



University of
South Australia

Ehrenberg-Bass
Institute for Marketing Science

A bottle by any other name...

What effect do product and
messaging attributes have
on the choice of low-carbon
wine packaging?

Jakob Mesidis

Bachelor of Marketing and Communications
Thesis submitted for the degree of Masters by
Research (Marketing), April 2022

Supervisors:

Dr. Bill Page
Prof. Larry Lockshin
Assoc. Prof. Armando Maria Corsi
Dr. Justin Cohen



Acknowledgements

I've spent majority of my time writing this thesis making my writing less flowery. Well, now that we have got that nonsense out of the way, excuse me while I talk very flowerily about the people and places that have made this thing possible.

Firstly, and most importantly, the supervisors. I cannot thank you enough for your support over the past two years. To Larry, your sage-like presence and ceaseless optimism throughout this journey has been invaluable. I've read some acknowledgements from other theses and often see you lauded for your big-picture thinking. I wanted to come up with something more original, but they really are right.

To Armando, the patron saint of DCEs and stats, your ability to provide a remedy to any issue (and make it seem like the easiest thing in the world) really helped make this whole process a lot less stressful, and a lot more enjoyable.

To Justin, the final boss of feedback. You're one of the most intelligent people I've ever had the pleasure of meeting, and your ability to spot even the tiniest of holes in my thinking has been invaluable in making me a better researcher.

And last, but certainly not least, Bill. How fortuitous it was to have had you as a lead supervisor. Despite all this floweriness, I struggle to find the words to sufficiently express my gratitude for all your help. So I'll just say this: thank you for your pragmatism, thank you for your humour, and thank you for bringing a human element to the oft-clinical academic world. And the music recommendations, they were good too.

An immense thank you must also go to Mr Wolf Blass AM and the Wolf Blass Foundation, who's generous funding made this research and my candidature possible. Thank you for seeing the value in this topic and helping bring it to life—your contributions to the Australian wine industry will be felt for years to come.

To my colleagues at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, thank you for the shared wisdom, the experience, and the opportunity to cut my teeth with the best. It has absolute pleasure to work at here and be part of the big changes that the Institute is helping motivate in the world of marketing.

To my fellow HDRs (past and present), what a ride. Thank you for some of the most truly bizarre adventures I've had the pleasure of being on. It was the shared drinks and laughs that made coming into the office something to look forward to. Don't miss me too much.

To the friends and family who have had to endure me ranting about bottles and significance testing for the past two years, thank you for your patience. We will now get back to our regularly scheduled programming.

A final few acknowledgements: I'd like to thank Pink \$ock for the music and Julie Pallant for her SPSS survival manual. I'd also like to dedicate this thesis to the little oasis over yonder, the Grace Emily Hotel—I'll see you all on Friday.

Anyway, enough of that. Time to get this show on the road—enjoy!

Declaration

I declare that this thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.

.....
Jakob Mesidis
April 2022

1 Abstract

Despite often being considered natural and non-polluting, the wine industry produces carbon dioxide emissions much like any other industry (Abbott et al. 2016). While the industry has made great progress in the vineyard and winery to reduce its carbon emissions, the largest area of carbon emissions has not yet been tackled head on. This area is the production, transportation, and filling of conventional glass wine bottles, which accounts for over two-thirds of the Australian wine industry's total CO₂ output (Abbott et al. 2016).

The most obvious solution to this issue is to change the packaging format and material. Most alternative wine packages are 40-51% more carbon efficient than their glass counterparts (Abbott et al. 2016; Amienyo et al. 2014; Detzel & Mönckert 2009; Roux & Gérard 2014; Smithers 2019). However, for winemakers, there is little literature to provide them with evidence of how moving towards more sustainable practices will affect their business (Baird et al. 2018). Additionally, previous research on alternative wine packaging has found that less familiar wine packages and wine packaging attributes are less preferred than more familiar options (Nesselhauf et al. 2017; Stanco et al. 2020). Given that low-carbon wine packaging appears to be facing an uphill battle (despite being the most effective pathway to reducing the wine industry's carbon emissions), the question for winemakers becomes how they can get consumers to choose these packages on the shelf.

The thesis aims to start to answer this question. There are three factors that may positively influence consumer choice of low-carbon wine packaging. The first factor relates to product attributes. The most obvious attribute this thesis examines is packaging format. The second product attribute examined is price. The final product attribute examined is brand.

The next set of factors that can be used to positively influence packaging choice are messaging attributes. The literature indicates that consumers have clear preferences as to what types of sustainability attributes they value most. Specifically, consumers value end-of-life attributes (such as recyclability or biodegradability) more than early or mid-life attributes (such as reduced carbon emissions in manufacturing or transport) (Herbes et al. 2018; Steenis et al. 2018; Van Dam 1996). Despite the difference in preference for these attributes having been established in the literature, they have not been tested as competing messaging devices.

The second messaging attribute examined is how the message is structured (i.e., the appeal). Abstract appeals, which are more simplistic and vague in nature, are purportedly better suited for hedonic categories (such as wine) (Hansen & Wänke, 2011), and have been found to help increase a consumer's likelihood to buy. However, concrete appeals, which are much more specific and detailed, have been found to be more common in industry and generally preferred by consumers (Atkinson & Rosenthal 2014; Davis 1993).

The final area that this thesis examines is the role that consumer characteristics play in how each of these attributes affect low-carbon wine packaging choice.

To answer these questions, a discrete choice experiment was created. This was actioned by the creation of choice sets simulating a store shelf with a variety of wine products available. Each of the products differed in the attributes mentioned above. 1201 Australian wine consumers (a nationally representative sample) were provided with contextual information regarding the choice they were going to make, and were prompted to pick which wine option they would most likely purchase. This data was then analysed via latent class analysis, to identify what the key motivators were in wine consumer packaging choices, and if there were any groups of consumers that differed in their choices. This also allowed for differences in the characteristics of the classes to be tested, helping uncover the role that consumer characteristics play in making certain attributes more influential.

The findings show that package format is the most important attribute in influencing low carbon wine package choice (in retail contexts that have multiple package types available), even more so than price. Price is the second most influential attribute, with brand and messaging attributes being of considerably lesser importance. The latent class analysis revealed that there are two classes of consumers who differ in what extent each of the attributes influences their choice. This highlights the heterogeneity of the market, giving winemakers insights into how they might best optimise their low carbon packaging wine's marketing mix to appeal to as many consumers as possible.