



**Quality Attributes of Wine Products: an Explorative Study of Consumers' Buying Motivation Through a *Means-End Chains* Approach**  
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### **Research objectives**

In the last few years, the interaction between more conscious consumers and wine supply chain actors, has influenced the complex, and somewhere trendy, phenomenon of wine consumption. In Europe, the growing number of wine clubs and associations, the attention devoted to wine on every media channel, and the plethora of wine fairs born everywhere show the cultural importance of wine consumption behaviour.

From the researcher point of view the complexity of this issue is well known: there is considerable empirical evidence that consumers, in purchasing a specific food or wine product, express a preference for certain attributes (colour, size, region of origin...) that are considered quality cues (signals) of the whole product. For this reason Steenkamp in 1989 clarified the concept of perceived quality in food markets as the mediation between product's characteristics and consumer's preferences. This means that quality perception depends on an individual evaluation that is strictly related to the environment and the specific consumption situation and that can be based on incomplete information (Holm, Kildevang, 1996). The discovery of subjective and objective dimension and how they interrelate each other can be an important issue to determine the profitability of firms in the long period. As stated by Lockshin (2003) wine quality can be based on perceptions, such as price, recommendations of friends or experts, or the label. But the levels of involvement and knowledge can be determinants of searched information and consequently of quality perception and buying behaviour. Thus, the understanding of different consumers' quality perception is a mainstream for both researchers and managers who deal with the wine market.