

WHY DO YOU DRINK WINE? CONSUMER MOTIVATIONS IN KENYA AND ANGOLA

Tim Clifton, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
Johan Bruwer, Stellenbosch University, South Africa;
University of South Australia, Australia
Nick Vink, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

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Introduction

Wine consumption in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is growing rapidly. However, there is little research into the motivations of consumers to purchase and consume wine, outside South Africa. This study investigates consumers in Kenya and Angola, countries with different wine heritages.

Literature review

Significant research exists regarding European (Brunner & Siegrist, 2011), American (Kelley, Hyde, & Bruwer, 2015) and Australasian wine consumers (Bruwer & Li, 2017). There are also studies into emerging markets such as China (Camillo, 2012). However, academic research into SSA consumers is almost non-existent. Media reports and wine industry studies, however, attribute wine consumption to a growing middle class with greater disposable income and a desire to secure social status through association with wine. Consequently, although prior research has identified constructs for interpreting wine consumer behaviour generally, there is a significant gap in understanding the motivations of SSA wine consumers in their specific context.

Research focus

This study investigates why Kenyan and Angolan consumers choose to drink wine instead of 'traditional' alternatives, such as beer and spirits. It focuses on understanding what wine signifies for consumers, how the image of wine differs from other alcoholic beverages, when and why consumers choose wine instead of alternatives, and the needs that wine consumption satisfies.

Research methodology

The research question requires an interpretive understanding of the social realities of individual consumers. The study therefore uses a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) approach, in which an initial qualitative study informs a subsequent quantitative phase. Significant weight is given to the qualitative study.

The qualitative phase (currently underway) comprises semi-structured interviews with wine consumers with different socio-demographic characteristics in Kenya and Angola. The study uses grounded theory to analyse the interviews. The findings will then be tested for soundness and generalisability through surveys.

Preliminary findings

Interviews have been conducted in Kenya, and are starting in Angola. Angolan conclusions are not yet available.

Interviews in Kenya identified two main consumer segments, *wine connoisseurs* and *uninformed consumers*. Wine connoisseurs include consumers of both genders who are knowledgeable about wine and seek a consumption experience through good quality wine. This consumer segment has lived and travelled overseas and learnt about wine while outside Kenya.

The second main consumer segment consists of uninformed consumers. This is the majority of Kenyan wine consumers. This segment is poorly informed about wine and shows little interest in enhancing knowledge. Such consumers do not seek quality in wine and display strong brand loyalty.

Within this second consumer segment, however, there are significant differences in the consumption motivations of men and women.

Men do not see wine as ‘manly’ and still generally consume beer and spirits in male company: men rarely consume wine with male friends for fear of ridicule. This study, however, identified three segments of male wine consumers. The first segment consists of men who consciously use wine, in mixed company, to make a statement that they are a ‘modern man’. This motivation is strong in young men under 30 who wish to create a good impression which they hope will appeal to women. The second segment is men who drink wine in mixed company in order to disassociate themselves from the ‘hard drinking’ tradition of beer or whisky consumption, but are not committed to wine. The third segment, primarily men over 40, drinks wine because they think it is good for their health.

The study identified three consumer segments amongst women. The first segment consists of women who use wine to make a statement that they are independent, modern and will do as they wish. This segment includes women of all ages, but is strongest amongst women under 30. The second segment comprises women of all ages who see wine as a socially acceptable option to other alcoholic beverages, thereby enabling them to drink alcohol in public, even on more conservative social occasions. Wine therefore represents a ‘middle way’ between soft drinks and spirits. The third segment comprises women who like wine and will generally choose wine over alternative alcoholic beverages. All three segments see wine as more important than clothes or other ‘status’ apparel when sending a message about themselves.

Conclusions

Contrary to prior studies of wine consumption in SSA, Kenyan consumers do not use wine to secure social prestige. Consumers of both genders use wine to make specific statements about themselves, essentially linked to being ‘modern’. This reflects changes in Kenyan society, particularly the empowerment of women and a rejection by men of the macho image associated with ‘hard alcoholic beverages’ and a move towards more socially-responsible alcohol consumption.

Wine also allows both male and female consumers to drink alcohol without the negative connotations associated with other alcoholic beverages such as beer and spirits. Consuming wine in public therefore has greater social acceptance. Marketers in Kenya should emphasise the social acceptability of wine in marketing campaigns rather than wine quality.

References

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