

**A** typology of  
Chinese wine  
**consumers.**



**Carlos Raúl Sánchez Sánchez**

*Montpellier Business School*

[cr.sanchez@montpellier-bs.com](mailto:cr.sanchez@montpellier-bs.com)

**Josselin Masson**

*Université Haute-Alsace*

[josselin.masson@uha.fr](mailto:josselin.masson@uha.fr)

**Franck Celhay**

*Montpellier Business School*

[f.celhay@Montpellier-BS.com](mailto:f.celhay@Montpellier-BS.com)

- Agreement is broad that the Chinese market has high potential for many products, including wine (*Lee et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2014*)
- China **is very attractive** for winemakers (*Jenster and Cheng, 2008; Camillo, 2012; Liu et al., 2014; Zeng and Szolnoki, 2014; Anderson and Wittwer, 2015*), **particularly for the oldest wine-producing countries** (*Muhammad et al., 2014; Capitello et al., 2015*)
- Wine **consumption** is showing a strong and steady **increase of 25%** per year over the last decade (*ISWR, 2014*)
- **Potential** marketable **segment** of 167 million consumers (*Bouzdine-Chameeva et al., 2014*)
- According to *Liu et al. (2013)*, it is essential to **lead large** scale and up-to-date **research** about the Chinese wine consumption because **studies** on the segmentation of the Chinese wine market are **scarce** in the academic literature.

# Literature review

---

- According to *Bouzdine-Chameeva et al. (2014)*, a **specific wine consumer strategy** is imperative in China today. A good way to achieve this aim is to begin by segmenting the market.
- Wine consumer segments are recurrent: *the highly knowledgeable wine drinker (connoisseur), the enjoyment-oriented social wine drinker, the fashion and image oriented wine drinker, the conservative knowledgeable wine drinker*. However the researches about the Chinese wine consumers are **sparse** and present **some limitations**.

# Literature review

## ***Bouzdine-Chameeva et al. (2014)***

**Findings:** a development taste for wine and particularly for red, a weak wine knowledge, and preferences based on the country of origin and the brand.

**Limitations:** sample is only marketing managers of Chinese wine firms.

## ***Pettigrew and Charters (2010)***

**Findings:** Wine consumption involve a symbolic meanings such as intellect, success, and affluence. Some consumers consider that wine posses health-giving properties.

**Limitations:** focus group interviews with 36 Chinese-born wine consumers living in Adelaide

## ***Liu and Murphy (2007)***

**Findings:** Chinese wine consumer is a businessman over 40 years old with a high education, a high income and a weak knowledge about wine.

Wine consumption strongly depend of the occasions for its colour (symbolising prosperity, luck and good fortune), health reasons (as containing less alcohol than spirits) and having a good face (*mianzi* in Mandarin, i.e., getting a good social image and a good social status)

**Limitations:** exploratory study that relies on only 15 participants from a single city (Guangzhou)

# Literature review

## *Yu et al. (2009)*

**Findings:** the most important attributes for choosing wine are: tasted the wine previously, origin of the wine, brand name, and someone recommended it.

**Limitations:** lack of interest for the individuals' characteristics and a small sample. (n=197) and only in Beijing.

## *Camillo (2012)*

**Findings:** education, profession, position, income, wine knowledge and wine-related activities are the main consumers characteristics affecting the consumption volume and price.

Concerning the product attributes, he finds that, in order of importance, taste, country of origin, quality associate with brand recognition, wine type and style, and price.

**Limitations:** sample relatively small (n=438).

## Methodologies used:

- small and convenience sample,
- only in one or few cities,
- qualitative approach,
- mostly about wine attributes without consideration of individual characteristics.

- **n** = 1260 questionnaires
- **Date** : November 2014.
- **Method** : on-line questionnaire using the Qualtrics platform.
- **Sampling** : quota (age, gender and income). All the respondents were recruited by Samplenomics, a panel company specialised on the Chinese market.
- **Filter questions:**
  - Respondents are regular imported wine drinkers
  - Earning more than 4500 RMB per month
  - Living in a Tiers 1 or Tiers 2 city (9 cities in total).
- **Topics:**
  - Individual characteristics (residence city, gender, age, marital status, education, position, incomes per month).
  - Psychological variables (product involvement, consumer knowledge, variety seeking, prices sensitive).
  - Wine consumption frequency and typical spending.

### Cluster' socio-demographic composition

Characteristics	Indifferent occasionals (n=122)	Wine lovers (n=208)	Relaxed amateurs (n=209)	Social Networkers (n=202)	Conservative connoisseurs (n=289)	Infrequent money-minded (n=230)	$X^2$
<b>Gender (%)</b>							3.3
Male	54.9%	59.7%	63.6%	59.2%	56.9%	58.9%	
Female	45.1%	40.3%	36.4%	40.8%	43.1%	41.1%	
<b>Age (%)</b>							26.2*
18-29	26.5%	25.9%	29.7%	40.1%	22.6%	25.6%	
30-39	52.6%	56.7%	52.3%	42.8%	52.8%	46.5%	
40-54	20.9%	17.4%	18%	17.1%	24.6%	27.9%	
<b>Education (%)</b>							40.2*
Finished year 12	1.9%	0%	2.5%	1.3%	3.1%	2.7%	
Trade college	18.1%	7.5%	14.2%	9.9%	9.2%	16.7%	
University	72.6%	76.1%	71.1%	73%	81.5%	67.4%	
Post Graduate degree	7.4%	16.4%	12.1%	15.8%	6.2%	13.2%	
<b>Marital status (%)</b>							51.7*
Single	10.2%	7%	10%	19.1%	5.1%	17.4%	
Married	86%	92.5%	86.2%	75.7%	93.3%	85.2%	
Couple	3.7%	0.5%	2.9%	4.6%	1%	3%	
Divorced	0%	0%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	
Widow	0%	0%	0.4%	0%	0%	0.1%	
<b>Job position (%)</b>							186.3*
Director and above	5.1%	30.3%	13%	15.1%	11.8%	1.2%	
Manager	66.5%	62.2%	69.9%	67.8%	72.8%	55.8%	
Clerks	24.7%	4.5%	14.2%	13.2%	14.9%	35.7%	
Interns, novice, etc.	0.9%	1%	1.7%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	
Other	2.8%	2%	1.3%	2.6%	0%	4.7%	
<b>Income per month (%)</b>							160.1*
RMB 4500-6999	35.1%	12.5%	22.6%	25.5%	22.8%	36.9%	
RMB 7000-9999	32.2%	29.5%	36%	38.3%	38.8%	32.8%	
RMB 10000 +	32.7%	58%	41.8%	36.2%	38.4%	30.3%	

Note: \*  $X^2 = p < 0.05$

### The indifferent occasionals cluster :

- The smallest group .
- Consume wine only to celebrate a special occasion, mainly in a friendly atmosphere.
- An average of expenditure of 305 RMB for occasions at home and 290 RMB out of the home.
- Hypermarkets.

### The wine lovers cluster,

- Consume both for informal and more formal occasions at home and out of the home.
- A high level of wine involvement.
- An average of expenditure of 711 RMB for occasions at home and 701 RMB out of the home.

**Cluster' socio-demographic composition**

Characteristics	Indifferent occasionals (n=122)	Wine lovers (n=208)	Relaxed amateurs (n=209)	Social Networkers (n=202)	Conservative connoisseurs (n=289)	Infrequent money-minded (n=230)	$X^2$
<b>Gender (%)</b>							3.3
Male	54.9%	59.7%	63.6%	59.2%	56.9%	58.9%	
Female	45.1%	40.3%	36.4%	40.8%	43.1%	41.1%	
<b>Age (%)</b>							26.2*
18-29	26.5%	25.9%	29.7%	40.1%	22.6%	25.6%	
30-39	52.6%	56.7%	52.3%	42.8%	52.8%	46.5%	
40-54	20.9%	17.4%	18%	17.1%	24.6%	27.9%	
<b>Education (%)</b>							40.2*
Finished year 12	1.9%	0%	2.5%	1.3%	3.1%	2.7%	
Trade college	18.1%	7.5%	14.2%	9.9%	9.2%	16.7%	
University	72.6%	76.1%	71.1%	73%	81.5%	67.4%	
Post Graduate degree	7.4%	16.4%	12.1%	15.8%	6.2%	13.2%	
<b>Marital status (%)</b>							51.7*
Single	10.2%	7%	10%	19.1%	5.1%	17.4%	
Married	86%	92.5%	86.2%	75.7%	93.3%	85.2%	
Couple	3.7%	0.5%	2.9%	4.6%	1%	3%	
Divorced	0%	0%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	
Widow	0%	0%	0.4%	0%	0%	0.1%	
<b>Job position (%)</b>							186.3*
Director and above	5.1%	30.3%	13%	15.1%	11.8%	1.2%	
Manager	66.5%	62.2%	69.9%	67.8%	72.8%	55.8%	
Clerks	24.7%	4.5%	14.2%	13.2%	14.9%	35.7%	
Interns, novice, etc.	0.9%	1%	1.7%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	
Other	2.8%	2%	1.3%	2.6%	0%	4.7%	
<b>Income per month (%)</b>							160.1*
RMB 4500-6999	35.1%	12.5%	22.6%	25.5%	22.8%	36.9%	
RMB 7000-9999	32.2%	29.5%	36%	38.3%	38.8%	32.8%	
RMB 10000 +	32.7%	58%	41.8%	36.2%	38.4%	30.3%	

Note: \*  $X^2 = p < 0.05$

**The relaxed amateurs cluster:**

- Consume only at home or in informal situations.
- Not have a lot of wine knowledge but try to buy what they like.
- A quite price-sensitive.
- Moderately interested in different grape varieties, countries and regions of origin.

**The social networkers cluster:**

- Drink wine only for formal occasions and for business lunch/dinners.
- Has limited knowledge about wine .
- Not interested in trying new grape varieties, countries or regions of production.



**Cluster' socio-demographic composition**

Characteristics	Indifferent occasionals (n=122)	Wine lovers (n=208)	Relaxed amateurs (n=209)	Social Networkers (n=202)	Conservative connoisseurs (n=289)	Infrequent money-minded (n=230)	$X^2$
<b>Gender (%)</b>							3.3
Male	54.9%	59.7%	63.6%	59.2%	56.9%	58.9%	
Female	45.1%	40.3%	36.4%	40.8%	43.1%	41.1%	
<b>Age (%)</b>							26.2*
18-29	26.5%	25.9%	29.7%	40.1%	22.6%	25.6%	
30-39	52.6%	56.7%	52.3%	42.8%	52.8%	46.5%	
40-54	20.9%	17.4%	18%	17.1%	24.6%	27.9%	
<b>Education (%)</b>							40.2*
Finished year 12	1.9%	0%	2.5%	1.3%	3.1%	2.7%	
Trade college	18.1%	7.5%	14.2%	9.9%	9.2%	16.7%	
University	72.6%	76.1%	71.1%	73%	81.5%	67.4%	
Post Graduate degree	7.4%	16.4%	12.1%	15.8%	6.2%	13.2%	
<b>Marital status (%)</b>							51.7*
Single	10.2%	7%	10%	19.1%	5.1%	17.4%	
Married	86%	92.5%	86.2%	75.7%	93.3%	85.2%	
Couple	3.7%	0.5%	2.9%	4.6%	1%	3%	
Divorced	0%	0%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	
Widow	0%	0%	0.4%	0%	0%	0.1%	
<b>Job position (%)</b>							186.3*
Director and above	5.1%	30.3%	13%	15.1%	11.8%	1.2%	
Manager	66.5%	62.2%	69.9%	67.8%	72.8%	55.8%	
Clerks	24.7%	4.5%	14.2%	13.2%	14.9%	35.7%	
Interns, novice, etc.	0.9%	1%	1.7%	1.3%	0.5%	2.7%	
Other	2.8%	2%	1.3%	2.6%	0%	4.7%	
<b>Income per month (%)</b>							160.1*
RMB 4500-6999	35.1%	12.5%	22.6%	25.5%	22.8%	36.9%	
RMB 7000-9999	32.2%	29.5%	36%	38.3%	38.8%	32.8%	
RMB 10000 +	32.7%	58%	41.8%	36.2%	38.4%	30.3%	

Note: \*  $X^2 = p < 0.05$

**The conservative connoisseurs cluster:**

- Very interested in the type of grape.
- Conservative tastes, showing preferences for a small number of types of grape, countries and regions of production .
- A high involvement in wine.
- Drink at home.
- Not price-sensitive.

**The infrequent money-minded cluster:**

- Extremely price-sensitive.
- Drink wine on rare occasions.
- Not interested in wine and do not want to expand their knowledge.
- Their main motive for consumption is that wine is good for health.
- Hypermarkets.

- **The large consumer sample** recruited in several Chinese cities, reinforcing the reliability and external validity of this research, and the results **are consistent with the literature.**
- This is interesting for the foreign winemakers who therefore need to have **accurate information** about the different Chinese wine consumers to correctly define their marketing strategies and adapt their product range to the needs and wants of the targeted consumer segments
- Sample excludes some people not having a computer and internet access. In future researches, it would be interesting to study the whole population by including **the domestic wine consumers** and **potential wine consumers** in order to make comparison with the foreign wine consumers and also understand the reasons for non-consumption of wine.
- It would be also interesting to complement this study by observing **actual behaviours** (measuring the wine purchases in store, quantities consumed at home, wine spending made in restaurant, etc.).
- China is a very large country with strong regional cultural differences. So there is a need to **increase still the number of areas** investigated and the consumers **sample size** in order to improve the external validity of the researches.

**非常感謝你**  
**Thank you very**  
**much!**



**Carlos Raúl Sánchez Sánchez**  
*Montpellier Business School*  
[cr.sanchez@montpellier-bs.com](mailto:cr.sanchez@montpellier-bs.com)

**Josselin Masson**  
*Université Haute-Alsace*  
[josselin.masson@uha.fr](mailto:josselin.masson@uha.fr)

**Franck Celhay**  
*Montpellier Business School*  
[f.celhay@Montpellier-BS.com](mailto:f.celhay@Montpellier-BS.com)