar. Thus we see that the consumer prefers quality wine,

and it purchased from specialty stores, where it is all about the wine they buy. Approximately 22% of consumers purchase wine at the restaurant in this case considered the ideal place to enjoy a glass of wine. From hypermarket prefer to buy wine 20% of respondents, while 10% of them buy wine at the supermarket, and about 4% from the individual producer. One of the questions aimed to identify the influence of wine color on consumers. Most respondents prefer red wine 46%, followed by those who choose white wine 38%. Rose wine is preferred by only 16% of consumers because it must be consumed quickly. Regarding favorite wine, the results indicate that most consumers prefer wine demi-sec (43%). This wine is the most sought and can be served at dinner. Semi-sweet wines are consumed by about 27%, and are valued as an appetizer. Least favorite are dry and sweet wines. Dry wine contains a small amount of sugar is consumed by 19% of consumers, while 11% prefer sweet wine. Regarding the preferred packaging for wine, most people prefer glass (70%), this package is considered the most affordable and the most common. About 14% prefer PET, 12% prefer the bag-in-box while 4% prefer metal boxes, although they are quite rare. Price is considered to be a very important factor in the decision for 51% of respondents, and important for 24% of them, while 10% are indifferent with the price and 6% consider the price to be unimportant in their choosing decision.

Table2. Quantification of criteria in wine purchasing decision (no of respondent)

Criteria	Rating				
	5	4	3	2	1
Price	615	285	125	75	100
Packaging	370	475	225	108	22
Wine type	508	380	145	132	35
Color	395	425	205	171	4
Advertise	430	290	415	60	5
Producer	485	380	215	85	35
Harvest year	378	353	245	139	85
Vinifying place	483	375	232	72	38
Grape variety	512	325	212	120	31

(5 = very important, 4 = Important, 3 = indifferent, 2 =unimportant, 1= without any importance)

For 8% of respondents price is without any importance when they are choosing which wine they want to buy.

If we calculate the score for each criteria, the results indicates the price as the most important criteria: SPrice = 4.03; SPackaging = 3.89; SWine type = 4.00; SColor = 3.86; S Advertise = 3.90; SProducer = 4.00; SHarvest year = 3.67; SVinifying place = 3.99; S Grape variety = 3.97.

## CONCLUSIONS

The profile of our wine consumer indicates, that this use to drink wine once of month but buy wine once a year and makes choices especially depending on price, type of wine and producer. Romania has an important market for red wines and dry wines. The price is very important in the consumer choice, but he accepts to pay more depending on quality and other relevant aspects. Each sensory or non-sensory attributes of the wine have an important role in wine consumer decision.

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