

SURVEY ON THE CONSUMPTION OF WINE IN SICILY: SOME RESULTS*

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Abstract: *The survey on consumption of wine was conducted in the period between April 20th and July 10th of 2011 on a sample of 200 consumers of Sicily. The recognition by the administration of the product was mainly conducted at some outlets, supermarkets, wine shops and bars, interviewing a sample of consumers directly with the "face to face" method. The purpose of the survey was conducted to understand the needs of wine consumers and the role played by the mark of quality in the choice of purchase, and finally the degree of appreciation and consumption of Sicilian wine.*

Key words: *wine, consumption trends, Sicily*

JEL Code: *M31*

1. Methodology and research objectives

The methodology followed to conduct the research project was quantitative and random. The random search refers to the identification of the prominent factors from which springs the buying behavior of consumers. The preliminary components of the research team have defined and developed the research hypotheses, they have identified the survey questions and constructed the questionnaire to be administered to the sample of consumers.

The construction of the questionnaire has led to questions about the definition of the perceived quality, the habitual consumption, the price-quality ratio. The objective of the research was to understand the buying habits and preferences of wine consumers, with particular reference to that produced in Sicily. The research was conducted as a motivational survey through a methodology that refers to the survey by questionnaire.

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The purpose of the survey was conducted to understand the needs of wine consumers and the role played by the mark of quality in the choice of purchase, and finally the degree of appreciation and consumption of Sicilian wine. The instrument used for data processing has been the construction of a double entry table and the estimated *log-likelihood ratio test* with the relevant *p-value*.

The significance level for the whole statistical analysis was $\alpha = 0.05$. The *log-likelihood-ratio test* known in the statistical literature as test G was used to evaluate the association between two qualitative variables. The questionnaire was structured in three sections, the first tending to acquire information about the socio-demographic characteristics of consumers surveyed (age, sex, marital status, education level).

The second section identifies the factors and the specific consumption of wine (wine type, frequency of consumption, purchasing places, places to eat).

Finally, the third one was to obtain information about the perception of quality, price and preference for the consumption of Sicilian wine.

* The paper is the result of a complete cooperation and it is, therefore, of responsibility of all authors. The material drawing up of the paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 are attributable to Maurizio Lanfranchi (mLANFRANCHI@UNIME.IT); paragraphs 2 and 4 are attributable to Carlo Giannetto.

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In order to assess whether the frequency of wine consumption is significantly influenced by age was estimated by ordinal logistic regression model, known in statistical literature as a PLUM model. In this context it was made known only a part of the research, we refer to a next publication of the full report.

2. Social-economic characteristics of the sample selected for the survey

The analysis was conducted on a large heterogeneous sample with different demographic and socio-economic conditions. 200 respondents were surveyed. The survey was conducted in Sicily (Italy).

Table 1. Summary of socio-economic characteristics of the consumers surveyed

Indication	characters	n°	%
sex	males	102	51
	females	98	49
	total	200	100
age classes	70 and up	2	1
	50 – 69	21	10,5
	30 – 49	43	21,5
	18 – 29	134	67
	total	200	100
civil status	single	151	75,5
	married	47	23,5
	divorced	2	1
	total	200	100
study qualifications	degree	30	15
	diploma	149	75
	primary-secondary	20	10
	total	200	100

Source: Our calculations based on data collected directly

Figure 1 shows that 51% of respondents are males, the remaining 49%, corresponding to 98 subjects, are females.

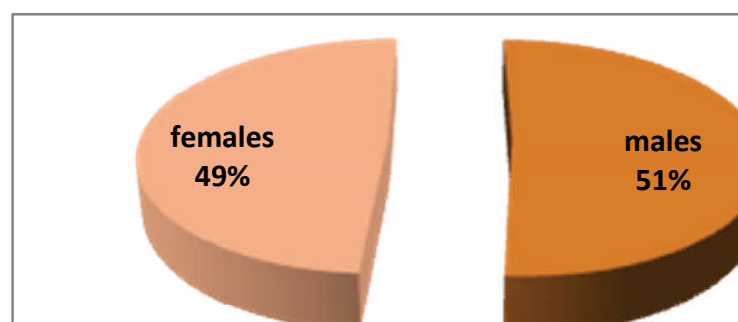


Figure 1 – Composition of the sample by gender

On the basis of demographic characteristics, the target of the respondents was divided into four age groups: members of the class, including the persons aged between

18-29 years old, represents 67% of respondents (134 units) ; members of the second age group (30-49 years old) are 21.5% of total (43 units); respondents included in the third age group (50-69 years old) represented 10.5% of the sample; Finally, only 1% of respondents older than 70 years old.

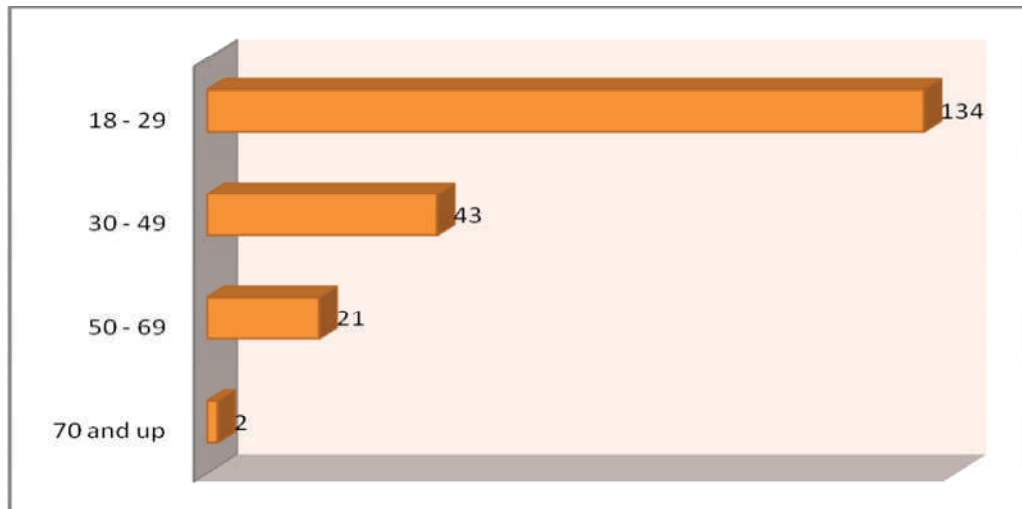


Figure 2 – Composition of the sample by age

With reference to the qualifications, it is possible to note that the majority of respondents, 75% (149 units), graduated, only 15% have a college degree, while the remaining 10% (20 units), have graduated middle or elementary school.

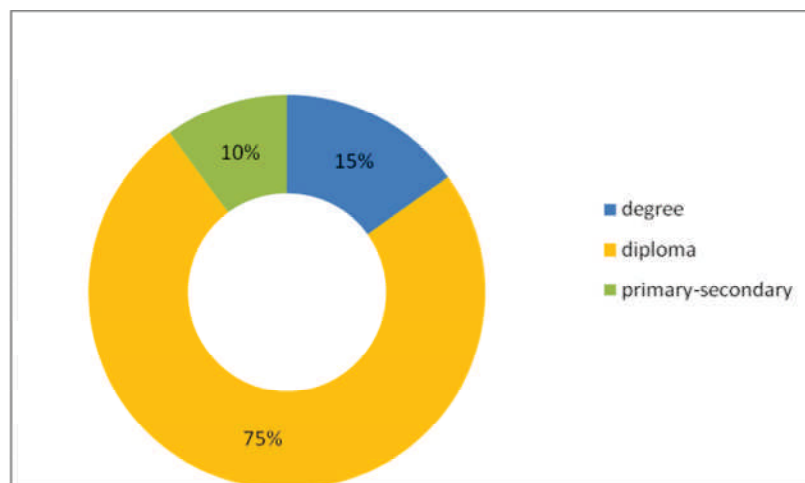


Figure 3 – Composition of the sample under study

Another variable considered in the sample for the survey is conducted on marital status. 75.5% (151 units) of the respondents are single (unmarried), 23.5% (47 units) are married and only one person reported being divorced.

3. Analysis and interpretation of data collected

Respondents were administered a questionnaire consisting of ten questions aimed to assess, in particular, the wine consumption and buying habits, the characteristics which a quality wine must have, and the reasons to choose from a wide range of wines. The first question asked the respondents to mention the wine consumption frequency. From the replies it can be seen that there are two opposing groups fed, on the one hand those who

consume wine from time to time, not more than once per month (19.5%), on the other hand, those who consume it regularly, in fact, 34.5 % say they consume it at least 2 to 3 times a week.

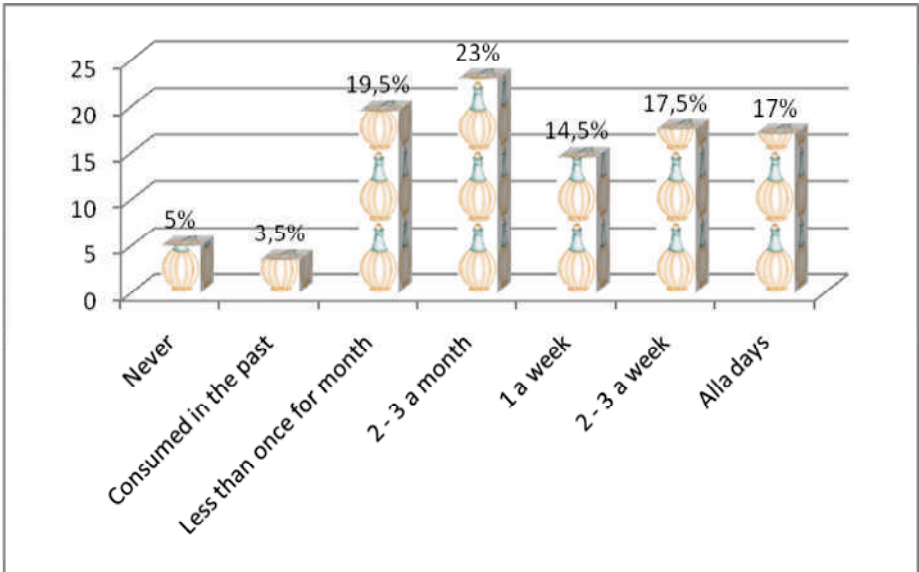


Figure 4 – What is your wine consumption?

In particular, as shown in Graph no. 4, 17% of regular consumers prefer to taste the wine every day. Regarding the place of consumption, the majority of respondents prefer at home or the restaurant (74%).

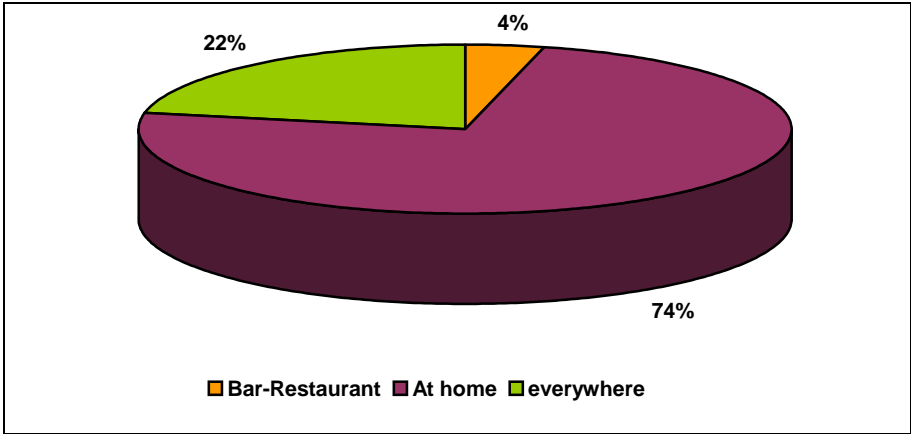


Figure 5 – Where do you prefer to consume wine mainly?

Only a small proportion of respondents, about 4% prefers to consume wine at the bar. Maybe this place can be a pleasant meeting point but not the ideal place to savor or enjoy a glass of quality wine.

With regard to the propensity of expenditure and to the habits of wine consumption, two questions have been formulated; the first related to the maximum expenditure for the purchase of a single bottle, the second refers to the rough budget for the purchase of wine in one year.

Regarding the first question, 42.5% of respondents said they were willing to spend an amount not exceeding 10 € for a single bottle of wine, only 26% of consumers would be willing to buy a bottle at a price above the 10 €.

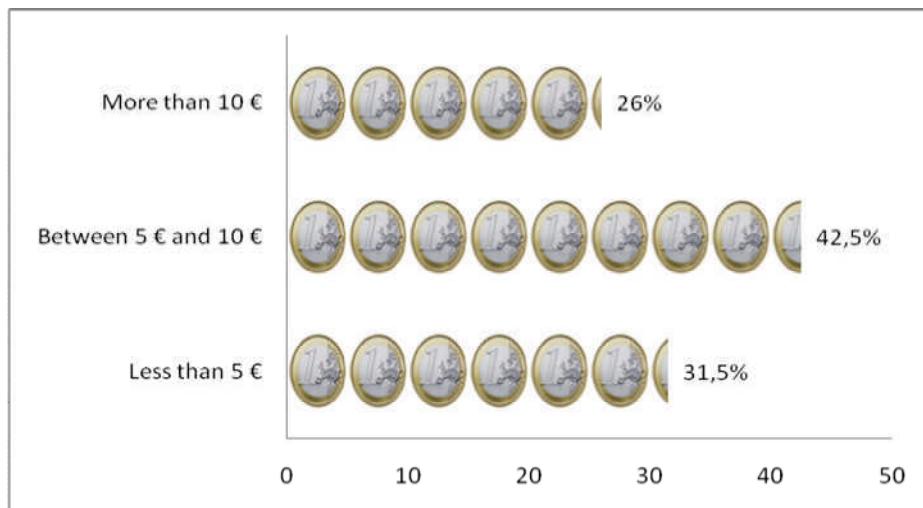


Figure 6 – How much would you be willing to spend on a bottle of wine?

When asked which would be the average annual expenditure for the purchase of wine, most of the answers were between 10 and 100 euros (35.5%), significant, approximately 27% is the percentage of those who are positioned on a top-end buying, on average, between 101 and 250 euros.

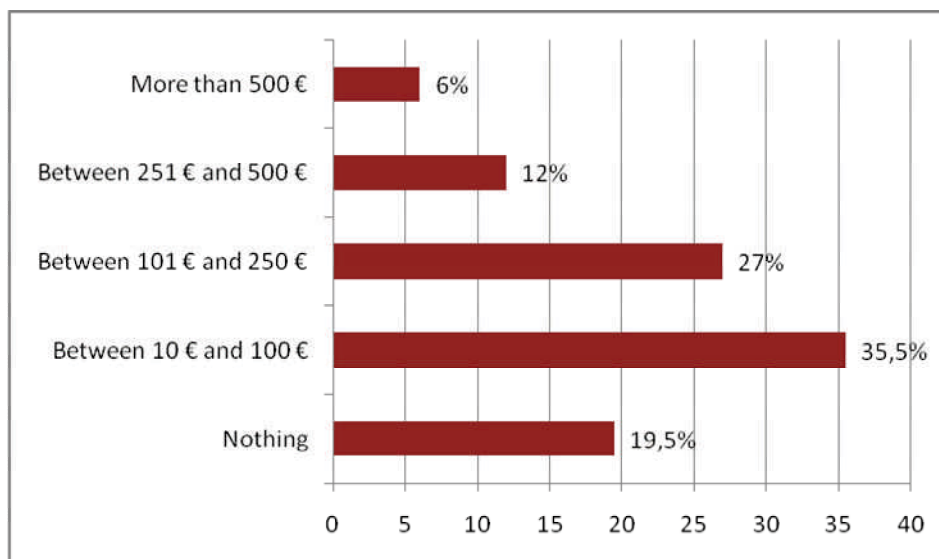


Figure 7 – How supposedly do you spend in a year for the purchase of wine?

Only 6% of respondents are willing to spend an amount in excess of 500 euros to deal with such consumption.

To know the consumption habits, they were also asked about the place where they buy wine. The majority of respondents (37%) replied from the manufacturer. This shows that the average consumer is still looking for a genuine product, and that the seller prefers to meet the person, the raw materials and techniques used. This finding is important because it reflects the consumer's preference towards a short chain, which allows us to contain the costs of intermediation.

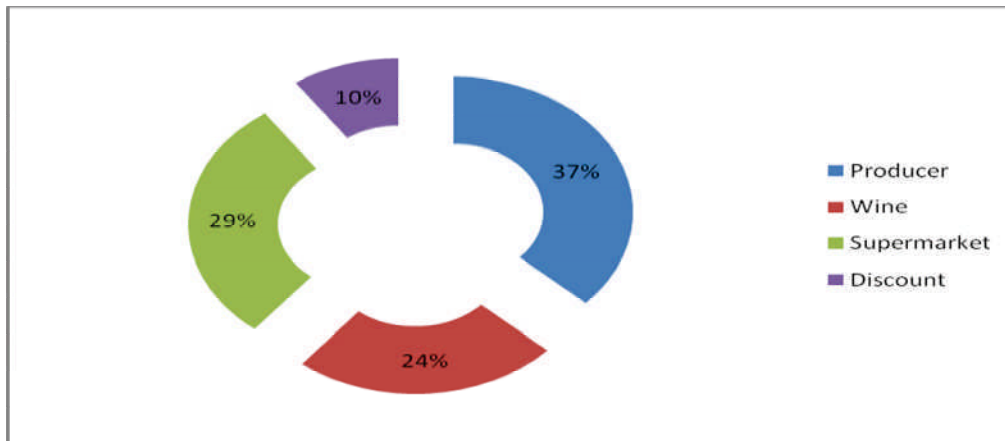


Figure 8 – What is your usual place of purchase?

29% of respondents prefer to buy that product in supermarkets and hypermarkets.

Only 10% discount on wine purchases, a sign that they tend to buy more quality wine.

Subsequently, the respondent is asked which are the factors that determine the quality of the wine. For this application, s/he had the opportunity to provide a multiple choice.

The extrapolated data is interesting, in fact, about 60% of respondents matched the quality of the wine according to the origin area (30%) or more specifically the designation of origin (29%). This shows that the average consumer feels protected only if there is an official recognition that guarantees the quality of the product.

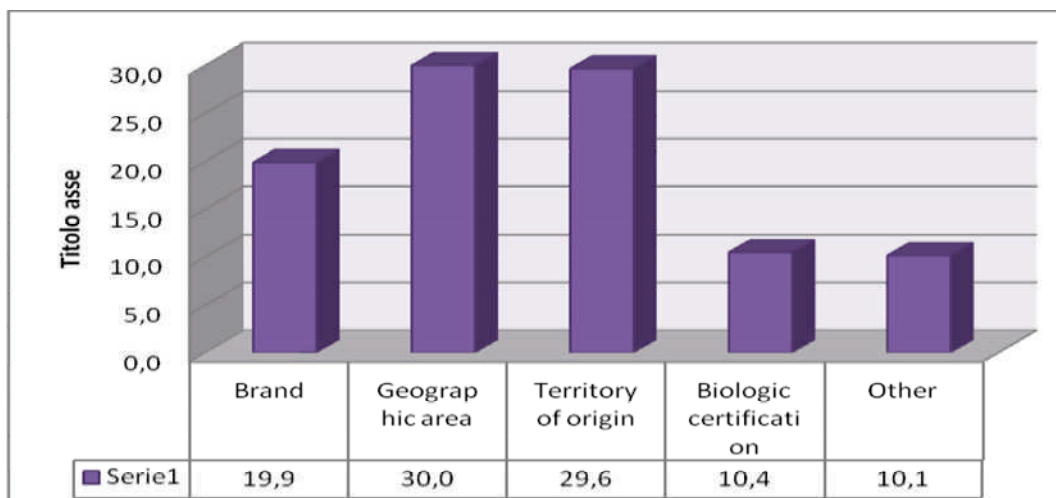


Figure 9 – What are the factors that determine the quality of wine?

Only 10% of consumers said that the factor that determines the quality of wine is organically certified, meaning that even today this kind of recognition is not entered in the “culture” of the average consumer. Through the investigation, among other things, an attempt was made to understand the reasons which push the consumer to purchase a product over another. This question was an answer for question No. 7

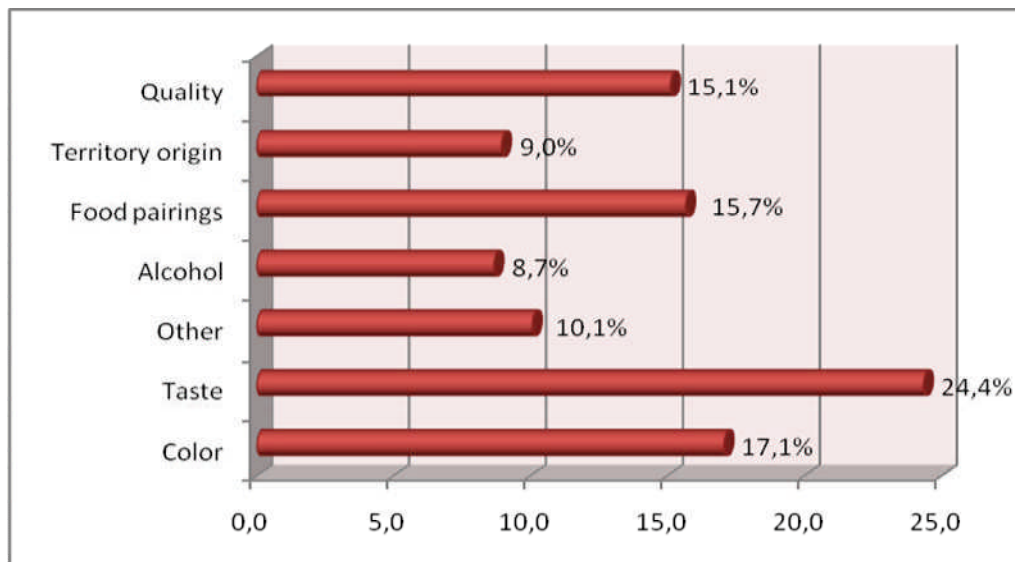


Figure 10 – Which factors are the most important choice for the purchase of wine?

For 24.4% of respondents, the decisive factor in the choice of purchasing wine is the taste, 15% of those who believe that the parameter of choice is paramount pairing with food. This data, however, shows us that the “quality” factor is not paramount in purchasing decisions (15.1%). The answer can be justified by the fact that generally the ‘quality’ wines had a higher price, and as evinced by the previous answers, the consumer is not willing to spend an exorbitant sum for the purchase of a single bottle.

17.1% of respondents said that one of the main factors that determine their choice in wine is the color. Some 35.5% of the sample of respondents said they preferred the color red.

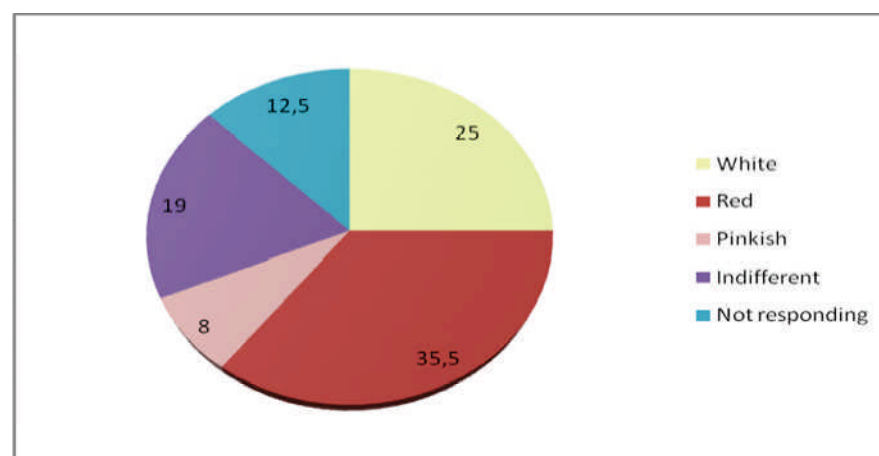


Figure 11 – What color is your favorite wine?

25% of consumers have shown a preference for white wine, while for 18% the color of wine does not matter. Concerning the consumption habits, the interviewees were asked if they change in general the type of wine and how long they prefer the same type of wine.

The answers show that an average consumer normally changes the type of wine. More specifically, 31% of respondents say they would change the type of wine consumed occasionally.

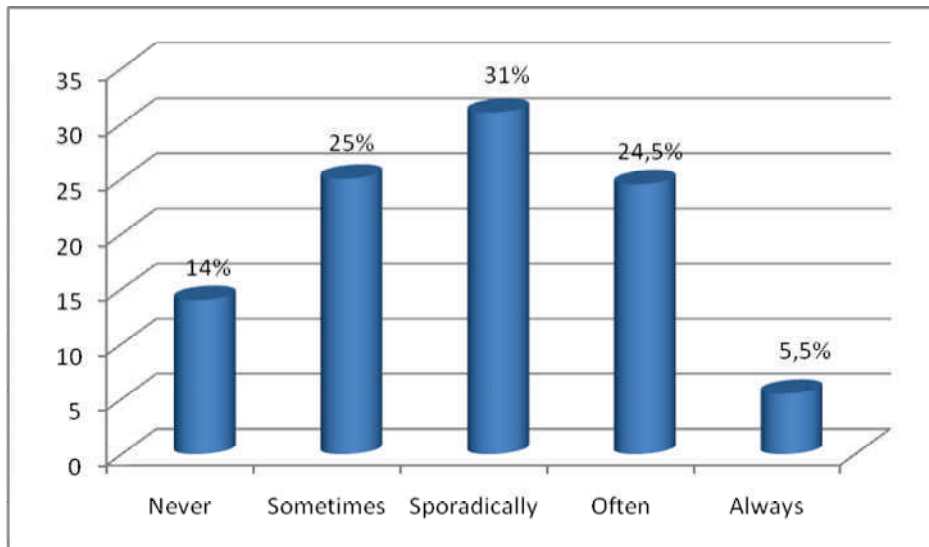


Figure 12 – How often do you change the type of wine?

Instead, 24.5% say they frequently prefer to change the type of wine, only 14% of respondents do not like to change the wine, but prefer to consume the same type.

The investigation extended to the territory of Messina, as we have said, the goal of interpreting the buying habits of consumers relative to the market of Sicilian wines. For this reason the following question has been given: Do you drink Sicilian wine?

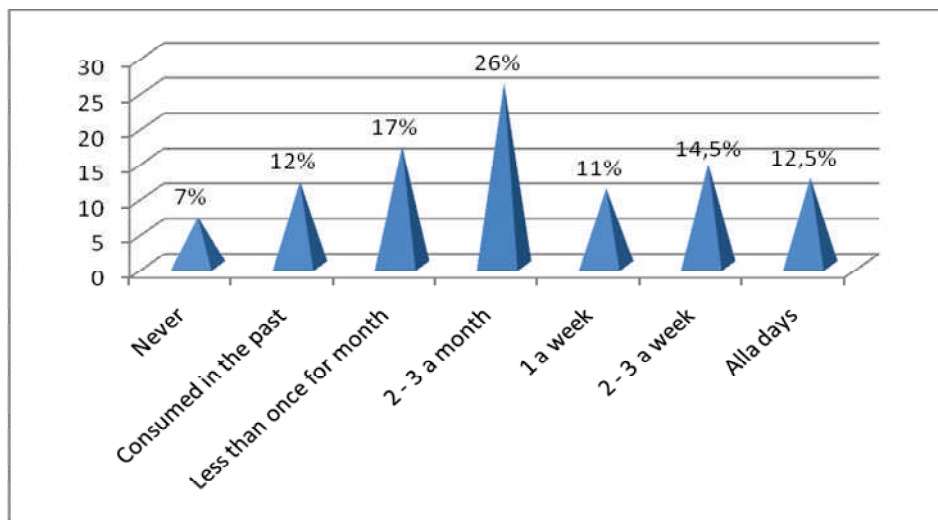


Figure 13 – Do you drink Sicilian wine?

The most frequent response was two to three times per month (26%). This finding is consistent with that provided by the respondents to the first question (how many times do you consume wine).

In fact, even then most consumers gave the same response. 12.5% of respondents said they consumed Sicilian wine each day. Finally we asked respondents if they know the beneficial effects of wine consumption.

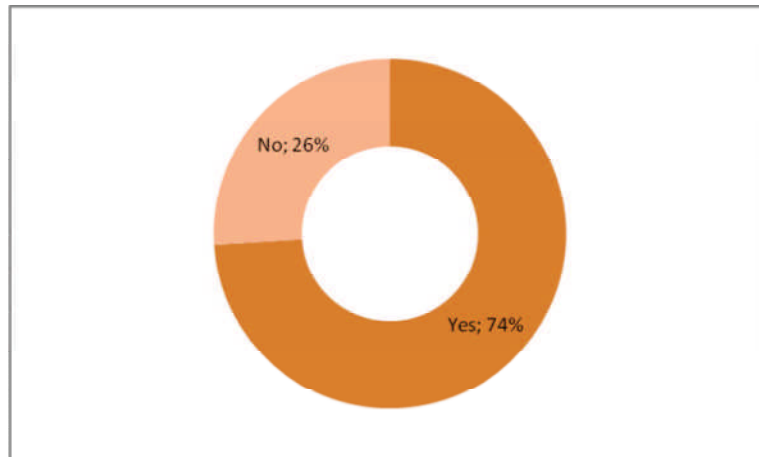


Figure 14 – Do you know the beneficial effects of wine consumption?

Almost all respondents (74%) say they know the benefits of wine, most of them being concerned with the health aspects associated with the consumption of wine, particularly the presence of polyphenols can reduce the negative effects associated with the digestion of certain fats of animal origin present in red meat.

4. Identikit of the wine consumer in Sicily

The study conducted on the reference sample has been able to trace the profile-type on the consumer of wine in Sicily. Man, bachelor or graduate degree, over the age of fifty and among those belonging to the younger age group between 22 and 25 prefers red wine on a budget with which to purchase the bottle of quality wine even more than 10 euros if bought at Enoteca, less than 5 euros when purchased at a discount store.

The annual expenditure for the purchase of wine does not exceed 100 euros. This is the identikit of the wine consumer in Sicily. The research showed, among other things, that the consumer prefers the type of wine consumed at home or in a restaurant. With regard to the distribution channels, the consumer-type prefers to buy the bottle from the manufacturer, preferring the short chain, and researching the quality of the product, even if there is a high proportion of subjects that buy at the supermarket.

Among the factors that determine the process of consumption choice, the market survey showed that the area of origin for the majority is synonymous with quality. This is an aspect of particular importance that reinforces even more the need to link the image of the area to the product. The consumer research was thus realized through the official recognition of a quality wine brand.

5. Conclusions

Over the years the business strategies of the wine sector have focused mainly on improving the quality demonstrated by the recognition of a mark of national or Community origin. It is in the viticulture that we can reconstruct the quality as one of the most important models of multifunctionality of agriculture, not as only achieved by the primary function of producing food, but also other equally important functions, eg: environmental protection, landscape and environmental services, enhancing the attraction of tourism and the positive impact on the social territory.

All these phenomena may be partial to be easier and successful, if we develop the will to cooperate among the various manufacturers. The future of Italian viticulture will be closely linked to the activation or not of a collaborative process that encourages forms of integration not only horizontally but also vertically.

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