



# Exploratory wine consumer behavior in a transitional market: The case of Poland

Renata Schaefer\*, Janeen Olsen, Liz Thach

*Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA, USA*

Received 7 August 2017; received in revised form 22 December 2017; accepted 16 January 2018

## Abstract

This paper investigates exploratory behavior among wine consumers in Poland where the country's wine culture is in a state of rapid change. This study investigates the extent to which demographics, values, and wine preferences relate to exploratory behavior.

Data obtained from 198 Polish wine consumers was used in the analysis. Exploratory behavior was measured using the VARSEEK scale adapted to wine. Other measures included the Schwartz Value Inventory, wine knowledge and involvement, and measures relevant for wine purchasing behavior. Demographic variables were also used to profile consumers.

The findings show that Polish wine consumers' level of exploratory behavior is not related to demographics, but is influenced by personal values. The consumers who were most likely to engage in exploratory behavior valued creativity, fun, and risk taking and were less concerned about behaving properly. They also had more global outlook as they were more likely to purchase wine in other countries and desired more wines from regions outside Poland.

The findings are useful for wine marketers when developing strategies for wine consumers in transitional markets based on their unique needs and expectations.

This is the first known research conducted in Poland focusing on wine consumers' exploratory behavior and subsequent wine preferences. © 2018 UniCeSV, University of Florence. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

*Keywords:* Polish wine market; Consumer behavior; Exploratory behavior; Consumer segmentation

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Wine culture in Poland

The wine culture of Poland began to emerge with the adoption of Christianity when Mieszko I, the country's first ruler, was baptized in the year 966 (Barford, 2001). Since its religious origins, the country's wine culture has both waxed and waned over time. The first wines consumed in Poland were imported from Hungary, France, Italy and Crete. However, the imported wines were very expensive. Vineyards

planted by the local Christian monasteries soon became the main source of wine in Poland. The first vineyards were established in the vicinity of Cracow (Kraków), (Kosmaczewska, 2008). Further significant cultural development took place within Polish territory in the 14th and 15th century, which was followed by a peak in wine production. Later, in parallel to the political muddle and civil wars of the Middle Ages, wine production declined to a practically non-existent level until the end of 20th century. This period was also associated with climatic changes in Europe, such as the Little Ice Age from 1350 to 1850, which caused grapes to freeze and led to their irreversible damage (Estreicher, 2004; Yiu et al., 2012). In addition, the policy of the three states that partitioned Poland from 1772 to 1918 did not look favorably on winegrowing or winemaking. After World War II came the

\*Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [renata.schaefer@sonoma.edu](mailto:renata.schaefer@sonoma.edu) (R. Schaefer), [janeenolsen@gmail.com](mailto:janeenolsen@gmail.com) (J. Olsen), [Liz@lizthach.com](mailto:Liz@lizthach.com) (L. Thach).

Peer review under responsibility of Wine Economics and Policy.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wep.2018.01.003>

2212-9774/© 2018 UniCeSV, University of Florence. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

era of communism (1945–1989). Good quality wine was considered an exclusive product, thus its production was not allowed. It was not until 1989 that the situation changed (Dobrowolska-Iwanek et al., 2014).

### 1.2. The wine market in Poland

In Poland, wine has largely been regarded as secondary to vodka and beer. According to a survey held by the consumer research company Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej CBOS, approximately 84% of the population over 18 years (legal drinking age in Poland) consumes alcoholic beverages: 47% beer, 30% spirits, and 20% wine (CBOS, 2010). Inexpensive drinks made from a variety of fermented fruits have been consumed, but in recent years, Poles have begun to discover wine made from grapes. Dynamic growth in the wine category is attributable to consumers' greater exposure to and adoption of Western alcohol consumption habits. The rapid expansion of wine category has been facilitated by increasing consumer wealth, changing consumption patterns together with rising awareness and increasing focus on health-related aspects of alcohol consumption (Euromonitor International, 2015). According to Michniak, owner of the Stocaggio, a model wine shop and bar in Krakow, "Poland presents the highest growth of wine consumers in the European Union. The turn towards wine consumption can be seen everywhere, from the widely present alcohol shops selling low quality, less-expensive wine to the bars and restaurants" (Benakis, 2017).

Since 2004 sales of grape wines have increased by more than a half in terms of quantity, yet there is still a strong potential for further growth. The Polish market remains very small compared to other European countries. In 2013, an average adult Pole bought 7 l of grape wine, spending an equivalent of EUR 30. During the same year, an average adult Czech purchased 21.4 l of wine worth EUR 104. Much higher sales volumes and values per an adult are recorded in Germany, not to mention typical wine-making countries from Southern Europe (KPMG, 2014). A comparison with other European countries and the New World markets such as the US, Argentina, Chile clearly shows that the Polish wine market is at an early stage and has many years of growth ahead before reaching maturity.

It is estimated that there are about 500 different wine brands available to Polish consumers (Winięjatywa, 2013). While the number of wine brands in Poland has grown, it is still much less than the almost 8000 wine brands and over 21,000 distinct wines available for sale in US retail establishments (Brager, 2014). Even so, both in the US and in Poland wine can be a very confusing product, and one that creates a segment of consumers that are "overwhelmed" by the amount of choices available to them (Winięjatywa, 2013).

### 1.3. Wine consumption and economic conditions

Smith and Mitry (2007) propose that wine consumption per capita is related to the general economic conditions in a country, as well as the increasing health consciousness of

consumers by switching to beverages containing less alcohol. Poland is a country of over 38 million people with the majority living in cities (65%). Research reveals also that 70% of wine consumption in Poland has been in large cities of Warsaw, Poznan, Wroclaw, and Cracow and also in the economically more developed western part of the country. The percentage of female consumers within the population who prefer to consume wine has reached 56% in comparison to 44% male consumers. The primary reason that women are more regular consumers of wine than men is that they prefer the lower alcohol content and milder taste compared to spirits (CBOS, 2010).

Researchers have also suggested that the drinking habits in EU countries are becoming more similar and wine has made significant advances in beverage preferences and accounts for a third of alcohol consumed in the EU (Smith and Mitry, 2007). Cultural convergence, economic growth, transnational corporations' and international retailers' contribution to globalization of markets in Europe have had positive effects on wine consumption. Along these lines, macroeconomic progress in Poland, leading to higher income and standard of living, has resulted in different consumption habits. Specifically, Polish wine consumers increasingly show preferences for new options and seem to relish the wide variety of styles, varietals, and national origins of wine. The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the different levels of exploratory behavior amongst Polish wine consumers, in order to determine their characteristics and values. This resulting information in the context of transforming Polish wine market may be useful for wine marketers and distributors in developing more focused forms of communication and interaction with the consumer based on their needs and expectations.

## 2. Exploratory consumer behavior

### 2.1. Theoretical underpinnings of exploratory consumer behavior

Exploratory consumer behavior is not a new concept in the marketing literature, emerging over six decades ago from the theory of optimum stimulation level (OSL) (Orth and Bourrain, 2005). According to the theory of OSL, consumers seek an optimal level of stimulation from their environment, one that is not too low to become boring or uninteresting, nor one that is too high to be overwhelming and uncomfortable. Berlyne (1960) states that stimulation in the form of novelty and change are inherently satisfying to people, however there is an optimal level of stimulation that differs from person to person. Personal values appear to play an important role in determining a person's optimal level of stimulation, as people who value excitement and are more pleasure seeking and less risk adverse tend to seek higher levels of stimulation, while people who value tradition and security are more comfortable when exposed to less environmental stimulation (Raju, 1980; Schwartz, 1994). A person's optimum level of stimulation and can shift over time, depending on demographic and contextual factors (Agnoli et al., 2011). For example, younger people are

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7428740>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7428740>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)