

Analysis of the Importance of Several Aspects before the Purchase of a Wine Bottle for Comunidad Valenciana (Spain) Consumers

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Abstract: This paper analyses the importance of several aspects that consumers in the Comunidad Valenciana (Spain) take into account when getting a wine bottle from a shelf. These aspects are: the designation of origin, the price, design and information on the label, design and information on the back label, the point of sale, the seller advice, friends and family recommendations. The information has been obtained through survey with 400 interviews throughout Comunidad Valenciana (Spain). These interviews were based on asking a questionnaire with closed questions. It has been seen how the most valued aspect is the designation of origin. The second aspect in the rank is friends and family Recommendations. Price is the third most valued aspect. The less valued aspects are the seller advice and the point of sale. The design and information of the label is more valued than the design and information of the back label. Results seem to show how consumers want to reduce risk before buying a wine bottle looking for aspect that they can rely on. They give more importance to family and friends recommendations than to the seller advice.

Key words: Consumer, purchase, label, wine bottle.

1. Introduction

Any product can be distinguished at three levels: the core product, the tangible product and the augmented product [1, 2]. In the case of wine the following tangible features can be identified:

- The wine itself, determined by grape variety, region, vintage and blending style;
- The bottle and bottle dress to identify the type and style of wine and indicate quality through traditional shapes and colours;
- Labelling information to confirm the taste and flavour of the wine, provide evidence of quality and supporting advice on its consumption and enjoyment;

The augmented product introduces additional intangible features that can help to differentiate a wine from the competition. Features such as the image

associated with a winery, awards given by wine magazines and newspapers, the atmosphere created by the wine outlet as well as the knowledge and education provided by the wine seller can reinforce and enhance the wine buyers' perception of the product on offer.

Effective marketing of wine requires the producer to make a complex set of decisions in the selection and balancing of both tangible and intangible features which will enhance the product in the eyes of the consumer.

Different design factors are relevant to competitiveness at the various stages of the purchasing decision [1, 3]. This has significance for winemaking given that the real nature of the final product remains hidden until it is actually consumed. It is important that design factors influencing the "before purchase" as well as the "actual purchase" decision create a clear and consistent impression of

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the quality being offered by the wine. Poor packaging design or company image could create discord in buyer perceptions to the disadvantage of the product in the marketplace. After consumption, it is important to maintain and reinforce the perceptions gained while drinking the wine.

In this paper, we concentrate on the factors that are relevant before purchase. This is to say, the factors direct a consumer to consider buying a wine bottle. This includes concepts as designation of origin, price, design and information on the label, design and information on the back label, point of sale, seller and friends and family.

Information on search attributes is relatively plentiful and easily attained, always depending on the consumer's ability to perceive and process information [4]. Since consumers cannot judge experience attributes of food quality until after they buy and use the product, they always run a risk of purchasing a product that will not satisfy them or that will not increase their utility, negatively affecting them financially or even in terms of their health. In order to reduce this risk, consumers try to learn about the product's attributes in various ways. One way is to acquire information from either more informed consumers (personal communication) or from appropriate news media and specialized columns in newspapers, magazines, etc..

Labels and back labels provide the key recognition factor through their shape, colour and position as well as the information offered [5-10]. Label information is governed partly by regulations which vary according to country as well as EC requirements. Before purchase, they deliver the key message to consumers as to the benefits on offer encouraging wine consumers to experiment.

Where consumers enter the market sequentially and how the knowledge of informed consumers can be used by previously uninformed consumers [11]. Another strategy that reduces consumer risk is the gradual and repeated purchase of food products where

reputation is important and consumers have some degree of loyalty to higher quality producing firms [12-20]. Finally, consumers may learn about food attributes through quality signalling in the form of informational labelling, certifiers or branding, warranties and advertisement.

Some models explored the conditions under which information on product quality could be effectively supplied to consumers [15, 16]. Akerlof's famous "market for lemons" model concluded that the quality product market may disappear completely and only the lowest quality products may be sold if sellers cannot signal quality. In contrast, Grossman's signalling model concluded that markets for varying levels of quality will exist and operate smoothly if totally effective, truthful and costless quality signalling and verification of claims are assumed.

The purchase of a bottle of wine is often a challenging event [17-23]. A wine's packaging, consisting of a several inter-related factors (e.g., bottle shape, colour and labels), interacts with a consumer's varying experience and knowledge of wines, and the situation and occasion faced. These forces combine to form decisions.

However, not all consumers are alike. Some know what they want and select a wine based on their experience, or the wine's variety/style, region, producer or maker. Others, however, do not know and scour a bottle's labels to satisfy their information requirements. Consumers may decide to make their wine choice primarily on the basis of the objective characteristics, appearing on the label of the wine bottle [24].

The impact that shape and colour can have on choice, and that front labels, "should be reserved for making a positioning statement" [25-27]. Information on wine labels presents itself openly to consumers for processing and acts as an aid to decisions. Wine label information is regarded as "clues" and includes information such as grape variety, region, manufacturer and style. These are known as "designators" [28], or widely recognised elements for

positioning and differentiating wine products in consumers' eyes.

Arguably, the array of information on wine labels identifies the special qualities of a bottle's contents. Also, the information presented conveys a wine's character and helps make a statement to potential buyers. Label information, the consumer's evaluative criteria and their state of knowing, contributes to assessing and deciding upon competing alternatives.

Knowledge of the importance given to wine label information would offer wine makers a value-added impression of specific information elements and its value to wine consumers.

Purchase behaviour can be influenced by the manner in which information is presented and by the way it is perceived or processed. It is also guided by the extent to which various information elements are available and used.

Wine consumers are exposed to a variety of information sources and these are recognised as important to marketers and consumers alike [29, 30]. For consumers, information is used to reduce risk or minimise uncertainty. Information assists charting the unfamiliar [30] and guides choice amongst alternatives [29]. Consumers experience different forms of risk in buying wine [31]. These risks pertain to functional (taste), social (family and friends), financial (price) and physical (hangover) conditions. To cope with risk, consumers seek information, become brand loyal, trust others (e.g., a retail sales person) or a well-known brand, use price as an indicator and use free tastings.

Ultimately, the influence of friends and family is a credible and trustworthy influence [29]. Comments from friends were ranked third out of 16 information sources. This was preceded by point-of-sale and label information. However, comments from friends were viewed as slightly more important than information derived from tastings.

In wine marketing, packaging plays an integral part in delivering information and a manufacturer's

promise. Packaging embodies aesthetics and emotions, yet presents itself as communication and influence mechanisms to purchasers. Here, the wine's label plays a large role [32].

Several authors [1, 25, 26, 33, 34] had commented on the importance of labels and the role they play. Wine course students' attitudes to wine bottle back labels were also studied [35], and they were seen as interesting, provided useful information and received variable use in purchase decisions. Back label information as a source was favoured slightly more than that contained on front labels.

Understanding the factors that determine which options wine consumers choose and whether they choose to buy the product or defer the purchase decision is critical to the development of marketing strategies. A major contribution of behavioural decision research has been to establish the notion of uncertain preferences, the idea is that consumer preferences are not well defined but rather constructed during the process of making a selection. This constructive viewpoint suggests that different tasks and contexts highlight different aspects of the purchase options, focusing consumers on different considerations that lead to seemingly inconsistent decisions [36].

Research has focused on the effect of this decision conflict and preference fluency on consumer choice by manipulating the content of the choice or by manipulating which content is the focus of attention.

Information and other product attributes can influence consumers' purchasing behavior by the manner in which it is presented and by the way it is perceived or processed by the consumer. For consumers, information is used to increase knowledge and reduce risk or minimize uncertainty. This buying decision is guided by the extent to which various information elements are available and used by the consumer [26].

Previous experience with a product creates the foundation that aids in the development of the consumers' knowledge, and thereby their

self-confidence.

Relying on sources of information such as their own values and preferences, friends and family, journalists and wine writers, as well as descriptions from labels helps in the purchase decision [37-39].

The objective of this paper is to analyse the importance of several aspects that consumers in the Comunidad Valenciana (Spain) take into account when getting a wine bottle from a shelf. The information has been obtained through survey with 400 interviews throughout Comunidad Valenciana (Spain).

2. Material and Methods

400 surveys were made throughout Comunidad Valenciana, with a maximum error of 5% and a level of confidence of 95%, through a conglomerates sampling with random subsampling, looking for usual market basket buyers of the usual food basket in entrance access to facilities (supermarkets, hypermarkets, central markets, street markets, etc.). The questionnaire included several questions about wine label bottle information.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents

Fig. 1 shows the age of the respondents. The major part of them was included in 31-35 (34% of respondents), 36-45 (35%) and 46-65 (24%) years old.

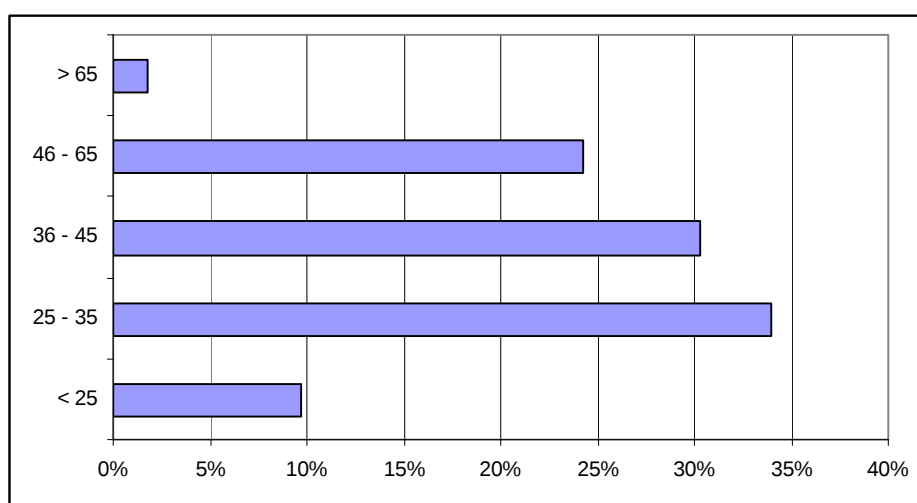


Fig. 1 Age of respondents.

55% of respondents were men.

Fig. 2 shows the level of studies of respondents. The majority of respondents declare to have college studies (30%) and degree studies (29%).

64% of respondents declared to be employees. This can be seen in Fig. 3 where occupation of respondents is shown.

Respondents' family level of incomes per month can be seen at Fig. 4. 20% of them said that the monthly incomes were 2,001-2,500 Euros. 19% said that it was more than 3,000 Euros per month.

Finally, Fig. 5 shows the town size where respondents live. The majority (30%) of respondents live in a town where has 10,001-50,000 inhabitants and 100,001-500,000 inhabitants (25%).

3.2 Wine Consumption Patterns

Respondents were asked to declare their consumption of wine per week. This can be seen at Fig. 6. 48% of respondents declare to consume less than one bottle of wine per week. Less than two bottles were declared by 36% of respondents.

The questionnaire also asked where this consumption of wine was mainly done. 31% of respondents declared that they mainly consumed wine at home. 30% of them declared to mainly do it at restaurants. Finally, 39% of respondents declared to consume wine both at home and at restaurants.

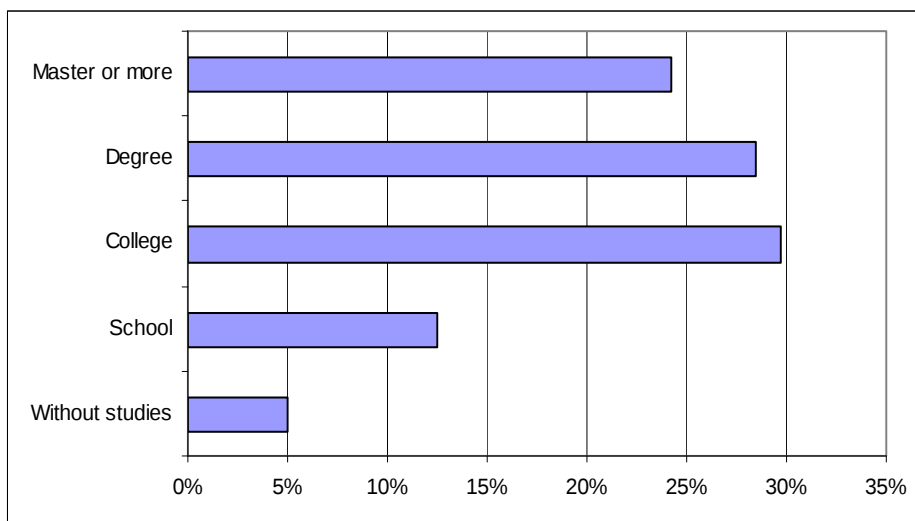


Fig. 2 Level of studies of respondents.

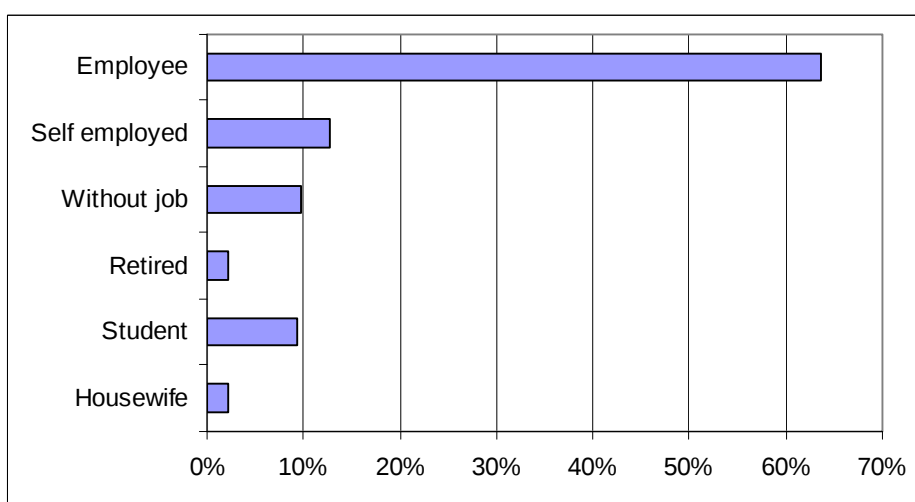


Fig. 3 Occupation of respondents.

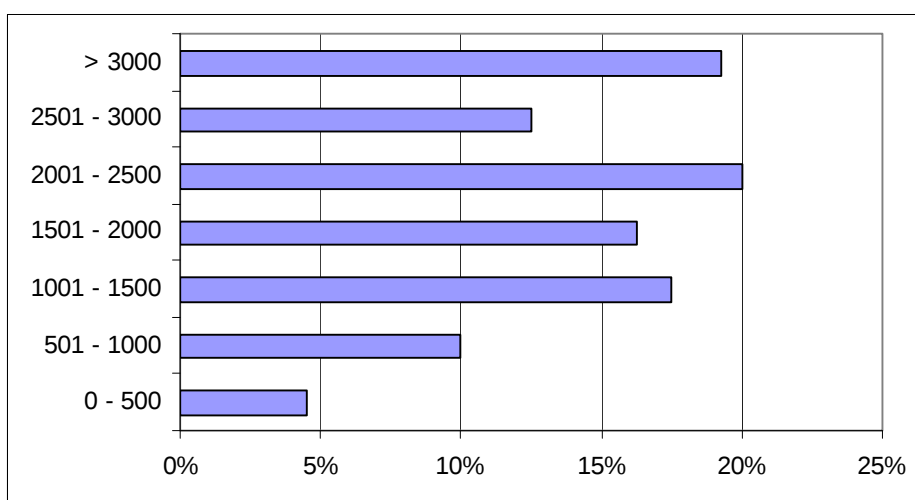


Fig. 4 Family income level per month of respondents.

Analysis of the Importance of Several Aspects before the Purchase of a Wine Bottle for Comunidad Valenciana (Spain) Consumers

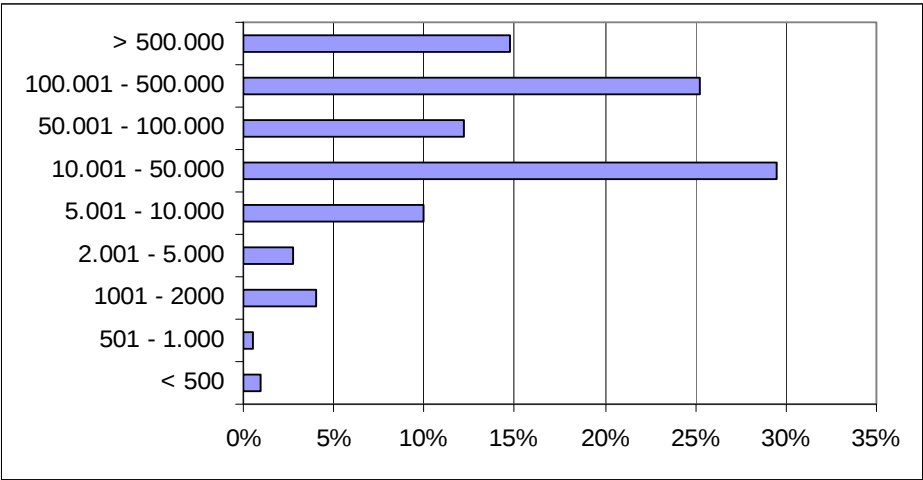


Fig. 5 Town size of respondents.

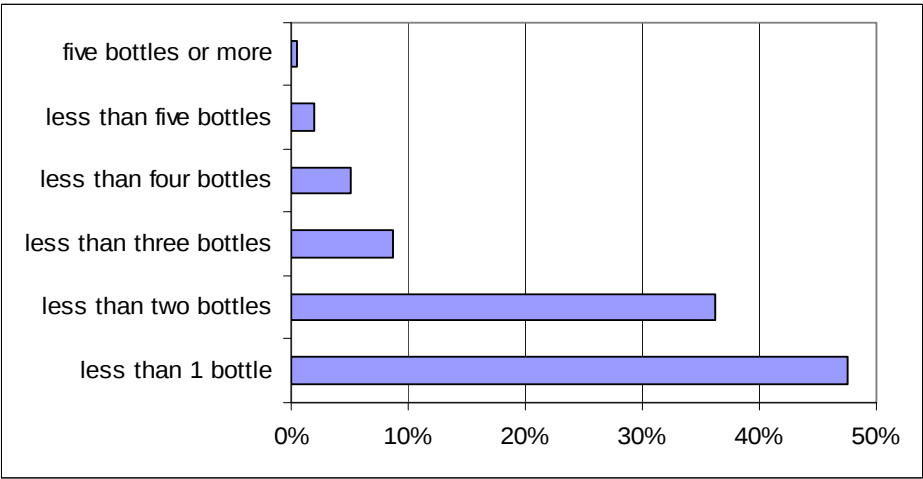


Fig. 6 Wine consumption per week.

3.3 Analysis of the Importance of Several Aspects before the Purchase of a Wine Bottle

Respondents were asked to rank from one (non important) to seven (very important) several aspects that they could take into account when getting a bottle from the shelf before buying it. These aspects were: the designation of origin, the price, design and information on the label, design and information on the back label, the point of sale, the seller advice and friends and family recommendations.

Table 1 shows the average, minimum, maximum and mode of the scores. The most valued aspect by respondent was designation of origin getting an average score of 5.50. The second aspect in the rank is

friends and family recommendations (5.15 in average). The less valued aspects are the seller advice (3.94) and the point of sale (4.11). The design and information of the label is more valued (4.89) than the design and information of the back label (4.70).

Importance given to the designation of origin by respondents can be seen in Fig. 7. 31% declared that it is very important when getting a wine bottle from the shelf before buying it. 25% said that it was significantly important. Quite important was chosen by 22% of respondents.

Fig. 8 shows the percentages of answers for the importance of the price. Price was very important for 21% of respondents. 30% of them said that it was significantly important.

Table 1 Average, minimum, maximum and mode of the scores.

	Designation origin	of Price	Design information the label	and Design of information of the back label	and the Point of sale	Seller advice	Friends and family recommendations
Average	5.50	5.01	4.89	4.70	4.11	3.94	5.15
Maximum	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mode	7	6	5	6	4	4	6

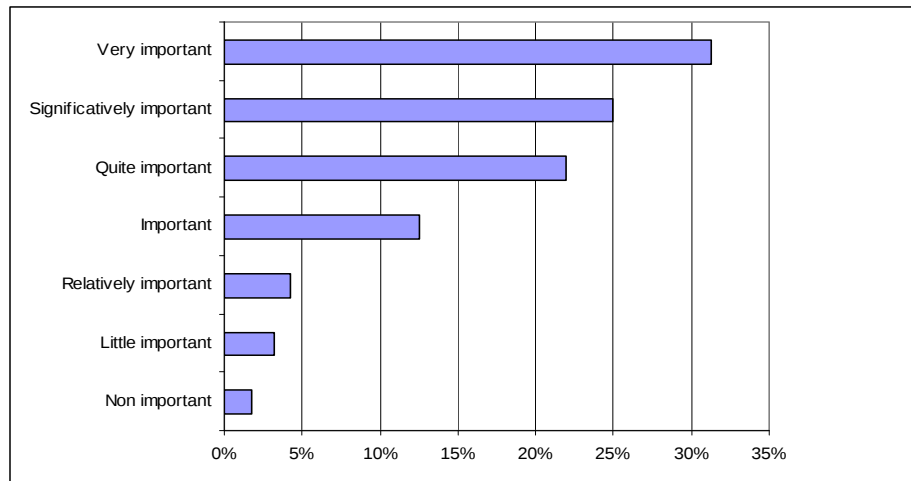


Fig. 7 Importance given to designation of origin.

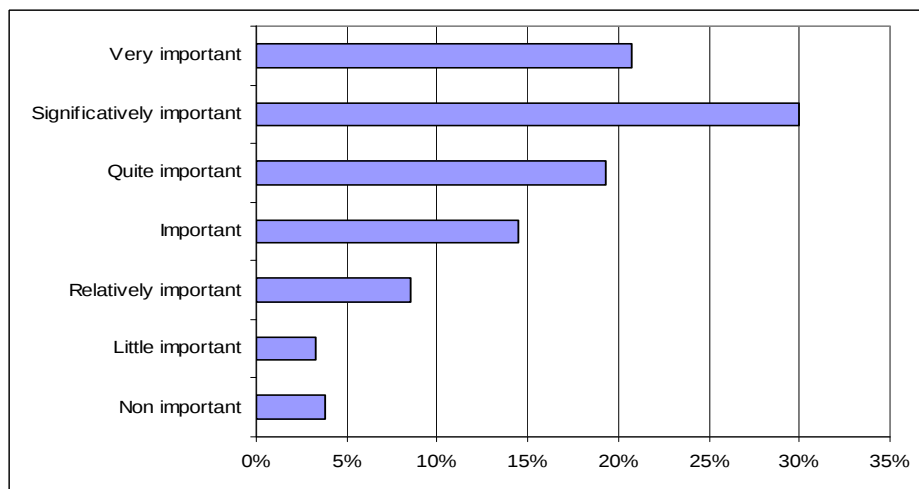


Fig. 8 Importance given to price.

The degree of importance that respondents give to design and information on the label can be seen in Fig. 9. 27% of them declared that it was quite important. 21% declared it was significantly important.

Fig. 10 shows the same considerations for the design and information on the back label. 26% of respondents said that it was significantly important.

21% chose it as quite important.

The point of sale is valued according to Fig. 11. 23% of respondents said that the point of sale was important. 21% consider it as relatively important.

The importance given to the seller advice by respondents can be seen in Fig. 12. 24% of respondent consider it as important. 18% declared that it was of

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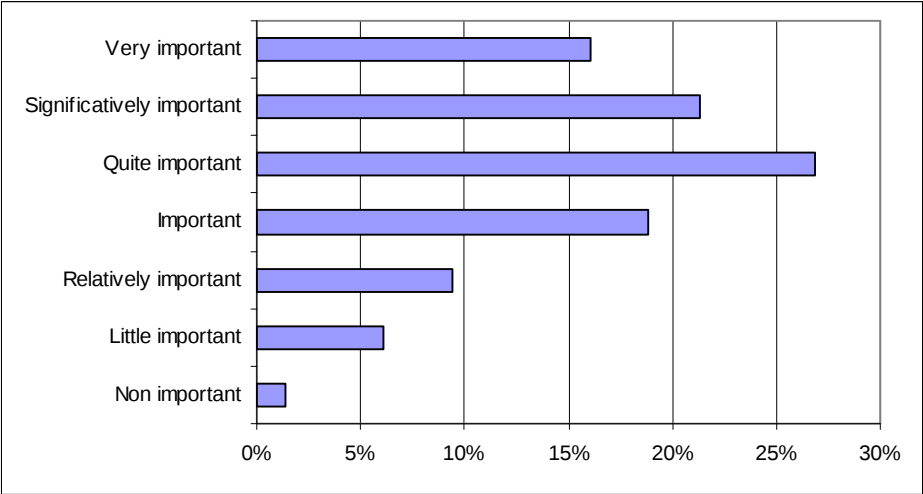


Fig. 9 Importance given to design and information on the label.

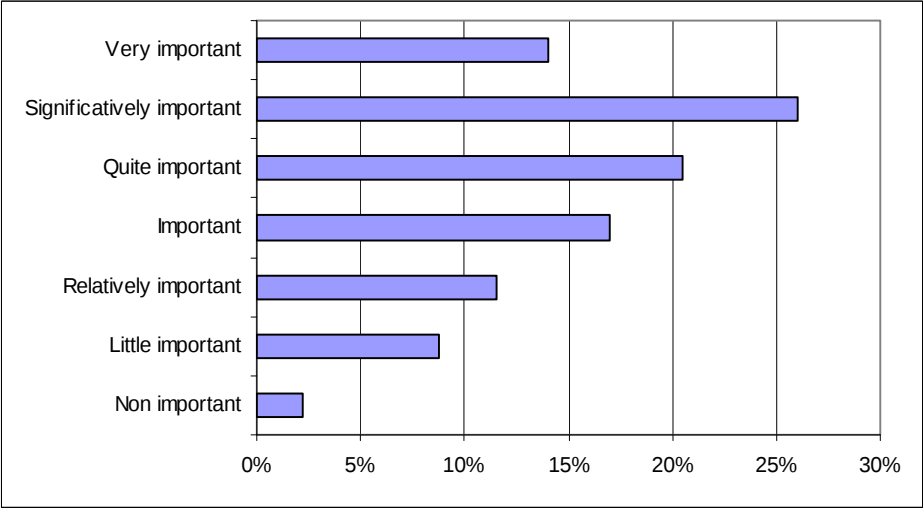


Fig. 10 Importance given to design and information on the back label.

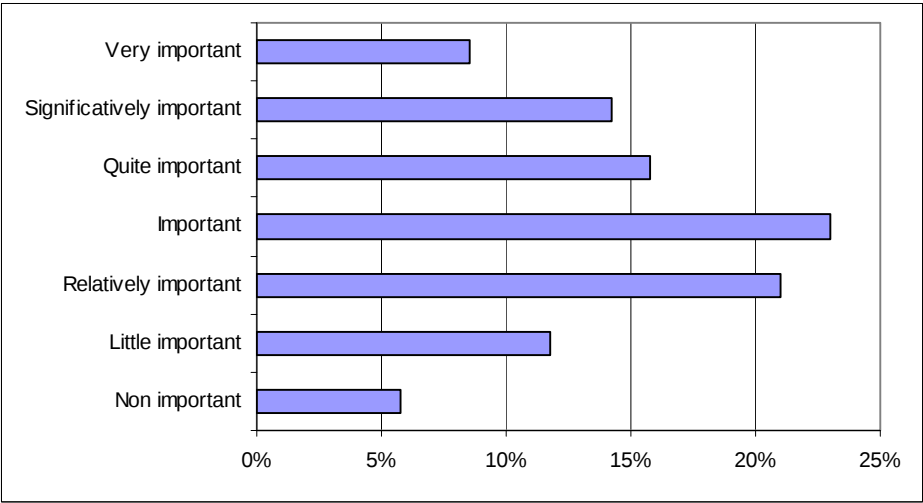


Fig. 11 Importance given to the point of sale.

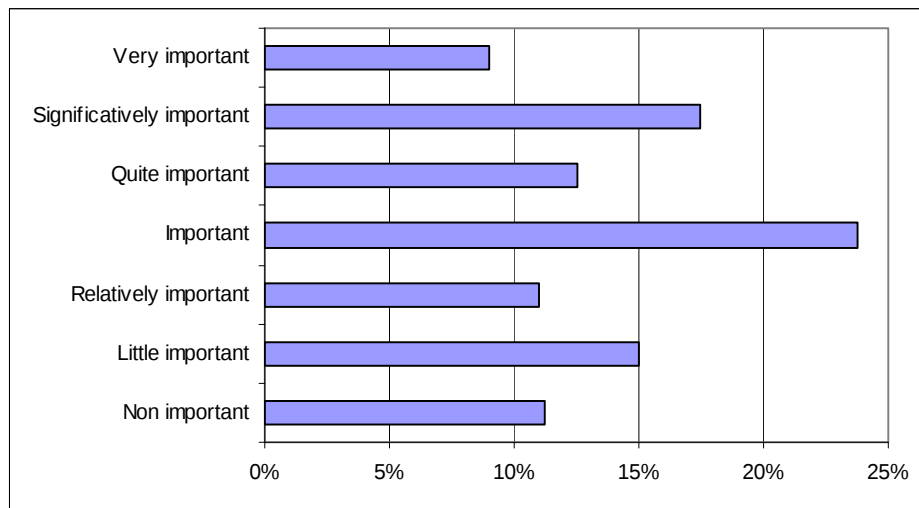


Fig. 12 Importance given to the seller advice.

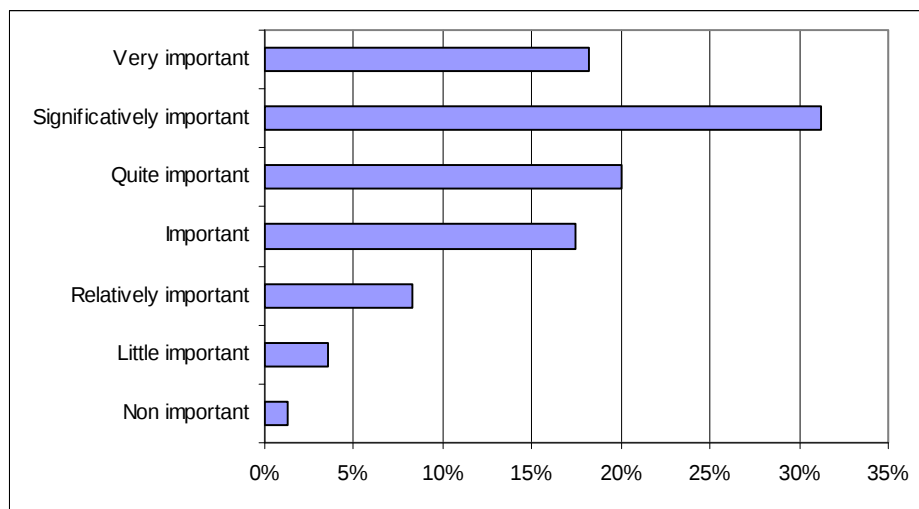


Fig. 13 Importance given to friends and family recommendations.

little importance.

Finally, Fig. 13 shows the importance that respondents declare to give to friends and family recommendations. 31% of respondents declared that it was significantly important. 20% of them consider it quite important.

Consumers' purchase intent is mainly influenced directly by informed liking (designation of origin; friends and family recommendations) and price evaluation.

Extrinsic attributes were found to impact purchase intent in a mediated process through informed liking. It seems that price leads to a more complete product

evaluation. Wine back label information is found to have a positive effect on consumer choice. Extrinsic product cues and extrinsic characteristics influence how consumers evaluate food products and can both increase and decrease consumer acceptance of a product. This study also confirmed the strong effect of extrinsic cues on informed liking found by previous research.

The effect of designation of origin is clear. A well-known region does add value to a wine regardless of brand size, involvement level or price. Furthermore, if one wine label has attributes or cues that facilitates the consumer perceptions and

understanding of the wine, it is likely that it will increase the preference for that particular wine product.

The effects of price are quite complex. There is seemingly a price-quality effect. Price has a significant effect on purchase probability. It seems that price is used as a positive cue, especially when both the region and brand are not known. The results are consistent with previous research.

Both front and back labels were rated by consumers as important in assisting their decisions on which wines to purchase. Overall, back labels were seen as slightly more important than front labels in this process.

4. Conclusions

This paper analyses the importance of several aspects that consumers in the Comunidad Valenciana take into account when getting a wine bottle from a shelf. These aspects are the designation of origin, the price, the design and information on the label, the design and information on the back label, the point of sale, the seller advice and friends and family recommendations.

It has been seen how the most valued aspect is the designation of origin. The second aspect in the rank is friends and family recommendations. Price is the third most valued aspect. The less valued aspects are the seller advice and the point of sale. The results from this study confirm that wine label information is ascribed considerable value by consumers in guiding their purchase decisions. The design and information of the back label is more valued than the design and information of the label.

Results seem to show how consumers want to reduce risk before buying a wine bottle looking for aspect that they can rely on. They give more importance to family and friends recommendations than to the seller advice.

Identifying consumer wine packaging preferences is critical because wine consumers are in need of a useful and pertinent wine label message. Before creating costly, innovative product development

schemes wine producers need to know what consumer preferences are and consumers need to understand the product attributes.

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