Chapter 11

Mass Masstige Index:
Application in Wine Brands and the Importance in Restaurant Communication

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ABSTRACT

This work intends to obtain for the first time one mass masstige index for wine brands and analyze the importance of that index in the restaurants' communications. The authors used quantitative research, and information was obtained through a convenience sample of 196 masstige wine brands. The mass masstige index was obtained for a set of wine brands of several countries. The results show that the masstige wine brand index can benefit gastronomic restaurants by having masstige wine brands recognized as top-of-mind brands by tourists. This research fulfills a gap in the tourism literature applying for the first time the masstige theory in wine brands and obtaining a mass masstige index for a set of wine masstige brands. The provider of masstige wine brands in gastronomic restaurants must continue to bet on communication strategies with masstige wine brands as a way to create strong consumer-brand relationships.

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INTRODUCTION

The Tourism sector and several businesses have begun to explore the unconventional way of marketing luxury goods and services which promise status and superior experiences for the tourists (Correia et al., 2020; Goyal, 2021). Gastronomy is an important factor in the travel experience and its importance is increasing, it is something consumers look for when they choose a destination (Antón, Camarero, Laguna, & Buhalis, 2019). On the other hand, there is a consensus among tourism research that consumption of tourism products has a predominantly hedonic component (Antón et al., 2019; Carlsen & Boksberger, 2015; Kim, 2014). In this way, the consumption of masstige wine brands can translate this hedonic motivation of consumption experience into gastronomy and restaurants choices (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Kim, 2018).

Wine tourism provides an extraordinary experience to tourists (Santos et al., 2019). This extraordinary experience can be explained by several factors. One of those factors is the communication of the destination's gastronomy and more specifically the communication of the wine brands (Brochado et al., 2021). According to Brochado et al. (2021, p. 597) "wine tourism thus refers to activities motivated by tourists' desire to taste new wines and learn more about the traditions and cultures of wine-producing areas". Then, we can posit that the wine tourism activities need to be focused on sensorial, experiential, symbolic and hedonic attributes (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2020).

According to Keller (2010), marketing communication is a helpful tool to build and manage brands – directly or indirectly, – thus informing and reminding consumers about functional, symbolic and hedonic attributes of the brand's products. Masstige wine brands can be a source of differentiation in tourist destinations and gastronomic restaurants. Paul (2018b, p. 723) defines masstige marketing as "a phenomenon in which regular products with moderately high prices are marketed to the maximum number of consumers by creating mass prestige without lowering prices or without offering discounts". This implies a strategy of wine brand positioning, aiming at creating mass prestige value for wine brands and for tourism destinations and gastronomic restaurants.

In the wine sector, Portugal is the 11th wine producer in the world and holds the 9th position regarding the global wine exports in value, and the 10th position in volume, with a market share of almost 3% (IVV/Viniportugal, 2021). In 2021, according to data released by ViniPortugal, exports increased by 8,11% in export value compared to the same period in 2020, having exceeded 925 million EUR. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the tourism sector, both for non-resident visitor tourism and domestic tourism, significantly reducing the global volume of wine being sold through this channel. However, with Portuguese consumers behaviour, we have witnessed the market's recovery during 2021. One of the key factors was the premiumisation (Portugal Wine Landscapes, 2021). Portuguese regular wine drinkers continue to drink more expensive wines, this behaviour hasn't changed with the pandemic. The lockdowns also provided more moments to drink wine, a reality we have observed in Portugal and in several countries, as this drink is a small luxury for those who want to indulge themselves when other indulgent or ambitious options, such as going out or traveling, have been severely limited (Portugal Wine Landscapes, 2021). In this moment, Portugal is the 7th country in the scope of global wine consumption, with a per capita wine consumption (the highest in the world) of almost 51,9 litres per year, which is equivalent to approximately 69 bottles of 750 ml (OIV, 2021). The Portugal Wine Landscapes (2021) report highlights that the biggest growth in wine consumption came from younger consumers – those in the 18-34 and 35-49 year old age brackets.

This chapter intents to make a literature review of masstige brands and the consumers' choice of gastronomic restaurants and the relevance of masstige wine brands. Then, based on the data collection from final consumers, we intend to better understand the perception of wine consumers about masstige wine brands, in the Portuguese case, obtaining a masstige mean score scale index for the chose brands.

BACKGROUND

Masstige Brand

According to Kumar et al., (2021a) masstige means mass prestige associated with brands. The masstige theory arises from an acknowledgment that marketing theory is full of recycled and repeated analyses of different elements of the marketing mix, but it it is not well grounded in how and why certain companies build brand equity (Paul, 2018a).

The author has conducted several studies related to masstige and has focused on the success of masstige marketing strategies based on the 4Ps strategy, rather than exploring or considering the meaning of masstige in the brand's framework of values (Paul, 2015, 2018a, 2019). Following the same thinking, Kumar et al., (2020) designed a review study presenting and understanding the future directions for "masstige marketing", considering the given meaning of masstige to be prestigious and accessible to middle-class mass consumers. They suggested developing a masstige brand through the masstige marketing strategy based on the 4 Ps. They indicated that masstige is different from luxury, but they also concluded that it is important to register the relative newness of masstige as a concept with its potential limitations.

According to the masstige theory, Goyal (2021) states that masstige brands are expressed as a new luxury, different from traditional luxury. It is identified that masstige brands can be distinguished from luxury brands by their functional, financial, social, and individual values. Brands are considered prestigious as luxury brands, but they differ from luxury brands and are purchased in masse (Goyal, 2021). Brands that are able to build mass prestige and brand value can charge high prices from consumers, and consumers are also willing to pay relatively higher prices for these brands compared to mass brands (Kumar et al., 2020).

Consumers looking for masstige brand seek means of self-expression (Chernev, 2011), but middle-class consumers seeking identity through brands may not be willing to spend a lot on them (Zhan & He, 2012). For this type of consumer, masstige brands are good and affordable options (Kumar et al., 2020).

Masstige brands are important means of expression and formidable alternatives to traditional luxury items. Truong et al. (2009, p. 376) posit that masstige brands "are often mass-oriented and less expensive than traditional luxury goods, which have a very confined exclusivity in terms of accessibility and price". This shift from traditional luxury to masstige came to be known as the shift from old luxury to new luxury (Granot et al., 2013).

A consumer of a masstige brand seeks to achieve an image or a desirable ideal through the choice of that brand (Kumar et al., 2020). On the contrary, a consumer who prefers true luxury seeks heritage, family name and country of origin (Kapferer, 2014).

Masstige brands are bringing a new luxury, affordable luxury, luxury consumed in droves. In the existing literature it was found that the definition of this type of brand is for the masses, prestigious, not rare, of high quality and not as expensive as luxury (Goyal, 2021).

Wine as a Product and as a Brand

Wine is a complex product (Hall & Mitchell, 2007). It is an experience product as consumers cannot feel the taste of a wine before buying it (Lockshin et al., 2006). There are few product categories that have so many SKUs as wine in most retail outlets, were it seems too have too many cues for consumers, each one competing with the other (Goodman et al., 2005), making it difficult to decide which wine to choose on the shelf. Wine is also a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes. The extrinsic attributes (i.e., alcohol, sugar, acidity) will shape its taste, but are not constant as these will vary on every vintage according to non-controllable factors such as climate (Ramos et al., 2011). However, some extrinsic attributes like price, geographical location and branding also play a key role on the perception of a masstige wine brand.

Although there's evidence of growth in the demand and consumption of luxury wine brands (Wolf et al., 2016), according to Nápoles et al. (2020) the luxury wine sector is still underrepresented in Portugal. The exception has been for the fortified wines, like Vintage Porto's and some Madeira. However, in recent years some of the new vintages of iconic wines like Barca Velha by Ferreira/Sogrape, can now reach values of approximately $500-650 in some USA outlets. Thach and Olsen (2019) found that the motivations of the luxury wine buyer are different from the non-luxury wine buyer, and reasons for purchasing luxury wine go beyond mere collecting. Luxury wines must meet some criteria such has the place of origin, high price, scarcity, heritage, and ability to age (Yeung & Thach, 2019). In a previous research, Beverland (2004) indicated that most of the luxury wine buyers would buy them mainly for collection motives. However, more recently, Thach and Olsen (2019) indicated that only 12% of the luxury buyers purchase with the purpose of keeping the bottles in their cellars. Most of the buyers of "Luxury wines" were more motivated for hedonic reasons, like simply enjoying the wine in a social context and comparing with friends. There's is still a critical difficulty in defining what is the price point were a wine could be considered "Luxury". Jarrett and Jarvis (2016) classified them in Ultra-Premium wines $70 - $99 and the Luxury / Icon wines at $73 USD. This, adding to the fact that a bottle of a so called "luxury wine" can be bought and/or shared with a few friends, makes it a potential masstige product that some more average consumers can reach for a unique luxury experience.

Importance of Masstige Wine Brands on Gastronomic Restaurants

Product knowledge and involvement are important aspects when it comes to wine brands, gastronomy and restaurants (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2019). According to several authors, when consumers purchase any product, they look for different sources of information and knowledge to better tailor their purchase to their needs (Bruwer et al., 2017; Ellis & Caruana, 2018; Gustafson et al., 2016; Mason & Bequette, 1998).

Velikova et al. (2019, p. 1751) posit that "wine enhances a restaurant's image and reputation. It enriches guests' dining experiences and maximizes their satisfaction". Thus, restaurant owners continue to encourage their activity, enriching them through the appreciation of several wine options, and gastronomy with specialized wine-oriented events (Velikova et al., 2019). For Ruiz-Molina et al. (2010, p. 98), "good food accompanied by suitable wine can greatly enhance the gastronomical experience". Also, according to Velikova et al. (2019, p. 1754) "diners now ask for more information on which wines complement their selected menu items". By recommending masstige wine brands to complement a gastronomic menu, restaurants can increase their average dinner and provide greater gastronomic satisfaction to their customers (Oliveira-Brochado & Silva, 2014). Recommendations from masstige wine brands that are part of the food menu offered by restaurants, as opposed to being an independent wine list, are associated with sales of the prestige wine brands (Lockshin et al., 2011; Ruiz-Molina et al., 2010). For Ruiz-Molina et al. (2010, p. 98), "the existence of a supply of fine wines has been an excellent parameter for judging restaurant quality". Consumers know that wine in restaurants cost more. But they are willing to pay more for enriching dining experiences, and for learning how to better combine wine with food (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2019; Velikova et al., 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Method

A literature review was carried out on masstige brands, regarding the importance that consumers attach to this type of brands in their choices, and on the impacts of masstige wine brands on gastronomic restaurants.

Afterwards, a structured questionnaire was developed for data collection, using the Masstige Mean Score Scale Index of Paul (2019), applied to wine brands of Portuguese consumers. We used a Likert scale of five points to collect this information.

The questionnaires was divided into three parts: the first contained questions related to the knowledge and behaviour of the respondents' about the wine brands, the second part used the Paul (2019) scale to obtain the MMSSI and, finally, the third part included the questions related to the characterization of the respondents.

Brand Selection and Data Collection

For data collection, we disseminated an online questionnaire available in the period from March 2021 to April 2021. A convenience sample method allowed us to obtain 196 responses.

An initial poll was made amongst 30 wine consumers and wine bloggers, asking them to list the wines they most wished they could buy someday or the ones they had already bought as a treat to themselves and that they could use this as a social flagship (both national and international brands). Some of the brands they suggested can be considered as luxury wines (although most of them can have a less expensive alternative in the same company). However, many of these consumers bought them for a special occasion or to share them with friends, and as a status symbol, in line with what Thach and Olsen (2019) found. Some even replied that they bought these wines splitting the cost with other friends, just to be able to taste them at least once in their lifetime.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample Characterization

From the total of 196 respondents, 89.8% said they were wine consumers. Among the wine brands presented, the ones that respondents knew the most and tasted were Ferreira – Barca Velha (60.2%), Cartuxa – Pera Manca (58.2%) and Quinta do Castro (57.7%). These wine brands are all Portuguese, and

Table 1. Sample characterization (n = 196)

Are you a wine consumer?	Nº	%
No Yes	20 176	10,2 89,8
Tell us what brands do you know and have tasted?	**Nº**	**%**
Ferreira - Barca Velha Cartuxa – Pera Manca Mouchão Quinta do Castro Romanée Conti Château Petrus Château Lafitte Veja Sicilia Pingus Sassicaia	118 114 78 113 42 52 59 46 25 29	60,2 58,2 39,8 57,7 21,4 26,5 30,1 23,5 12,8 14,8
Age	**Nº**	**%**
18 to 25 26 to 40 41 to 65 More than 65 years old	12 46 132 6	6,1 23,5 67,3 3,1
Gender	**Nº**	**%**
Male Female	124 72	63,3 36,7

these results can be explained by the fact that the respondents are also Portuguese. 67.3% of respondents are aged between 41 and 65 years old and 63.3% are male (Table 1).

Masstige Mean Score Scale Index (MMSSI)

The masstige mean score scale from Paul (2015) was applied and the statistic results are shown in table 2. The most valued items were M6, M4, M7 and M5, respectively, recognizing that quality and awareness are the main characteristics' of a masstige wine brand. Consumers indicated that they choose the top-of-mind brands, and this is related to the quality that they associate with the wine and the levels of satisfaction, after all, the consumer only remembers what was very negative or positive for him. In addition, standardized brands that meet international standards can provide an association with a status symbol. Lastly, we also observe that the consumers are predisposed to communicate through word-of-mouth to other consumers (friends and relatives).

We analysed the data normality with Skewness and Kurtosis results. No problems were identified with data normality because their values were between the cut fit.

To calculate the brands' masstige scores the values of all 10 items on the MMSSI (Paul, 2019) were aggregated. Paul (2015), who used a 7-point Likert-type scale, argued that a brand needs to have a minimum score of 50 out of 70 on the MMI to be considered masstige (Table 3). As we used a 5-point Likert-type scale we had to convert the original range (50 – 70), which resulted in a range of 35 out of 50 to be considered a masstige brand.

According to the results obtained, it appears that foreign brands are considered by Portuguese consumers as masstige brands – Château Lafitte, Château Petrus, Romanée Conti, Sassicaia and Vega

Table 2 - Scale statistic

Scale	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
M1: I like this wine brand because of its masstige	2,81	1,108	-0,194	-0,946
M2: I would buy this wine brand because of its mass prestige	2,93	1,163	-0,027	-0,892
M3: I would pay a higher price for this wine brand for status quo	2,56	1,156	0,212	-0,982
M4: I consider this wine brand, a top-of-mind brand in my country	4,01	0,954	-1,234	1,662
M5: I would recommend this wine brand to friends and relatives	3,96	0,909	-1,437	2,740
M6: I believe this wine brand is known for its high quality	4,05	0,917	-1,342	2,316
M7: I believe this wine brand meets international standards	3,99	0,954	-1,017	0,953
M8: I love to buy this wine brand regardless of price	2,69	1,162	0,053	-0,991
M9: Nothing is more exciting than this wine brand	2,25	1,035	0,256	-0,949
M10: I believe that individuals in my country, perceive this wine brand as prestigious	3,75	0,952	-1,002	1,078

Sicília – unlike Portuguese brands. These results are interesting because consumers have better access to Portuguese brands and can establish more associations with the respective tastes. (Table 3).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The multiplicity of wines that consumers have at their disposal poses some complications when making a choice. The growing competitiveness represents a challenge for wine producers and restaurants. In order to respond to consumer needs in an adequate way and with unforgettable experiences and thus achieve a high level of satisfaction, companies must know the perceptions of their customers. However, in the context of wines and gastronomy, there has been no perception of the consumers' motivations that lead them to choose one wine over the other and their experiences during consumption. In this sense, with this chapter we have presented for the first time one masstige index for wine brands. For that, we applied a questionnaire to Portuguese tourists and we presented wine brands not only from Portugal but also

Table 3. Masstige Mean Score Scale Index for Wine Brands

Brand	MMSSI
Cartuxa - Pera Manca	32,36
Château Lafitte	41,5
Château Petrus	35
Ferreira - Barca Velha	34,04
Mouchão	28,5
Quinta do Crasto	31,41
Romanée Conti	37
Sassicaia	37
Vega Sicília	35

from other countries. This research can give a significant contribution for different stakeholders of the wine sector. One of the most important results More specifically, concerns the consumers' perceptions on Portuguese luxury brands. We observed that the foreign wine brands are considered by Portuguese consumers as masstige brands, as opposed to brands from the country itself. We have confirmed an appreciation of the national product (wine), contrary to what it could be expected.

In this, post-COVID-19 moment, we observe a reality which is characterised by new demands and new stakeholders, or the latter with a different positioning. The supply will necessarily have to adapt to face the challenges placed by the recovery period after the pandemic.

The results indicate that a masstige wine brand index can promote gastronomic restaurants through the offer of masstige wine brands identified as top-of-mind brands by tourists. In this case, the restaurants must include the available masstige wine brands in their communication strategies. However, the decline of masstige wine brands should be avoided. To this purpose, it is essential that they adequately define a price and distribution policy strategies. As for the price policy, a premium price must be applied and as for the distribution, the masstige wine brands must only be available in reference restaurants and aimed at middle/high income consumers. If not, widespread brand access tends to occur when purchases by middle-class consumers become frequent or common. The more available a product is, the less prestigious its perception. Additionally, a prestigious environment must be provided around the brand, and both communication and presence must be related to luxury and prestigious places for the brand to appeal to consumers as an "aspirational" brand. Certainly, if the consumer/tourist is involved in a strategy of co-creative wine and food experiences, it will provide greater engagement, stimulating learning and promoting to meaningful and immersive experiences that lead to growing place additions and loyalty (Carvalho et al., 2021). It should be noted that Portugal, in 2020, similar to previous years, continues to be the country in the world with the highest consumption of wine per inhabitant, despite a slight drop of 0,6% in the volume of wine consumed, according to the 2021 report by the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV). In terms of global consumption, there was a 3% drop last year, to 234 million hectolitres, the lowest value since 2002. More precisely, in 2020, each Portuguese aged over 15 consumed, on average, 51,9 litters of wine, surpassing the Italians, who consumed 46,6 litters per capita, and the French with 46 litters per capita. Furthermore, it is observed that regular wine consumers continue to prefer to drink more expensive wines, and this behaviour has not changed with the pandemic and that consumption has increased in the 18-34 and 35-49 year old age groups (Portugal Wine Landscapes, 2021). This is an important information for the wine brand managers because it is this target that should be aware of brand knowledge, perceived quality, excitement and status - the masstige dimensions.

This research has some limitations that can be overcome in future research. One of the limitations is the use of a convenience sample. Other limitation is that we consider all the consumers that know the masstige wine brands or have tasted them, and we did not consider their income. The consumer income is a decisive variable for this type of consumption and also the intention to purchase. Furthermore, we do not consider behavioural or emotional variables of brand (e.g., brand loyalty, WOM, e-WOM, happiness and wellbeing). These variables could be contemplated in future research. Lastly, it would be interesting to evaluate the masstige index on another consumer segmentation, namely different nationalities, different types of generations, frequency of visits to restaurants, cultures, and so on.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Luxury Wine: Wines that meet criteria such as the place of origin, high price, scarcity, heritage, and ability to age.

Masstige: Can be consider as mass prestige associated with brands.

Masstige Mean Score Scale Index (MMSSI): Is an instrument of performance of masstige brands.