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CHRIS PENTZ

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

MARKUS FILTER

Stellenbosch University, Somalia

“FROM GENERATION Y TO GENERATION WINE” A BEST-WORST SCALING STUDY OF WINE ATTRIBUTE IMPORTANCE

Abstract:

South Africa is an emerging market, but it is also the eighth largest wine producer in the world. Despite the country's established position in the global wine industry and its rich history in wine production, South Africa has a significantly low level of wine consumption per capita compared to other wine-producing countries. Consequently, there is a need for wine producers to explore opportunities and strategies to increase domestic wine consumption. One such opportunity lies in new, unexplored markets, such as the emerging Generation Y consumers. However, these consumers seem to lack knowledge when selecting and purchasing wine mainly because of their inadequate experience with the product. Owing to the complex nature of wine, consumers typically identify and prioritise certain wine attributes. For the purposes of this study, 13 wine attributes were identified from prior research that might influence consumers' wine selection and purchase behaviour, namely, 'taste', 'price', 'someone recommended it', 'medal/award', 'brand', 'attractive front label', 'in-store promotions', 'grape variety', 'region of origin', 'information on back label', 'read about it', 'matches my food' and 'information on shelf'. This study investigated the relative importance of these wine attributes to South African Generation Y consumers. A quantitative research design that used self-administered, non-interactive surveys was presented to a student sample at a leading South African university. The relative importance of the wine attributes was measured using the Best-Worst scaling method. The results indicated that 'taste', 'price', 'someone recommended it', 'medal/award' and 'brand' were deemed the most important wine attributes, whereas the attributes 'information on shelf', 'matches my food', 'read about it', 'information on back label' and 'region of origin' were identified as less important. Based on these findings, it is recommended that wine producers should focus their marketing efforts on providing South African Generation Y consumers with experiences that involve tasting wine; that wine producers should compile appropriate wine pricing strategies; and that they should encourage opinion-sharing of their wines. By gaining a deeper understanding of the wine selection and purchasing behaviour of South African Generation Y consumers and the importance they place on wine attributes the low level of South Africa's per capita wine consumption can be addressed in a positive way.

Keywords:

Wine attribute importance; Best-Worst scaling; Generation Y; South African wine industry

JEL Classification: M31

Introduction

“Wine to me is passion. It’s family and friends. It’s warmth of heart and generosity of spirit. Wine is art. It’s culture. It’s the essence of civilization and the art of living.”

This quote by legendary vintner Robert Mondavi (1999) encapsulates wine as a complex, yet rich in character, beverage that has been produced for thousands of years and today forms part of a flourishing global wine industry.

The earliest evidence of wine production suggests that it was first produced during the early Neolithic period in 6000-5000 BC (McGovern, Jalabadze, Batiuk, Callahan, Smith, Hall, Kvavadze, Maghradze, Rusishvili, Bouby, Failla, Cola, Marian, Boaretto, Bacilieri, This, Wales & Lordkipanidze, 2017). In 2017, an ancient winery was discovered in Armenia, possibly dating back to 4100 BC, and the ancient Egyptians also produced a wine-like beverage believed to be the drink of the gods. The wine industry expanded when the Phoenicians started trading in wine with Greece. With its increased use, wine became a symbol of health, trade and even religion among the Greeks, who named the god, ‘Dionysus’, in honour of wine (The history of wine, 2018). The production of wine has subsequently grown with civilisation and its consumption is now a common part of modern life in countries around the globe.

Winemaking in South Africa dates back to more than 350 years when Jan van Riebeeck, a Dutch colonial Governor of the Cape, planted the first vines near the current city of Cape Town (Three centuries of Cape wine, 2018). From these humble beginnings and thanks to South Africa’s ideal climate for growing vines, the wine industry has developed from a small market for home consumption to its current status as the eighth largest wine producer in the world (Wesgro: Wine Factsheet, 2017). However, South Africa’s wine consumption per capita remains relatively low at an estimated 7.96 litres per annum (SAWIS: SA Wine Industry, 2017), indicating that only a minimal amount of the wine produced in South Africa is consumed domestically.

In terms of consumer segmentation, wine is no longer a commodity that is exclusively consumed by older, more mature generations, but it has also been recognised as a sophisticated drink by younger, especially Generation Y consumers (Chrysochou,

Krystallis, Mocanu & Lewis, 2012; Lategan, Pentz & Du Preez, 2017). In a South African context, the Generation Y segment has the potential to substantially increase South African wine sales, but consumers in this segment have limited experience with and exposure to the beverage. To better understand the wine selection and purchase behaviour of South African Generation Y consumers, wine producers need to increase their knowledge of this important market segment. By enhancing their insight in Generation Y wine consumer behaviour, wine industry role players can design more effective marketing strategies, which could ultimately lead to increased wine sales.

Literature perspectives

The wine product

In simple terms, wine can be defined as an alcoholic beverage that is made from fermented grapes (Saranraj, Sivasakthivelan & Noveen, 2017). Wine is, however, a highly complex product, as each wine is unique, not only because of the variety of grapes used, but also as a result of other factors such as climate, rainfall, terroir and fermentation techniques. The unique taste of different wines can furthermore be explained in terms of the wine's acidity, alcohol, sweetness and aroma compounds (Puckette, 2016). As a result, there are thousands of wines around the world for consumers to choose from, each with a unique style and taste.

The global wine industry

In 2017, global wine consumption was estimated at 250 million hectolitres (mhl), with five countries being responsible for the consumption of almost half the world's wine. These countries are the United States (US) (32.6 mhl), France (27.0 mhl), Italy (22.6 mhl), Germany (20.2 mhl) and China (17.9 mhl) (State of the vitiviniculture world market, 2018). The major importers of wine in 2017 included Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States and China (Workman, 2018). According to the *Organisation Internationale de la Vigne et du Vin* (2018), overall wine exports increased by 3.4 per cent between 2016 and 2017, with Spain, Italy, France, Chile, Australia and South Africa being the largest exporters.

The South African wine industry

The South African wine industry boasts an abundance of primary grape producers, wine estate cellars, producer cellars and producing wholesalers (WOSA: Overview, 2018). There are 3 029 primary grape producers, 472 private wine cellars, 48 producer cellars and 26 producing wholesalers (SAWIS: SA Wine Industry, 2017). The South African wine industry as a whole provides approximately 300 000 jobs, highlighting its importance to the economy. Collectively, the industry delivered 1 437 261 tons of grapes, producing 1118.3 million litres of wine in 2017 (WOSA: Overview, 2018).

Apart from being the eighth largest producer of wine in the world, the South African wine industry has the twelfth largest surface area under vines (WOSA: Overview, 2018). The industry has shown consistent growth over the past 14 years, mainly exporting to the UK, Germany and the Netherlands (Wesgro: Wine Factsheet, 2017). Despite this growth, the South African wine industry faces several challenges and during the past decade, South African grape producers have been under severe financial pressure. According to Conradie (2019), Vinpro's wine cellar master, wine production costs have increased by 7.4 per cent annually over the past ten years. At the same time, wine prices remained almost unchanged with the result that more than 80 per cent of South African wine producers have to farm below a sustainable net farming income.

Furthermore, due to small profit margins, financial investments in the wine industry are low. In addition, there are a myriad wine producers in South Africa, making the industry highly competitive, especially in terms of price. Many small wineries producing and selling small volumes of wine cause the economy to be unstable (Wesgro: Wine Factsheet, 2017). Another concern for the wine industry is that South Africans drink much less wine than other wine-producing countries. According to South African Wine Industry Information & Systems (SAWIS), South African wine consumption in 2017 was only 7.96 litres (l) per capita compared to France (36.20l), Italy (38.20l) and Portugal (47.10l) (SAWIS: SA Wine Industry, 2017). The local per capita wine consumption is also insignificant compared to the use of other alcoholic beverages. For example, the per capita beer consumption in South Africa amounts to

56.8l per annum, making beer consumption almost seven times more than wine consumption (SAWIS: SA Wine Industry, 2017).

It can therefore be argued that to remain competitive and sustainable, South African wine producers should increase the domestic consumption of wine. One way of doing this is to focus on and create a new generation of wine drinkers. One such segment is the emerging generational group known as Generation Y, which has been the focus of various studies in the past. To target Generation Y consumers more effectively, deeper insights into how consumers of this generation behave with respect to wine selection and purchasing are needed.

Generation Y consumers

When purchasing a bottle of wine, consumers are faced with a large variety of wines, with many factors making each wine unique. Selection can thus be a taxing process, especially to Generation Y consumers, who may have limited experience of the beverage, and who may therefore also lack knowledge to make an informed purchase decision. To capture Generation Y as a new generation of wine drinkers, wine producers need insight firstly into who Generation Y consumers are and secondly, how they behave as consumers.

Despite variations in definitions, Generation Y, also known as 'Millennials', typically refers to the group of consumers who were born between 1980 and 2000 (Nielsen, 2015). Generation Y consumers are becoming increasingly active in the economy (Velikova, Fountain, De Magistris, Seccia & Wilson, 2013) as the spending power shifts from the older generations (Generation X and the so-called 'Baby Boomers') to the younger generations (Generation Y). Owing to the group's large size, Generation Y has a powerful impact on the economy (Noble, Haytko & Phillips, 2009). In South Africa, the Generation Y segment represents about 35 per cent of the total population (Stats SA, 2018). Furthermore, Valentine and Powers (2013) highlight that Generation Y was born into a consumption-driven society and that they have access to more disposable funds than any previous generational group. Not only do these consumers spend more, they also have a large influence over the spending power of their parents (Ordun, 2015). Consequently, Generation Y consumers are of vital economic importance, as they have the potential to transform the market and the economy

(Nielsen, 2015). As every generation differs in certain ways and has its own set of characteristics, social values and lifestyles, which influence consumer behaviour (Ordun, 2015), it is important to analyse the characteristics of Generation Y consumers.

Generation Y consumers are described as innovative, motivated and open-minded (Ordun, 2015). They are more educated than previous generations, further increasing their potential earnings and spending power (Nielsen, 2015). Because uniqueness is valued by this group, self-expressive brands with traits that are in line with their own are valued. Consequently, personalisation plays a major role, because of the independent orientation of Generation Y consumers (Noble *et al.*, 2009). Generation Y consumers also have different priorities and life goals compared to other generations. Valentine and Powers (2013) claim that the quality of work life is prioritised over income. Furthermore, Generation Y values investment in human capital, they are confident, have high expectations and they are achievement-oriented (Noble *et al.*, 2009). There is a major difference in how Generation Y grew up compared to older generations. Technology plays a distinctive role in their lives and upbringing, as they are technology and Internet proficient and have constant access to large volumes of information (Chrysochou *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, they are adaptive and welcoming towards new technology. By understanding who Generation Y consumers are, wine producers will be able to profile and target these consumers more effectively. However, insight into the generation's characteristics is not sufficient for the development of marketing and promotional material; it is also essential to understand how these consumers behave.

Generation Y's wine selection and purchasing behaviour

Marinelli, Fabbrizzi, Sottini, Sacchelli, Bernetti and Menghini (2013:118) suggest that consumer preferences are "expressions of social behaviours that are associated with habits and lifestyles shared within the same generation".

Fountain and Lamb (2011), however, argue that it cannot be assumed that consumers of the same generation, in this case Generation Y, behave the same in all countries. Durvasula and Lysonski (2008) found that the same generation behaves differently in different countries because of the political, economic and cultural contexts that they

are exposed to in their respective countries. These behaviour differences have become apparent in several studies, especially in the context of wine consumption. There are distinct cultural differences in different countries, which influence wine consumption (Velikova *et al.*, 2013). Fountain and Lamb (2011) further highlight the importance of the cultural, political, economic and social contexts in the process of forming attitudes and behaviours in wine consumption.

Chapin (2016) found a decrease in alcohol consumption among Generation Y consumers in countries such as France, Italy and Spain, whereas Velikova *et al.* (2013) reported a similar downward trend in wine consumption in particular. A study by Geller (2016) found that many Generation Y consumers place substantial importance on personal health and Rudgard (2015) revealed that Generation Y consumers perceive intoxication as embarrassing. These findings might explain why certain Generation Y consumers have decided to drink less alcohol, including wine.

On the other hand, wine consumption among younger consumers such as Generation Y has increased in countries such as the US and New Zealand. According to Velikova *et al.* (2013), roughly half of the Generation Y consumer group in the US drink wine at least once a week, making Generation Y a core segment in the context of wine consumption in the US. A study on Generation Y consumers in New Zealand revealed that they were positive about wine consumption and consumed wine more frequently and in more situations than their older counterparts (Fountain & Lamb, 2011).

It can thus be reiterated that in terms of wine consumption, consumer behaviour varies by country. In addition, research on the topic of Generation Y's wine purchasing and selection behaviour has shown inconsistencies and results should therefore not be generalised.

The abovementioned contexts form the values, motivations and lifestyles which ultimately determine the wine purchase behaviour of consumers (Velikova *et al.*, 2013). The different wine consumption behaviours and the formulation thereof are even more significant in the context of Generation Y consumers when considering the marketing and consumer behaviour concept known as 'consumer socialisation' and the generation subculture theory.

Consumer socialisation

First introduced by Scott Ward in 1974, consumer socialisation is defined as “the process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge and attitudes” (Velikova *et al.*, 2013). In other words, it is how people learn to become consumers and behave as consumers. The concept of consumer socialisation has often been used in marketing and consumer behaviour contexts and is recognised in the literature. Traditionally, consumer socialisation primarily refers to child development, considering aspects such as role and moral development in children (Ward, 1974). However, the concept also applies to adolescent and adult consumers (Shahzad, Khattak & Shazad, 2013).

The skills, attitudes and knowledge referred to in the definition of consumer socialisation are formed by a number of factors. A person’s family and friends, gender and culture play a primary role in shaping their consumer behaviour. Through the process of consumer socialisation, both present and future purchase behaviours are influenced (Ward, 1974). In other words, how consumers are influenced in their formative years not only influences their current attitudes, behaviour and motives to purchase (or not to purchase) specific products, but is likely to also influence these aspects in the future. In a similar vein, Shahzad *et al.* (2013) highlight the powerful influence of consumer socialisation on drinking behaviour. A person’s parents and friends, culture, economic status and other contextual factors can cause them to learn a particular style of drinking.

Generation subculture theory

The generation subculture theory posits that country-specific contexts, such as social, economic and political circumstances that consumers are exposed to in their formative years form a generational identity (Mueller, Remaud & Chabin, 2011). This generational identity comprises values, behaviours and beliefs related to a specific context, and lasts throughout the generation’s lifetime (Fountain & Lamb, 2011). In simple terms, Generation Y consumers do not only differ from other generational

groups, but they are also likely to have different views, values, beliefs and behaviours within their own generational group, depending on the country they live in.

In essence, it is vital for strategists to understand and act when consumers are in this formative period to form their preferences in favour of wine as this could have a lifelong impact on further generations, because of the strong influence of family and peers on consumer socialisation. This action should comprise effective wine marketing techniques. South Africa is currently a predominantly beer-drinking country. It is therefore important to encourage consumers, especially Generation Y consumers, to make wine their drink of choice by implementing appropriate wine related marketing strategies.

Intrinsic and extrinsic wine attributes

Many Generation Y consumers enter the wine market with little knowledge and experience of the wine product (Histro & Kuhar, 2015). This lack of knowledge and experience, together with the complex nature of wine, may cause them to feel overwhelmed. There are a large variety of intrinsic and extrinsic attributes that consumers in general consider when selecting and purchasing wine (Nunes, Madureira, Oliveira & Madureira, 2016). Intrinsic product attributes refer to the internal product, or material within. In the case of wine, intrinsic attributes refer to the actual wine itself (liquid), its colour, taste and level of alcohol percentage. Extrinsic product attributes are inherent or non-essential characteristics that are generally not part of the actual product. Examples of extrinsic product attributes of wine include the bottle design, price, front label, logo and brand name. Unlike most products, wine generally has to be tasted before a judgement can be made on its quality, which makes it more difficult to make a choice, especially in a retail environment (Barber, Almanza & Donovan, 2006).

Wine can be purchased and consumed in different contexts. These contexts include restaurants and bars (on-premises) and retail stores (off-premises). Each of these purchasing contexts will influence how consumers choose wine. In a retail environment, consumers are faced with vast choices of types and brands of wine, and consumers do not generally have the opportunity to taste the wine before purchasing it. Therefore, their selection is primarily based on extrinsic product cues (Histro &

Kuhar, 2015). As a result, it is vital for wine producers to know which attributes consumers (in this case Generation Y) consider when they select wine, and which attributes have the greatest influence on their wine choices. Consequently, wine producers can gain insight into not only the wine selection decisions of these consumers, but also into the information searches, evaluation of product alternatives, and the purchase stages of the entire consumer decision-making process.

Previous studies by various authors such as Cohen (2009); Chrysochou *et al.* (2012); and Lategan *et al.* (2017), have identified several wine attributes that can be used to investigate consumers' wine selection and purchasing behaviour. Although there are slight variations of these wine attributes in existing studies, most include the following attributes: 'someone recommended it', 'brand', 'in-store promotions', 'medal/award', 'grape variety', 'attractive front label', 'matches my food', 'taste', 'information on back label', 'read about it', 'information on shelf', 'region of origin' and 'alcohol level below 13 per cent' (Chrysochou *et al.*, 2012). The price of wine has often been excluded from similar studies but evidence shows that price plays a key role in wine selecting and purchasing decisions, especially in the case of Generation Y consumers (Nunes *et al.*, 2016).

Price is a primary tool used in understanding and providing customer value. It is one of the major aspects of the total costs that consumers calculate when making a purchase decision. Chrysochou *et al.* (2012) emphasise the significance that Generation Y consumers place on price as an indication of quality when they seek value. Owing to this generation's lack of knowledge and experience in selecting and purchasing wines, Generation Y consumers may rely heavily on price (Chrysochou *et al.*, 2012), in essence using price as a risk-reducing strategy (Mueller *et al.*, 2011).

Problem statement

As outlined earlier, the South African wine industry is the eighth largest producer of wine globally (Wesgro: Wine Factsheet, 2017). However, evidence indicates that compared to other wine-producing countries, South Africa has a significantly low level of wine consumption per capita, indicating that despite high wine production volumes, domestic wine consumption remains low (SAWIS: SA Wine Industry, 2017). South African wine producers should therefore explore opportunities and strategies to

increase local wine consumption by pursuing and expanding new potential markets. One such opportunity lies in Generation Y consumers.

Generation Y presents a new group of potential wine drinkers. Because of its large size, high spending power and the group's influence on family spending, Generation Y consumers present opportunities for South African wine producers to increase domestic wine consumption (Chrysochou *et al.*, 2012). However, studies show that individuals of a certain generation do not behave equally in different countries because of economic, social and political contexts (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2008). Therefore, there is a need for marketers and wine producers to conduct further research on the wine selection and purchasing behaviour of South African Generation Y consumers.

Owing to the complex nature of wine as a product, consumers, including Generation Y, identify and prioritise certain attributes when choosing which wine to purchase (Lategan *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, research is necessary on the wine attributes that Generation Y deem most important and those attributes that are deemed less important. By better understanding the selection and purchase behaviour in terms of wine attribute importance, more effective marketing strategies can be tailored to satisfy the wants and needs of Generation Y wine consumers in South Africa. As a result, a new generation of wine drinkers (from 'Generation Y to Generation Wine') could be created, and effectively targeted with appropriate marketing strategies.

Against this background, this study investigated the relative importance of a number of wine attributes that could influence the wine selection and purchase behaviour of Generation Y consumers in South Africa, specifically in a retail (off-premises) environment.

Research design and methodology

Secondary research provided insight into the global and South African wine industry, wine as a product and the consumer behaviour of Generation Y in the context of wine selection and purchasing. The research highlighted the necessity for wine producers to consider South African Generation Y consumers as an opportunity to increase local wine consumption. Therefore, primary research was needed to gain insight into the

wine selection and purchasing behaviour of South African Generation Y consumers in a retail setting. Quantitative (primary) research was carried out, involving structured data collection and objective interpretation.

According to Marinelli *et al.* (2014), it is important to note that because of the wide age range of the Generation Y cohort, the applicability of research results for the entire cohort is not optimal. As a result, a number of researchers (Martin & Turley, 2004; Noble, Haytko & Phillips, 2009; and Du Preez, Pentz & Lategan 2016) have narrowed the Generation Y cohort to a more focused college and/or university cohort. Muller (2016) argues that a tertiary degree is commonly correlated to a higher future income capacity and a higher social status in society. In combination, these factors result in the fact that university graduates are often seen as role models and opinion leaders among their peers. A decision was therefore made to collect data from a sample of South African university students by means of a self-administered pen-and-paper questionnaire.

To measure the relative importance that respondents allocated to wine attributes, the Best-worst scaling method was followed, which allows for ratio level data to be measured (Lategan *et al.*, 2017). Best-Worst scaling, also known as 'maximum difference' scaling, is used to measure the degree of importance that respondents allocate to each attribute by allowing respondents to choose only one most and one least preferred attribute in a series of choice sets (Cohen, 2009). This method requires respondents to make trade-offs, as attributes are measured relative to other attributes. Best-Worst scaling overcomes some of the shortfalls of Likert-type scales, as Likert-type scales do not measure the relativity of each item to another. Furthermore, Likert-type scales may be given a different meaning and interpreted differently by individuals (Cohen, 2009). Best-Worst scaling also eliminates bias in the rating scale, as respondents can choose only one best and one worst response per choice set.

As part of the secondary phase of the study, a number of attributes that consumers consider when selecting and purchasing wine were identified. All the attributes used in this study were based on pre-designed, pre-tested attributes used in previous studies. These 13 attributes were adapted mainly from the study by Chrysochou *et al.* (2012), and were as follows: 'price', 'region of origin', 'information on shelf', 'read

about it', 'information on back label', 'matches my food', 'attractive front label', 'grape variety', 'medal/award', 'in-store promotions', 'brand', 'someone recommended it', and 'taste'.

A notable difference between this study and the Chrysochou et al. (2012) study was that the current study included 'price' as an attribute due to reasons explained previously. On the other hand, the study excluded the attribute 'alcohol level below 13 per cent'. The reason is that recent studies have consistently pointed out that 'alcohol level below 13 per cent' was considered least important by a large margin (Cohen, 2009; Chrysochou *et al.*, 2012; Lategan *et al.*, 2017).

A Balanced Incomplete Block Design (BIBD) was used to organise the attributes into a series of thirteen choice sets. This design ensured that the attributes could be compared to each other in equal amounts of time, thereby increasing the validity of the results (Cohen, 2009). In addition to the attributes tested other questions were also included. As this study was aimed at a university cohort of South African Generation Y wine consumers, the following three screening questions were included: firstly, whether the respondent fell in the specific Generation Y age category (18-25), and was of a legal drinking age; secondly, whether the respondent was a South African citizen and lastly, whether the respondent had purchased wine in a retail setting during the past previous six months. If respondents answered negatively to any of these questions, they were removed from the study. Lastly, questions were also asked about the respondent's general wine consumption behaviour such as purchase frequency, purchase volume, wine type preference and purchase location.

Results and discussion

A total of 200 usable questionnaires were retained for statistical analysis following the exclusion of questionnaires that did not meet the inclusion criteria such as being incomplete or where the respondent fell outside the target group. The sample was evenly spread between male and female respondents and all the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25, with the majority being between the ages of 20 and 22.

The results indicated that the sample purchased wine occasionally with the majority indicating that they purchased wine once a month (31 per cent) or once every three months (31 per cent). Only 17 per cent of the respondents purchased wine once a week or more. Furthermore, in terms of how many bottles of wine respondents had purchased in the previous four weeks, the vast majority (72 per cent) indicated that they had purchased fewer than four bottles, with only six per cent indicating that they had purchased more than seven bottles. Although wine can be purchased from various outlets, including liquor stores, grocery stores, online and wine shops, the results showed that the majority (78 per cent) of the sample preferred to purchase wine at liquor stores. Interestingly, no respondents indicated that they had purchased wine online. Therefore, it can be suggested that for South African Generation Y consumers, more traditional wine purchase locations such as liquor stores are prevalent.

Red wine was indicated as the preferred wine of choice with 46 per cent of the total sample choosing this option. White wine was also indicated as a popular wine choice, with 37 per cent of respondents indicating a preference for white wine. Only three per cent of the sample indicated sparkling wine as their preference. The results therefore suggest that sparkling wine is an unpopular or uncommon wine choice for these respondents.

Finally, the results showed that the sample seemed to have a strong preference for word-of-mouth (57 per cent) when seeking information about wine, suggesting that the Generation Y student cohort sample value the opinions of others such as friends, family and peers, above other (more commercial) information sources when selecting wine. The respondents placed little emphasis on impersonal (more commercial) forms of communication such as the Internet, e-mail, newsletters or printed material.

These findings are an important insight for wine producers and marketers to consider in their marketing strategies for South African Generation Y consumers.

Results of Best-Worst scaling (BWS)

The overall BWS scores, ranked from best to worst, are shown in Table 1. The level of importance that was allocated to each wine attribute was measured between a

range of +4 to -4. Raw scores for each respondent were calculated for each wine attribute by subtracting the total number of times an attribute was selected as least important from the total number of times it was selected as most important. Mean scores for each wine attribute were then calculated to rank the attributes from most important to least important.

Table 1 Overall BW score ranking

No.	Attribute	Most	Least	Aggregated BWS	BW Score Mean	BW Score SD
1	Taste	593	13	580	2.89	1.33
2	Price	411	47	364	1.82	1.71
3	Someone recommended it	322	81	241	1.20	1.57
4	Brand	272	136	136	0.68	1.67
5	Medal/ award	223	118	105	0.54	1.88
6	In-store promotions	147	164	-17	-0.08	1.82
7	Attractive front label	168	214	-46	-0.24	1.81
8	Grape variety	123	280	-157	-0.78	2.11
9	Information on back label	85	276	-191	-0.96	1.57
10	Read about it	83	297	-214	-1.07	1.58
11	Matches my food	69	301	-232	-1.17	1.84
12	Region of origin	61	322	-261	-1.30	1.70
13	Information on shelf	42	350	-308	-1.54	1.27

Source: Own analyses from primary data

'Taste' was identified as the most important wine attribute, with a BW score of 2.89, which suggests that the Generation Y university student cohort sample, prioritise and value taste when selecting and purchasing wine. The second most important attribute was 'price', with a score of 1.82, which was unexpected given Generation Y's high levels of spending power reported in the literature. It also highlights the limitations of previous studies that excluded this attribute, and the importance of including price as a key wine attribute. Thirdly, the attribute 'someone recommended it' yielded a relatively high score of 1.20. As pointed out previously, the sample prioritised word-of-mouth as a reliable form of information and communication about wine, suggesting that they

consider the opinions of others when selecting and purchasing wine. The attributes 'brand' and 'medal/award' were ranked as fourth and fifth respectively when choosing a wine, which could be related to the sample's lack of experience or knowledge about wine.

Attributes that were identified as least important in the study included 'region of origin', 'matches my food', 'read about it', 'information on back label', and 'information on shelf' (least important attribute).

Conclusions

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the relative importance of a number of pre-selected attributes that could influence the wine selection and purchasing behaviour of a Generation Y university student sample of consumers. The results revealed which attributes the sample deemed as most and which as least important when selecting and purchasing wine in a retail setting for their own consumption.

Taste

Of the 13 attributes assessed, taste was deemed as most important by a significant margin. If the respondents in the sample had previously tasted and enjoyed the taste of a specific wine, they were likely to choose it again. This finding is consistent with those of Chrysochou *et al.* (2012), Lategan *et al.* (2017), and Casini, Corsi and Goodman (2009).

One should bear in mind that Generation Y consumers, and especially the student cohort assessed in the sample (aged 18-25) have limited experience of purchasing and consuming wine, and that they might thus rely heavily on their previous, albeit limited, experience of wine consumption. Furthermore, it is important to consider the concept of consumer socialisation. Exposure to wine in this group's formative years may thus affect their preferences for wine in the future (Velikova, *et al.*, 2013). In other words, by socialising Generation Y consumers to purchase wine during their formative years (aged 18-25), they are likely to continue drinking wine for the rest of their lives. As Generation Y consumers are often faced with an overwhelming

selection of wines in retail settings, they are likely to choose wine with a taste that they are familiar with to reduce their risk of making an unsatisfactory purchase.

Price

Price was considered the second most important attribute by the sample. As price has been excluded from several previous studies on wine purchasing, it was difficult to compare the sample results with those of previous studies. However, the omission of price was highlighted as a limitation in several studies. Chrysochou *et al.* (2012) emphasise the importance Generation Y consumers place on price as a proxy for quality. In simple terms, when Generation Y consumers are unsure which wine to purchase, they tend to consider the price to assist them in selecting a wine. Price can therefore be used as a surrogate indicator for quality and also as a risk-reduction strategy. Furthermore, it should be noted that it is not always possible to taste wine before purchasing it. In the case of most supermarkets and other retailers, access to evaluating intrinsic attributes may be limited (Viot, 2012). According to Barber *et al.* (2006), unlike most products, wine generally has to be tasted before the quality can be judged. Therefore, it can be concluded that because Generation Y consumers do not often have the opportunity to taste wine before they purchase it, they rely on extrinsic cues such as price to evaluate their decision.

Recommendations by others

The third most important attribute was that the wine was recommended by someone else ('someone recommended it'). This attribute was also identified as the second most important attribute by Chrysochou *et al.* (2012) and Lategan *et al.* (2017). However, it should be noted that both studies did not include price. The findings of these studies thus concur with the results of the current study. Unlike taste, which relates to personal experience and preference, recommendations by others can be seen as a form of word-of-mouth advertising and was indicated as the preferred information source by the sample. Generation Y consumers seek information from sources such as family, friends, peers and other reference groups, which highlights the value they place on the opinions of others. Recommendations by others make Generation Y feel more confident in their selection and purchase decision, adding to and improving the knowledge of these relatively inexperienced wine drinkers.

Brand name and medal/awards received

In addition to relying on taste, price and the opinions of others when choosing a wine for their own consumption, the sample also considered extrinsic attributes such as a wine's brand name and the medal/awards it received. Both of these attributes can be seen as important sources of information. This finding concurs with the results of Lategan *et al.* (2017), but differs from those of Chrysochou *et al.* (2012) and Casini *et al.* (2009). Casini *et al.* (2009) found brand to be the eighth most important attribute and medal/award the ninth most important, whereas Chrysochou *et al.* (2012) reported that a wine's medal/award was the second least important consideration when purchasing wine. The medal/award labels on a bottle of wine can be seen as a proxy of quality that may help consumers in their decision-making and reducing risk.

The brand or cellar name of a wine played an important role in the decision-making of the sample. A possible explanation is the respondents' lack of knowledge about the product, and their risk-reduction tendencies (Chrysochou *et al.*, 2012). It can be assumed that Generation Y consumers purchase well-known brands believing that such brand names epitomise quality.

Least important attributes

The study revealed that the least important attributes were 'information on the shelf', 'region of origin', 'matches my food' and 'read about it'. The low BW score for the region of origin indicates that the sample was not concerned with where the wine was produced, which could be attributed to their lack of knowledge of wine, and of the influence of region on the taste and quality of the wine. Furthermore, the sample's lack of knowledge and experience could have influenced their disregard of how well a wine would match their food. The student cohort sample did not seem to rely on information and messages by the wine producer or seller (i.e. the attributes 'information on shelf', 'region of origin', 'read about it', 'information on back label') to make a choice, but rather on more personal information sources such as taste and recommendations by others. In other words, Generation Y consumers do not necessarily believe the industry (wine producers and marketers), but rather rely on the opinions of other consumers (word-of-mouth).

These findings are more or less similar to the results of the study by Lategan *et al.* (2017). However, there are several differences in the results of this study compared to the findings of Chrysochou *et al.* (2012) and Casini *et al.* (2009). These differences can be explained by country-specific contexts. The same generation behaves differently in different countries because of the unique political, economic, and cultural contexts (Durvasula & Lysonski, 2008). It must be noted that Lategan *et al.* (2017) conducted their study in South Africa, whereas the findings of Chrysochou *et al.* (2012) were related to the US market and the results of Casini *et al.* (2009) were from an Italian perspective.

Recommendations

The results of the current study enabled the researchers to suggest a number of recommendations to wine marketers wishing to target Generation Y consumers (specifically university students) in the South African wine industry. Understanding what this group deems most important and least important allows wine marketers to tailor-make their marketing strategies and align their marketing mix to appeal to the Generation Y group more effectively. The strategies of winemakers should therefore focus on the attributes that are deemed highly important, namely taste, price, someone recommended it, as well as brand and medal/ award.

Taste was clearly identified as the most important attribute of the 13 attributes assessed in the study, and should be used to target and capture the Generation Y audience. Wine producers should also encourage Generation Y to taste their products to give them first-hand experience of it. They should therefore offer tastings in retail stores, at points of purchase, at bars and cellars. By giving Generation Y consumers the opportunity to taste the wine, they will be more likely to purchase it from retailers if they enjoy the taste. Results of this study indicated that the majority of the sample (73 per cent) prefer to purchase wine at liquor stores. Wine producers and marketers should therefore consider setting up tasting stations in the wine sections of liquor stores. These tasting stations will attract the consumer's attention and will allow Generation Y consumers to experience and taste wine first-hand.

Furthermore, wine producers could give consumers a pleasant wine-related experience by using wine events, food and music festivals. One of the most popular music festivals in South Africa, *Rocking the Daisies*, attracts thousands of young people, making it a promising opportunity for wine producers to reach Generation Y consumers. Wine producers could arrange sponsorship areas providing festival attendees with various wine-related events. As experience was deemed important by the sample in this study, areas could be created with comfortable couches where interactive games and wine tastings could take place. Furthermore, opportunities could be created for Generation Y consumers to taste wine and interact with well-known wine brands, which could lead to future wine consumption and enhanced sales.

Not only will Generation Y consumers taste the wine, but they are also likely to associate the wine with positive experiences. Consumers who have positive experiences are likely to recommend the wine to their family, friends, and peers through positive word-of-mouth. The Generation Y student cohort placed significant importance on the recommendations and opinions of others in their decisions to select and purchase wine. Therefore, wine producers should encourage wine drinkers to share their opinions with others. In addition, the results of the study indicated that word-of-mouth plays an important role in communication for this group. Consumers talk about and share their feelings and experiences of events, products and brands. As Generation Y consumers are proficient in technology, the use of social media could be a powerful marketing strategy for wine producers to spread opinions and word-of-mouth recommendations at a faster rate than ever before.

Opinion-sharing and recommendations by others not only involve brands and products per se, but also the experiences with those brands and products. Generation Y consumers will thus look for wine recommendations from other consumers who have had experience with wine. It is therefore important for wine producers to actively engage and communicate with consumers on social media and encourage them to share their wine-related experiences with others. This could be done by encouraging consumers who have tasted wines, to place their reviews and comments on social media sites. Incentives such as discount coupons could be offered to these participating consumers, which in turn should enhance opinion-sharing.

Furthermore, Generation Y consumers are likely to seek information and recommendations from review sites, blogs, mobile applications (apps), and wine guides. Therefore, wine producers should prioritise establishing a presence on these sites, blogs, apps, and wine guides. Wine producers could approach prominent South African wine blogs such as *Winemag.co.za*, *Food 24 Wine* and *Michael Oliver* to feature a particular brand. Wine producers could also ask existing customers to review and share their experiences with a particular brand. Incentives such as discounts could be offered to customers who engage in opinion-sharing. Generation Y consumers could use such reviews to reduce their perceived risk in their wine purchasing decision.

In addition, owing to the high importance that the sample placed on taste, social media could be used strategically to encourage Generation Y consumers to taste specific wines. Social media is a powerful tool to promote wine tastings and wine tasting events. Generation Y consumers could be invited by specific wine brands on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to attend wine tasting functions.

Price was a highly important consideration for the sample and it can be inferred that it would play an equally important role in the broader Generation Y consumer group. Owing to their lack of wine knowledge, Generation Y consumers use price as a proxy for quality. Wine producers should therefore ensure that their product price is neither too low nor too high, as price directly affects the target's purchase decision. The student cohort sample indicated that they were willing to pay between R50 and R100 per bottle for all types of wine. Winemakers attempting to appeal to Generation Y consumers could use shelf layouts to their advantage in this regard. For example, separate shelves in retail stores could be set up displaying only wines in a specific price bracket. In other words, instead of organising wine bottles on shelves by wine variety, as commonly practiced, wine producers attempting to appeal directly to Generation Y consumers could create a separate shelf for wine in the price bracket identified as most suitable for the Generation Y group. Furthermore, as the sample indicated the high importance of price when purchasing wine, the price labels of wine should be highlighted and emphasised. In other words, the price of the wine should be easily identified and prominently visible to Generation Y consumers. Making the price of wines more noticeable could be achieved by placing the wines in the identified price

bracket at the eye level of Generation Y consumers. As a result, wines in a specific price bracket are likely to be noticed first.

The three attributes of taste, someone recommended the wine, and price were identified as significantly more important as the other attributes in the study. Therefore, it is recommended that wine producers first and foremost focus their marketing resources on these aspects.

As brand and medal/awards were also identified as significantly important, these attributes should also be considered. Wine producers should attempt to make their brand as well-known as possible. Practical strategies for doing so could involve ensuring that there is ample availability of their wines in retail stores, restaurants and bars, as well as ensuring that wine producers and their wines have a strong social media presence. As many Generation Y consumers may lack experience with wine, they may not be familiar with many wine brands. Therefore, consumers in this group are likely to choose the most well-known wine brands as an indication of quality, and as a risk-reduction strategy. The branding of a product can be used as a powerful differentiating tool. Therefore, as a vast variety of wine brands exist, the brand can be used by wine producers to stand out from competitors. Wine producers should therefore focus on creating a brand name that is unique and differentiable from that of other wine producers. Secondly, the brand name should be easy to pronounce, which in turn is likely to make it more identifiable and memorable. Furthermore, wine producers should consider that Generation Y consumers tend to regard medal/award labels as a symbol of quality. The Generation Y university student sample indicated that the presence of a medal/ award label on a bottle of wine plays an important role in their selection of wine. Therefore, wine producers should consider taking part in wine awards, such as the *Veritas Wine Awards* and the *Michelangelo International Wine Awards* to gain medals and awards. The award labels should be displayed prominently on the bottle. Furthermore, wine producers and marketers should show and promote the wine's awards and medals at events and on social media, so that consumers could become more aware of the medals and awards held by the wine producer.

A major aspect identified in this study is the lack of knowledge among the Generation Y group concerning wine. Therefore, this group needs to be educated about wine. A campaign could be launched to focus on explaining the basic principles of wine, such as vintage, grape variety and the wine product to consumers. For example, wine producers could design a series of social media posts on various wine-related topics to inform Generation Y consumers on aspects such as the history of wine, the wine production process, and the influence of grape variety and grape vintage on the wine product. The social media posts will give Generation Y consumers a richer understanding of the wine product and will encourage them to interact with the wine product.

Furthermore, the educational material could be distributed through various other media channels such as magazines, radio and pamphlets. Alternatively, because Generation Y is regarded as a mobile and technology-oriented generation, educational material may be best communicated through an application (apps). Wine apps could be created containing educational material, as well as news articles, reviews and wine selection suggestions. Generation Y consumers could also be approached when purchasing wine at, for example, liquor stores. Wine producer representatives could, for example, be present at liquor stores, where they can talk directly to Generation Y consumers to inform and educate them about wine. A more educated Generation Y group will be more knowledgeable and therefore more confident when it comes to selecting and purchasing wine.

The findings of the study suggested that little importance was given to the attributes 'information on the shelf', 'region of origin', 'read about it' and 'matches my food'. As a result, these attributes do not have to be the focal point of wine producers' strategies when targeting Generation Y consumers.

Finally, one would hope that by targeting Generation Y consumers in South Africa more effectively, this cohort will eventually echo the words of Robert Mondavi alluded to earlier in this paper. In doing so, they will progress from Generation Y to Generation Wine, which will not only benefit themselves, but also the entire South African wine industry.

Limitations and future research

Certain limitations may have affected the results and generalisability of this study. The most notable limitations relate to the sample. Firstly, a small sample of 200 students is not representative of all South African Generation Y consumers. Furthermore, as no sampling frame was available, convenience sampling was used, limiting the sample to students at a single South African university. The sample was therefore limited regarding the diversity of characteristics, demographics, and geographic variables. The student sample also narrowed the age of the sample to a student cohort of Generation Y (aged 18-25), as opposed to the entire Generation Y age group (aged 18-30). Future research on this topic could include a larger, more representative sample.

Although the 13 wine attributes used in the study were selected based on the analysis of previous research, it cannot be said with certainty that these 13 attributes are the most important attributes in wine selection and purchasing in a Generation Y university student context. Furthermore, the attributes assessed in the study were changed, in that 'price' was included and 'alcohol level below 13 per cent' was excluded from the list. These changes could have influenced the attribute scores, as each attribute was compared to one another by using the Best-Worst scaling method. Respondents in the sample ranked price, an attribute that has previously been excluded from the list of wine attributes, as second most important. Future research could therefore further analyse the role of price in wine purchasing. Linked to price, research about the role of social class and income in wine purchasing could also be undertaken. South Africa has a growing middle-class, which could pave the way for further opportunities to grow the wine sector. Research is also needed on the specific consumption occasions and purchase situations (such as on-premises and off-premises wine sales) that consumers consider for wine consumption. This study was limited to retail wine purchases, but research using other contexts including a restaurant environment could produce valuable insights for wine marketing strategists to consider.

In conclusion, it is recommended that this study is conducted in more countries, including new-world- and old-world wine-producing countries, to compare the

importance of wine attribute factors on the wine purchasing behaviour of Generation Y consumers.

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