

# Can Changes in Wine Marketing Attributes and Messaging Help Motivate Consumer Trial of Low-Carbon Wine Packaging?

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## Abstract

*Purpose:* This extended abstract focuses on how to motivate consumer trial of low-carbon wine packaging. The existing literature shows that messaging is an important aspect of gaining consumer trial. Two message categories, concrete versus abstract will be tested in a simulated shopping experience across four low carbon packages plus standard glass bottles.

*Design/methodology/approach:* This research will be conducted as a discrete choice experiment using two message types (low carbon v recyclable) with two appeals (concrete v abstract) across four price points and four levels of brand prestige. Consumer demographics and attitudes will also be measured. This will allow a variety of potential influencing factors to be manipulated all while simulating real purchasing contexts.

*Findings:* Data collection and analysis is anticipated to begin in March/April of 2021 and preliminary results will be presented at the conference.

*Practical implications:* This research can ultimately be used to help inform wine producer decision making regarding low-carbon wine packaging schemes, while also providing insight into the viability of low-carbon wine packaging in market. It also provides insight into potential messaging strategies that can be used in other areas of the industry (e.g. labelling, health claims)

**Key words:** Sustainability, Low-carbon, Wine packaging, DCE, Messaging

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Wine is often assumed to be natural and non-polluting by the consumer, however, more than two-thirds of winemaking's carbon emissions can be attributed directly to the production, packaging, and transport of conventional glass wine bottles (Abbott et al., 2016). Consequently, the majority of the wine industry's carbon emissions could be mitigated through reduced material usage, more efficient packaging shapes and sizes, and the use of more sustainable materials. However, there is little evidence of whether environmentally sustainable, low-carbon packaging will be accepted by consumers in the market (Baird et al., 2018).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Consumers have been found to generally be poor predictors of a package's sustainability performance, in most cases valuing the least carbon efficient packaging options the most (Herbes et al., 2018, Lindh et al., 2016, Ok Park and Sohn, 2018, Steenis et al., 2017, Van Dam, 1996). In the case of wine packaging, the most carbon intensive packaging format is the conventional glass wine bottle, with consumers perceiving other packaging options negatively due to factors such as poor wine quality and poor sustainability performance (Chrysochou et al., 2012, Hopkins et al., 2011, Steenis et al., 2017).

One tactic to combat consumer barriers is the use of messaging, which can be used to help educate consumers about new packaging options, as well as favourably nudge behaviours (Atkin et al., 2006, Sheth and Ram, 1989). Messages can be classified into two categories: abstract (low-detail) or concrete (detail-heavy) (Yang et al., 2015, Choi et al., 2018). There is no conclusion as to which is best at nudging consumer behaviour, and they have not been considered in the context of sustainable packaging trial (Atkinson and Rosenthal, 2014, Boz et al., 2020, Choi et al., 2018, D'Souza et al., 2006, Evans and Peirson-Smith, 2018, Hernandez et al., 2015, Hoogland et al., 2007, Mueller Loose and Remaud, 2013, Teisl et al., 2008).

Another factor that could influence trial is the content of the message. Consumers favour eco-attributes differently depending on where they fall in a product's life cycle (Herbes et al., 2018, Steenis et al., 2017, Van Dam, 1996). Eco-friendly attributes stemming from a package's origins (e.g. gathering of raw materials) and the production, transport, and retail portions of a package's life cycle are not valued by consumers, whereas eco-friendly attributes stemming from the end of a package's life cycle (e.g. recyclability, biodegradability) are valued highly (Herbes et al., 2018, Steenis et al., 2017, Van Dam, 1996). While knowledge of this preference has existed for some time, it has not been considered as a basis to structure eco-messaging around.

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTION**

This paper focuses on: 'Can changes in wine marketing attributes and messaging help motivate consumer trial of low-carbon wine packaging?'

#### **4. METHOD**

This research employs a discrete choice experiment (DCE) to uncover respondents' preferences through the combination of specific product features into sets of competing alternatives (Lockshin and Corsi, 2020). Different messages and messaging appeals, packaging types, brands, and price levels will be used in the simulation. This method has previously been used in studies addressing similar issues, such as the effects of sustainable wine claims (Remaud et al., 2010), wine brand, region, price sensitivity (Lockshin et al., 2006), back labels (Mueller et al., 2010), and healthier wine alternatives (Barreiro-Hurle et al., 2008).

Demographics, category involvement, performance of other pro-environmental behaviours (e.g. recycling trash), brand usage, and environmental concern will be used as covariates to discern whether the effects revealed by the DCE vary by consumer factors.

#### **5. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

Data collection and analysis is anticipated to begin in March/April of 2021 and preliminary results will be presented at the conference.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

This research is expected to produce findings that will deliver impact to both industry and academia.

Thus far, the only sustainability initiatives that have promulgated throughout the wine sector globally are oriented around the viticultural process. Given that anxieties around consumer response has been cited as a key cause of reluctance to introduce low-carbon packaging initiative by wine producers, this research seeks to directly address these anxieties, allowing producers to make alternative packaging decisions with confidence (Baird et al., 2018). It also will assist wineries in implementing these strategies properly, identifying what messages, price points and types of consumers should be considered, as well as what types of brands will benefit most from alternatively packaged wine variants.

In regard to academia, this will help clarify exactly what types of messaging appeals are most effective in this context, as well as what the content of sustainability messages should focus on. Beyond this, this research will also add to the body of research surrounding NPD acceptance, providing insight into how acceptance is affected by a variety of factors, and how it can be better motivated. These findings can then be used to inform decision making outside of the context of alternative wine packaging, or even the wine industry as a whole (e.g. health labelling, motivating trial of lower-alcohol wines, etc).

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