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Message in a bottle: Generation Y and wine purchase occasions' perceived risks and information sources

Abstract

This study focused on Portuguese Generation Y wine consumers' purchase behaviour for different occasions. The latter were defined by two variables: where (i.e. home, gift-giving and restaurant) and who (i.e. myself, friends, family, partner and colleagues). A sample of 477 Portuguese millennials provided the primary data. The research included cross-tabulating product attributes, perceived risks, and information sources with wine consumption occasions. The results show that occasion-based segmentation is an effective way to investigate Portuguese Generation Yers' wine consumption. The findings also reveal more associations between wine attributes, wine consumption risks and information sources for the occasions defined by the variable where as compared with those delineated by who. Overall, occasion-related tactics are always crucial when creating wine industry strategies. This book chapter provides information useful to wine business professionals and academics.

Keywords: wine occasions; market segmentation; wine risks; wine attributes; millennials.

1. Introduction

The wine market is saturated. Consumers frequently become confused when selecting wine due to the diverse range of brands, prices and styles (Corduas et al. 2013). Much single-market and cross-national research has been done on consumers' wine behaviour to understand specific wine markets' unique characteristics or to compare different wine markets (Lockshin and Corsi 2012). Customers tend to purchase bottles of wine for specific occasions (Boncinelli et al. 2019; Aqueveque 2023), so various authors have focused on distinguishing between types of consumption situations. These scholars have observed that the list of circumstances influencing wine purchasing behaviour needs to be expanded and developed more fully (Sandell 1968; Bruwer et al. 2013). Studies in different countries are especially crucial as the findings could be more valuable to specific market players.

Segmentation based on specific criteria helps marketers identify needs and thus allocate their budget better to strengthen more effective marketing strategies (Barber et al. 2008). The literature highlights that different occasions can influence final wine purchase and wine consumption decisions, so this topic requires further research. Related traditions usually include festive occasions and gifts (Carsana and Jolibert 2017), as well as individuals' personal use of wine (Boncinelli et al. 2019). Most often, exceptional occasions cause consumers to spend time and money shopping for high-quality wine (Bruwer et al. 2013). The study discussed in this chapter thus examined wine consumers' behaviour in different wine situations to answer previous calls for research on a more diverse set of wine consumption situations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Millennials' wine consumption

Because culture is a significant determinant of consumption, wine-drinking behaviour differs across countries and occasions (Fountain and Lamb 2011). Hall et al. (1997) conducted a cross-cultural investigation of wine consumers in Australia and Europe, focusing on their wine intake on different occasions and revealing major divergences that may be due to

contrasting cultural backgrounds. Other studies have found that specific occasions worldwide influence wine purchase behaviour, but their implications are perceived differently depending on the culture involved (Carsana and Jolibert 2017).

In addition, Generation Y's wine-drinking habits differ greatly from those of earlier generations (Williamson et al. 2016). This age group is building a wine-related culture in the United States and Australia that was previously non-existent, contrary to what can be seen in France and Italy. Espejel et al. (2011) found that Generation Y drinks more beer and less wine than previous generations. Millennials appear to be concerned about healthier and more responsible drinking, so the wine industry has introduced sustainable practices in, among other things, wine labelling (Sogari et al. 2015). Due to pressure from these consumers, wine producers' current main goal is to stop using herbicides and pesticides in vineyards.

Wine enthusiasts, in general, look for information from wine-related communities (Thach 2009). According to Fernández et al. (2017), marketers are thus spending more on social media, blogs and even wine applications (Beninger et al. 2014).

2.2 Portuguese millennials' wine consumption behaviour

Portugal has one of the strongest wine traditions worldwide (Brochado et al. 2021; Brochado et al. 2022). However, academics have not yet studied market segmentation in the Portuguese wine market more closely (Figueiredo et al. 2003; Brochado and Martins 2008), especially regarding Generation Y's behaviour. Wine consumption varies within each country because of regional and generational cultural patterns, which are crucial factors shaping attitudes and conduct related to wine on different occasions (Fountain and Lamb 2011).

Males between 35 and 49 years old are the leading wine drinkers among Portuguese consumers (Duarte et al. 2010). Low-cost wines are frequently bought at retail establishments, so the cited authors also concluded that price is an important determining factor of wine purchasing behaviour. Duarte et al. (2010) nonetheless found that, depending on the occasion, Generation X males are willing to spend more for a bottle of wine (Ferreira et al. 2019).

In addition, a small number of individuals under 24 years old prefer to consume wine in restaurants, but most Portuguese say that they would rather drink wine at home (Figueiredo

et al. 2003). Fifty-two percent of the latter consumers report that they offer wine on special occasions when dining with friends. According to Sanches (2013), Portuguese consumers rank, by order of importance, of the spectrum off-premises sales namely in hypermarkets, supermarkets, and on-premises such as restaurants as places to buy wine. Figueiredo et al. (2003) found that off-premises sales in these establishments are due to their strategic location and prices are key factors in why Gen Y buy wine at hypermarkets and supermarkets. Furthermore, wine clubs have a minimal expression in the Portuguese market, and winery websites are mostly used for formation searches rather than online purchases, this might be explained by the young demographic group that is part of this study (Figueiredo et al., 2003; Sellers & Nicolau, 2023). Another interesting conclusion was that Portuguese consumers place a high value on direct purchases from producers; nevertheless, those places are not always easily accessible (for example they have reduced visiting hours and are difficult to access).

2.3 *Wine occasions*

Wines are currently marketed for every event and season, as well as pairings with all types of food. Wine occasions have been studied for many decades. Belk (1974) was one of the first researchers to confirm that customers choose different wines for specific occasions. Nicholson subsequently extended Belk's (1974) work with a study conducted in the United Kingdom, which identified the situations in which customers choose to drink wine as 1) with meals during special occasions, 2) while dining out or 3) when cooking.

Bruwer et al. (2013) in turn combined Quester and Smart (1998) and Hall et al.'s (2001) occasion models to create a more detailed list: occasions that are at home, intimate, with family, with friends, business and gift-giving and/or celebrations (see Fig. 1). The cited research verified that friends, family members, partners and colleagues are most often present at wine consumption occasions, which gives these individuals considerable influence over wine consumers' choices.

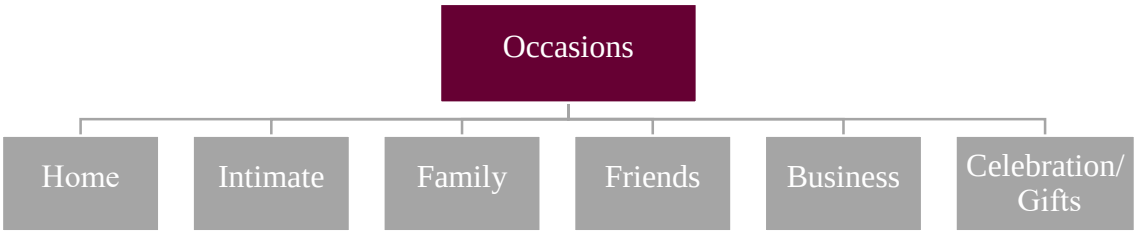


Fig. 1: Multidirectional Conceptual Framework – Occasions

Source: Adapted from Bruwer et al. (2013)

2.4 Wine attributes' influence

Corduas et al. (2013) and Marques and Guia (2015) list the wine attributes that affect purchase choices as colour, grape variety, brand, labelling, alcohol percentage, region and country of origin, among others. Boncinelli et al. (2019) narrowed the key attributes down to only four: price, geographical indication, organic claim and brand. Prior studies have not considered label characteristics, and various studies have shown that, when consumers are questioned directly about wine attributes, labels are seen as the least essential feature (Orth and Malkewitz 2008; Brochado and Martins 2008; Goodman 2009; Mueller et al. 2011). However, the label becomes significant during purchases in which value is measured indirectly because labels communicate the full range of extrinsic wine characteristics (Mueller et al. 2011) (see Fig. 2). Wine producers are aware of consumer preferences and prepare a wide range of wines to match these predilections (Goodman 2009).

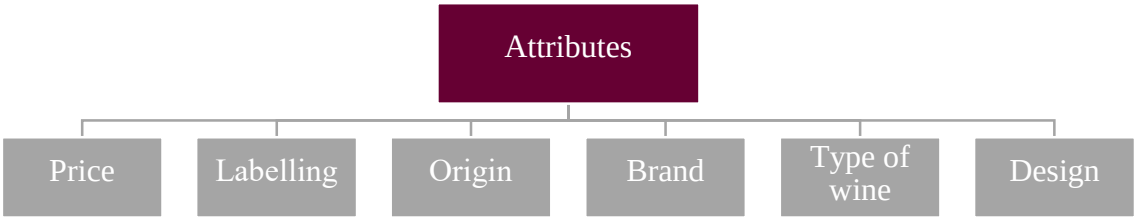


Fig. 2: Multidirectional Conceptual Framework – Attributes

Source: Authors

2.5 Perceived risks' influence

The literature shows that perceived risks have not been investigated for wine consumers (Bruwer et al. 2009; Bruwer and Cohen 2017). Wine purchases imply an evaluation of a

number of perceived risks, and consumers usually pick products based on which appear to be less risky (Figueiredo et al. 2003). Jacoby and Kaplan (1972) identified five types of risks: (1) cognitive, (2) social, (3) financial, (4) psychological and (5) physical. Schiffman et al. (2011) added time risks, thereby creating a model of six generic risk categories that Bruwer et al. (2013) used to develop a measurement scale of perceived risk in wine purchase decisions for specific occasions (see Fig. 3).

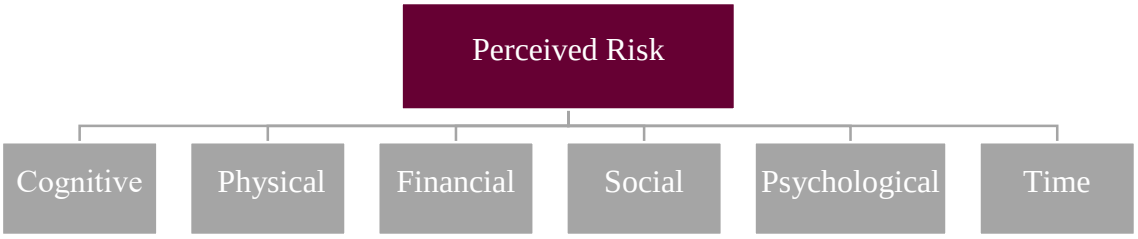


Fig 3: Directional Conceptual Framework – Perceived Risks

Source: Adapted from Bruwer et al. (2013)

2.6 Information sources' influence

Consumers search for information to alleviate their fear of perceived risks (Murray 1991; Dowling and Staelin 1994; Bruwer et al. 2013). Wine producers tend to employ risk-reducing measures based on prospective consumers' frequent search for information from multiple sources to help them deal with uncertain situations or make purchase decisions (Day 1970; Locander and Hermann 1979). This behaviour is particularly obvious when people intend to buy wine due to the complex information available (Lockshin et al. 2006). Dodd et al. (2005) concluded that wine consumers rely on three different sources: impersonal, personal and internal (i.e. themselves) (see Fig. 4).

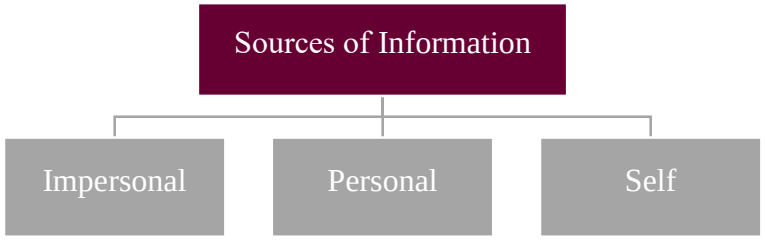


Fig. 4: Directional Conceptual Framework – Information Sources

Source: Adapted from Dodd et al. (2005)

3. Methodology

3.1 Conceptual framework

The wine industry is extremely complicated due to wines' many influential components and customers' exposure to a wide variety of product attributes (Lockshin et al. 2006). Researchers such as Lockshin and Hall (2003) have hypothesised that wine characteristics can also be connected to the contexts in which consumers plan to consume wine. Boncinelli et al. (2019) similarly found that customers value specific wine attributes in different wine consumption settings (e.g. for personal use vs gifts). The present study's first hypothesis was based on the above findings:

H1: *Specific wine characteristics are associated with each type of wine-drinking occasion.*

Wine-buying decisions are significantly influenced by perceived risks (Lockshin and Hall 2003). Bruwer and Cohen (2017) call for further investigations to examine the specific risks associated with each occasion. The current research thus included a second hypothesis written as follows:

H2: *Specific risk perceptions are linked to distinct wine-drinking occasions.*

In addition, Murray (1991) and Dodd et al. (2005) confirmed that, in different wine purchase contexts, consumers rely upon distinct fonts of information. This finding was incorporated into the present study's third hypothesis:

H3: *Specific information sources are linked to each type of consumption occasion.*

Events such as eating meals at home, dining out in a restaurant and giving gifts influence customers' attitudes and purchase behaviours in contrasting ways (DeVere et al. 1983; Goodwin et al. 1990; Oude and Van 1995; Quester and Smart 1998). Relationships with other consumers also affect individuals' wine choices (Hall et al. 2001). Aqueveque (2023) reports that preferences for wine labels vary for three different wine situations: barbeques with friends, gatherings with friends and dinners with a partner. These previous studies' findings were condensed into the current research's final hypothesis:

H4: *Where and who can be effective segmentation variables in wine markets.*

3.2 Questionnaire design and data collection

This study's target population was Portuguese millennials. A survey was conducted that started by confirming if the respondents had two required characteristics. The first was these individuals' voluntary agreement to fill in the questionnaire. The second was whether they belonged to the correct age group, namely, over 18 and less than 35 years old. In Portugal, 18 is the minimum age for drinking alcoholic beverages (Lancaster and Stillman 2003). A convenience sampling procedure was followed to recruit participants, which resulted in a sample of 477 respondents.

The questionnaire included eight sections: (1) informed consent, (2) general knowledge, (3) consumption habits, (4) attributes, (5) perceived risks, (6) information sources, (7) sociodemographic information and (8) submission. The data were analysed using Pearson's chi-squared test, Cramér's V and the decision tree method of chi-squared automatic interaction detection.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 *Respondents' descriptive statistics*

The sample included 147 male (31%) and 330 female (69%) respondents. Most participants were in a relationship (48%), and the majority of the remaining respondents were single (39%). The most common education levels were a bachelor's degree for 208 participants (44%) and master's degree for 165 respondents (35%). The participants' sociodemographic profile is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Sociodemographic Profile

		Number	**Percentage**
Gender	Female	330	69.18%
	Male	147	30.82%
Age	Early millennials [18:27]	288	52.81%
	Late millennials [28:35]	189	47.19%

Relationship status	Single	184	38.57%
	In a relationship	229	48.01%
	Married	59	12.37%
	Divorced	5	1.05%
Current residence	Lisbon	188	39.41%
	Oporto	42	8.81%
	Braga	30	6.29%
	Immigrant	30	6.29%
	Setubal	30	6.29%
	Other	157	32.91%
Education	Less than secondary school	10	2.10%
	Secondary school or equivalent	79	16.56%
	Specialisation course	5	1.05%
	Bachelor's degree	208	43.61%
	Postgraduate or Master's	165	34.59%
	Doctoral degree or postdoctoral	10	2.10%
Current occupation	Student	139	29.14%
	Working student	60	12.58%
	Employee	199	41.72%
	Self-employed	42	8.81%
	Unemployed	29	6.08%
	Other	8	1.68%
Total		**477**	**100%**

The respondents most often mentioned the attributes of type of wine (73%), price (58%), brand (45%) and region (41%), while label (9%) and design (7%) were the least important. The Portuguese Generation Yers surveyed most frequently identified three risks: functional (65%), financial (55%) and social (35%). Physical (16%), time (11%) and psychological (8%) risks were selected by the fewest participants. The information sources that were most often commonly used included previous tasting (64%), relatives' advice (51%), product information (51%) and staff and/or producer's advice (37%). The respondents selected advertising (10%) and online (10%) sources far less often. Table 2 presents the cross-tabulation of wine attributes, perceived risks and information sources by occasion (i.e. where and who).

Table 2: Wine Attributes, Perceived Risks and Information Sources by Occasion

	Occasion		Where			Who				
			Home	Gift	Restaurant	Myself	Friends	Family	Partner	Colleagues
Wine attributes	Price	N	169	128	191	207	157	153	151	173
		%	59%	45%	67%	72%	55%	54%	53%	56%
	Brand	N	133	155	105	99	144	134	129	129
		%	47%	54%	37%	35%	50%	47%	45%	45%
	Type of wine	N	224	191	204	211	211	213	205	197
		%	79%	67%	72%	74%	74%	75%	75%	72%
	Origin	N	122	121	111	119	116	131	118	106
		%	43%	42%	39%	42%	41%	46%	42%	37%
	Labelling	N	29	36	12	21	28	23	27	27
		%	10%	13%	4%	7%	10%	8%	9%	8%
	Design	N	15	40	8	9	26	15	23	22
		%	5%	14%	3%	3%	9%	5%	5%	8%
Perceived risks	Functional	N	188	188	181	191	182	188	188	188
		%	66%	66%	64%	67%	64%	66%	66%	66%
	Social	N	97	109	92	53	119	101	101	94
		%	34%	38%	32%	18%	42%	35%	35%	33%
	Financial	N	142	147	181	180	156	155	155	150
		%	50%	51%	63%	63%	55%	55%	55%	53%
	Physical	N	48	34	52	52	45	45	45	46
		%	17%	12%	18%	18%	16%	16%	16%	16%
	Psychological	N	25	21	25	23	22	26	26	26
		%	9%	7%	9%	8%	8%	9%	9%	9%
	Time	N	45	41	12	36	31	33	33	31
		%	16%	14%	4%	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%
Information sources	Advertising	N	32	31	21	26	27	28	26	31
		%	11%	11%	7%	9%	9%	10%	9%	10%
	Product information	N	160	158	122	145	144	150	150	149
		%	56%	56%	43%	51%	51%	53%	53%	52%
	Staff/producer's advice	N	83	86	146	116	109	106	106	106
		%	29%	30%	51%	41%	38%	37%	37%	37%
	Relatives' advice	N	163	149	128	152	150	148	148	145
		%	57%	52%	45%	53%	53%	52%	52%	51%
	Previous tasting	N	193	184	170	186	185	183	183	185
		%	68%	65%	60%	65%	65%	64%	64%	65%
	Online	N	32	36	16	24	26	28	28	29
		%	11%	13%	6%	8%	9%	10%	10%	10%

Note. N = number.

4.2 Hypothesis testing

H1 postulated that specific wine characteristics are associated with each type of wine-drinking occasion. The wine attributes included were brand, price, origin, type of wine, design and label. The variable of who comprised five options: friends, family, partner, colleagues and myself. Three choices were given for the variable of where: restaurant, gift and home.

The chi-squared test confirmed that a significant statistical difference (i.e. a significance level of 10%) exists between all the wine attributes and the who variable and between five wine attributes and the where variable. The results thus almost completely supported H1.

H2 suggested that perceived risks are linked to distinct wine consumption occasions. The measurement model thus included the functional attributes of financial, social, psychological, physical and time. The variable who again comprised five options (i.e. friends, family, partner, colleagues and myself). For the variable where, the same three choices were given (i.e. restaurant, gift and home).

The chi-squared test and Cramér's V verified that a statistically significant association exists between the who variable and social and financial risks and between the where variable and social, financial, physical and time risks. Therefore, the results provide partial support (i.e. half the associations) for H2.

H3 stated that specific information sources are linked to each type of consumption occasion. Six sources were listed: product information, advertisement, producers' information, relatives' advice, online search and previous tasting. The variable who included five options, that is, friends, family, partner, colleagues and myself. The variable where was divided into three choices: restaurant, gift and home.

The chi-squared test and Cramér's V revealed that no significant statistical connection exists between any information sources and the variable where, but clear associations appear between the information sources and the who variable. The results thus only support H3 in terms of the wine consumption occasions defined by who is involved.

H4 postulated that where and who can be considered effective segmentation variables in wine markets. The questionnaire did not include any items specifically designed to test this hypothesis, but logical deductions could be made based on the previous hypotheses'

outcomes. An analysis of the 18 variables (i.e. risks, attributes and information sources) confirmed that 16 are statistically significant for the occasions defined by the where variable and 7 for the situations defined by the who variable. H4 was, therefore, considered partially verified (see Table 3).

Table 3: Overall Statistical Outcomes for Occasions

Variables	Values	Occasion					
		Where			Who		
		$\chi 2$ test	Cramér's V	Accept H	$\chi 2$ test	Cramér's V	Accept H
Attributes	Price	$\chi^2 = 127.748$ ***	0.179	Yes	$\chi^2 = 70.812$ ***	0.133	Yes
	Brand	$\chi^2 = 79.230$ ***	0.141	Yes	$\chi^2 = 36.557$ ***	0.096	Yes
	Type of wine	$\chi^2 = 44.581$ ***	0.106	Yes	$\chi^2 = 8.625$ *	0.046	No
	Region of origin	$\chi^2 = 4.974$ *	0.035	No	$\chi^2 = 14.179$ ***	0.060	Yes
	Label	$\chi^2 = 63.542$ ***	0.126	Yes	$\chi^2 = 3.726$	0.031	No
	Design	$\chi^2 = 131.071$ ***	0.181	Yes	$\chi^2 = 23.633$ ***	0.077	Yes
Perceived risks	Functional	$\chi^2 = 2.003$	0.022	No	$\chi^2 = 3.060$	0.028	No
	Social	$\chi^2 = 10.285$ ***	0.051	Yes	$\chi^2 = 93.740$ ***	0.153	Yes
	Financial	$\chi^2 = 62.809$ ***	0.125	Yes	$\chi^2 = 18.414$ ***	0.068	Yes
	Physical	$\chi^2 = 19.384$ ***	0.070	Yes	$\chi^2 = 3.130$	0.028	No
	Psychological	$\chi^2 = 2.041$	0.023	No	$\chi^2 = 2.167$	0.023	No
	Time	$\chi^2 = 111.634$ ***	0.167	Yes	$\chi^2 = 1.163$	0.017	No
Information sources	Advertising	$\chi^2 = 14.271$ ***	0.060	Yes	$\chi^2 = 2.379$	0.024	No
	Product involvement	$\chi^2 = 61.184$ ***	0.124	Yes	$\chi^2 = 2.517$	0.025	No
	Staff/Producers' advice	$\chi^2 = 184.039$ ***	0.215	Yes	$\chi^2 = 4.782$	0.035	No
	Relatives' advice	$\chi^2 = 45.497$ ***	0.107	Yes	$\chi^2 = 3.095$	0.028	No
	Previous tasting	$\chi^2 = 20.341$ ***	0.071	Yes	$\chi^2 = 2.910$	0.027	No

	Online	χ^2 = 42.914 ***	0.104	Yes	χ^2 = 1.755	0.021	No

Note. χ^2 = chi-squared; H = hypothesis; ***, ** and * = statistically significant at the 1%, 5% and 10% level.

5. Conclusion

The findings reveal that Portuguese Generation Yers consider price and wine type important, so they are mainly concerned about functional and financial risks. These preoccupations explain why this generation in Portugal considers having tasted wines previously to be the most reliable source of information. In addition, the empirical research conducted verified that different occasions are linked with specific wine characteristics. (e.g. Elliot and Barth 2012), as defined by two dimensions: where and who. Social and financial perceived risks (Bruwer et al. 2013) are linked with occasions' where and who features.

The results further indicate that Portuguese millennials place different degrees of importance on wine attributes and perceived risks according to the occasion, namely, when these individuals buy wine to be consumed at home with friends. This insight supports the conclusion that drinking wine in this setting with friends is these Generation Yers' most treasured occasion. However, different information sources (Nowak and Newton 2008) become significant only in association with the where dimensions of wine occasions.

The current study also found that the variables of previous tasting, relatives' advice and product information are quite important, which suggests that market players should invest in wine tastings and wine-related events. Occasions can be paired with tactics that encourage consumption, such as unique winery experiences and bolder and more interesting information on labels. These strategies can reduce the risks associated with wine consumption, increase consumers' access to information and differentiate wines from their competitors.

The results stress that wine marketers and managers need to adopt an occasion-based segmentation approach. For instance, consuming wine with friends at home is Portuguese millennials' preferred occasion, and the majority purchase wine at supermarkets. Thus, wine businesses should seriously consider special offers (e.g. distinctive wine glasses, decanters, corkscrews and other wine products for group events), sales (i.e. to minimise financial risks) and wine tastings with qualified personnel (i.e. to lessen social risks).

The most notable finding is that where is a more effective market segmentation variable than who. The results reveal that wine consumers exhibit different behaviours depending on the situation involved. Besides confirming that bottles of wine are purchased for specific

occasions (Hall et al. 2001; Carsana and Jolibert 2017; Boncinelli et al. 2019; Aqueveque 2023), the present research adds to the literature by considering a wider range of consumption situations including varied where and who dimensions.

Regardless of the above contributions' value, this study had some limitations that need to be considered. The convenience sampling method used may restrict the findings' generalisability, and the sample includes a higher percentage of females and individuals with a bachelor's degree, which may skew the results. Applications of the research's findings to other contexts should also be done with care because this study focused on wine consumption and buyer behaviour in Portugal.

Further studies are needed to examine more deeply some of the needs identified, such as the respondents' disregard for online information. The sample was made up of Generation Yers, so the infrequent use of online sources for information or purchasing tips was surprising.

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