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in

Mattas K. (ed.), Tsakiridou E. (ed.).
Food quality products in the advent of the 21st century: production, demand and public policy

Chania : CIHEAM
Cahiers Options Méditerranéennes; n. 64

2005
pages 83-99

Article available on line / Article disponible en ligne à l'adresse :

<http://om.ciheam.org/article.php?IDPDF=800047>

To cite this article / Pour citer cet article

Marangon F., Troiano S. **Consumer attitudes and preferences regarding Italian quality wines. evidence from the civintas exhibition.** In : Mattas K. (ed.), Tsakiridou E. (ed.). *Food quality products in the advent of the 21st century: production, demand and public policy.* Chania : CIHEAM, 2005. p. 83-99 (Cahiers Options Méditerranéennes; n. 64)



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Consumer Attitudes and Preferences regarding Italian Quality Wines. Evidence from the Civintas Exhibition

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Abstract. In order to improve consumer behaviour knowledge, it is very important to collect information about consumer characteristics and preferences. This is made possible at events such as "Civintas", an Italian quality food exhibition that promotes production linked to a specific territory, such as CDO (Controlled Designation of Origin) wines. The 1997-2000 editions gave us the opportunity to gather information through interviews with participants. This analysis allowed us to understand the demand market configuration. We should underline that the study was also used to give the consumer product information, so as to improve their perception of quality. Interviewees were asked to respond to questions regarding socio-economic characteristics and wine preferences. The responses were used to create consumer profiles. Data was analysed in three statistical stages: univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis. A homogeneity analysis was conducted to examine data during the last stage. A hedonic analysis model was also carried out to identify the implicit prices in relation to wine quality. After conducting this study, it was discovered that wine consumption was characterised by a wide variety of consumer behaviours and preferences. This information will be useful in indicating effective market segmentation criteria so as to develop sustainable differentiation and positioning strategies to satisfy consumer preferences.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, quality products, wine preferences, homogeneity analysis, hedonic pricing.

1. Introduction

The models of traditional consumption have gone through a substantial transformation over the last few decades. This change has resulted in the need to examine the new characteristics, preferences and motivations of a rapidly changing consumer model.

Wine consumption has decreased substantially, and at the same time the needs that are satisfied through drinking wine are less fundamental and more abstract. Moreover, wine is now being consumed in non-traditional markets.

In this context, the study of wine consumer behaviour has become a factor of great importance in giving wine producers a true picture of demand. Indeed, they constantly need to adapt their supply to market demand.

The aim of this study is to illustrate the characteristics, the habits and the preferences of local quality wine consumers.

To this purpose, the evolution in wine consumption over the past ten years will be described. Subsequently, the chosen data set will be analysed. The data were collected by wine tasters that participated in the 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 editions of the "Civintas" exhibition.