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**A MULTIPLE PRICE LIST EXPERIMENT TO MEASURE
CONSUMER WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

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Abstract

Introduction - Over the last years corporate social responsibility (CSR), in the wine sector, has been a core topic on both the academic and governmental agenda due to the environmental, societal and economic impact of wine production (Gabzdylova, 2009; Mueller Loose and Remaud, 2013). The latter along with the growing interest of consumers towards environmentally friendly and socially fair products has encouraged wineries to implement CSR activities in vineyard and winery, aiming at preserving soil biodiversity and landscape, protecting workers' health and safety and promoting economic sustainability (Corbo et al., 2014; Pomarici et al., 2014). The potential benefits of these programmes are manifold including a higher level of consumer satisfaction, an increase in companies' performance and competitiveness on the market (Bocquet et al., 2014), and societal benefits due to the reduction of negative externalities (e.g. environmental damages).

Although the literature widely acknowledges the effects of CSR in the food sector (Hartmann et al., 2013; Lombardi et al., 2015); so far, there is only one paper investigating its impact in the wine industry (Mueller Loose and Remaud, 2013).

The present study aims to fill this gap, assessing consumers' preferences and willingness to pay (WTP) for wines differing in terms of CSR initiatives implemented. Further, the study also uncovers the effect of CSR information on consumers' hedonic liking (HL) and willingness to pay for the wines.

Experimental design - The analysis was based on a tasting experiment linked to a structured questionnaire and was carried out in Italy and Germany. 100 regular wine consumers (drinking wine at least once a month) in each country participated in the study. The experiment was carried out in a lab setting and consisted of 3 rounds: blind, expected, and informed. Participants tasted the wines during the first (blind) and third (informed) round, whilst in the second (expected) they received only information about the five wines. The wines evaluated in the experiment were one conventional and four with different social responsibility certifications (i.e. Carbon footprint, Vignaioli Indipendenti, VIVA sustainable wine, and Organic). Respondents were asked to rate their hedonic liking and willingness to pay for the five wines. Specifically, HL was measured on a 9-point hedonic scale, while consumer's WTP was assessed using an experimental economics method such as multiple price list (MPL) ranging from 4.5 € to 14.5 € per 0.75l bottle.

The study also analysed consumers' wine consumption frequency, their socio-demographics characteristics and general attitudes toward wine such as subjective knowledge, involvement and sustainability concerns.

Conclusions - Preliminary results of the wine experiment carried out in Italy and Germany indicate that consumers - in both countries - are willing to reward wine companies implementing corporate social responsibility strategies. These results can be considered as powerful drivers for the promotion of CSR initiatives in the wine industry. Moreover, the study highlighted specific consumers' preferences towards the considered certifications in the two countries, providing practical insights to the wine industry on the CSR initiatives more attractive to consumers and on the effect of information on consumer choices.

Keywords : Willingness to pay, Multiple Price List, CSR certifications

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