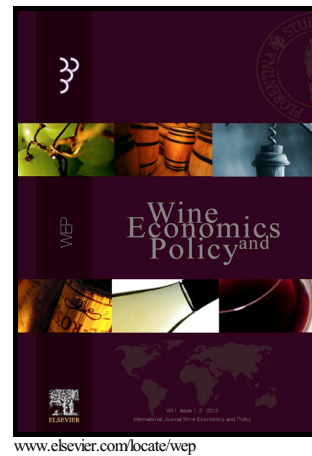


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European consumers' perception of moderate wine consumption on health

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Abstract

The present study examines the perceptions that French, Italian and Spanish consumers have about the possible health effects of what they consider to be a moderate wine consumption. Furthermore, it identified whether the following factors positively or negatively influence consumer opinion - wine appreciation, environmental awareness, environmental labels, local legislation and media coverage. Perceptions were identified through an online survey of 1183 respondents. The respondents perceive wine as a rather healthy product if consumed moderately. Wine appreciation positively influences the perception of a healthy effect of moderate wine consumption. French policies advising constraints on wine consumption indirectly influence consumer opinion about the unhealthy effects caused by wine. French and Spanish consumers with high environmental awareness perceive a wine with an eco-label to be healthier than a conventional one.

Keywords: *wine, health, moderate consumption, France, Italy, Spain, consumer survey*

1. Introduction

According to the latest data collected by the OIV (International Organisation of Vine and Wine), Italy, France and Spain collectively produced 48% of the world's wine volume in 2015 (OIV, 2015). Wine consumption in Italy and in France has been steadily decreasing: by 11.50% in Italy and by 4.85% in France between 2011 and 2014 (Wine Institute, 2015). In Spain there has been an increase in the on-trade sales of 1.07%, thanks to a recovery from the economy crisis (Euromonitor International, 2015), but it remains lower than in Italian and French because of a sustained decline over the last few decades.

In the context of consumers paying more attention to their diet's influence on health (Todd, 2014; Crédoc, 2010; Eurobarometer, 2006), it is interesting to explore if the perception that wine could be unhealthy is one of the factors explaining behaviour towards wine, and hence consumption.

Several studies have been published that discuss the effects of alcohol consumption on health, and some are specifically focused on wine consumption. Scientists cannot agree on the effects of alcohol consumption on health, because it presents some positive as well as negative

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