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## Wine purchasing: Planned or unplanned behaviour?

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# **Wine purchasing: Planned or unplanned behaviour?**

## **Abstract**

This exploratory research examines the planned and unplanned wine purchasing behaviour of consumers across four nations and identifies the factors that influence whether wine is a planned or unplanned purchase. A structured questionnaire and intercept interview technique were used to obtain information from 399 respondents inside supermarkets, liquor stores and specialty wine stores in New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The findings reveal that a majority of consumers do plan to purchase wine before they enter a store. Discounted prices and bottle or label designs were more important to those consumers who made unplanned wine purchases. Factors such as wine knowledge, wine involvement and various demographic characteristics were found to have no significant influence on the proportion of planned to unplanned wine purchasing behaviour. This research suggests to marketers that discount pricing is a strategy that can lead consumers to making unplanned wine purchase decisions.

**Keywords:** planned, unplanned, purchasing, wine

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## **1 Introduction**

Increased unplanned purchasing behaviour by consumers, especially in supermarkets, has gained the attention of both manufacturers and retailers (Abratt & Goodey, 1990). This has resulted in marketers allocating substantial budgets for in-store promotional activities in order to encourage unplanned purchasing behaviours (Bell, Corsten & Knox 2009).

Unplanned purchasing has also interested many academic researchers and is a topic that has been debated over a long period of time (Bucklin & Lattin, 1991; Hausman, 2000; Kollat & Willet, 1967; Wood, 1998).

Unplanned purchasing is an important topic because it accounts for a considerable level of total consumer spending. Kollat and Willet (1967) first identified the significance of unplanned purchasing, suggesting that it accounted for around fifty percent of total purchases. Later research has revealed that unplanned purchasing could account for up to eighty percent of total purchases in certain product categories (Abrahams, 1997; Smith, 1996). According to Mogelonsky (1998) approximately \$4.1 billion of total annual sales in the United States are generated from unplanned purchases. However, some researchers argue that the concept of unplanned purchasing lacks depth (Bell, Corsten & Knox 2009; Inman, Winer & Ferraro, 2009) and needs further examination. One criticism is that studies of unplanned behaviour have mostly focused on supermarkets and the purchasing of grocery products (Block & Morwitz, 1999; Han et al., 1991).

In terms of wine, the last decade has seen significant global growth in both supply and demand, leading to strong competition among wine producers. Production and consumption levels have especially increased in 'New World' countries such as the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and Chile (Anderson, 2004). The competitive nature of the global wine market and the huge array of wine brands available to consumers have increased the complexity of the purchasing decision for wine consumers (Lockshin, 2005). In order to survive in a competitive market, wine marketers spend significant amounts on advertising and on in-store promotions. Previous studies have indicated that in-store stimuli are only effective on unplanned consumer purchases (Abelson, 1976; Block & Morwitz, 1999), but no research has been found to have examined the specific level of unplanned purchasing behaviour among wine consumers.

This study addresses this gap by examining the level of planned and unplanned wine purchase decisions made by consumers across four nations. In addition, this study examines whether planned or unplanned wine purchase decisions are influenced by factors such as the consumption situation, product knowledge, product involvement or demographic characteristics. This paper begins by assessing the literature regarding unplanned consumer purchasing behaviour and developing hypotheses that flow from this literature. Subsequent sections include details of the method adopted by this study, analysis and discussion of the results, and presentation of the conclusions.

## **2 Planned and unplanned purchasing**

Planned purchases are rational and reasoned decisions that are made by consumers who intended to purchase when they entered a store or website. A central factor of planned

purchasing behaviour is the consumer's *intention* to perform the purchasing act (Ajzen, 1991). Bucklin and Lattin (1991) defined a planned purchase as one in which the consumer, before entering a store, had already decided to make a purchase. When making a planned purchase, a consumer will identify their needs, set a budget, attain information and evaluate the various product or brand options (East, 1997; Vianelli et al., 2007). This rational decision making process means that planned purchases thus involve a longer timeframe and greater information search than do unplanned purchases. Abelson (1976) stated that during planned purchases, information such as in-store stimuli will have minimal effect on the consumer. This is because the consumer who has planned a purchase carries a script or mental image of the tasks to be done whilst in the store (Block & Morwitz, 1999). However, it is unlikely that consumers would have a script for every possible purchase situation and this can lead to impulse or unplanned purchasing behaviour (Kollat & Willet, 1967; Park, Iyer & Smith, 1989).

Unplanned purchasing has been the focus of many previous consumer behaviour studies (Cobb & Hoyer, 1988; Hausman, 2000; Kollat & Willet, 1967; Raju, 1980). The major differences between planned and unplanned purchase decisions are the length of time involved and the amount of information search performed by the consumer (Lee & Kacen, 2000). An unplanned purchase is also more likely to involve a degree of emotion, whereas planned decisions are rational in nature. Unplanned purchasing has been defined as occurring when a consumer deviates from the rational or reasoned decision-making process, usually resulting in lower overall satisfaction (Kollat & Willet, 1967). Although several researchers agree with this definition (Cobb & Hoyer, 1988; Stern, 1962), others have suggested that an unplanned purchase does not necessarily result in dissatisfaction (Rook & Fisher, 1995). Prasad (1975) defined an unplanned purchase as being a purchase that is made without any deliberate planning before entering the store. Another way to describe an unplanned purchase is one in which there is no script involved. In other words the consumer enters a store without the product being noted on either a written list or on a mental list.

Several factors have been found to influence the likelihood or level of unplanned purchasing behaviour. Wood (1998) maintained that unplanned purchasing usually occurs due to a lack of planning, heightened emotion, and less time for deliberation. Lee and Kacen (2000) also note the shortened timeframe involved with unplanned purchasing and the lack of deliberate and thoughtful consideration of all information and choice alternatives. Unplanned purchasing is particularly influenced by information such as store layout, point of purchase displays, price discounts and other in-store stimuli (Bucklin & Lattin, 1991). Marketers and retailers thus spend a significant amount on these in-store activities in order to encourage unplanned purchasing behaviour. Encouraging such behaviour is particularly important when the significance of unplanned purchasing is considered.

Previous studies have indicated that unplanned purchasing accounts for more than 60% of the shopping done in supermarket or grocery stores (Block & Morwitz, 1999; Han et al., 1991; Underhill, 2000). In some product categories unplanned purchasing has been reported to be as high as 80% (Abrahams, 1997; Smith, 1996). According to Kollat & Willet (1967) consumers plan their purchases of staple food items more they do for non-staple

foods. Consumers also tend to do higher levels of unplanned purchasing when they shop in stores they are not familiar with (Park et.al., 1989).

A study (Wyllie et al., 1993) reported that the introduction of wine in grocery outlets resulted in an increased level of unplanned purchasing. Wine is now typically available in supermarkets and grocery stores in most developed nations (Lockshin, 2005). In the UK and US markets, almost 70% of all wine sales are made in supermarkets or grocery stores. In contrast, wine sales are not legally permitted in supermarket or grocery stores in Australia. Abratt and Goodey (1990) reported that the incidence of unplanned purchasing in supermarkets varied according to the product category and that forty-six percent of wine buying was unplanned. Although there is much previous research on unplanned and planned purchasing of items in grocery stores, supermarkets and fashion outlets, no study has focused exclusively on planned and unplanned wine purchasing at the time of actual purchase. Based on the reviewed literature, and the high percentage of wine that is sold through supermarkets or grocery stores, the first hypothesis is thus:

**H<sub>1</sub>: The majority of wine purchase decisions will be unplanned.**

To the author's knowledge, no previous research has examined whether the proportion of planned to unplanned purchasing varies across countries. However, there has been some research that suggests culture may have an influence on planned and unplanned purchasing behaviour. Kacen and Lee (2002) reported that Asian consumers were less likely than Caucasians to engage in impulsive buying behaviour, but Asians were more likely to engage in impulsive buying as a response to emotional feelings. Later research revealed different reasons for impulsive buying behaviour depending on whether consumers were from individualistic cultures or collectivist cultures (Kacen & Lee, 2008). Despite the cultural influences identified by Kacen and Lee (2002), the countries that are examined within this study are not culturally different to a significant extent, and thus the following hypothesis has been developed:

**H<sub>2</sub>: Unplanned purchasing of wine will not vary significantly across countries.**

The concept of the consumption situation is considered to be an important one when understanding variation in consumer behaviour (Kleine & Kernan, 1991). Belk (1974) defined a situation as comprising all the factors particular to a time and place of observation that have a demonstrable and systematic effect on consumer behaviour. Lai (1991) identified three specific types of situations that influence consumer behaviour; the communication situation, the purchase situation and the consumption situation. Consumption situations are the very reasons for which products are created and marketed (Fennell, 1978). This study focuses solely on the consumption situation, or in other words, the specific end-use situation for which a wine purchase is made.

Hall and Lockshin (2000) reported that the consumption situation plays a role in the importance of various product attributes and the final selection of a wine. For example, a higher price is paid by a consumer if they are purchasing wine for a special occasion such as a special dinner or an important business meeting, while lower prices are more important to consumers who are purchasing wine for a more informal consumption situation (Charters,

2006; Lockshin, 2005). Rook and Fisher (1995) revealed that emotions and moods are strongly linked with unplanned purchasing behaviour. Emotions and moods would likely vary across different consumption situations too, and thus the following hypothesis has been developed:

**H<sub>3</sub>: The consumption situation will significantly influence whether wine purchases are planned or unplanned decisions.**

Consumers will utilise a number of product attributes when they evaluate and select a product to purchase. Product attributes are particularly important for wine purchases, where the consumer is unable to evaluate quality or drinkability of the product until after the bottle is opened (Barber, Dodd & Ghiselli, 2008; Chaney, 2000). Wine consumers evaluate extrinsic attributes such as price, packaging, brand name, and country or region of origin, as well as intrinsic cues such as the alcohol content or grape varietal (Dodds & Monroe 1985; Szybillo & Jacoby 1974). Product attributes such as price and country or region of origin are used by wine consumers as heuristic cues to indicate product quality. From a rational point of view, it is assumed that consumers gather substantial information before making a purchase, but in the case of unplanned, impulsive or habitual purchases it is likely that consumers will evaluate very little product information prior to purchasing (Foxall 1983; Lockshin et.al., 2001). Based on these earlier results, this study hypothesises:

**H<sub>4</sub>: Fewer product attributes will be evaluated when consumers make an unplanned wine purchase decision.**

Previous research has identified the attributes that are important to consumers when they are selecting a wine to purchase (e.g. Batt & Dean, 2000; Charters, 2006; Jenster & Jenster, 1993; Lockshin & Hall, 2003). Keown and Casey (1995) identified ten product attributes that were important to wine purchasers in Northern Ireland, with country of origin, brand name and grape variety being the most important. McCutcheon, Bruwer and Li (2009) also reported that the origin of a wine was important because it gave a clue about monetary, emotional and social value to consumers. In a study of New Zealand wine consumers, Jaeger, Danaher and Brodie (2009) reported that previous tasting of a wine was the most important factor in making a purchase decision, followed by grape variety and brand. The importance of having tried a wine previously has been noted in other studies across multiple countries (Goodman, Lockshin & Cohen, 2007; Rasmussen & Lockshin, 1999). A number of studies have also revealed that price is a particularly important attribute for wine purchasers (Batt & Dean, 2000; Halstead, 2002; Hoffman, 2004; Jenster & Jenster, 1993; Rasmussen & Lockshin, 1999). In some studies, the wine brand name is ranked highly by consumers (Jaeger et al., 2009; McCutcheon et al., 2009) and in others the importance of the packaging or labelling attribute has been identified (Batt & Dean, 2000; Lockshin & Hall, 2003). These previous studies have asked consumers to list the attributes they typically evaluate when purchasing wine or to remember the attributes they have evaluated during a previous purchase; asking consumers to describe typical or remembered behaviour may be a reason for the variety of results presented in the literature.

In terms of wine, no previous research has been found that has determined whether different product attributes are evaluated by consumers depending on whether they are

making a planned or unplanned purchase. However, there are some studies for other product categories that do suggest a relationship between evaluated attributes and unplanned purchasing. Stern (1962) identified low price as one of the key factors that resulted in unplanned purchases. Unplanned purchasing has also been found to be triggered by sensory product attributes such as label design (Tifferet & Herstein, 2012). It is thus hypothesised that:

**H<sub>5</sub>: Evaluated product attributes will differ across planned and unplanned wine purchase decisions.**

Previous research suggests that product knowledge plays an important role in how consumers process information and use it to make purchase decisions (Liang, Liang & Duan, 2008; Lin & Chen, 2006; Philippe & Ngobo, 1999). Product knowledge consists of three distinct constructs: subjective knowledge, objective knowledge and familiarity or experience (Brucks, 1985; Dodd et al., 2005). Subjective knowledge is the knowledge the consumer thinks they have about a product category, while objective knowledge is the actual knowledge a consumer has. Familiarity or experience is a construct which, as the name implies, comes with the experience of using a product category. These constructs are interrelated and often used interchangeably by researchers (Raju, Lonial & Mangold, 1993; Rao & Monroe, 1988).

Product knowledge has been found to be an important influence on wine purchasing decisions (Beverland, 2003; Gluckman, 1990; Mitchell & Hall, 2001). In particular, wine knowledge and wine consumption have been reported as being positively related with each other (Famularo, Bruwer & Li, 2010; Hussain, Cholette & Castaldi, 2007; Johnson & Bruwer, 2003). A study of New Zealand consumers (Beverland, 2003) indicated that those with higher product knowledge prefer to buy high quality wines and spend a high proportion of their income on wines. According to Orth (2002), consumers with low product knowledge were more likely to evaluate the medals attribute when making a wine purchase decision.

In an empirical study, Liang et al. (2006) reported that consumers with high product knowledge are more cautious about their product selection and evaluate products more thoroughly before purchase. Liang et al. (2006) also revealed that consumers with high product knowledge were more likely to plan their purchases than to make unplanned purchases. Based on this it is hypothesised that:

**H<sub>6</sub>: Consumers with high product knowledge will be less likely to engage in unplanned wine purchasing behaviour.**

Product involvement is another concept that has been found to influence consumer behaviour (Brisoux & Cheron, 1990; Celsi & Olson, 1988; Quester & Smart, 1996; Sherif & Cantril, 1947). Product involvement has been conceptualised as the interest that a consumer has for a particular product class and the degree to which it is important to them (Goldsmith, D'Hauteville, & Flynn, 1998).

Wine purchasing behaviour has been found to be significantly influenced by the level of the consumers' involvement with wine (Lockshin et al., 1997; Quester & Smart 1996). High



involvement consumers tend to evaluate more informational attributes about wine than low involvement consumers, who simplify their purchases to reduce perceived risk (Lockshin & Hall, 2003). This is supported by Charters and Pettigrew (2006) who reported that low involvement consumers were more likely to judge a wine by appearance criteria. It has also been reported that high involvement consumers drink more wine than low involvement consumers (Dodd, Pinkelton, & Gustafson, 1996; Goldsmith, d'Hautville & Flynn, 1998).

Previous research suggests that product involvement can lead to unplanned purchasing, as consumers who are involved with a product category are more likely to produce emotions when they see the product in a store (Jones et al., 2003). These emotions lead to unplanned purchasing behaviour (Rook & Hoch, 1985). A study of cloth purchasing (Chen, 2008) reported that product involvement led to higher unplanned purchasing behaviour. Although no previous research has been found to have examined whether product involvement will influence planned or unplanned wine purchasing behaviour, based on the literature reported herein, it is hypothesised that:

**H<sub>7</sub>: Consumers with high product involvement will be more likely to engage in unplanned wine purchasing behaviour.**

Demographic characteristics are important segmentation variables and have been found to have varying effects on consumer behaviour in general. Several studies have shown that unplanned purchasing behaviour varies with consumer age (Bell, Corsten & Knox 2009; Bellenger, Robertson, & Hirschman 1978; Inman, Ferraro & Winer, 1998; Wood, 1998). Wood (1998) found that as the age of US consumers increased, their unplanned purchasing behaviour decreased. Similarly, Bellenger, et.al. (1978) reported that consumers under the age of 35 were more likely to make unplanned purchase decisions than those who were aged over 35. In a multi-national study, Kacen and Lee (2002) reported that getting older reduced impulsive buying behaviour amongst Asian consumers but had no significant effect on Caucasians.

Several studies of unplanned purchasing behaviour have suggested that females show a greater tendency to make unplanned purchases than males (Dittmar, Beattie & Friese, 1995; Kollat & Willet, 1967; Wood, 1998). However, Cobb and Hoyer (1988) revealed that women tend to plan more and men are more likely to make unplanned purchase decision, while Hausman (2000) found no significant relationship between gender and unplanned purchasing.

Very little previous research has been found that has considered the relationship between education or income levels and unplanned purchasing behaviour. The exception is Gutierrez (2004), who found no significant relationships between unplanned purchasing behaviour and either education or income levels. Whilst there is also a lack of literature that has examined the influence of age, gender, education or income on the unplanned or planned purchasing of wine, the following hypotheses have been developed based on the literature reported herein:

**H<sub>8a</sub>: Older consumers will be less likely to engage in unplanned wine purchasing behaviour.**

**H<sub>8b</sub>: Female consumers will be more likely to engage in unplanned wine purchasing behaviour.**

**H<sub>8c</sub>: Education level will have no influence on unplanned wine purchasing behaviour.**

**H<sub>8d</sub>: Income level will have no influence on unplanned wine purchasing behaviour.**

### **3 Method**

This exploratory study collected quantitative data from individual respondents in four countries (i.e. New Zealand, Australia, the UK and USA) through an interviewer-administered questionnaire. The interviews were performed in natural market settings inside supermarkets, liquor stores and specialty wine stores during various times of the day and days of the week. Respondents were intercepted just after they selected a bottle of wine to purchase and were thus questioned about their actual purchase decision rather than being required to recall typical or previous wine purchasing behaviour. This method helped the study to identify *actual* purchase behaviour and to reduce the likelihood of any response biases. Previous researchers have noted that consumers may not be able to accurately remember or describe past behaviours (Desai, 2002; Grunert, 1986). Kollat et al. (1970) noted the value of analysing the decisions made by consumers in genuine purchase situations. The final sample consisted of 399 respondents from a total of 647 who were approached by the interviewer (62 percent response rate).

The questionnaire developed for this study was designed using a three-phased pre-testing approach. In the first phase the validity of each construct was reviewed by expert participants, followed by a second phase in which the validity was reviewed by a non-expert panel. The non-expert panel examined their understanding of each question and ensured the wording of the questionnaire was clear and not ambiguous. Finally, the questionnaire was pilot-tested by interviewing respondents in a liquor store. A few minor changes were made to the questionnaire as a result of the pre-testing phases.

The respondents were asked if the wine they had just selected was a planned or unplanned purchase decision. Questions were also asked to identify which consumption situation the wine would be used in and the attributes that were evaluated by the respondent. The list of wine consumption situations were developed from previous research (e.g. Hall & Lockshin, 1999), as was the list of product attributes that could have been evaluated by the respondents (e.g. Morey, Sparks & Wilkins, 2002; Quester & Smart; 1998). Wine knowledge was measured across both objective and subjective constructs. Wine involvement was measured using a 5-item Likert-scale developed from earlier research (Lockshin et al., 2001; Mittal & Lee, 1989; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Individual demographic information was collected through categorical responses. The collected data were analysed in SPSS, with significance being tested at the .05 level.

## 4 Results and discussion

The sample of 399 respondents is described, in terms of their demographic characteristics, in Table 1. Of the total sample, 54 percent of respondents were interviewed in New Zealand, 20 percent in Australia, 15 percent in the UK and 11 percent in the US.

**Table 1: Sample description**

<i>Gender:</i>		<i>Education:</i>	
Male	51%	High School	28%
Female	49%	Trade/Tech qual.	16%
<i>Age:</i>		Undergrad degree	31%
18-24	5%	Postgrad degree	24%
25-34	15%	<i>Income:</i>	
35-44	22%	Very low	5%
45-54	25%	Low	12%
55-64	19%	Middle	49%
65+	15%	High	26%
		Very high	8%

The first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) stated that the majority of wine purchase decisions will be unplanned. This hypothesis was developed from literature reporting that high levels of purchasing are unplanned, particularly in supermarkets where the majority of wine sales now occur (e.g. Block & Morwitz, 1999; Underhill, 2000). However, this study reveals that 87.5 percent of all wine purchase decisions were actually planned decisions;  $H_1$  is not supported. This finding suggests that the majority of wine purchasing decisions are made rationally by consumers who had included the product of wine on a written or mental list of items to purchase before they had entered a store. As a product category, wine appears to be an exception to the high levels of unplanned purchasing inside supermarkets, as reported in previous research (Abrahams, 1997; Block & Morwitz, 1999; Han et al., 1991; Smith, 1996; Underhill, 2000). Although wine is an important product to many consumers, it may be taking this finding too far to suggest that it relates to Kollat and Willet's (1967) suggestion that planned purchase are more likely for 'staple food items'.

$H_2$  examined whether unplanned wine purchasing would vary across countries. A cross-tabulation statistic revealed there was a significant difference in the planned wine purchasing of consumers across New Zealand, Australia, the UK and US; this provides support for  $H_2$ . Further ANOVA analysis revealed a significant between groups difference ( $p=.034$ ). In particular this study found that Australian consumers are significantly more likely than New Zealand or British consumers to plan their wine purchasing. Although this study did not seek to understand the reasons behind planned wine purchasing, this finding is likely to relate to wine not being sold through supermarket or grocery store outlets in Australia. As the product category is not available in these stores, Australian consumers have to make a specific trip to a general liquor store or specialty wine store in order to make a purchase; and thus the purchase is much more likely to be a planned one.

The third hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) stated that the consumption situation would significantly influence whether the wine purchase decision was a planned or unplanned one. This study found

support for H<sub>3</sub>. Respondents were significantly more likely to make a planned wine purchase for four specific consumption situations: 'party/celebration', 'business related', 'meal with friends' and 'gift giving'. All of these are public consumption situations in which a consumer would be likely to feel a degree of stress or risk associated with making the right purchase decision; for this reason a consumer would be likely to think about their wine purchase prior to entering a store. In contrast, unplanned purchasing was more likely to be associated with four private or informal consumption situations: 'drink with partner/spouse', 'meal with partner/spouse', 'drink by oneself' and 'outdoor BBQ/picnic'. In these situations, it is likely that a consumer, who is already inside a store, sees wine on display and simply picks up a bottle to consume that night by themselves or with a partner.

H<sub>4</sub> suggested that fewer product attributes would be evaluated by a consumer during an unplanned wine purchase decision. Chi-square analysis reveals that there is no significant relationship between the number of attributes evaluated by the respondent during their purchase decision and whether they made a planned or unplanned wine purchase ( $\chi^2 = 4.711, p = .318$ ). H<sub>4</sub> is not supported. This result suggests that respondents evaluate a similar number of attributes (on average) when they are making a decision about which wine to purchase, regardless of whether or not they had intended to purchase wine before they entered the store. It cannot, therefore, be assumed that those who are making an unplanned wine purchase are spending a lesser amount of time and effort evaluating the merits of a wine's attributes prior to making a decision.

The fifth hypothesis (H<sub>5</sub>) examined whether the evaluated product attributes would differ across planned and unplanned purchase decisions. This study has found support for H<sub>5</sub>. Cross-tabulation and chi-square statistics revealed that consumers who didn't plan their wine purchases were significantly more likely to consider the discount price attribute ( $p = .000$ ) and the bottle/label attribute ( $p = .027$ ). These results substantiate the findings of Stern (1962) who suggested that low prices are a key factor in unplanned purchasing and Tifferet and Herstein (2012) who reported that sensory product attributes such as label design could trigger unplanned purchasing behaviour. Although the majority of wine purchases are planned ones, nevertheless this result is important in terms of identifying attributes that can contribute to unplanned purchasing. Bottle or label designs that attract attention and price discounts are attributes that are under the control of wine marketers and can therefore be utilised to increase sales through unplanned purchases.

H<sub>6</sub> stated that consumers with high product knowledge would be less likely to engage in unplanned purchasing behaviour. H<sub>7</sub> stated that those consumers most involved with the product category of wine would be more likely to engage in unplanned purchasing behaviour. The findings do not provide support for either H<sub>6</sub> or H<sub>7</sub>. These results differ from earlier studies that have suggested consumers with high product knowledge would be more likely to make planned purchases (e.g. Liang et al., 2006) and those with high product involvement would be more likely to engage in unplanned purchasing behaviour (e.g. Chen, 2008). In the case of wine, neither product knowledge or product involvement influences the likelihood of planned or unplanned wine purchasing.

The final hypotheses (H<sub>8a</sub> – H<sub>8d</sub>) sought to identify the influence of age, gender, education and income on unplanned wine purchasing behaviour. The results do not provide support

for any of these four hypotheses; planned versus unplanned wine purchase decisions are not significantly influenced by the consumers' age, gender, education or income level. The findings are aligned with those of Hausman (2000) who found no significant relationship between gender and unplanned purchasing behaviour and Gutierrez (2004) who reported similarly that education and income have no influence on unplanned purchasing. Conversely, the findings are not aligned with previous research that has reported unplanned purchasing behaviour as decreasing with age (e.g. Bell, Corsten & Knox, 2009; Bellenger et al., 1978; Inman, Ferraro & Winer, 1998; Wood, 1998). For the product of wine, age has no significant influence on whether the consumer makes a planned or unplanned purchase.

## **5 Conclusions**

This study reports an unexpected dominance of planned purchasing among wine consumers, which is quite contradictory to previous research on unplanned purchasing behaviour. Although previous researchers have reported that a high number of products in supermarkets or grocery stores are purchased by consumers without prior planning (e.g. Abrahams, 1997; Block & Morwitz, 1999; Smith, 1996; Underhill, 2000), wine appears to be an exception to the rule. What is apparent though is that the low level of unplanned wine purchases reported by respondents in this study were typically performed in the countries where wine was able to be sold through supermarkets or grocery stores. In Australia, where wine is not sold through supermarkets or grocery stores, there was an even higher level of planned purchasing behaviour. There is little doubt that the place of purchase does have an influence on the degree of unplanned purchasing behaviour.

In particular this study has expanded current knowledge by highlighting the important relationship between consumption situations and purchasing behaviour. The nature of the consumption situation, especially whether it is a public or private one, significantly influences the likelihood of a wine being purchased in a planned or unplanned manner. Public situations are clearly aligned with planned wine purchases, whilst private or more informal consumption situations were most likely to be related to unplanned wine purchasing. It is clear that when consumers are involved with a public consumption situation, such as a party, a business related event, a meal with friends, or a gift giving occasion, they are more likely to take the time to think about the need to purchase a wine before they enter a store. It is also likely that consumers engaged in these public consumption situations have made some preliminary decisions about attributes such as wine type, varietal, country or origin and price range prior to entering a store; further research would be needed to verify this.

This study has also increased knowledge of the relationships between evaluated product attributes and unplanned purchasing behaviour. Price discounts and label designs are correlated with unplanned wine purchases. For wine marketers, the use of price discounts, particularly within supermarkets or grocery stores, is a strategy that can be used to increase unplanned wine purchasing behaviour. In addition, attractive or attention grabbing bottle or label designs are another strategy that may increase unplanned wine purchases.

Whilst the consumption situation influences the likelihood of planned or unplanned purchasing behaviour, individual consumer characteristics appear to have very little influence. The product knowledge, product involvement, age, gender, education and income levels of wine purchasers are not factors that trigger unplanned purchasing. Again, these results help to reinforce the importance of the consumption situation as a significant influencer on the behaviour of wine purchasers. If the wine industry can increase the amount of wine consumed in private or informal consumption situations (e.g. an everyday meal), the level of unplanned wine purchases and total wine sales will likely increase, regardless of individual consumer characteristics.

This study is limited by the small sample of 399 respondents selected for interviews in six cities. It is implausible to claim that this sample is representative of all wine consumers in all regions of the four countries included in the study; nevertheless the sample does provide an indication of the likely purchasing behaviour and was sufficient given the exploratory nature of this study.

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