The Wine Consumption and Purchase Behavior of College Students: An Investigation in the South of China

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Abstract The aim of this research is to discuss the wine consumption behavior of college students in the south of China, to seek possible explanation for the college students' behaviors and finally, to identify which factors may attribute their willingness to purchase and make strategic suggestions or plans for the wine industry. Self-administered electronic questionnaires were completed by 159 college students in Shenzhen, China in 2016. Frequencies, cross-tabulation, Chi-square and One-way Anova and correlation analysis were used in the study. Research results indicate the majority of respondents have a basic command of wine knowledge. The college students have a desire to know wines and the most effective way is through visitation. Generally, they drink and purchase wine infrequently. They would be more likely to purchase wine from the supermarkets, wineries and internet, which aims mainly for celebrations and socializations. Respondents prefer to sweet white wines, rose wines and sparkling wines, in comparison to dry wines, which are fresh and aromatic. Significant differences exist between the genders and the type of wine, while no significant differences between the grape varieties of wine and genders. Strong correlations were found between consumer wine knowledge and frequency. This paper contributes a basic study on college student's wine subjective knowledge and wine drinking behavior in the south of China, which assists the wineries and wine markets to make strategies for market segmentation. It is also helpful for wine markets to understand and make proper market strategies for the emerging wine consumers.

Keywords Wine, Consumer Behavior, Consumer Preference, Chinese College Students

1. Introduction

In an increasing competitive and over-supplied wine marketplace, there is a need to foster an interest in wine

among younger consumers. This is particularly significant given the college students, for so long the leading consumers of wine globally. The wine industry is aware of the need to pay more attention to younger wine drinkers with academic attention currently being focused college students. There are two research objectives for this paper:

1. To explore the main channel for college students to search wine information and gain wine knowledge.
2. To discuss the college students' attitudes and behaviors of wine consumption.

In western countries, the current researches seek to explore the wine consumption behavior, based on economics, psychology and behavior or science theory, to study the wine consumption behavior roundly from different behaviors, decisions, situations and motivations.

Much has been written to indicate the differences in wine consumption behavior which are resulting from the different gender, specific age, earns and education level. Hussain's study proved that age, ethnicity and education level have a significant influence on consumers' wine consumption behavior by Regression model [1]. In an increasingly competitive and over-supplied wine market, consumers gain an emotional benefit from drinking wines, which is cultural Identity and social status to younger consumers in comparison to the socialization to the elders [2].

Motivations are the drivers for consumption. Previous studies indicate that socialization, matching with food and health care are the main motivations for consuming wine. Madeira et al.'s study indicated the younger consumers in Portugal drink wines for enjoying the wine, socialization and self-experience [3]. It can be consumed privately with a home-cooked meal, taken with friends during a more formal dinner occasion, or even offered as a gift [4].

Wine consumption can be influenced via many factors. It is expected that the relative importance of product attributes will be influenced via the consumption situation and consumers' intention to purchase depends on the degree to which they associate the product characteristics with their

consumption situation [4]. The factors consist of the wine characteristics (brand, price, wine variety, color et al.) and reference group (family, friends and colleague et al.). With respect to the way consumers gain experience and knowledge, they felt more able to make a purchase [5]. Goodman noted “tasted” and “others’ recommendations” can be ranked the top three in most countries in terms of the factors to wine consumption [6]. Wine Intelligence investigated 1512 wine consumer in Britain and suggested 60% consumer gain value recommendations from their family and friends [7].

Generally, the college students in China in terms of tend to be less knowledgeable, while they have a strong desire to learn [8-11]. Previous studies suggest that college students are a group who are confident, self-reliant, ambitious, and generally tolerant of others (thus positively welcoming diversity) and keen to face challenges [12]. With respect to the channels to search for wine information, a survey was conducted with the college students in Yunnan Province and suggested that students learn wine knowledge mainly through advertisements, magazines, newspapers and Internet. They are a slightly knowledgeable in health care of wine, while they are ignorant of types of wines and wine regions, which are slightly professional. Many of them indicated the willing to enrich wine knowledge via lectures, tasting or winery visitation [13]. While Camillo noted that the channels of communication through which Chinese consumers receive information are, in ranked order: 1 – product review, 2 – word-of-mouth, 3 – TV commercials, 4 – wine-related web sites, 4 – print ads, and 5 – direct mail [14].

Many of the consumers make a purchase in terms of wine which is mainly for self or celebrations [15, 16]. Yi. D noted that the respondents who are accustomed to make a purchase of wines on internet generally have a good education level and they are younger [17]. In terms of the different consumption objectives, consumer target price tends to displays specific differences, the analysis of buying behavior of Chinese consumers show that they buy expensive wines as a gift or for celebrations and inexpensive wines for their own consumption, which is influenced by face and status [14, 15, 17, 18].

With respect to the type of wine consumed, the previous study showed that the Chinese wine consumer prefer red wine and sweet wine than white wine. Influenced by the older generations who point wines as red wines and called the drinks red wines, Chinese young adults consider that wine should be red. Chinese have a preference to palatable food is another important reason [11, 14].

The brand, texture and others’ recommendations tend to be the main characteristics to make college students have a purchase, which was proved by Goodman and Somogyi et al. [6, 18].

2. Methods

This study investigates the level of wine knowledge, the

wine consumption behavior and the attitudes towards wine of young consumers in the south of China. The research design for the analysis is an online survey distributed to young consumers in Shenzhen, one of the megacities in the south of China. Meanwhile Shenzhen is a new developing city, whose population is mainly consisted of young adults and is representative of the national potential market. The following sections address the detailed questionnaire and the methods using in the data analysis. This study applied qualitative and quantitative methods using an online survey with a self-administered, electronic questionnaire.

From the previous researches, we can learn that the college students are a special group and they have the strong eager to purchase but limited by the earns [6, 10, 15]. There is a hypothesis to examine college students’ purchasing frequency:

H₁: College student drink and purchase wine infrequently.

Previous researches have suggested that young consumers first tried wine in mostly in a special occasion and a social drink that make consumers happy. [2, 19, 20] Accordingly, there is a hypothesis to examine college students’ views regarding wines in terms of their purposes:

H₂: College students drink and purchase wine mainly for socializations.

It is likely that the demand for taste is higher among college students. Previous researches have suggested that college students have preference to purchase Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc. [6, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24] There are two hypotheses to examine consumer views regarding wines in terms of both preference for drinking such wines and purchase intentions towards these products:

H₃: College students prefer to drink aromatic and light-bodied wines and have the intentions to purchase the product.

H₄: College students prefer to drink sweet white wines such like Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc and have the intentions to purchase the product.

2.1 Research Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of four parts: the wine knowledge, the consumption behavior, the attitudes toward wine consumption and the demographic profile. In the first part, respondents were conducting a self-assessment for the wine knowledge. In the second part, wine drinking behaviors were examined. In the third part, the attitudes toward wine consumption were examined. In the last part, the demographic information of respondents was collected. The main questions in the questionnaire on wine drinking behavior were:

How do you get the information about wine?

Which method do you prefer to gain wine knowledge?

How often is wine consumed?

Where do you purchase wine?

What are the purposes of consuming wine?

What type of wine is consumed?

2.2. Samples and Data Collection

In this study, the samples were consisted of university students in Shenzhen, which is a good representation of possible future national wine market. This study uses an online survey for data collection. Respondents were interviewed at various days of week, over a seven-day timeframe from September 2016 to November 2016 in Shenzhen, China. A total of 160 representative questionnaires were collected and 159 representative questionnaires are valid. All of the respondents are confirmed to be 18 years of age or over and they have no occupation and what they spend daily is supported by their family. The respondents gave positive cooperation because the investigation is used for scientific research and they are interested in wine, which is benefit to avoid the bias into results.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data was pre-coded and then entered into SPSS.

In order to test the college students' level of wine knowledge, a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) was used. To obtain the information of wine consumption behavior and attitudes toward wine, the Frequencies and cross-tabulation for variables were constructed. Pearson Chi-square tests were used to test for significant differences between those respondents which have different preference to the type and variety of wines. One-way Anova was used to test for the significant differences between respondents' gender and frequency of wine purchase.

3. Results of Discussion

3.1. The Level of Subjective Knowledge of Wine

The subjective knowledge of wine is the self- assessment to wine knowledge. This was accessed by a Likert scale from 1 (Not at all well) to 5 (excellent well). Overall, the college students in China tend to be less knowledgeable which is between the "somewhat well" and "very well" (Table 1), indicating that the wine is tend to be more popular in the respondents.

Overall, the respondents have a good knowledge to grape varieties (Mean=3.42, SD=0.687), old world region (M=3.47, SD=0.786), and new world region (M=3.34, SD=0.794), while they don't know much about Chinese wine region (M=2.42, SD=0.798), which indicates what college students emphasis is tasting and import wines, while they pay to less attention to China region and viticulture (M=2.87, SD=0.769) and serving and breathing (M=2.74, SD=0.75). Strong relationships were found among the knowledge of the wine tasting, old world region, new world region and the wine buying frequency (Table 2).

Table 1. The level of subjective knowledge of wine

	N	Mean ^a	Std. Deviation
Wine tasting	159	3.35	.686
Grape varieties	159	3.42	.687
Viticulture	159	2.87	.769
Vinification	159	3.07	.858
Storing wine	159	2.94	.829
Serving and breathing	159	2.74	.750
Food matching	159	3.23	.841
Wine glass choosing	159	2.87	1.011
China wine region	159	2.42	.798
Old world wine region	159	3.47	.786
New world wine region	159	3.34	.794

^a: Mean calculated using a 5-point interval scale, where 1 = Not at all well, 5 = excellent well. (N=sample size).

Table 2. The correlation between wine knowledge and frequency of wine purchase

	Frequency of wine purchase	
	Correlation Coefficient ^a	Sig (2-tailed).
Wine tasting	.156	.049
Grape varieties	.103	.197
Viticulture	.056	.483
Vinification	.095	.234
Storing wine	.083	.299
Serving and breathing	.101	.203
Food matching	.096	.229
Wine glass choosing	.131	.099
China wine region	.132	.096
Old world wine region	.190	.017
New world wine region	.179	.024

^a: The correlation coefficient between wine knowledge and wine buying frequency (Significant at the 0.05 level(2-sided)).

3.2. The Channel to Gain Wine Knowledge

As Table 3 shows, three channels have the most significant effects, among which the effect of lecture by experts (60.3%) is the best, professional books (53.6%) is the second and Internet (50.3%) is the third. Other channels all have the ordinary effects. These findings support existing research which has been proved by Ma. C. H and Camillo [13, 14].

Table 4 is interesting since in practice with above. The main channel they gain wine knowledge is lecture by experts, but if they have choice, the lecture (5.7%) have the least attraction to college student, which is a slightly better than blind tasting (4.4%) and courses (4.4%). The main factor in term of their characters is the group has a less favors in the stereotype lecturing. And winery visitation (34.6%) is most attractive to the respondents, which indicates college students prefer to learn in a field trip, meanwhile enjoying a

relaxed experience [28,29].

Table 3. The channel to gain wine knowledge

The channel ^a	Responses	
	N	Percent of Cases
TV	36	23.8%
Newspaper	12	7.9%
Magazine	32	21.2%
Outdoor advertisement	6	4.0%
Internet	76	50.3%
Peer communication	52	34.4%
Professional books	81	53.6%
Lecture by experts	91	60.3%
Winery visitation	6	4.0%
Sales	11	7.3%
Total	403	266.9%

^a: Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 4. The first choice to enrich wine knowledge

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Wine exhibition	22	13.8
Lecture of wine region	9	5.7
Certificate training	31	19.5
Wine tasting event	27	17.0
Blind tasting	7	4.4
Internet courses	7	4.4
Winery visitation	55	34.6
8	1	.6
Total	159	100.0

3.3 Wine Consumer Behavior

Multiple factors influence an influence on consumers' decisions of how often to buy, where to buy and which to buy. Consumers' intention to purchase depends on the degree to

which they associate the product characteristics with their consumption situation [4].

As Figure1 demonstrates, conclusions that the college students have a limited buying power. In the last year, the 18.2% of the respondents purchase wine once a year and 30.8% of respondents purchase wine twice a year. Overall, in the last year, 62.3% of them have purchased wine while 37.7% have not. One-way Anova (Table 5) revealed there is no significant differences in the frequency of wine purchase as different gender ($F=3.028$, $p=0.084 > 0.05$), which is because college students as a special group are limited by their incomes and can prove H1.

Respondents were asked where they prefer to purchase wine, including for supermarkets, wine stores, Internet, bars and hotels (Table6). Internet (72.0%) is the favorable way to purchase wine for the young consumers. Supermarket (56.1%) is the second favorable choice, which is a slightly lower in comparison to other countries. It indicates the online shopping has been popular due to the convenient transportation, especially for college students, which has developed faster than other countries. While the traditional shopping method also counts a specific proportion, bars (6.4%) and hotels (0) tend to be less favorable, which is reasonable as college students.

Many of the respondents purchase wine which is mainly for socialization or celebrations (Table7). 79.2% of respondents purchase for parties. 55.8% of respondents purchase wine for celebrations and 34.4% of respondents purchase wine for gifts. Self-drinking, business invitation, investment and collection have a less significant effect in comparison to above. Currently, the wine is used more frequency on parties rather than self-drinking not only in terms of earns but also the influence of traditional "face culture", which indicates one's style, taste and well education and can prove H2. These findings are similar to the existing study proved by Camillo, Yu. Y et al., Yi. D and Somogyi et al. [14, 15, 17, 18]

Figure 1. Frequency of wine purchase

Table 5. One-way ANOVA between gender and frequency

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	3.970	1	3.970	3.028	.084
Within groups	205.879	157	1.311		
Total	209.849	158			

Table 6. The venue to purchase

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
The venue to purchase ^a	Supermarkets	88	35.1%	56.1%
	Wine stores	40	15.9%	25.5%
	Internet	113	45.0%	72.0%
	Bars	10	4.0%	6.4%
Total		251	100.0%	159.9%

^a Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 7. The factors attribute to purchase

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Table7 The factors attribute to purchase ^a	Self-drinking	74	20.0%	48.1%
	Parties	122	33.0%	79.2%
	Celebrations	86	23.2%	55.8%
	Business invitation	25	6.8%	16.2%
	Gifting	53	14.3%	34.4%
	Investment	4	1.1%	2.6%
	Collection	6	1.6%	3.9%
Total		370	100.0%	240.3%

^a Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

3.4. Attitudes Towards Wine

Overall, the respondents show their preference to sweet white wines, Rose wines and sparkling wines.

As shown in Table8, Sweet white wines (66.7%) were indicated as the most favorable wine, followed by sparkling wines (62.9%), rose wines (49.1%) and other type of wines, respectively. The three types of wine are common in taste, which are fresh, sweet, and aromatic. Chi-square (Table 9) revealed significant differences in the type of wine that respondents consume as the different gender ($\chi^2=16.475$, $p=0.021 < 0.05$).

With respect to the flavor of wine, respondents have less purchase intentions towards the full-bodied wines (6.3%) and oaky flavor wines (4.9%), while 44.9% prefer to drink aromatic wines and 43.9% have a purchase intention to light-bodied wines. College students prefer to drink aromatic and light-bodied wines and have purchase intentions towards the products. These findings support existing research which suggests early experimentation with wine by young people tends to purchase aromatic and light-bodied wine, which can

prove the H3 and H4. [25, 26, 27].

With the respect to college students' attitudes towards grape varieties, the conclusion (Table10) is similar with what previous study. Chardonnay (34.0%), Sauvignon Blanc (40.3%) and Riesling (78.0%) rank the top three among the college students, which are the sweet wines and aromatic wines. The dry wines and full-bodied wines display fewer interests of them, such as Cabernet Sauvignon (24.5%), Merlot (15.7%), Syrah (8.2%) and Pinot Noir (16.4%). Chi-square (Table 11) revealed no significant differences in the grape varieties of wine when respondents consume as the different gender ($\chi^2=7.716$, $p=0.260 > 0.05$), which prove the hypothesis above.

Table 8. Type * Gender Cross tabulation

		Gender		Total (Percent of Cases)
		Male	Female	
Type	Dry red	12	22	34(21.4%)
	Dry white	11	34	45(28.3%)
	Sweet red	1	12	13(8.2%)
	Sweet white	20	86	106(66.7%)
	Rose	13	65	78(49.1%)
	Sparkling	16	84	100(62.9%)
	Fortified	1	3	4(2.5%)
	Spirits	4	2	6(3.8%)
Total		78	308	386(242.7%)

Table 9. Chi-Square Tests between type of wine and gender

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.475a	7	.021
Likelihood Ratio	14.235	7	.047
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.663	1	.197
N of Valid Cases	386		

^a 5 cells (31.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .81.

Table 10. Grape varieties and Gender Cross tabulation

		Gender		Total (Percent of Cases)
		Male	Female	
Grape varieties	Cabernet Sauvignon	13	26	39(24.5%)
	Merlot	3	22	25(15.7%)
	Syrah	1	12	13(8.2%)
	Pinot Noir	8	18	26(16.4%)
	Chardonnay	13	41	54(34.0%)
	Sauvignon Blanc	15	53	68(42.8%)
	Riesling	24	100	124(78.0%)
Total		77	272	349(219.5%)

Table 11. Chi-Square Tests between grape varieties and gender

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.716a	6	.260
Likelihood Ratio	7.978	6	.240
Linear-by-Linear Association	.910	1	.340
N of Valid Cases	349		

^a 1 cells (7.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.87.

3.5. Attitudes to the Country of Origin

The respondents display a preference to the import wine (Table 12), especially the France wine (76.7%). Other than domestic wines, currently the domestic wines have more dominances than import wines, while the potential consumers' attitudes, which have a significant effect on the market, should be an alert to the domestic wine industry to perfect the supervision system and improve product quality.

Table 12. The frequencies of preference to countries

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$country ^a	France	122	26.6%	76.7%
	Italy	51	11.1%	32.1%
	Spain	24	5.2%	15.1%
	German	67	14.6%	42.1%
	America	42	9.2%	26.4%
	Australia	73	15.9%	45.9%
	New Zealand	41	9.0%	25.8%
	Chile	16	3.5%	10.1%
	Argentina	7	1.5%	4.4%
	South Africa	1	0.2%	0.6%
	China	14	3.1%	8.8%
Total		458	100.0%	288.1%

^a Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

4. Conclusions and Recommendation

With the wine industry being so competitive, wine marketers need to attract more consumers, especially the potential consumers. This study investigated college students' attitudes and try to identify what college students' preference is and how to attract them.

Overall, the college students have a fundamental knowledge about wine and they have a relatively good knowledge of tasting. The new world region, the old-world region and wines tasting tend to be prevalent among them. These participants gain the wine knowledge mainly from the lectures by experts, internet and books, while they tend to enrich by visiting wineries, which is interesting in practice.

The respondents have less limited purchase power because of no incomes, and many of them buy wines once a year (18.2%) or twice a year (30.8%), a quantity of them even have no purchase (37.7%) last year. College students usually purchase wine on the internet (72.0%) for socializations including parties and celebrations. They prefer to aromatic (44.9%) and fresh wines (43.9%) which have good tastes, and they have a preference to sweet white wines, rose wines and sparkling wines. Significant differences exist in respondents consuming as different genders. Chi-square reveals no significant differences exist in the grape varieties of wine that respondents consume as different genders. The college students in Shenzhen have a preference to the import wines, especially the France wine (76.7%).

The above studies have dedicated that college students have a preference to the aromatic and light-bodied wines, such like Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc, and have the intentions to purchase the product. Accordingly, marketers should focus on college students' preference while making a wine promotion that are attractive to them. Since the research was conducted in Shenzhen, marketers can consider a sweet wine marketing plan to the local students.

Based on the results from the study, it is recommended that wineries and wine marketers should cooperate to establish a platform to conduct wine education, helping college students to know more about wines through television, advertisement and internet. These can lead the consumers' preference and behavior, as well as enhance their buying power of wine. In order to increase the sales, the wineries can cooperate with the travel agency to provide winery trip for the consumers to experience in wine making and promote the sales of the products at the same time [28,29]. These are specific appealing to those who are eager to know more about wines and interested in wineries.

For further studies, the recommendations would be to expand. The research should investigate college students from a much broader area because the demographics have limited diversity in Shenzhen, e.g. the sample size of Shenzhen is not enough to be representative to college students in other areas. Moreover, the research should include more students from more colleges. Surveys should be conducted in more universities in order to get a better idea of wine preference and behavior of college students.

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