Generation Y = Generation Wine? - German Millennials and their liaison with wine

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Introduction
One possible marketing strategy to segment consumers in different groups classifying their needs, characteristics and behavior is to generate groups by year of birth. This classification is based on the assumptions these people share cultural, historical and social experiences resulting in a similar background. The deductive resemblance in their behavior, attitudes and values influences their consumer patterns (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Noble & Schewe, 2003; Pendergast, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to examine how members of the German Generation Y proceed when they buy wine and to extract the key points of their perception of wine quality.

Context
The Generation Y is the youngest generation of wine drinkers, but there is only little research done in Germany about this group, although there were 16.7 million members of this group in the year 2011 in Germany, representing 20.4% of the total population. Recent studies describe the members of the Generation Y as consumers who drink wine as a companion for food, relaxing or sociable events (Thach & Olsen, 2006).

Focused topic
The goal of the most purchase decisions is to choose the best product among the available alternatives. Beside other attributes quality is an important factor during the evaluation. While buying wine, consumer can pay attention to different external and internal factors. By which factor consumers are guided depends on different parameters like gender and income (Barber, Almanza & Donovan, 2006), involvement (Hollebeek, Jaeger, Brodie & Balemi, 2007) and origin (Casini, Seghieri & Torrisi, 2006). Another factor is the age resp. the belonging to a specific generation (Barber et al., 2006; Chrysochou, Krystallis, Mocanu & Lewis, 2012).

Methodology
A self-administered web-based questionnaire was developed and afterwards distributed via several e-mail distribution lists of university faculties, only reaching the members of the generation Y. The results are based on 565 completed questionnaires. The questionnaire is comprised of five parts. The first part is about the quality evaluation when buying wine asking for the factors they use during a purchase decision. The second question included 26 different whereby the respondents should select the ones they normally use when buying wine. Five most important factors where used to build a ranking at the end. Second part of the questionnaire attended to the interest in the product wine. The respondents assessed their wine knowledge and then scored different statement belonging to the scales "Product Involvement", "Brand Decision Involvement" and "Brand Risk". They base on scales developed by Mittal (1988), Mittal und Lee (1989) and Lockshin, Spawton und Macintosh (1997) and were translated into German. In addition, the scale "Brand risk" contains one self-
developed item. The next part of the questionnaire was about the consumption of wine and contained questions about the frequency of wine consumption, the preferred style of wine and how much money is normally spent on a bottle of wine. The questionnaire ends with questions about the consumption of other alcoholic beverages and socio-demographic information.

Results
The sample consists of 75% female respondents, 52% belong to the age group 22-25 years and 95% live in a wine growing area. Through analysis of the chosen factors the following "Top 5" quality factors are used when evaluating the quality of wine:

1. Price (chosen by 82.1%)
2. Labeled style of wine (dry/semi-dry/sweet) (81.4%)
3. Country of origin (74.7%)
4. Label (69.7%)
5. Producer/Brand (67.1%)

The five least chosen factors are degree of innovation (1.4%), exclusivity (7.1%), membership of a wine association (8.1%), style of the salesroom (9%) and vineyard site (13.8%).

Regarding the knowledge of wine the respondents judge it averagely with 2.44 on a 6-point-scale (SD 1.2). The mean values of the involvement scales are 4.4 (SD 1.6) for the product involvement scale, 3.8 (SD 1.5) for the brand decision involvement scale and 3.3 (SD 1.3) for the brand risk scale (all are 7-point Likert scales).

The majority of the respondents consumes wine several times per month (32.2%) and prefers white wine (69.9%) over sparkling wine (41.8%), red wine (40.9%) and rosé wine (34.4%). Regarding the average sum of money spent on a bottle of wine, the category "5.00 EUR to 9.99 EUR" is chosen by the half of the sample (51.1%), followed by the categories "<5.00 EUR" (36.4%) and "10 EUR to 14.99 EUR" (10.6%).

Discussion
Germany is an interesting market for exporting wine countries. For the future it will be important to pay attention not only to the present target groups but also to the growing group of new wine consumers, the Millennials. Recent studies showed that they differ from older generations (Chrysochou et al., 2012). This study is highlighting new insights in the attitude towards wine and the consumption pattern of the German Millennials. According to our results this Generation is orientated by price, various information found on the label (labeled style of wine, country of origin, producer/brand) and the design of the label itself to judge wine quality. The results show some overlaps to recent studies what points out that cross-national similarity exist within the Generation Y.

The Millennials attest themselves a low level of wine knowledge, but show an above-average involvement what implies that they are interested in this product. This could be used for marketing activities, e.g. by creating information material that match the interest and needs of this generation.

Concerning their consumption pattern the analysis points out that the majority doesn't drink weekly. Surprisingly they spend between 5 and 10 EUR per bottle of wine what corresponds
to the finding that price is the most chosen quality factor. To sum up, for the first time new insights in the consumer pattern and quality related attributes for German wine consumers belonging to the generation Y could be acquired. This understanding will help to place products on the German market fitting the consuming behaviors of this attractive generation.

**Literature**


