

## Young Chinese consumers and their first wine experience

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*Purpose:* This paper reports on part of a study exploring Chinese consumers' experiences with wine, focusing in particular on the experience of young Chinese wine consumers (Generation Y). It addresses the questions: What is the process, influencers and context of wine socialisation of young wine consumers in China, and how do their experiences differ from those of older Chinese consumers?

*Design/methodology/approach:* An online survey was distributed to Chinese respondents who had consumed wine at least once in their lives, and were of legal drinking age (18 years). Within a total valid sample of 608 respondents, 395 respondents were aged between 18-34 years at the time of the study (born 1981-1997). Descriptive statistics, Chi-square and *t*-tests were used to analyse the data.

*Findings:* Young adults in China today are first experiencing wine in significantly different environments to previous generations. In particular, they are being exposed to wine at a younger age, and in less formal settings than their older counterparts. The family, and particularly parents, are important influencers of early wine experiences. While health reasons and situational suitability are given as major motivations for first consuming wine amongst Chinese wine consumers of any age, Gen Y consumers report stronger motivations for wine consumption overall, suggesting perhaps a greater interest and engagement in wine.

*Practical implications:* This account of the wine socialisation experiences of young Chinese consumers offers insights to marketers and researchers seeking to understand this increasingly significant market segment. Of particular interest to wine marketers is the role of the family in early wine experiences, and the sophisticated and classy image of wine held by Gen Y consumers in China.

**Key words:** Generation Y, wine socialisation, Chinese wine consumers

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