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Title

Consumers' behavior toward cheap wines: a multidisciplinary approach

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Keywords

Nonpremium wine
Multidisciplinary approach

Research Question

What is the consumer behavior toward cheap wines?

Methods

The multidisciplinary approach has been implemented in three steps: (i) chemical analysis, (ii) sensory analysis, (iii) economic analysis.

Results

The preliminary results of the study show a high correlation between the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristic of wine.

Abstract

Consumers' behavior toward cheap wines: a multidisciplinary approach
Stefano Corsi, Chiara Mazzocchi, Giordano Ruggeri, Monica Bononi, Monica Laureati, Leonardo Valenti
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Wine market witnessed a progressive and constant increase in the last decades and in 2017, the global market is

estimated at 10 107.9 mhl in terms of volume (an increase of 3.4% compared with 2016), and 30.4bn EUR in terms of value⁸ (a rise of 4.8% compared with 2016) (OIV, 2018). But the consumption patterns are very different in the main consuming countries.

Wine's share of global recorded alcohol consumption volume has more than halved between 1961 and 2015, falling from 35% to 15%, while beer's share has increased from 29% to 42%, and spirits' share rose from 36% to 43%, over the same period. Furthermore the differences in total alcohol consumption levels are diminishing and a convergence process is occurring in several countries (Bentzen et al., 2001; Aizenman and Brooks, 2008) The market shares for traditional beverages declined in several European countries (Smith and Solgaard, 2000) and, in particular, in the Old World wine producers, namely France, Italy and Spain, the wine consumption has substantially decreased with a shift from wine to beer or spirits.

According to Anderson and Nelgen (2011) the wines can be classified in three categories: nonpremium, commercial premium and superpremium. Nonpremium wines represent a relevant part in the world wine market, accounting for only one-seventh of the global wine trade in value but almost half in volume terms. Moreover, as the price of wine per liter of alcohol is higher than the ones of beer and spirits in Europe and North America (Holmes and Anderson, 2017), this means that the shift from wine to beer consumption has probably been at the expense of the cheapest wines.

The wine's purchasing process is generally based on the multiple attributes of wines, both intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic attributes, namely, the physical-chemical aspects of the wine, such as color, alcohol content, and flavor are specific to each product (Lockshin & Hall, 2003) and are the most relevant characteristics that guide the consumers' choice. But consumers have often no opportunity to taste a wine before buying it and cannot consider its intrinsic sensory characteristics (Barber, Almanza, & Donovan, 2006). Thus, consumers choose a bottle of wine using available information they can gather when inspecting the bottle and the label. These extrinsic attributes are name of the wine, company brand, price, packaging, geographical indication, grape variety, etc. (Sáenz-Navajas et al., 2013).

Some authors confirmed the different consumers' behavior in choosing premium and nonpremium wines and most of them focused on the premium wines (Balestrini and Gamble, 2006). On the other side, despite the importance of nonpremium wines, very few studies have specifically investigated the consumers' behavior toward this segment (Cembalo et al., 2014).

In this work we are exploring the consumers' behavior in choosing cheap wines by a multidisciplinary approach, making use of the chemical, sensory and economic analysis in order to study the consumers' appreciation of nonpremium wines. In particular, chemical analysis has been implemented in order to define the chemical descriptors of aroma and taste. The sensory analysis showed the consumers' judgement and preferences and finally the economic analysis assessed the willingness to pay for a nonpremium Italian wine.

Methodology

The multidisciplinary approach has been implemented in three steps: (i) chemical analysis, (ii) sensory analysis, (iii) economic analysis.

(i) HS/HRGC/MS technics have been implemented to identify the chemical markers, which define the aromatic composition.

(ii) A panel of 200 consumers has been during the test sessions in sensory labs. A questionnaire has been developed and distributed to get socio-demographic information and anthropometric data, familiarity with wine, food-related lifestyles, food habits, and preferences. The participants tasted the wine and provided judgement on color, taste and flavor.

(iii) The same panel has been involved in the economic analysis. A discrete choice experiment has been implemented to elicit the Willingness To Pay for cheap red wine in the Italian market. DCEs working in a hypothetical market have limitations (Lusk and Schroeder, 2004), but the major advantage is allowing the study of products or attributes not yet available in the market.

Results

In terms of intrinsic attributes, the consumers prefer sweet and fruity wines with low alcohol content. Furthermore, consumers recognized and preferred some aromas correspondent to chemical descriptors identified by the chemical analysis.

The extrinsic attributes that guarantee higher appreciation are the grape variety and the company brand, whereas the denomination of origin and the name of the wine have lower impact.

Finally, the preliminary results of the study show a high correlation between the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristic of wine.

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