

Effect of Information on Appreciation of Red Wines

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify if consumers' knowledge about wine is a factor which contribute to change wine appreciation. A consumer survey was carried-out in France in 2014 with 407 consumers. The test was focusing on sensory evaluation of 37 red wines from Bourgogne. Two ways of evaluation were used visual and smell-&-taste evaluation. This was done first, without any information about sample, second, with information about wine. Consumers were asked to fill-in questionnaire focusing on their knowledge about wine.

The results are significant whatever the way of evaluation used. Some participants were heavily influenced by the information displayed and they modified their note positively. Connoisseur and Expert clusters appreciate more the wines tasted than Amateur or Novice ones. Information and gender have a significant impact on appreciation of Burgundy red wines.

Keywords: Consumer perception; Knowledge; Red wines; Clustering

Rationale

The effect of information on product appreciation has been already identified. Consequently, label displayed on packaging, brand name and information available on label are the most important extrinsic cues in the choice of product on the shelves. The level of influence of the information may change depending on the consumer's perception of the different attributes. Some individuals may be sensitive to certain information that may therefore affect the appreciation and perception of the product. This paper aims at identifying the significant factors which contribute to wine's appreciation. Is it consumer knowledge, or socio-demographic descriptors? Is product characteristic such as Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée?

Material and method

A quantitative survey was conducted in 2014 with 407 red wine consumers. Two ways of evaluation were used for 37 red wines from same vintage bearing regional or village appellation from Bourgogne: visual and smell-&-taste. Consumers were also asked about three dimensions of knowledge towards wine identified as: processing-oriented, semantic and geographical one. We call Expert those respondents with a high level of knowledge, and Novice those showing a low level of knowledge, whatever the dimension is. The distance between cluster Expert and cluster Novice is maximal as they are at the extreme positioning within the

clustering. The two in-between clusters were named Amateur for those with a good semantic knowledge, and Connoisseur according to the good processing-oriented and geographical knowledge of respondents from this cluster.

Results

The results are significant whatever the way of evaluation used. Information has an impact and modifies product evaluation. This effect is more important in smell-&-taste evaluation than in visual evaluation. Some participants were heavily influenced by the information displayed and they modified their note positively. In this context, clusters of consumers were set up according to the level of information influence. This influence can be positive, neutral or negative.

Wines with higher price were more appreciated whatever the evaluation way was. In this case, the additional information improves the appreciation of samples for 57 to 75% of respondents especially on taste-&-smell evaluation except for the connoisseurs, for whom the information seems to stress expectations.

Village appellation wines received higher notes than wines with regional appellation. Adding information increases consumer expectations on taste, this effect is stronger for samples with village appellation. The results show that men and women, appreciate differently samples. Women give lower and more diversified marks than men, information increases more women's marks rather men's ones.

Concerning knowledge, Connoisseur and Expert clusters appreciate more the wines tasted than Amateur or Novice ones. Adding information about wine tasted improves appreciation of these wines for Amateur and Novice. It also narrows those of Connoisseur and Expert.

Managerial implications

Information and gender have a significant impact on appreciation of red wines from Bourgogne. It would be advisable to demythologize the wine tasting of entry and medium range red wines from Bourgogne to make them more accessible for Amateur and Novice.

Women and young consumers have different expectations from Connoisseur or Expert, especially from senior men. The objective is to promote differently wines fitting for different consumers who don't have the same expectations about red wines from Bourgogne.