

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO DISTRIBUTE WINE: MYTH OR REALITY?

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Purpose: The purpose of this study is twofold: on the one hand, to investigate wine consumers' perceptions about social media and online wine activities; on the other hand, to delineate how wine consumers behave vis-à-vis social media, especially in terms of their propensity to be a social wine wholesaler.

Design/methodology/approach: Data has been gathered from an online survey based on constructs using multi-item indicators. 366 valid responses represented a 37.6% response rate were collected and analysed using SPSS® analysis like frequency, means, standard deviation, and multiple regressions.

Findings: The findings first underline that respondents were reasonably familiar with social media, with no respondent indicating excessive use of them. Moreover, social media posed some degree of risk in terms of their collecting and protecting the personal data of respondents. Otherwise, people found social media to be easy and fun to use and had plans to use it in future.

Second, nation of residence and wine knowledge level are characteristics that have a significant relationship with social wine wholesaler propensity. Moreover, primary consumer attitude factors such as perceptions of wine vendor quality, home-based wine pickup issues and dislike of sharing personal data were correlating with respondents' propensity to be a social wine wholesaler. Finally, wine knowledge significantly predicted wine wholesaling as did perceptions of hosting wine pickup in one's home.

Practical implications: Winegrowers should seriously consider the potential of using social media in conjunction with their websites, in order to promote and distribute their wine. At the same time, social media possess attributes that manufacturers (or producers) can assess when choosing and deciding on building a supply relationship with their clients who might act as “social wholesalers”. A social wholesaler is an individual who is doing the same job as a wholesaler but in the manner of the ‘gig’ economy.

Originality/value: Social media may contribute to increasing sales and building customer loyalty for wine companies, by creating social links that may generate sustainable profits based on recommendations made by consumers.

Keywords: wine; social media; distribution; food industry; perceived risk; collaborative consumption; social wholesaler

Introduction

Although trading of wine has been going on for many decades (Grace, 1979, old.: 47), wine logistics is always a challenging activity. The product is fragile, since glass wine bottles can get harmed while shipping. Weight is also another important factor, (Butzke, Vogt, & Chacón-Rodríguez, 2012; Shackelford & Shackelford, 2018, p. 2) since bottles of wine are heavy – a typical bottle weighs between 600 grams (slightly more than a pound) and nearly 2 kilograms (a little more than 4 pounds) for an empty bottle of 750 milliliters). These factors slow down the dispatch and delivery of wine and hinder the guarantee of perfect service. Taken together, the price of a bottle of wine and the price of its delivery make consumers reluctant to buy wine online. However, the adoption of the Internet as a wine marketing tool is of significant interest both for consumers and retail distribution chains (Begalli *et al.*, 2009). Some authors even advocate that “in a global economy and competitive and dynamic environment, supply chain management is a key strategic factor for increasing organizational effectiveness.” (Garcia *et al.*, 2012, p.284). Buying wine online is characterized by credence factors, i.e., it is hard to test the product prior to purchase, thus the Internet is a critical communication channel for consumers and collaborators searching for information concerning the qualities of the wine they wish to buy (Hsieh and Lin, 1998; Baourakis and Kourgiantakis, 2002). Online shopping offers practical advantages (temporal and spatial), financial advantages (through the

ability to compare prices), and appeals to buyers motivated by hedonic consumption (Eroglu, Machleit and Davis, 2003).

In France, there were over ten times more e-commerce websites in 2018 than in 2003 and a turnover multiplied by six according to the e-commerce trade body FEVAD (Fédération du e-commerce et de la vente à distance, 2017). Nevertheless, the act of buying wine online is not common practice since only 34% of French wine drinkers have bought wine online. Although e-commerce is growing more quickly than offline sales in the US, e-commerce is expected to rise only slightly as a share of total sales, from 7.2% this year to 9.8% by 2019¹⁰. Mobile commerce (m-commerce) is an even smaller segment, accounting for a tiny 1.6% of all retail and by 2019 its share is projected to be only 2.7% of the total. On a global scale, wine sold by Internet on the international market represents only six billion euros in 2016 (ePerformance-Baromètre.com). Therefore, questions remain about the best practices for capturing the market in the wine sector and how can the Internet be of help.

This paper reports results from an exploratory study over five countries which examined the characteristics, motives, and needs that might influence someone's decision to become a wine wholesaler, a middleman whose home is used as a pick-up point for buyers who have bought wine online from a winery. We want to see if social media could serve as a new distribution channel for wine businesses to sell their wine. More precisely, we firstly examine how recommendations on social media may drive the intention to purchase wine online, and secondly, investigate an individual's intention to become a "wholesaler of wine", *i.e.* part of a winery's distribution network. In addition, we consider what motivates and what deters consumers from buying wine online, for example is personal wine consumption a greater consumer motivation than wine purchase for gift use? Lastly, we inspect consumer attitudes towards the purchase of this product online, such as perceived risks of buying wine via the Internet, and compare results across cultures.

The study is organized as follows. First, we conceptualize online wine distribution through social media. The model is then tested, using 366 valid responses to document consumer attitudes towards wine wholesaling. Finally, results and analyses are presented and the theoretical contribution and practical implications are discussed.

¹⁰ Figures for wine e-retail sales are higher elsewhere e.g. UK and China. See e.g. <http://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2015/05/uk-online-wine-market-the-facts/>, and China: <http://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2015/06/online-wine-sales-to-grow-globally/>

Literature review and problem studied

In this section, we first highlight the importance of e-commerce and social media in the wine business, paying close attention to trust and cultural issues. Then we describe the main actors along the supply chain followed by the possible delivery options, issues and perspectives related to them. Finally, we define the 'wine wholesaler' and describe a possible scenario as an innovative shipping option.

E-commerce and Social media in the wine business: trust and cultural contexts

Digital Information Technology can reduce transaction costs by a huge amount. E-commerce substitutes services of computers, the Internet and the World Wide Web for traditional human labor and physical capital (Mueller, 2001, p. 1244). In e-commerce, websites serve as distribution points that also inform customers about the products offered by producers (Soós, 2012). E-commerce is becoming more and more popular, providing company benefits such as competitiveness, better image, efficient processes and improved information systems (Khatibi, Thyagarajan, & Seetharaman, 2003). There are also some barriers to effective use of e-commerce, such as keeping up with technology itself, lack of technical expertise, uncertainties with regard to legal regulations and high switching costs when changing e-commerce platforms (Khatibi, Thyagarajan, & Seetharaman, 2003, p. 81).

Businesses are realizing that social media platforms are very fruitful advertisement channels too. Herrero *et al.* (2017) stated that organizations should design content to be accessible and shareable, so that it will spread via social media sites more easily and reach further into desired markets. Effective social media design will enhance the experience for the platform user and consumers will remember the experience better later on, maybe referring to saved and stored information while shopping. With the evolution of technology, social media sites are becoming more and more adapted to the needs of the users; enabling, advertisers and marketers to provide content in ways that offer positive experiences and support for their customers (Herrero, San Martín, & del Mar Garcia-De Los Salmones, 2017). But what do wine growers and wine marketers know about their social media users?

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) social network sites are web-based services that let people (1) create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) share a connection with other users and (3) view their and others' lists of connections within the

system. The nature and the terminology of these “friendships” may vary from site to site. Jue, Marr and Kassotakis (2009) defined social media as cheap and easily available electronic tools, that can be reached online and that enable people to access and share content and information. Social media can create cooperation and can also establish new friendships and relationships. Social media tools include forums and blogs, as well as sites that enable users to share photos and/or videos (Jue, Marr, & Kassotakis, 2009). Social network sites are unique, as they allow participants to make new friends with people they may not even have met offline. But often, the individuals using social media network do not look to widen their network, instead they would just like to keep in touch with their already “offline” friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). According to Statista, Facebook, Youtube and Whatsapp are the three most used social network sites as of January 2018 (Statista, 2018). Understanding consumers’ perceptions of mobile commerce and social media and the factors that might positively and negatively affect these perceptions is thus important for wine marketers.

Trust plays an important role in the development of online relationships (Coppola, Hiltz, & Rotter, 2004). Trust can be defined as the feeling that another person will not behave opportunistically to the detriment of oneself and that a situation will not mishandled by either party (Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002). An additional definition of trust from Moorman *et al.* (1993, p. 82) is the “willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence.” Deutsch (1960) suggested that two components are needed to gain trust. These are confidence in intention and in ability.

Successful relationships rely on the trust users have in other users and on the trust users have in the social media platform provider (Sherchan, Nepal, & Paris, 2013). A related concern is Internet Privacy, meaning that people are concerned about the privacy of information they share on social media (Pelet and Taieb, 2017). For example, social media sites cannot always be trusted to reveal nothing of their users’ private information (Cadwalladr, 2017; Dwyer, Hiltz, & Passerini, 2007). And most importantly can we trust our friends on social media?

According to Park *et al.* (2012), Halikainen & Laukkanen (2018), trust levels vary across national cultures. Extant research indicates that trust correlates with national governance, which is defined as “the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised”. This includes (a) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; (b) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (c) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic

and social interactions among them” (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2010). Social trust and national governance are interdependent constructs (Goodell, 2017).

Actors along the Supply Chain

According to Pomarici *et al.* (2012), there are two actors dominating the marketing channels: the *market-makers* and the *match-makers*. The market-makers include wholesalers, distributors, importers and exporters. A wholesaler buys one or more products from the producer and resells them along with other products, without any exclusivity agreement. The distributor on the other hand, acquires the exclusive right to represent and sell the wines of a special winery. Importers and exporters specialize in international trade, and they may operate as distributors (Pomarici, Boccia, & Catapano, 2012). The actors that belong to the match-maker category are brokers and agents. There are two types of agents; the buyer and the winery agent. They both are instructed to sell or acquire wine, respectively. Brokers do not necessarily conduct transactions in a single winery’s name, though they are usually specialized, e.g., fine wine brokers, auction brokers, brokers representing large retailers, or state monopolies (Pomarici, Boccia, & Catapano, 2012, p. 24). A separate important market-maker in the wine supply chain is the hospitality industry: hotels, restaurants, café, catering firms, and wine bars. Here, wine consumption takes place outside of the home and consumers satisfy their needs for experimentation and variety in a social environment. Hospitality establishments are generally supplied by wholesalers (Pomarici, Boccia, & Catapano, 2012, p. 25). However, this paper focuses on wine consumption outside of hospitality venues, i.e., purchase for use in one’s home or for gifts.

The most common distribution channel is retail, including supermarkets, discount stores, and wine shops, which offer convenience, large selections of wines, and varying levels of service and staff expertise. Many retail places lack wine experts to help consumers make their decisions. However, since most people have smartphones, a quick search on the Internet makes the decision-making easier, although not everyone is tech-savvy, or has the time to read site information while shopping. Therefore, more and more people have turned to the Internet for ordering wine and getting it delivered to their doorstep (EUROSTAT, 2016). Dedicated wine vendor websites and apps have the ability to sell wine online and also function as an extensive information system for those who are interested in the complex world of wine (Pelet and Lecat, 2014). Websites and apps have extensive functions. They can provide

comprehensive information on a specific wine producer or vintage, and can serve experts and connoisseurs as well as providing basic education about wine and wine-consumption for those who are interested in wine, but know less about it. For occasional buyers, wine websites and apps are useful tools, given that such buyers may be embarrassed to deal with traditional channels (Pomarici, Boccia, & Catapano, 2012, p. 26).

Delivery options, issues and perspectives

Last-mile delivery is one of the biggest challenges in e-commerce business (Boyer, Prud'homme, & Chung, 2009). The goal is to get the product to the end-consumer as soon as possible – by offering a fast delivery system that entices consumers to return based on good service (Greasley & Assi, 2012). According to Gevaers *et al.* (2009) shipping costs range from 13% to 75% of all supply chain costs. There are multiple types of delivery services, defined by the time of the action. Service taking place within one night, which is called Next-Day Service, Second-Day service takes up 48 hours and Deferred Service occurs within 3-5 days (Kim, Barnhart, Ware, & Reinhardt, 1999). Direct shipment is the easiest way, as the distance is shorter and the product arrives earlier to the customer. It is also a liability, since economies of scale can be lost when a less-than-full truck is sent to a destination (Chen & Pan, 2015). To overcome the above-mentioned difficulties, suppliers create hubs (Elhedhli & Hu, 2005) from where orders are shipped to a large number of customers, reducing problems with the costs of last-mile delivery.

Delivery time is not the only concern; shipping processes can be very energy-intensive. Transportation, namely diesel fuels from trucking, accounts for 15% of the total energy consumed within the U.S. food system. (Cholette & Venkat, 2009, p. 2). Colman and Paster's (2007) lifecycle study of wine shows that outbound logistics may contribute to over half of the total carbon emissions for many regions' wine industries. In their research Perboli *et al.* (2017) simulated an optimization for City Logistics in Turin, Italy. They found that, if delivery services would use bikes and vans, it would lead to an improvement in economic efficiency. These delivery methods would affect the traffic less within a city, and they are the most appropriate means to deal with high demand deliveries.

Although direct delivery of products has been around since the 1980s, it has been problematic due to issues such as consumers not being at home at delivery time or agreed-upon times not being suitable for the recipients (Slabinac, 2015). Most retailers are looking for ways

to deliver their products more efficiently (Slabinac, 2015). Some of them using commercial operators (eg. DHL¹¹, DPD¹²) to deliver the goods for them. Another solution is that customers order online and then they pick up their products at a local shop. In the US, sometimes consumers don't even have to get out of their car, as the shops' employees load their cars with the goods. Other ideas have emerged, such as drones delivering goods (Slabinac, 2015). Some big e-retailers such as JD.com already offer the option of parcel pickup-machines that work automatically. Since 2015 more than 200 machines are being set up in metropolitan areas, in Beijing and Shanghai (Chen, Yu, Yang, & Wei, 2018). In their research, Chen *et al.* (2018) found out that a consumer's intention to use these pickup machine services depends on various factors. Location convenience plays a positive role in the consumer's intent and perceived time pressure has no negative effect (Chen, Yu, Yang, & Wei, 2018).

A recently surfaced research idea for solving the issues with the last mile delivery could be explored within crowd logistics. Crowd logistics, which relies on crowdsourcing (defined as outsourcing a task to a crowd), designates the outsourcing of logistics services to a crowd, in order to achieve some kind of benefits for all parties associated (Mehmann, Frehe, & Teuteberg, 2015). One of the examples for crowdsourcing is Uber, which is a peer-to-peer ridesharing and transportation network company. It basically follows the Crowd Logistics business model, meaning that the main source of service is the crowd, the users who are registered. The individuals within the crowd are either demanding or providing a service. The company only acts as a mediator. Uber (and other companies, such as Taxify and Lyft), provide their service through a mobile phone application (Mehmann, Frehe, & Teuteberg, 2015). Through that application they track communication, fulfil payments and manage the database of users.

Mehmann *et al.* (2015) define crowd logistics as: *"the outsourcing of logistics services to a mass of actors, whereby the coordination is supported by a technical infrastructure. The aim of Crowd Logistics is to achieve economic benefits for all stake- and shareholders."* In their study they revealed that the main driver of crowd logistics is the digitalization of society. If there is a platform that acts as a mediator within the crowd, then crowd sourcing a product is actually feasible. Going beyond third-party platform applications such as Uber and Airbnb,

¹¹ DHL: Larry Hillblom, Adrian Dalsey and Robert Lynn as partners, with their combined initials of their surnames as the company name (DHL)

¹² DPD: Dynamic Parcel Distribution

Devari *et al.* (2017) suggest using social media as a mediator between the customer and service provider. According to Devari *et al.*'s (2017) research, a vast majority of people in the US would agree to deliver goods to their friends or close friends, most of them for free (Pelet *et al.*, 2016). Also, if it would not take more than fifteen minutes, they would not mind doing it.

Wine wholesalers

“Wine wholesalers” is a new, alternative wine distribution program. A *wine wholesaler* is a person who is befriended by a winery who agrees to receive shipments of wine on behalf of other nearby winery customers in exchange for benefits from the winery (Pelet *et al.*, 2016). Receiving shipments for others reduces friction and expenses, as well as the carbon footprint in the distribution system, because the wine is sent to and received at one location instead of several locations. The *wine wholesaler* arranges a time for fellow buyers to pick up their wine in their property. The wine would already be paid from the consumer straight to the wine saler or winery, typically online, and therefore there is nothing to expect or ask on the *wholesaler* side. Instead of using a shipping service, a winery ships wines to a trusted individual who serves as an intermediary. This is similar to customer-to-customer exchanges, but the difference is, that there is no transaction of money between the wholesaler and the end-user. They just meet for pick-ups or converse to determine a pick-up time.

A social wine wholesaler scenario

In our wine wholesaling model, a customer buys wine on a winery's or wine shop's website and chooses “*wine wholesaler*” as the shipping option. An individual who lives close by to the customer is the *wine wholesaler*. The winery contacts the wholesaler through social media, e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp or else, and they discuss how many bottles or cases of wine will be shipped out and when. The shipment arrives on the decided date and time, and the shipment is moved into the *wine wholesaler's* property. For example, such space might be a basement, or a spare room, whichever suits the *wholesaler* the best. The *wine wholesaler* alerts the customer about the received shipment of wine and they discuss a date and time when the customer can pick up the wine. No other transactions go between the two. On Figure 1 a cycle of wine wholesaler activity is summarized and explained. Other customers may also come to pick up their wine and when storage space opens up in the *wine wholesaler's* facility, he/she

may receive new shipments again. The winery may offer special deals and other benefits to the *wine wholesaler* and they would also be legally bound by a contract. This new form of wine distribution still needs to be established, in particular, it needs to conform to each country's regulatory system (see Figure 1).

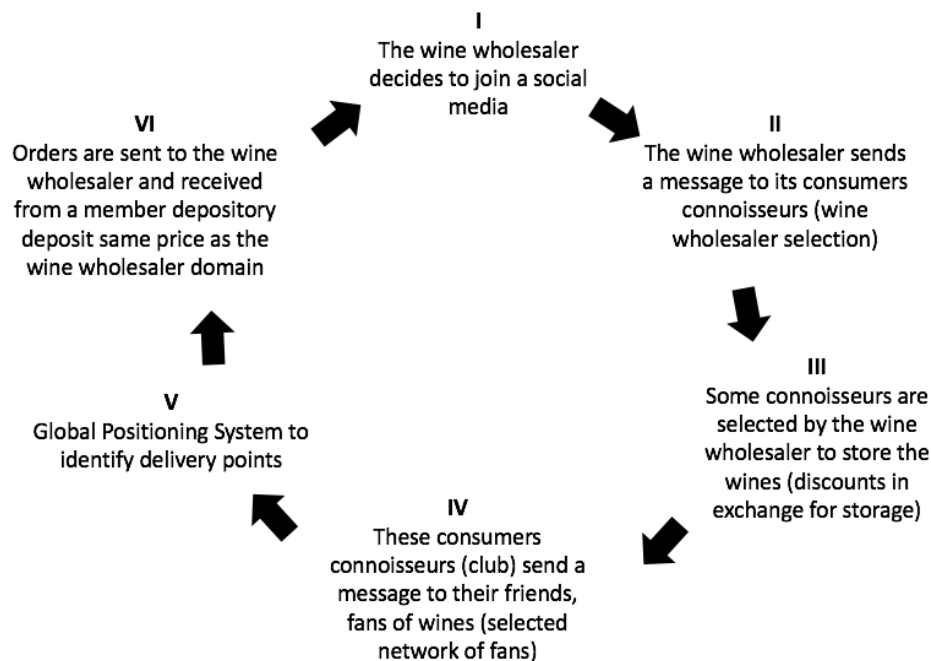


Figure 5: Summary of steps necessary to set up wine wholesaler scenario from Pelet *et al.* (2016)

Problem definition, research objectives

A new distribution line is introduced, called wine wholesaling or *wine grouping*. It is quite new, no data has been produced about it, except the exploratory study conducted by Pelet *et al* (2016). The research objective is to find out the feasibility of the *wine wholesaler* distribution channel. The study comprises market research, asking potential future customers about a new distribution program. Therefore, the research question is: Could social media be used as a new distribution channel for wine suppliers in different countries? If yes, what are wine consumers perception about social media and online wine activities? How do they behave vis-à-vis social media, especially in terms of their propensity to be a wine wholesaler?

Material and methods

A convenience sample of consumer data was generated through an online survey (Google™) by a team of international researchers. Google™ software was used to create the survey. This

software had capabilities of logic flow and question types which allowed for complex analysis. The survey software checked respondent records for indicators of bad data quality, such as speeding through questions, straight lining scale items, and gibberish answers to open-ended questions.

Three language versions of the survey were created in French, English, and Italian, translated from French and back-translated. Once programmed, each survey was tested by volunteers not directly connected to the project, to get a controlled look at preliminary results and ensure that the surveys were functioning as designed. Links to the survey were provided to members of the research team, who distributed the links to a convenience sample, using snowballing methodology. Once respondents voluntarily entered the survey, they were assigned identification numbers to distinguish their unique record in the data set. The survey was made available over a 90-day period from December 2017 to February 2018. Average response time spent on survey was 15 minutes per Google™ system reports.

Sampling design and screening process

Respondents were targeted based on being wine drinkers and wine buyers, as well as having used social media to support the wine purchase process. These were the screening questions of the survey. Respondents were also required to be over 21 due to references to alcohol/wine purchase, since the legal age for alcohol consumption in the United States is 21 years. After accounting for missing response data, a final usable dataset of 366 surveys represented a 37.6% response rate of 972 individuals entering the survey. In this study, additional analysis was limited to persons who responded to the question regarding propensity to be a wine wholesaler intermediary. This subsample comprised 90 respondents.

Data collection instrument

The survey instrument was created with 30 questions altogether and collected data about consumer attitudes and behavior toward social media and buying wine online. Multiple survey items were included, covering topics such as social media usage, subjective knowledge of social media and wine, and consumer attitudes related to risks of using social media in general as well as for purchasing wine. The outcome variable was collected via a set of seven items that were combined into a single measure of 'propensity to be a wine wholesaler'.

Demographic characteristics were also collected including age, gender, nationality, household income, and education.

Each scale was constructed upon a set of items identified in the literature and placed in the survey. Post-survey reliability analysis was conducted to determine if the scale composition was adequate, and where necessary, items were deleted or divided to improve the conceptualizations of these consumer variables. The number of items in these scales ranged from 3 to 8 with coefficient alphas well above .7.

Data analysis

Data was acquired in the form of an electronically exported and transmitted CSV spreadsheet, and subsequently saved as both MS Excel[®] and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences[®] (SPSS[®]) files. SPSS[®] analysis was employed in subsequent steps. The first step was to characterize the respondent profile by running descriptive analyses of available demographics, and scale reliabilities related to consumer perceptions about social media and online wine activities. Finding adequate coefficient alphas, researchers calculated average scores for each consumer scale. Next, the authors investigated potential associations between demographics and propensity to be a wine wholesaler. Lastly, multiple regression was conducted to assess potential relationships between selected and propensity to become a wine wholesaler.

Results and findings

Samples and respondent profiles

The initial sample was slightly more female (54.9%) and having a mean age of 32 years old with 59.6% under 30. Over half the sample (66.8%) had bachelor's degrees or higher. The three most common occupations were student (37.6%), executive/professional (27.2%) and clerical/administrative (11.1%). Respondents reported earning household incomes on average of 1000 to under 1400 US dollars per month. Home ownership status included more rentals (51.8%) than owned homes (49.4%).

Social media applications used

Respondents were reasonably familiar with social media, with 37.1% indicating expert knowledge, 49.1% indicating intermediate, and 13.8% indicating novice familiarity with social

media. Table 1 shows the frequency of usage of a variety of social media applications. While no respondent indicated excessive use of these social media (frequencies of use being close to midscore or lower on a scale of 1 to 7), Facebook and YouTube topped the list of applications employed by these respondents. Conversely, the sample's wine knowledge was generally lower, with only 10.5% marking expert, 35.5% marking intermediate, and 54.0% indicating novice wine knowledge.

Table 8: Social media applications used

Social Media Application	Mean usage frequency*	Standard Deviation
Facebook	4.72	2.055
YouTube	4.20	1.839
Instagram	3.90	2.467
LinkedIn	2.42	1.768
Snapchat	2.03	1.894
Pinterest	1.89	1.601
Twitter	1.82	1.591
Soundcloud	1.35	1.071
Tumblr	1.16	0.702
Viadeo	1.12	0.639
Foursquare	1.11	0.662
Myspace	1.10	0.642

*Valid N (366); 1 = never to 7 = many times per day

Consumer perceptions towards social media

Next, we look at the primary consumer scales used in analysis in this paper (see Table 2). In terms of descriptive findings about consumer perceptions towards social media, there was a general attitude that social media sites posed some degree of risk in terms of their collecting and protecting the personal data of respondents. Otherwise, people found social media to be

easy and fun to use and had plans to use it in future. Respondents had more moderate attitudes towards online wine vendors and purchases, although they did show a slightly positive propensity to engage in wine wholesaling with an average score of 4.65 out of 7.

Table 9: Consumer scale means and reliability of sub-items

<i>General description of scale focus</i>	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of items in scale*	Reliability Coefficient Alpha**
Social media sites should protect my data	366	6.19	1.19	8	0.950
Dislike sharing personal data with sites	366	5.73	1.38	4	0.859
I have needed resources to use social media	366	5.43	1.26	4	0.753
Using social media is easy for me	366	5.40	1.39	4	0.918
I will use social media in future	366	5.20	1.64	3	0.904
Using social media is fun for me	366	4.92	1.62	3	0.953
Social media sites should have clearer privacy policies	366	4.53	1.50	3	0.832
Social media sites' privacy policies are generally easy to read	366	4.40	1.54	2	0.829
I am a habitual user of social media	366	4.20	1.59	4	0.846
Online wine vendor quality and trustworthiness is good	366	4.16	1.24	7	0.942
Wine pickup creates difficulties for me to be a wholesaler	366	4.06	1.50	5	0.907
Online wine sales provide good value/price	366	3.87	1.27	3	0.919
Social media is a useful tool for me	366	3.79	1.51	4	0.886
Consumers like myself understand privacy policies	366	3.71	1.28	3	0.742

People tell me I should use social media to accomplish my goals	366	3.42	1.64	3	0.924
Propensity to be wine wholesaler ***	90	4.65	1.30	7	0.822

*Items on survey use Likert scale; 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree

**Inter-item reliability is high when coefficient alpha < . 0.700

***This variable is the dependent variable for future analysis

Propensity to be a wine wholesaler

ANOVA and correlations were used to determine if any demographic factors contributed to these respondents' propensities to be wine wholesalers. Age was not significant (correlation $r = .165$; $p = .121$; $n = 90$). Likewise, gender was not significantly associated with propensity to be a wine wholesaler (Table 3). Some profile characteristics that did show a significant relationship with wine wholesaler propensity were nation of residence and wine knowledge level (Table 3). Table 4 provided a deeper insight into the primary consumer attitude factors correlating with respondents' propensity to be a wine wholesaler; these were perceptions of wine vendor quality, home-based wine pickup issues and dislike of sharing personal data.

Table 10: Correlational analysis among scales and wine wholesaler propensity

Propensity to be a wine wholesaler					
	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-statistic	Degree of freedom	Significance (p-value)
Gender (n = 83)	4.65	1.32	.210	1, 81	.648
Female (n=29)	4.56	1.43			
Male (n = 54)	4.70	1.26			
Nation Residence (n = 81)	4.78	1.25	11.399	1, 79	.001*
USA (n = 17)	3.91	1.05			
France (n = 64)	5.01	1.20			
Wine Knowledge (n = 83)	4.65	1.32	4.816	2, 80	.011**
Novice (n = 22)	4.12	1.36			
Intermediate (n = 37)	4.60	1.14			
Expert (n = 24)	5.25	1.33			

*, ** Significant at 99% and 95 % respectively

Table 11: Correlation of consumer scales with propensity to be wine wholesaler

General description of scale focus	N	Correlation (r)*	Significance (p-value)
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Social media sites should protect my data	90	-.011	.920
I don't like giving personal data to sites	90	-.244	.021***
I have needed resources to use social media	90	-.050	.638
Using social media is easy for me	90	.071	.504
I will use social media in future	90	.162	.127
Using social media is fun for me	90	.120	.258
Social media sites should have clearer privacy policies	90	-.097	.364
Social media sites' privacy policies are generally easy to read	90	-.198	.062
I am a habitual user of social media	90	.013	.901
Online wine vendor quality and trustworthiness is good	90	.225	.033***
Wine pickup creates difficulties for me to be a wholesaler	90	-.587	.000***
Online wine sales provide good value/price	90	-.090	.401
Social media is a useful tool for me	90	.052	.627
Consumers like myself understand privacy policies	90	.205	.053
People tell me I should use social media to accomplish my goals	90	-.029	.785
Propensity to be wine wholesaler**	90	1.000	n.a.

*Correlations with the dependent variable

**This variable is the dependent variable

***Significant at $p < .05$

In subsequent analysis, four factors (perceived online wine vendor quality, home-based wine pickup issues, dislike of sharing personal data, and wine knowledge level) were used in trying

to understand people's propensity to be a wine wholesaler. A multiple regression was conducted to ascertain the effects of these factors on propensity for wine wholesaling in the home. Regression results (Table 5) showed the overall model of two factors (self-reported wine knowledge and home-based wine pickup issues) was statistically significant. The results of the regression indicated that two predictors explained 41.5% of the variance in propensity to be a wine wholesaler (adjusted $R^2 = .415$, $F(4, 78)=15.546$, $p<.001$). It was found that wine knowledge significantly predicted wine wholesaling ($\beta = .33$, $p<.05$), as did perceptions of hosting wine pickup in one's home ($\beta = -.50$, $p<.01$). Perceived online wine vendor quality and concerns about personal data did not remain in the equation.

Table 12: Summary of regression analysis for predicting propensity to be a wine wholesaler

	Beta Coefficient	Standard Error Coefficient	Standardized ofCoefficients Beta
Wine knowledge	.329*	.158	.187
Perceived online wine vendor quality	.185	.114	.140
Home-based wine pickup issues	-.502**	.077	-.568
Dislike of sharing personal data	-.024	.086	-.025
R-square	.444		
Adjusted R-square	.415		
Number of. observations	83		

Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

*, **, indicates significance at the 95%, and 99% level,
respectively

Managerial implications and recommendations

We found that the feasibility of wine grouping in many countries is based around a few variables, and each country raised different concerns. In this research, amongst our respondents the most preferred social media site was Facebook, meaning, that the *wine wholesaler* would have to focus mainly on that platform. Those who answered *yes* to the question about using social media in relation to wine are primarily reading posts for entertainment and information, which suggests that the future *wine wholesaler* has to write posts about wine that are informal and entertaining. There are still concerns about the privacy and security of these wine wholesaler actions, in that not too many of our respondents trust

their Social Media friends. Nonetheless, a majority of them agreed that they would become a wine wholesaler, if the one that is getting the wine from their property is a close friend. In Eastern Europe and Germany, the respondents who live there mainly raised concerns about their privacy, while the French, American and Spanish respondents seem to have more implicit trust in each other—for them the wine wholesaler activity can be more easily implemented. Many of our respondents also raise the question of time. In this hectic world, people have jobs, and don't have time to take part in other outside of work actions, such as wine grouping, especially if they are not getting paid in any form. But, fewer Spanish, French, Italian and Eastern European interviewees said that they would be concerned about time management, so maybe in these countries the feasibility of wine wholesaling is higher. All in all, it seems as if that people would require winery perks in return for their work as the wine wholesaler. The perks can be wine discounts, exclusive wines or extra wine. To have a close relationship with the winery is also a motivating factor for the respondents. They feel like members belonging to a wine club. What could be researched in the future is whether wineries are comfortable adapting to these new methods, and why would it be worth for them to have noncommercial wine wholesaler contacts/friends who practice social wholesaling for themselves. Researchers should dig more deeply into trust issues, especially in the Eastern European area and Germany. Time management is also an issue for most of the respondents, hence it has to be further researched. Another important factor, is whether people have the right place to store wine, where the temperature, light and humidity might be controlled.

Conclusions

A study was conducted about whether people from different countries would be interested in wine wholesaling. An online questionnaire was distributed which focused on whether people have the space to store wine, if they have the correct conditions to store wine, as well as what their motivations are, what are their fears related to becoming social wholesaler. Questions were also focused on their social media usage, and on how they would use social media and other platforms, such as scheduling applications, as a platform to become *wine wholesaler*. Only a limited number of countries participated, therefore we cannot make conclusions for the global wine community. Still, out of these samples reasonable conclusions can be drawn. Based on our findings, most countries would adapt to the wine wholesaler type of distribution, but many things have to be still clarified, i.e., legal restrictions, technical issues,

as well as optimal storing options and units. As most of our respondents do not engage in wine-focused social media activities, future studies could target those who are using social media platforms to get to know more about wine specifically.

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