

THE IMPACT OF KNOWLEDGE TYPE ON THE ACQUISITION OF WINE

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Abstract

An important question facing both wine marketing scholars and practitioners is which wine consumers are more likely to engage in exploratory purchasing of wine? Does gender, age, education level and level of wine consumption matter? Is exploratory wine purchasing behavior dependent on a consumer's subjective (imagined) or objective (real) knowledge of wine? These are the issues that we explore in this paper.

300 participants (via Amazon's MTurk) completed a 24-item instrument consisting of three measures to capture each of objective and subjective knowledge and exploratory purchasing behavior. Five items from the Forbes, Cohen and Dean (2008) test of objective wine knowledge were expanded to ten items by the addition of further questions about wine with correct or incorrect answers. The eight-item scale by Flynn and Goldsmith's (1999) was used to measure subjective knowledge while the six-item Exploratory Consumer Tendencies scale by Van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman's (1996) was used to assess respondents' need for variety, or willingness to make exploratory purchases, with regard to wine. Finally, respondents were also asked to provide information on four demographic variables, namely: age, gender, education and average wine consumption (in bottles) per week.

The three main constructs investigated in this study, namely exploratory purchasing behaviour (the tendency of a wine consumer to seek variety in their purchasing), subjective knowledge (how much a customer "thinks" they know about wine), and objective knowledge (how much a consumer actually knows about wine), showed themselves to be distinct from each other by loading on three separate factors in a factor analysis. Furthermore, exploratory purchasing behaviour and subjective knowledge showed themselves in the factor analysis to be unidimensional constructs, with the items making up the scales all loading onto a single factor. This suggests that the scores on the scales could be summed to provide composite scores for the constructs. The results also supported the reliability of the measures exhibiting Cronbach alphas that exceeding the customary 0.7 cutoff. In terms of the respondent demographics (namely: age group, gender, education, and wine consumption, the ANOVA results indicate that exploratory purchasing is significantly related to wine consumption, with higher consumption associated with a greater tendency to purchase exploratively. Subjective wine knowledge is also significantly related to wine consumption, with those who consume more, believing that they know more about wine. Two demographic variables are significantly related to objective wine knowledge. First, learning about wine does seem to come with age, as older consumers showed themselves to be more objectively knowledgeable about wine. Second, those who consume more wine actually know more about it than those who consume lesser amounts.

References available upon request