

## Why Winning a Gold Medal Help or Hurt? The Effect of Wine Jury's Expertise on Purchase Intentions in a Retail Context. A Mediation Analysis

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### *Abstract*

◦*Purpose* – Because wine awards serve as key quality indicators for consumers, those are commonly displayed on bottles in the retail space to reduce perceived risk related to the complexity of such a product and help purchasing decisions. However, very little is known about the effectiveness of awards like medals that are awarded by a jury of either consumers or experts. This paper aims to examine whether and why experts- versus consumer-based awards help or hurt purchase intentions.

◦*Design/methodology/approach* – We conducted an experiment with a sample of French consumers ( $n = 196$ ), in which we compare the effect of the awards given by a jury of consumers versus experts on consumers' responses. We specifically tested whether and why awards influence purchase intentions using a parallel mediation analysis.

◦*Findings* – Experts' awards on a bottle of wine increase purchase intentions compared to a bottle with a consumer-based award. That is because consumers perceive a wine with an expert-based award to be of higher quality, which in turn enhances purchase intentions. However, experts' awards can backfire because consumers perceived such a jury as being psychologically distant from themselves.

◦*Practical implications* – Our paper sheds light on why experts' awards help or hurt purchase intentions and contribute to the literatures on wine awards and psychological distance. Managers must keep in mind that awards delivered by professionals may either lead to positive outcomes — because they prompt quality perceptions — or negative ones, because of the feelings of distance triggered by professionals.

Keywords: Wine Awards, Jury Expertise, Quality Perception, Psychological Distance, Purchase Intentions

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