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Embracing globalization or reinforcing national culture? Evidence on the alcoholic beverages preferences and drinking motives in Europe.

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EMBRACING GLOBALIZATION OR REINFORCING NATIONAL CULTURE? EVIDENCE ON THE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES PREFERENCES AND DRINKING MOTIVES IN EUROPE.

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Abstract

Culture is commonly used as the principal explanation for consumer differences across countries, so research on its differential impact on consumer preferences and motives is fundamentally important. This study examines the role of cultural and sociodemographic influences in determining the differences between drinking cultures and drinking motives in Europe. Comparing eight countries (Italy, France, Portugal, Germany, Finland, United Kingdom, Turkey and Poland) through a one-way ANOVA and a two-way ANOVA, the author analyse and compare the roles of sociodemographic variables and national culture have on several drinking motives (social and enhancement) and on consumer preferences (alcohol consumption and type of beverage). The type of drinker (moderate or heavy) is also taken into consideration. Results show significant differences between gender, age, type of drinker and countries for most motives. Moreover, although some results confirm the traditional or “stereotype” countries drinking profiles, other results also suggest some insights to certain country profiles changing in unexpected ways. The paper outlines theoretical implications in cross-cultural research and alcoholic drinking motives. It also explores a further understanding on the motives behind alcohol consumption of European consumers, which could usefully inform policy that aims to promote a sensible drinking behaviour among its population.

Key words: drinking motives, cross-cultural, alcohol consumption, consumer preferences.

1. Introduction

Alcohol is a psychoactive substance with dependence-producing properties that only in 2012 was responsible for 139 million DALYs (disability-adjusted life years), 5.1% of the global burden of disease and injury, and 3.3 million deaths (5.9%) worldwide (World Health Organization, 2014). On the other hand, its use has been also an integral part of human kind and of several cultures since thousands of years; either for its therapeutic properties – relieving pain or stopping infection – or for its psychological and social benefits. Its use and type has varied from one culture to another, whether to communicate with the gods and ancestors through wine of the Eucharist or to present beer to the Sumerian goddess Ninkasi (McGovern, 2009).

Cultures have evolved and with them the use and consumption of alcoholic beverages. In a study developed by Askegaard & Madsen (1998), the authors identify twelve general food cultures in Europe with their own specific characteristics, including their own practices and preferences for different alcoholic beverages. For example, French and Wallonian cultures attach much importance to the sensuous of gratification, show low interest for health motives and their drinking patterns are dominated by red wine and aperitifs. Germanic

cultures, on the other hand, are highly concerned with health issues and their drinking pattern is dominated by healthier drinks, white wine and schnapps. In Germanic food cultures there is an absence of the 'aperitif' ritual, usually reserved for only very big occasions. These differences reflect the local production and the diverse cultural background, as culture also defines the way in which consumers behave and satisfy their needs. In fact, according to the World Health Organization (2010), the decision to consume or abstain from alcohol will be predisposed by contextual factors such as religious affiliation, gender roles and cultural norms, highlighting the importance of culture in consumer behaviour.

The consumer behaviour is defined as the activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, and using products and services to satisfy needs and desires. It is a motivated behaviour aimed at achieving particular goals (Wilkie, 1990). But these activities are complex and varied, and on many occasions are full of peculiarities and inconsistencies from the consumers, which makes it more difficult to understand their behaviour (McNeal, 1969).

Research in the area of consumer behaviour has undergone major changes. Although initially the analysis of this topic was relegated to a psychological (Kassarjian, 1971; McGuire, 1976) or to an anthropologic approach (McCracken, 1990; Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983); luckily, with time, researchers have also recognized the importance of cultural influence on consumer behaviour (Craig & Douglas, 2006; Kacen & Lee, 2002; McCort & Malhotra, 1993). However, "the role of culture will take different forms according to the specific consumer behaviour context" (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007, p. 257).

The effects of culture on consumer behaviour are really powerful and far reaching (Craig & Douglas, 2006; Traill, 1997). Consumer choices that cannot be understood without considering the cultural context in which those choices are made (Luna & Forquer Gupta, 2001), as culture is the 'prism' through which people view products and try to make sense of them (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2006). A consumer's culture can determine the overall priorities or the different activities and products. For this reason, it is important to understand how culture affects consumer behaviour, in particular alcohol consumption, in order to develop and promote policies that take into consideration the cultural aspect of alcoholic consumption, but also prevent the development of heavy drinkers and related alcoholic problems.

Although culture has an important role regarding the consumer behaviour, consumer preferences are not static. The modern world is constantly changing and also the preferences of the consumers. With all the technological advances in communication and transportation, the increase in the spending power of many countries, globalization, megamergers, the low trade barriers and the convergence of income, media and technology; the rules of the game in the international markets are changing (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). For this reason, an endless discussion has emerged of whether the consumer behaviour is converging to a standardized one (Levitt, 1983; Szymanski, Bharadwaj, & Varadarajan, 1993) or if the different cultures still retain those characteristics that describe them and their region (de Mooij, 2003).

Researchers do not seem to reach consent on whether consumer preferences across nations are converging or not. This makes it more difficult to study and understand the role of culture on consumer behaviour and alcohol consumption. Understanding if consumers are converging or diverging and the effect of national culture on their behavior has important implications not only for marketers but also for small and medium enterprises, for productivity, growth, market integration and policy makers (Traill, 1997). However, the conventional literature regarding the topic is insufficient, particularly concerning alcohol consumption and the consumption motives behind it.

Previous research is mainly descriptive and theoretical. There is a lack of multidimensional studies and those works that go further in analyzing the topic frequently focus on food culture (Askegaard & Madsen, 1998) or are not developed at the European level (Kuntsche, von Fischer, & Gmel, 2008). There is almost no evidence on the standardization or divergence of alcohol consumption motives and preferences in Europe, nevertheless the importance of the topic for health policies as well as because the key role that alcohol beverages play in the regions culture. For this reason, the main objective of this work is to compare and to examine the differences between drinking cultures in Europe by analysing the potential influences of socio-demographic variables and national culture on drinking motives.

In order to achieve the aim of this research, an analysis of variance (Two way- ANOVA and one way-ANOVA) is employed to spot the predominant motives across a sample of eight selected nations (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Turkey and United Kingdom). Differences through gender and age are also explored. The goal with this procedure is not to be simply assembling statistics; but rather to translate statistical findings about consumers into clear results that permit the understanding and prediction of various dimensions of the consumer behaviour, as well as to allow the implementation and design of public policies according to each national culture and context.

The study starts with a critical literature review and the development of five hypotheses. An initial and general portrait of beverage culture and preferences in various European countries is identified and presented. The two-way ANOVA and one way-ANOVA would allow to identify key differences between countries and sociodemographic profiles. Results contribute in the debate whether beverage cultures across Europe are converging, diverging, or hybridizing. The discussion also gives some actionable advice to face with the right strategies this complex and changing environment through the creation and development of tailored policies according to each drinking culture. Limitations and further research are presented at the end.

2. Conceptual development

2.1 A world towards convergence?

In the modern times the rules of the international markets are changing. The interaction between different cultures and regions has become easier and more accessible. This has generated a discussion of whether the consumer behavior is converging into a standardized one or if the different cultures are still strongly attached to their roots. Similar markets can be approach with standardize products and marketing techniques (Shoham, Brencic, Virant, & Ruvio, 2008), while markets that differ between them, need to be addressed in a different way, adapting or customizing the marketing strategy. For this reason, it is important to understand which is the recent trend in global markets, and for the present research, in the European market.

On the side of those who advocate for a process towards standardization is Levitt (1983), who argues that the deep-rooted cultural differences are becoming more and more alike, or as the author says "homogenized". This tendency is driven by a force known as technology. It allready standarized communication, transport and travel, and now is achieving the emergence of global markets for standardized consumer products on a previously unimagined scale. The days of accustomed differences and national or regional preference are over. In fact, Mitry & Smith (2009) consider that cultural boundaries are becoming blurred and consumer preferences appear to be driven less by local and regional traditions, and more by global products and perceived brand identities. In this sense, standardization becomes the main driver of globalization strategies (Özsomer & Simonin, 2004).

Zou & Cavusgil (2002) agree that proponents of standardization believe that world markets are being homogenized by advances in communication and transportation technology. The authors also think that this process is confirmed by the increasingly similar preferences exhibited by customers in distant parts of the world on the demand of the same products. The global consumer culture is identified as the extent to which people are united by their common devotion to brands, consumer goods, film stars and rock stars (Solomon et al. 2006). So, the new optimum global marketing strategy to reach the global consumer is to sell standardized products using also standardized marketing techniques.

However, the “culturally rooted differences that shape consumer attitudes, needs, and expectations seem to remain the greatest impediment to standardization” (Özsomer & Simonin, 2004, p. 414). Cultural barriers seem to be persistent (Traill, 1997; Whitelock & Pimblett, 2008). Moreover, De Mooij (2010) considers that consumers embrace the internet and other new technologies mostly to enhance their current activities. In cold weather where people used to preserve food in the snow, they embraced deep-freeze technology more intensely. So, the internet and new technologies have not changed the consumer; on the contrary, they have reinforced existing habits that instead of converging, tend to diverge. Nevertheless, there is not much support in literature for this proposition, as most of the evidence seems to point to a certain level of convergence between consumers and nations (Vrontis, Thrassou, & Lamprianou, 2009).

A third approach proposes a hybrid solution, based on the fact that consumer behaviour is experiencing both phenomena, standardization and divergence. In fact, it considers that “...it is quite common for cultures to modify symbols identified with other cultures and present these to a new audience” (Solomon et al. 2006, p.498). This is known as a co-optation process, in which the original meanings are transformed and often trivialized by people outside the original culture. A clear example is the Guinness beer. In Ireland it can be seen as a national beer that a real Irishman drinks in the Pub after work, while in the rest of the world it is associated with trendiness.

This is the effect that the world is experiencing, a force that modifies attractive external cultural patterns according to national preferences, highlighting the national culture by introducing in it tailored symbols from a global macro-culture. However, European cultures are still not standardized. Indeed, it seems as if “...the culture scene is now witnessing two opposing, yet simultaneously occurring and reinforcing movements: the homogenization and heterogenization of cultures” (Cleveland & Laroche 2007, p.249) generating a hybrid culture. It is an interplay between the local and global context in which “...forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices” (Pieterse, 2006). The differentiating impact of globalization strengthens the national and ethnic identities, generating a kind of interaction between them, where rather than suppressing those differences, they are being promoted to reach at the end a hybridization of social life.

From this perspective, globalization emerges as an incomplete, uneven and contested process: an unfinished project whose contours are shaped by locally specific social and cultural practices (Jackson, 2004). If well there is a tendency of people liking similar music, movies and brands, many of the big companies still adapt their advertising to some countries. Multinational firms as Pepsi-Cola and Nestlé do not follow traditional world markets recipes, on the contrary, their practice is always much more adaptive and respectful of local contexts (Usunier, Lee, & Lee, 2005).

In the case of Europe, even if product usage and knowledge may be relatively shared among all nations, the contexts of acquisition, consumption, role and meaning of the product in daily life becomes colored by the local culture. In fact, the context, timing and the particular circumstances of the market can affect

consumer's trends (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007; Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003). "...Variables such as personal motivation, cultural context, family relation patterns and rhythms of everyday life, all still vary substantially..." (Solomon et al. 2006, p.12). While pubs have become popular all over the world, in the United Kingdom people still go to the Pub after work; while Cappuccino is drunk everywhere, in Italy consumers are used to have a cappuccino only until 11 am.

There are also some general profiles in Europe. Germany, Belgium, Austria, Denmark and Ireland are usually identified as beer cultures; while Italy, France, Portugal and Luxembourg are considered as wine cultures. Food and drink have in both cases an important role in social life. Their drinking occurs in connection with social activities and traditionally is not related to excess or to special occasions only. For example, wine may be used at religious ceremonies or at dinner each evening, beer on the beach or in a bar after working hours, carbonated drinks after sports or for children's birthday parties, and so on (Solomon et al., 2006).

The commonness of consumption situations will also vary across countries and among lifestyles, as each nation will have their own rituals involving drinking in diverse places and with different beverages. Therefore, it seems that there is a macro culture that is in the way of homogenization, but there are also micro cultures that still have an important influence on the consumer and should not be underestimated in the effect they can have.

2.2 Drinking Motives

Motivation is the processes that cause people to behave as they do. It refers to the "...drives, urges, wishes or desires which initiate the sequence of events known as behaviour" (Bayton 1969 in: Oddi 1986, p.3). In the field of motivation, researchers seek to explain why this behaviour occurs; at the end motivation is the basis for all consumer activities (Wilkie 1990). This does not imply to learn how to win consumers and influence them, but instead it does imply "...a more thorough understanding of the basic motives of man when he behaves like a consumer" (Britt 1950, p.666). There are many studies and reports on the alcohol market in Europe, showing which country consumes more amounts of it and which beverages are preferred; but the underlying motives are unknown.

Some authors base the concept of drinking motives on the assumption that "...people drink in order to attain certain valued outcomes" (Kuntsche et al. 2005, p.842). The decision whether to consume alcohol or not is a combination of an emotional and rational process, cultural and national influence, and the expected effects they want to achieve. Still, the expectations are not the best measure for drinking behaviour. Lyvers et al. (2010) conclude that drinking motives are more proximal predictors of drinking behaviour than outcome expectancies.

The consumer behind each motive belongs to a particular nationality and it is a member of a certain community. Each and every one of these social institutions has an "emotional pull" for him and by it, it is possible to find out about his basic loyalties, beliefs and prejudices that will help to obtain an adequate picture of the consumers (Britt, 1950) and their motives. However, the path that a person chooses is not only influenced by his or her own experiences, but also by their cultural, religious and national values.

Another reason for the validity of the drinking motive concept is demonstrated by the association between specific drinking motives and drinking situations. Every social situation is different from others and requires a separate analysis. This means that there is no such thing as a universal set of explanatory motives, yet

there is a need to develop some basic principles that will help to understand consumer buying. An example of motives can be for instance: positive appeals versus negative ones or suggestive appeals versus argumentative ones (Britt, 1950). Following the same pattern of motives but applying it on alcoholic beverages, the principle can be alcoholic drinks versus non alcoholic ones or compare stimulating environments with relaxing ones.

Drinking motives may be influenced by the drinking culture. Motives "...vary across countries but not among ethnic groups in the same culture" (Kuntsche et al. 2006, 1844). For this reason, there is the need of identifying how culture influence drinking motives. This can only be achieved by the development of studies that compare different nations.

H1: Motives to drink alcoholic beverages diverge in different European countries.

It is important to remember that socio-demographic variables also can influence the drinking motivations. Kuntsche et al. (2005) and Wilsnack et al. (2000) identify important differences between genders in their drinking behaviour and preferences. They recognize that male drinkers are heavier drinkers than females. This difference was bigger in the Eastern bloc countries and smaller in the Northern countries, where men's and women's drinking habits appeared to be closer than elsewhere (Mäkelä et al., 2006). However, there also have been some recent evidence on the possible convergence of women and men drinking practices (Holmila & Raitasalo, 2005).

Regarding the kind of beverage, the present profiles by country are based on male drinking (Mäkelä et al., 2006). There are pronounced gender differences for beer and spirits. Men drank these beverages more frequently and in larger quantities per drinking day. In contrast, women generally drank wine, as men and in equally large quantities. The only difference was that men usually did it in different settings, probably often with meals; while women did it outside meals. Yet, wine was categorized as the favourite drink of women, no matter their nationality or culture. In conclusion, gender differences are smaller for wine, whether or not it is a beverage in the drinking culture.

H2: Men are expected to present a higher preference for beer and spirits than women.

H3: Men and women have similar preferences towards wine.

Concerning age, several studies have been done on the adolescent and young adult drinking motives in several countries. Most of them reveal that young people drinks mainly for social motives and are related to moderate or heavier drinking (Kuntsche et al. 2005; Labrie et al. 2007; Lyvers et al. 2010). Young people is always described with a similar drinking behaviour no matter the gender or culture.

Regarding older people preferences towards alcoholic beverages, there are not many studies. Simpura and Karlsson (2001) found that in most European countries, the peak of consumption of wine occurs in the age groups between 30 and 50 years. Clear examples are Italy and France. This could be at least partly due to a generational effect: new generations still appreciate wine but increasingly choose quality wines rather than table wines and drink smaller quantities than previous generations.

In the case of beer consumption countries, the mean for highest alcohol intake is between 30 and 50 years old, except in United Kingdom where the highest intake is among the youngest age group (from 16 to 24 years old). In the spirits consumption countries, the mean is between 20 and 40 years old (Simpura & Karlsson, 2001).

H5: Significant differences are expected between younger and older people.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample description

Because of the lack of international resources, a convenience sample was used for the development of the current study. To improve the comparability between nations and to reduce the influence of the limitation just mentioned, the data base was “calibrated” according to the procedure for international samples recommended by Green and White (1976). The method included achieving a smaller sample but randomly equivalent in number of respondents per country and equally distributed by gender and age.

The “calibrated” sample consisted with a total of 5.258 observations from thirty countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Poland, Spain, Turkey and United Kingdom), in which each nation had around 180 respondents equally distributed by gender and age. However, for the purpose of this analysis, it will not be use the whole dataset but a sub-sample of it. The selection of the sample was made based on Gupta et al. (2002) paper on cultural clusters. In this case there will be taken into account only the Anglo (United Kingdom), Arab (Turkey), Germanic Europe (Germany), Latin Europe (France, Italy and Portugal), Eastern Europe (Poland) and Nordic Europe (Finland) clusters.

The geographic variation was also taken into account, to isolate real effects of culture and to rule out macroeconomic factors or systems of law, following Engelen & Brettel (2011) recomendations. The factor that was taken into account was geographical distance base from Italy. There were chosen countries that were close and also farther away. For example, in the Latin cluster it was selected Italy, Portugal and France. Italy was the base, France the close country and Portugal was the further one. It is important to mention that the Latin cluster was the only one in which more than one country was chosen. This decision was made with the objective of analysing and identifying if the results are similar inside the clusters or if they differ in some way.

In the case of the Germanic cluster, Germany was selected for its distance with Italy, as well as based on the criteria of being the best representation of such cluster. The Nordic European cluster was selected furthest country, Finland, while Eastern European clusters was selected based on the proximity, Poland. United Kingdom (UK) was chosen as the closest country from the Anglo cluster and by the criteria of being the best representing of it. Last, but not least, Turkey was included in the study representing the Arab cluster, permitting to develop a comparison outside of European clusters. At the end the sample consisted of 1428 observations from 8 countries (Germany, United Kingdom, Poland, Finland, Italy, France, Portugal and Turkey).

3.2 Data collection

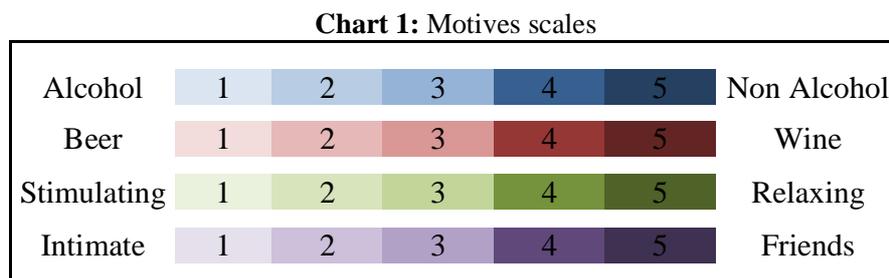
The data used in this evaluation comes from the Consumer Behaviour Erasmus Network (COBEREN) Survey made in 2011 in 30 countries in Europe. The information was collected using a common online questionnaire. Multi-country collaboration took place in all research stages; following Vijver & Leung (1997) decentered approach in which a culturally diverse perspective is taken in the conseptualization and

design of the study. Originally the questionnaire was developed in English, then translated in the respective country languages and then back-translated. The objective was to achieve idiomatic, grammatical and syntactical equivalence (Sekaran, 1983).

3.3. Measures

3.3.1. Dependent variables

Next, four dependent variables would be presented. *Chart 1* presents a graphic view on how each of the variables was operationalized.



3.3.1.1. Beverage dimension: Beer/wine

Based on the Graham's et al. (1998) model which explains the influence of culture on alcohol consumption and how it will depend on the type of beverage (beer or wine) consumed. The variable was operationalized through a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant preference towards beer and 5 towards wine.

3.3.1.2. Social dimension: Intimate environments/with others

Graham's et al. (1998) model also considered that the influence of culture on alcohol consumption will depend on whether the drinking is done with others or oneself. The variable was operationalized through a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represented a preference for intimate environments, while 5 meant situations in company with others.

3.3.1.3 Environment dimension: Stimulating/relaxing

Graham's et al. (1998) also identified two personal motives: "stimulant" and "relief". The authors argue that different drinking settings can generate diverse behavioural norms. For example, a person's conduct will be different in a formal environment than in a relaxed one, or at home drinking with close friends and family than in a public place. For this reason, the third motive was created: Stimulating/Relaxing. The variable was operationalized through a scale from 1 to 5, that took the value of 1 when the consumer had a preference for stimulating environments and the value of 5 when there was a predilection for relaxing situations.

3.3.1.4 Alcoholic dimension: Alcohol/non alcohol

It is important to mention that the main focus of Graham's et al. (1998) study was the effects of the consumption of alcohol on people. For this reason is also important to add a fourth motive that measures the preferences of the consumers towards alcohol. This motive is Alcohol/Non Alcohol. The variable was

operationalized through a scale from 1 to 5, that takes the value of 1 when there is a predilection for alcoholic beverages, while it presents a value of 5 when the consumer prefers non alcoholic drinks.

3.3.2. Independent variables

3.3.2.1. Country

As a proxy of national culture eight countries were selected: Germany, United Kingdom, Poland, Finland, Italy, France, Portugal and Turkey. This fact is justified by Steenkamp (2001) who argues that there is empirical support for within and between country differences, making nationality an acceptable proxy of culture. He does not imply that countries are fully homogeneous, but that there are forces pushing to a meaningful degree of within-country commonality. The variable was measured using a categorical variable.

3.3.2.2. Gender

To represent the gender, it was used a dichotomy variable that assumes a value of 0 when the respondent is female and a value of 1 when the interviewed is male.

3.3.2.3. Age

Age is a categorical variable that represents three age groups that were made looking to keep a similar number of respondents in each group. Age took a value equal to one when the person had between 18 and 37 years old (33.8% of the total sample). A value of 2 was assign if the respondent was included in the age group from 38 until 57 years old (33.8% of the total sample) and a value of 3 was for the cases in which the person has more than 58 years old (32.5% of the total sample).

3.3.2.4. Gender/age

Gender/age is a categorical variable based on other two: gender and age. It has values from 1 to 6. The value of 1 was for male between 18 and 37 years old, 2 was for men in the age range of 38 and 57 years old and 3 was for males older than 58 years old. The value of 4 was assign to women between 18 and 37 years old, 5 for meant females in the age range of 38 and 57 years old and 6 was for those women older than 58 years old.

3.3.2.5. Preferred beverage

The preferred beverage is a categorical variable that can take one of the possible values: beer, cider, wine, spirits or premix drinks.

3.3.2.6. Glasses of wine

Glasses of wine is a continuous variable that measures the number of 12cl glasses of wine that a consumer consumes in an average week.

3.3.2.7. Glasses of beer

Glasses of beer is a continuous variable that measures the number of 25cl glasses of beer that a consumer consumes in an average week.

3.4 Method

To analyse the influence of socio-demographics and culture on determining drinking behaviour there were used mainly two different approaches. The first one was a One Way ANOVA and Two Way ANOVA, using SPSS and R. This is one of most used analytical methods in cross cultural research (Lim & Firkola, 2000). Some even consider it as the most widespread technique in the field (Engelen & Brettel, 2011).

The analysis of variance or ANOVA, is a collection of statistical methods and models that deal with differences in the means of a variable across groups of observations. It is used for the study of the effect of a categorical variable on a metric one (Iversen & Norpoth 1987). In the case of the Two-way ANOVA, its primary purpose is to check if there is a relationship between two independent variables on the dependent variable. This is achieved by comparing the mean differences between the factors generated from the split of the two independent variables (Lund Research Ltd, 2013). For this research, the Two-Way ANOVA will be used to understand whether there is an interaction between age and gender on the different motives.

The second approach is a compare mean analysis using “*country*” and “*gender/age*” as the independent variables and the motives as the dependent ones. This will allow us to delineate specific consumer groups in terms of the combination of drinking motives and “personal” characteristics, and by this, identify the importance of national or personal culture in shaping drinking motivations. Descriptive analysis helped to give support to some of the results obtained from the previous two methods.

4. Results

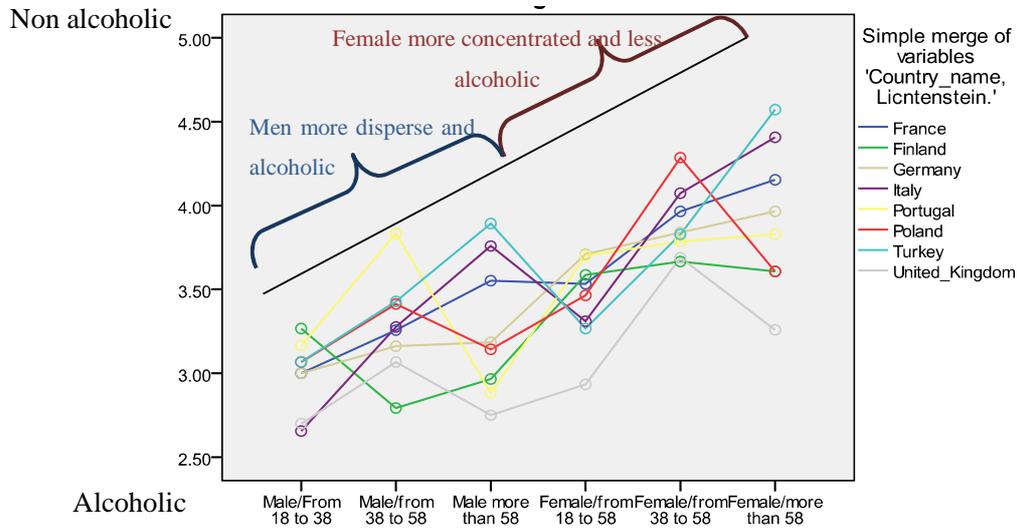
Giving that the objective of the study is to understand how nationality and personal socio-demographics characteristics can affect the consumer behaviour, the analysis of the motives was done according to the country of precedence, gender and age. Significant differences are founded. Following each of the motives are explored by gender/age and by country.

4.1 Alcohol consumption and preference

Starting from the motive alcohol/non-alcohol, the global effect of country is highly significant (p-value < 0,05), as well as the global effect of gender/age (p-value < 0,05). UK has the highest mean on alcohol consumption, while Turkey presents the lowest mean on alcohol consumption. Men between 18-37 years old have the highest mean on alcohol consumption (**Chart 2**). On the other hand, women older than 58 years old showed the lowest mean on alcohol consumption.

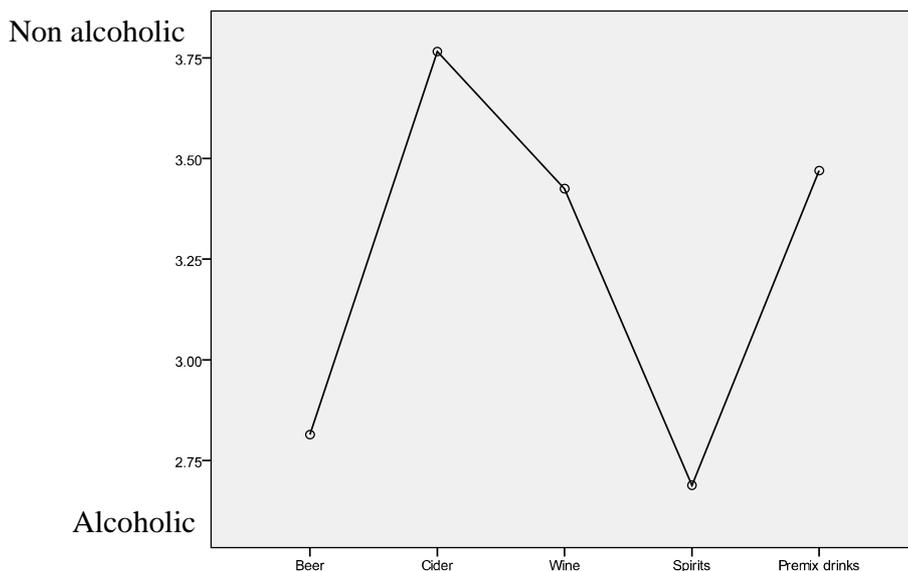
As the assumption of homogeneity of the variance was not fulfilling for the Two-Way ANOVA analysis, further detail on the alcoholic preferences between groups was not possible, as it could be underestimated or overestimated. However, with the one way ANOVA significant differences are found between Italy, Portugal, Poland, Turkey and UK. There are also found significant differences between the alcohol preference of young males (-37 years old) and women in all age ranges, as well as the preference of older males (+38 years old) and older females (+38 years old). Young women (-37 years old) only present a significant difference with other women or young males (-37 years old).

Chart 2: Estimated Marginal Means of Alcohol/non alcohol against gender



An additional analysis of compare means on the preferred beverage and the consumption of alcohol revealed significant differences among people who prefers to drink Beer or Spirits in compare to people who prefers to consume Cider, Wine and Premix beverages. The respondents that showed a higher inclination towards alcohol also showed a higher preference towards spirits or beer, while the people who are less incline towards alcohol prefer to drink Cider or wine. These results can be appreciated in the following chart (**Chart 3**).

Chart 3: Alcohol/non-alcohol consumption by preferred beverage



4.2 Stimulating or relaxing?

The motive stimulating/relaxing shows a global effect of country highly significant (p-value < 0,05)¹, as well as the global effect of gender/age (p-value < 0,05)². There is also a statistically significant effect in the interaction of gender/age and country.³ Germany presents a higher trend towards stimulating environments, especially in young (-37 years old) men, while UK presents the highest trend towards relaxing environments, especially on older age groups (+38 years old). Although, young males present one of the highest trends towards relaxing environments in compare to their pairs in other countries (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Compare means analysis for the motive **stimulating/relaxing** by country and gender/age*

Country/Gender	Male 18 to 37	Male 38 to 57	Male +58	Female 18 to 37	Female 38 to 57	Female +58	Total
France	<u>2,97</u>	<u>3,59</u>	<u>3,72</u>	<u>3,17</u>	4,00	3,85	<u>3,51</u>
Finland	<u>3,65</u>	4,03	<u>3,74</u>	<u>3,46</u>	4,00	3,92	<u>3,80</u>
Germany	<u>2,76</u>	<u>3,68</u>	<u>3,64</u>	<u>3,15</u>	<u>3,54</u>	4,00	<u>3,43</u>
Italy	<u>3,24</u>	4,12	<u>4,39</u>	<u>3,00</u>	<u>4,14</u>	3,84	<u>3,75</u>
Portugal	<u>3,37</u>	3,89	<u>3,32</u>	<u>2,80</u>	<u>3,68</u>	<u>3,44</u>	<u>3,44</u>
Poland	<u>3,59</u>	<u>4,42</u>	<u>3,22</u>	<u>3,88</u>	<u>4,28</u>	3,83	<u>3,87</u>
Turkey	<u>3,21</u>	<u>3,62</u>	<u>4,40</u>	<u>2,96</u>	<u>4,30</u>	<u>4,36</u>	<u>3,65</u>
UK	<u>3,83</u>	<u>4,19</u>	<u>4,04</u>	<u>3,74</u>	<u>4,39</u>	<u>4,17</u>	<u>4,05</u>
Total	<u>3,31</u>	<u>3,95</u>	<u>3,79</u>	<u>3,28</u>	<u>4,04</u>	<u>3,92</u>	<u>3,69</u>

*The underscore means significant at 5%.

In general terms is possible to see a age effect. Young men and women (-37 years old) are more incline towards stimulating environments, while men and women older than 38 years old tend to prefer relaxing environments. Males under 37 years old present significant differences between all countries. Among them, Germany and France are the most incline towards stimulating environments, while Finland and UK are more incline towards relaxing environments. Regarding males between 38 and 57 years old, they present significant differences between France, Germany, Poland, Turkey and UK. Men in France are more incline towards stimulating environments while men in Poland prefer relaxing ones. In the category of males over 58 years old, they present significant differences between all countries. Portuguese and Polish are the most incline towards stimulating environments, while Italy and Turkey are more incline towards relaxing environments.

Concerning the females, those under 37 years old present significant differences between all countries. Among them, Portugal and Turkey are the most incline towards stimulating environments, while Poland and UK are more incline towards relaxing environments. Females between 38 and 57 years old present significant differences between Germany, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Turkey and UK. Women in this age range

¹ For this case it was used the Welch test and Games Howell Post-Hoc.

² For this case it was used the Welch test and Games Howell Post-Hoc.

³ The assumption of homogeneity of variances was fulfill according to Levene test using the median as a point of reference (+R). This decision was made based on the fact that this test provides more robustness than the one with the mean, providing the ability of not falsely detect unequal variances when the underlying data are not normally distributed and the variables are in fact equal. This definition based on the median is recommended as the choice that provides good robustness against many types of non-normal data while retaining good power. This applies for all the following motives and interaction effects between independent variables.

in Germany are more inclined towards stimulating environments while women in Poland, Turkey and UK prefer relaxing ones. Regarding females older than 58 years old, they present significant differences between Portugal, Turkey and UK. Women in Portugal older than 58 years old are more inclined towards stimulating environments while these women in Turkey and UK prefer relaxing ones.

4.3 The social motive: intimate or with others?

When referring to the intimate/others motive, the global effect of country is highly significant ($p\text{-value} < 0,05$)⁴. Finland presents a higher trend towards intimate environments, while France, Italy and Turkey present the highest trend towards friendly environments. The global effect of gender/age is also highly significant ($p\text{-value} < 0,05$)⁵. In general terms, it is possible to see an age effect. Young men and women (<37 years old) are more inclined towards friendly environments than men and women between 38 and 57 years old. However, there is no statistically significant effect in the interaction of gender/age and country on the motives Intimate or Friends environments.

4.4 Beer and wine preferences: are we still a traditional Europe?

Concerning the motive beer/wine, the global effect of country is highly significant ($p\text{-value} < 0,05$)⁶, as well as the global effect of gender/age ($p\text{-value} < 0,05$)⁷. There is also a statistically significant effect in the interaction of gender/age and country on the preferences between beer and wine⁸. While Germany presents a higher trend towards beer, especially in young male (<37 years old), France and Italy present the highest trend towards wine, especially among women (**table 2**).

Regarding gender and age, males under 37 years old present a trend towards beer, while women older than 58 years old prefer wine. Analyzing the results in further details it is possible to see that men under 37 years old present significant differences between all countries. Among them, Germany is the most inclined towards beer, while UK and France are more inclined towards wine. In the case of males between 38 and 57 years old, they present significant differences between France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland and UK. Men in Italy are more inclined towards wine while men in UK prefer beer. In the case of men over 58 years old, they present significant differences between all countries. Polish are the most inclined towards beer, while Italy is more inclined towards wine.

After analysing the females, it is possible to see that women under 37 years old present significant differences between all countries. Among them, Portugal and Germany are the most inclined towards beer, while Poland and Finland are more inclined towards wine. Regarding females between 38 and 57 years old, they present significant differences between Finland, Germany, Poland, and UK. Women in this age range

⁴ For this case it was used the Welch test and Games Howell Post-Hoc.

⁵ For this case it was used the Welch test and Games Howell Post-Hoc.

⁶ For this case it was used the Welch test and Games Howell Post-Hoc.

⁷ For this case it was used the Welch test and Games Howell Post-Hoc.

⁸ The assumption of homogeneity of variances was fulfilled according to Levene test using the median as a point of reference (+R). This decision was made based on the fact that this test provides more robustness than the one with the mean, providing the ability of not falsely detect unequal variances when the underlying data are not normally distributed and the variables are in fact equal. This definition based on the median is recommended as the choice that provides good robustness against many types of non-normal data while retaining good power. This applies for all the following motives and interaction effects between independent variables.

in Poland and UK are more incline towards wine while women in Germany and Finland prefer beer. Finally, females older than 58 years old present significant differences between Portugal and UK. Women in this age range in Portugal are more incline towards beer while women in UK prefer wine.

Table 2: Compare means analysis for the motive **beer/wine** by country and gender/age*

Country/Gender	Male 18 to 37	Male 38 to 57	Male +58	Female 18 to 37	Female 38 to 57	Female +58	Total
France	<u>3,31</u>	<u>3,41</u>	<u>3,58</u>	<u>3,80</u>	3,86	3,86	<u>3,61</u>
Finland	<u>2,85</u>	<u>3,07</u>	<u>3,26</u>	<u>4,27</u>	<u>3,56</u>	3,85	<u>3,47</u>
Germany	<u>2,07</u>	<u>2,79</u>	<u>3,33</u>	<u>3,08</u>	<u>3,50</u>	3,91	<u>3,10</u>
Italy	<u>2,83</u>	<u>3,76</u>	<u>3,67</u>	<u>3,75</u>	3,72	3,95	<u>3,59</u>
Portugal	<u>2,63</u>	3,32	<u>3,32</u>	<u>2,84</u>	4,05	<u>3,39</u>	<u>3,23</u>
Poland	<u>2,89</u>	<u>3,42</u>	<u>2,44</u>	<u>4,35</u>	<u>4,17</u>	3,78	<u>3,48</u>
Turkey	<u>2,85</u>	3,23	<u>3,21</u>	<u>3,21</u>	3,84	3,89	<u>3,29</u>
UK	<u>3,08</u>	<u>2,74</u>	<u>3,24</u>	<u>3,77</u>	<u>4,30</u>	<u>4,30</u>	<u>3,55</u>
Total	<u>2,82</u>	<u>3,23</u>	<u>3,27</u>	<u>3,65</u>	<u>3,86</u>	<u>3,88</u>	<u>3,42</u>

*The underscore means significant at 5%.

Another interesting result is that when comparing the consumed quantity of wine glasses (12 cl) and beer glasses (25 cl) with gender and age, there are two interesting results. The first, regarding wine quantity consumption, it seems to show a significant difference between younger consumers (males and females under 37 years old) and the rest of the sample. This can be appreciated in the **Chart 4**. The second interesting result is the fact that regarding beer quantity consumption, there are no significant differences between women, even if some age groups and countries have a higher preference for beer over wine. This can be appreciated in the **Chart 5**.

Chart 4: Estimated Marginal Means of Glasses of wine (12 cl)

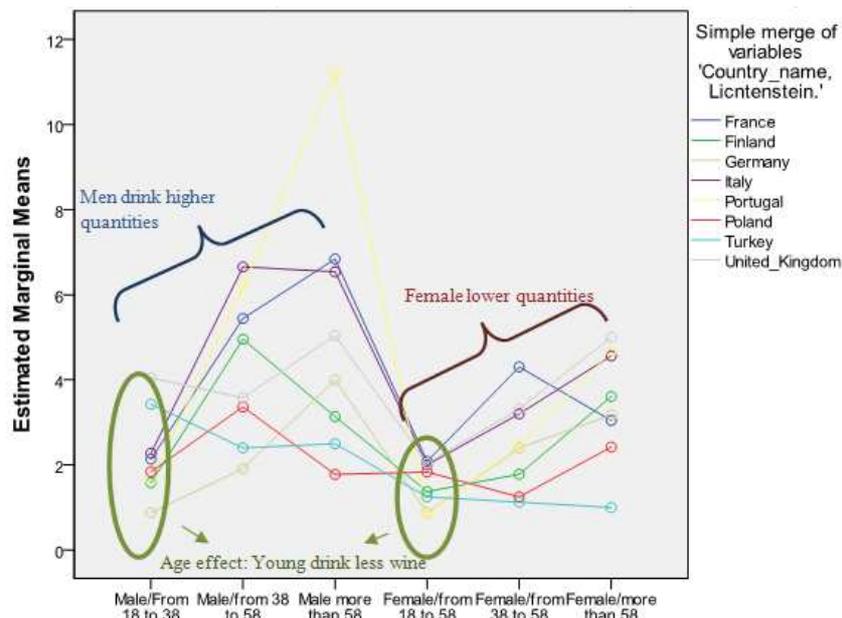
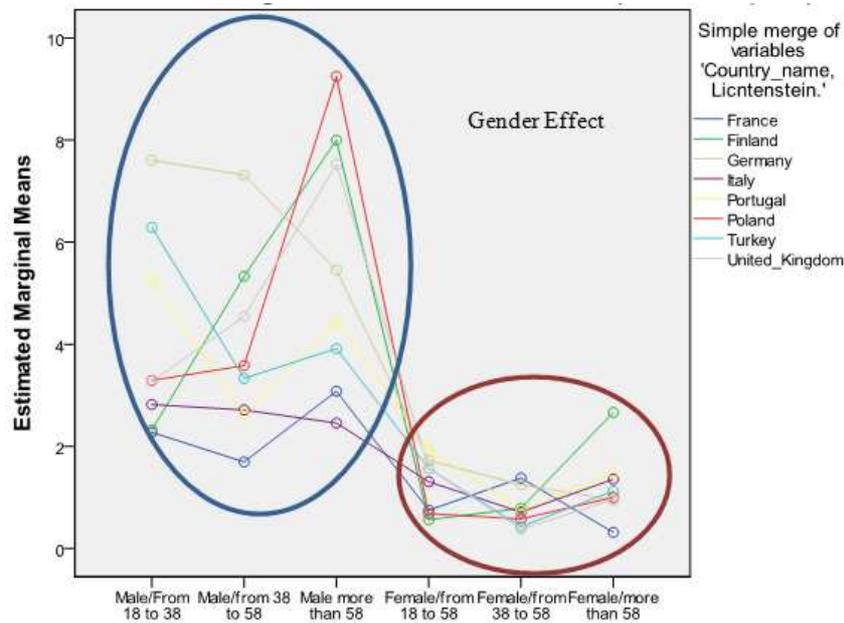


Chart 5: Estimated Marginal Means of Glasses of beer (25 cl)



Another interesting finding is the relation of some beverages (wine and beer) to particular situations (meals, or thirst). Beer is frequently related to thirst while wine is more related to a meal. These preferences do not differ between consumers who prefer beer or wine. Both kinds of consumers exchange the consumption of both beverages depending on the situation.

5. Discussion

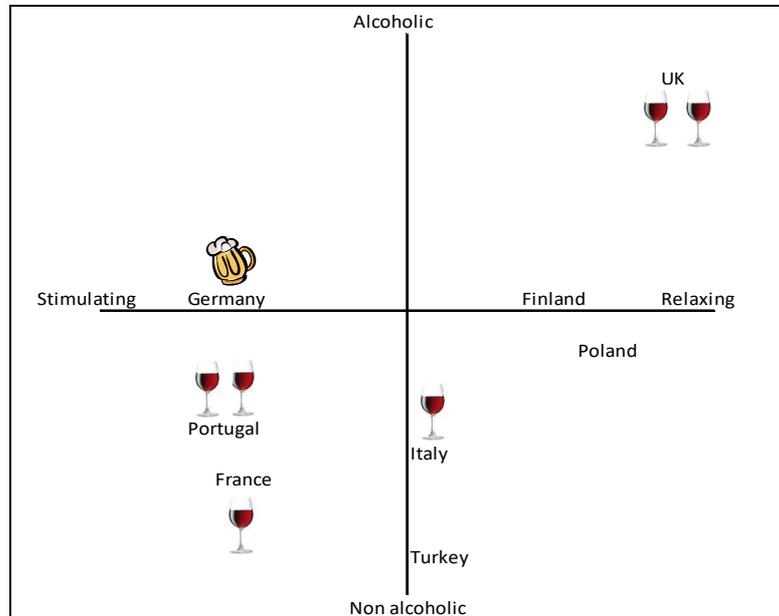
After analysing the descriptive statistics and the results of the ANOVA for the selected sample, it is possible to arise some general results, but first it should be made clear that even if there were identified some generalities in the behaviour of certain groups of consumers, it is not possible to classify several countries according to one pattern. This giving that there will be always exceptions in some of them or particular characteristics. Yet it is possible to identify nations that share similarities, as well as some patterns between gender and age.

Statistically significant differences are found between countries regarding the different motives, supporting the first hypothesis. UK shows a higher preference for alcoholic beverages, while Germany, Portugal and France have a statistically significant higher preference for stimulating environments. UK, Poland and Finland have a statistically significant higher preference for relaxing situations, while France, Italy and Turkey show a predilection for more friendly/social environments, confirming their collectivistic cultures. France and Italy show an expected inclination towards wine. However, the highest intake of wine is done in Portugal and UK. These results can be seen in the **Chart 6**.

This last result definitely shows a change in the classical perception of UK as a beer country. However, as it was mentioned before, beer drinking was usually related with high alcohol consumption (Mäkelä et al., 2006). Although it seems UK is switching towards wine drinking nowadays, the characteristic high alcohol intake related to beer consumption seems to still be part of the UK culture only that now is focused on wine

consumption. In fact, by 2011 the UK was the largest importer of wine and the fifth consumer market for wine in EU (CBI 2011).

Chart 6: Countries similarities and differences in the different motives

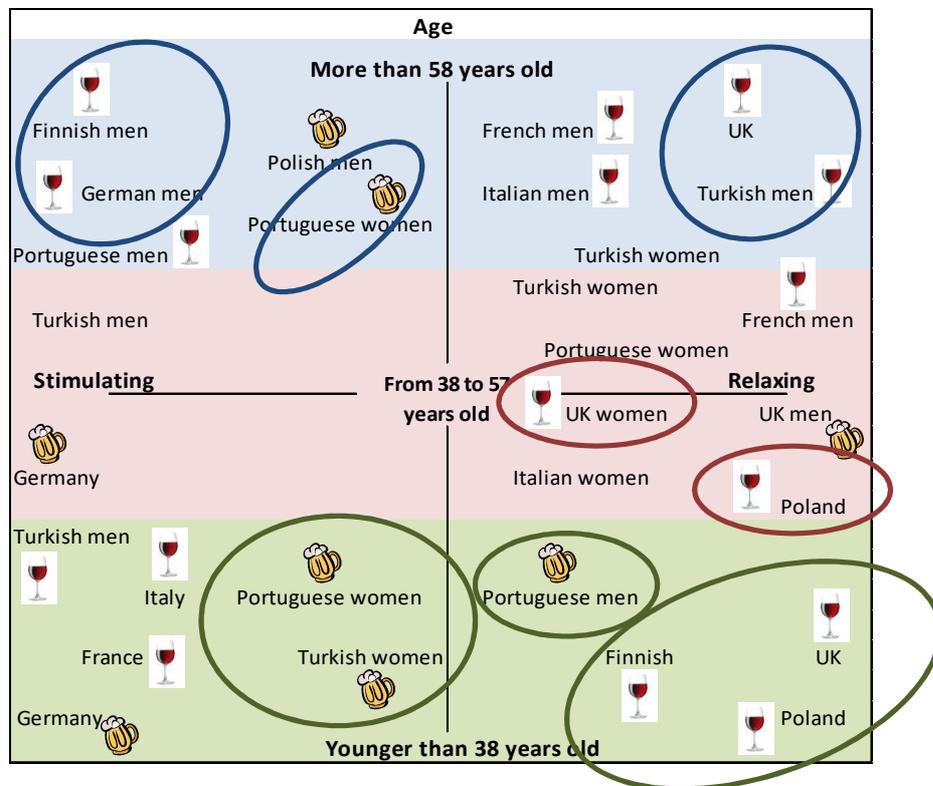


In general, European countries do not show signs of standardization in their beverage preferences, but there are also no signs of them coming back to their roots. Even if Germany and France still show a strong attachment to their traditional drinks, there are also cases as Portugal and United Kingdom that seem to be changing cultures towards different predilections (Portugal towards beer and UK towards wine). In fact, previous studies have identified an increase in wine-drinking in traditional beer-drinking countries, while traditional wine-drinking countries show the largest increase in beer consumption over time (Hupkens, Knibbe, & Drop, 1993; Solomon et al., 2006). Although this, in the meanwhile, seem to affect only Portugal and UK, it could also be a new trend arising.

Additional evidence in this direction is provided in the **Chart 7**, in which many ‘stereotypes’ of cultures are broken. Finnish, German, UK and Turkish men older than 58 years old present a preference towards wine, although their countries do not have a strong tradition on wine. In the same age range, it is possible to see the Portuguese women, whom against any prediction present a preference towards beer, although their country has been consider in the past as a wine country and female are usually related to wine consumption. The same results are shown for younger Turkish women.

Other interesting examples are younger population (-37 years old) from UK, Poland and Finland, which have switch towards wine and relaxing environments, while older Finnish, German and Portuguese men, although they also prefer to consume wine, they preferred in stimulant environments. Results as those brings to light on the possibility that Europe is going through a hybrid process (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007), in which the national culture is influencing the way in which nationals perceive the external trends and adapt them to their daily lives (Solomon et al., 2006).

Chart 7: Summary of socio-demographic characteristics and some motives



Regarding gender differences, women have a tendency towards non-alcoholic beverages and prefer wine, while men are more related to alcoholic beverages, drink significant bigger amounts and are associated with beer, except in France and Italy where men prefer to drink wine. However, only young males (-37 years old) presented significant differences with all female's groups. There was not enough evidence to conclude that young females (-37 years old) also present significant differences with men older than 38 years old. For this reason, the second hypothesis is only partially supported.

The third hypothesis is also partially supported, as the preferences towards wine between men and women of a particular country do not differ in all cases among the diverse age ranges. However, men do consume much more wine than women, and as a general trend men tend to like more beer than wine. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions, as French and Italian men that prefer wine or Portuguese and Turkish younger women (-37 years old), as well as older (+58 years old) Portuguese women, that showed a higher preference towards beer.

Regarding age, significant differences were found in most of the motives between younger and older populations. This partially confirms the fourth hypothesis. However, it is important to keep in mind that although younger people presented more similar behaviour (inclined towards alcohol, stimulating and friendly environments), they also presented statistically significant differences between countries. So they are not all standardize under the same preferences, but they have been adapting the external influences into their own culture (Solomon et al., 2006).

The present work contributes with some initial evidence on the hybridization of national culture at the European level, as well as some insights on how national culture is affecting such process. Further research is suggested to determinate which exact components of culture are affecting this process and their effect on consumer preferences.

6. Conclusions

Although much extant research has dealt with consumer behaviour and national culture there is still a lack of research at the European level. Most of the studies on alcoholic beverages are developed in North America and/or focus on younger people and more related to alcoholism and other social problems. Little research attention has been paid to the consumer's choices and what motives generate them.

The current study aims at contributing to the knowledge regarding European consumers' drinking behaviour using a data from the COBEREN (CONsumer BEhaviour REsearch Network) database, in particular 8 countries: Germany, Poland, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal, Turkey and United Kingdom. The observations were equally distributed by gender and age groups. Descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, two-way ANOVA and a comparison of means have been performed to obtain results regarding the main preferences in each nation and by socio-demographic characteristics. All the motives were evaluated by gender and age.

In general terms it can be said that there are some common patterns between countries, especially those who share close geographical distance. However, even in countries from the same cultural cluster some differences arise that probably are linked to more particular characteristics of their culture. For this reason, is not possible to say that all European countries are standardized. It is more as a "hybrid" culture in each country that is the result of the classical European deep roots and the exposition to a globalization effect that is slowly affecting also food and beverages preferences, starting by the younger groups. This result is congruent with Cleveland & Laroche (2007) previous study, in which the authors affirm that the world is witnessing two opposing and simultaneous effects: homogenization and heterogenization, producing a hybridization of social life.

It was also clear that neither of the countries presented exactly the same motives or behaviour in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. This is matching the literature on the subject. As Britt (1950) pointed in his work, the consumer behind each motive belongs to a particular nationality, in which many unique factors have shaped his decisions and beliefs. Europe has many different nationalities that have really strong cultures with their own food cultures and characteristics (Askegaard & Madsen 1998). For this reason, is safe to say that even if there are some similarities among culturally close nations, generally the motives to drink alcoholic beverages in Europe differ from one country to another.

A pattern that seems strongly arising and that probably is the most interesting result of the whole research is the generational effect. Younger generations seem to start differing from the older ones and from their national classical patterns. But, is this a static result that always will be obtained from younger people or is it the first insight of a globalization trend? Further research should be developed to answer this point.

Concerning limitations, the main one in the present study is that it was collected only by an online questionnaire it included younger and more highly educated users (The University of Texas, 2008) which could compromise the sample. However, the demographics of the Internet are changing rapidly so maybe the effects on the representation of the sample will not be so strong.

7. Managerial implications

Identifying the effects of culture on the consumer has an important effect on understanding how the consumers change their behaviour with time. For enterprises, this is an important fact, giving that their market success will depend on the degree to which their products reflect unmet consumer needs (Van Kleef et al., 2002). Also, understanding the motives behind the consumption choices of customers could help firms to position better their products. As Lyvers et al. (2010) conclude drinking motives are more proximal predictors of drinking behaviour than outcome expectancies. As well, international performance is enhanced by the way in which the company emphasizes on foreign customer focus (Knight, et al., 2004). This can be achieved by leveraging innovation in order to create products, processes, and strategies that better satisfy customer needs (Covin & Miles, 1999).

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