How Young Adults Perceive and Consume Wine: An Exploratory Comparison of French and American Consumers

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**Literature review**
- Consumer behavior in general
  - Descriptive approach, official organizations
  - General but in-depth research: trends, contexts, quality cues, reactions to innovation…
- Focus on young consumers
  - Representations of wine, social phenomenon
  - Psychology and sociology
- International and comparative approach
  - Is wine perceived the same way in different cultural contexts?
  - Do young adults purchase and consume wine differently?
  - How and why are they different?

**Research orientation**
- General approach: understand young consumers and their relationship with wine
- Wine compared to other beverages
- Beliefs and attitudes about wine
- Buying and consumption behavior, purchase criteria
- Determinants of behavior - consumption context, individual characteristics, social process, culture…
- Level and nature of involvement
- Comparative and international approach, focus on France-US

**Approach and position of research**

**Methodological framework**

**Some findings**

**Discussion and summary**
**Conceptual framework**

- **Consumer value concept**
  - Cost-benefit trade-off depending on perceptions
  - Segmentation, positioning, satisfaction, loyalty...

- **Means-End theory**
  - Consumption desires → end state
  - Decision-making process establishing cognitive links: attributes-consequence-end state

- **Situational context**
  - Specific perceptions depending on context
  - 5 situational elements: task definition, temporal situation, place, antecedent state, social situation

- **Cultural concepts**
  - Cultural dimensions and consumer’s national culture
  - COO, ROO, “made in” effect

**Methodological framework**

- **Focus group method**
  - Focus group method
    - Four groups
      - 36 students, 19 to 31 years old
      - 2 French, 2 American
      - 2 “younger” students, 2 “older” students
    - Summaries, verbatim analysis and descriptive statistics

**Participant profiles**

- **Group 1**
  - 8 undergraduate “LEA L2” students in Angers, France
  - Average age: 19.8
  - 4 males, 4 females

- **Group 2**
  - 9 graduate “AI M2” students in Angers, France
  - Average age: 23.7
  - 4 males, 5 females

- **Group 3**
  - 9 undergraduate students from various US universities
  - Average age: 20.3
  - 2 males, 7 females

- **Group 4**
  - 10 MBA students from USM enrolled in study trip
  - Average age: 26.4
  - 6 males, 4 females

Most are occasional wine drinkers (once a week to once every two months)

Diversity in terms of social category and degree of autonomy

**Research protocol**

- **Individual “free expression”**
  - General free expression
  - Word association
  - Classification questions

- **Interactive group discussion**
  - Focus on purchase criteria
  - Rose/LR wine
  - Different marketing styles
  - Tasting
Comparison of findings

Relative similarities
- Social act → sharing, coming together, transition
- Importance of tradition and respect of wine
- Family influence
- France as a cultural reference
- "Lost" consumers

Strong differences
- Religious aspects
- Health issues
- Social status and sophistication
- Age and drinking
- Gender differentiation
- Wine knowledge and education
- Purchase and consumption contexts

Purchase criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase criteria</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>French Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occasion</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>8.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meal type of meal</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>7.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of origin</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>7.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>7.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area who</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>7.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grape</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>8.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information back label</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common purchase criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase criteria</th>
<th>US Mean score</th>
<th>French Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occasion</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>6.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place of origin</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>8.06</td>
<td>7.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>5.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information back label</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance / Packaging</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common purchase criteria

- US mean
- French mean
**French age differences**

- AOC Apellation
- Back Label
- Brand
- Chef of cell
- Occasion
- Price
- Alcohol

**US age differences**

- AOC Apellation
- Back Label
- Brand
- Chef of cell
- Occasion
- Price
- Alcohol

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**Test of 2 wines**

- Different marketing approaches, different reactions
- Tasting

- Bottle 6.3
- Bottle 6.2

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**Discussion**

- Desired end states → socialization, sharing, well-being…
- Positive image of wine → affective involvement
- Frequency of consumption → young adults are not comfortable with wine
- Different choice criteria → different positioning and communication
- Information and education → innovations?
- Categorization of wine → consumption context, coherency
**Limits and future research**

- Exploratory approach
- Qualitative research, no generalization
- Limited data analysis (work in progress)
- Representative of young population?

**BUT...**

- Starting point
- Further investigation of qualitative and quantitative data
- Preparatory phase for international survey