Title
Do organic wine taste better? Evidence on consumer demand on taste of organic wine.

I want to submit an abstract for:
Conference Presentation

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Keywords
organic wine, consumer behavior, taste organic wine, sensory perception, sustainability, wine, consumer preferences, literature review

Research Question
Do consumers perceive organic wine as lower sensory quality than conventional one?

Methods
Literature review

Results
The results show how socio-economic and psychological characteristics of consumer as well as perceived risk toward quality perception affect their behaviour for organic wine.

Abstract
Consumer interest in organic wine is growing, but the effects of organic label on consumer quality perception are not yet fully understood and the support of consumer for the benefits claim of organic wine is at times doubtful. Little consensus on the benefits in terms of improved sensory quality of such products compared to conventional counterparts. Among sensory qualities, taste has been found to be both a key driver and barrier to wine consumption.
A concern among consumers is that organic wine might entail a trade-off between sensory quality and organic features (Lockshin and Corsi, 2012). While consumers wish to protect the environment, they are not willing to do this under the conditions of a product of inferior sensory quality (Hoffmann, 2010; Krystallis, 2010). Studies comparing organic and conventional wine show that positive attitudes and buying intentions consumers have about organic food in general do not seem to extend to organic wine. Olsen et al. (2006) provide possible explanations for consumers’ resistance to purchasing organic wine showing that wine is primarily associated with sensory quality, which is the main feature underlying wine consumption (Stolz and Schmid, 2009). Specifically, they consider the role that hedonic consumption plays in altering consumers’ willingness to support organic agriculture.
wine is associated with taste and pleasure in consumer’s mind, but organic wine is associated with bad taste and therefore less pleasure.

In wine consumption, hedonic aspect has been found to have a greater influence on the purchase decision than the utilitarian aspect (Edwards, 1990). Considering the hedonic elements of wine (Neely et al., 2010), the organic characteristic is subordinate to sensory characteristics, which were found very influential in determining wine purchasing decisions (Cohen, 2009).

Møller Sørensen (2011) points out that in the 1970s organic wines had a poor sensory quality, which caused a negative image. Nowadays, even if there is the image of organic wines has improved, an important obstacle to its consumption is the bad reputation linked to the wine taste (Stolz and Schmidt, 2008; Delmas and Grant, 2014). Among sensory qualities, taste has been found to be both a key driver and barrier to wine consumption (Lockshin et al., 2006).

The taste of wine constitutes one of the major perceived risks, as outlined by Mitchell and Greatorex (1988). The authors state that the taste of wine is the kind of risk that consumers are fretting mainly about. It is hard to minimise the risk due to the fact that almost all wine purchase situations do not include the opportunity to taste the wine before purchase.

From producer’s point of view, because of the lack of clarity on the value added by organic method production and relative label, some wineries currently follow organic practices without being certified. According to Delmas and Grant (2014) some American organically wine-makers do not use organic label on the bottle. Others become certified but do not provide the information on their bottle label (Rauber, 2006).

This study seeks to understand the link between organic wine and consumer taste perception. Using a systematic literature review, the paper explores the characteristics of consumer willing to buy organic wine, as well as the consumers’ perception of taste when evaluating organic wine quality and in shaping consumers’ attitudes.

In order to investigate about the effectiveness of organic wine, the research question is concentrate on the relations between intrinsic cues, such as taste, and consumer ‘preferences.

The objectives of the study therefore are: (1) to identify the characteristics of consumer of organic wine; and (2) to determine consumer perception of taste of organic wine when evaluating organic wine quality and in shaping consumers’ attitudes.

The literature review was performed to select studies and to summarize the literature about consumer preferences and consumer purchasing behaviour towards organic wine. Data were collected using the main scientific/economic electronic research databases and reference lists from identified studies. We also searched the websites of authors who have an established history of conducting consumers’ behaviour studies. The literature searching was conducted using a combination of keywords in the four most powerful on-line scientific search engines: Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, and Science Direct. We have also selected some academic journals specialized in wine economics, and we have checked the presence of articles that examine the issue of sustainability in wine.

The paper is structured as follows. In the first section a background of consumer quality assessment is carried out. In second section the method is described. The third section comprises the narrative systematic review, summarizing the main result of literature on organic wine consumer profile. Fourth section discusses the taste perception toward organic wine in the literature. Finally, fifth section explains the result and the sixth section discuss concluding remarks.

The results show how socio-economic and psychological characteristics of consumer as well as perceived risk toward quality perception affect their behaviour for organic wine. Based on literature studies, consumers have positive opinions toward organic wine, which is perceived as healthiness and environmental friendliness. However, an important obstacle to its consumption is the bad reputation linked to the wine taste. Understanding the profile of consumers and the factors that influence consumer’ behaviour provide information to the organic wine industry. Finally, the review concludes with implications and suggestions for further research.