

## **Social sustainability orientation during the COVID-19 outbreak: a perspective on Italian wine industry.**

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### *Abstract*

◦*Purpose* – The study contributes to the debate on social sustainability in the wine industry with the examination of drivers and determinants of the orientation towards social practices and initiatives, during a period of systemic shock (COVID-19).

◦*Design*: the analysis is based on the collection of primary source data of 178 Italian wine firms; the methodology is mixed (qualitative and quantitative).

◦*Findings* – The wine firms consider social sustainability as an important driver for their development. Despite the pandemic economic impact, the orientation towards social practices and initiatives is generally consistent, and its magnitude seems to be related to the size of the firm.

◦*Practical implications* – Scholars should not overlook the social dimension of sustainability that is relevant for business. Monitoring links between orientation and behaviour is needed. To disseminate knowledge and share a common paradigm on social issues, building a network of firms driven by larger ones is highly recommended.

Key words: social sustainability, wine industry, performance, COVID-19.

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