Package Profiles and the Role of Brand: The Case of Valpolicella Wines
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The packaging is often the first cue used by consumer to assess the quality of a wine; wine packaging also represents the “business card” of the winery, through which it presents its product and in which it makes its communication strategies explicit.

International studies on wine packaging focus on the different technical options for alternative materials (Buiatti et al., 1997, Thompson, 2010), on its influence on the consumer decision (Spawton, 2008, Barber et al., 2010, Szolnoki et al., 2010, Sherman and Tuten, 2011) and on its impact on the market price of wine (Mueller and Szolnoki, 2010).

The study of Orth and Malkewitz (2008) identifies, starting from wine packaging, the key types of package designs and proposes itself as a tool to help managers in packaging policies.

However, in the marketing and packaging literature, the role of packaging as communication strategy for the wineries has not been deeply analysed, as well as the role of the collective denomination of origin as an essential component of the packaging for the wineries in the Old World. Recently, its interactions with the brand are generating new communication elements which should be explored to give new marketing inputs to the wine producers.

This research aims at analysing the package profiles to understand the communication choices of the wineries in the denomination of origin area.

This objective will be pursued through the case study of Valpolicella wines. This area of origin has been chosen because it is one of the most important typical red wine areas of Italy, with a wide range of combinations product/market, diversified target prices according to wine categories and brand notoriety, and an high export propensity.

A survey by a representative sample of wineries has been conducted to collect the package profile elements actually used. An ad hoc survey scheme has been apply to 700 wines of the 130 member wineries, aiming to analyse the characteristics of the bottle, of the labels, and of the information they provide.

Different “package profiles” able to represent the different communication styles adopted by the Valpolicella wineries have been determined, segmenting packaging strategy of Valpolicella wineries.

Future development of this research aim at interpreting the quality cues perceived by the consumer through the package profiles and the role of the denomination of origin in the determination of the utility of the package profiles, also considering their interaction with the brand and the other packaging elements.