



**A STUDY OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THAI
CONSUMERS' PURCHASE DECISION FOR PREMIUM
WINE**

BY

MR. SIRIPHONG PLIANCHAOW

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN MARKETING
(INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM)
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ACCOUNTANCY
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015
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INDEPENDENT STUDY

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ENTITLED

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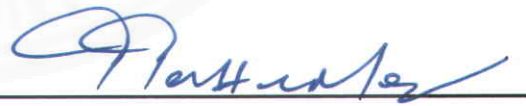
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the degree of Master of Science Program in Marketing (International Program)

on..... 6 JUN 2016

Chairman


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Author	Mr. Siriphong Plianchoow
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Major Field/Faculty/University	Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy Thammasat University
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ABSTRACT

Qualitative analysis was used to study market conditions in Thailand where budget-priced wine remains the most popular, but demand is growing for premium wines. Since 2010, wine consumption in the Kingdom has increased by over 10% annually. Wine is linked to fashionable lifestyles, particularly in urban areas, due to its premium image. Affordable New World wine from the United States, Australia, and Chile heightens product accessibility. In 2014, unit prices increased by 6% after restructuring of the alcoholic drink excise tax imposed in late 2013. Data was gathered by observation of consumer behavior. In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face and by telephone. The in-depth interviews were conducted via face-to-face or telephone with recording device starting from the first week of March, 2016. The sample size was 25 respondents. Also there was another two exclusive interviews with wine store owners. The criteria to select the interviewee were that they must be over 25 years old who reside in Thailand and had purchased and consumed premium wine within the past year. Samples were asked about purchase attitudes, behavior, and choices.

Results were that online shopping is a key outlet for premium wine sellers, due to rapid growth of fourth generation mobile communication technology and numbers

of smartphone users. Motivations for premium wine drinkers include social cohesion, connoisseurship, and enjoyment-seeking. These findings may help premium wine marketers and retailers in Thailand to understand wine drinkers, so they develop strategies, taking into account influences on consumer purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Purchase decision, Premium wine, Segmentation of wine drinkers in Thailand.



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Siriphong Plianchaow



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement and Research Purpose

Today the wine market in Thailand has registered healthy growth due to an expanding consumer base, with increasing numbers of young people acquiring the taste for wine as well as the introduction of affordable New World wine, making it more accessible to a larger number of wine drinkers. Moreover, mid- to high-income consumers in Thailand are becoming more affluent and highly educated on wine drinking.

New World wine producers include countries like US, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and South Africa. The Old World wine, on contrary, are France and Italy, still maintained strong position in Thai market. The consumer consider that Old World wine is more sophisticated, especially for wine drinkers who focus on quality and since Old World wine products have a higher price point, they signal more premium quality. Overall, New World wine has been increasingly significant in the total wine consumption in Thailand-the trend is on the rise every year.

In addition to price that is more affordable, there are more and more wine outlets opened up in Bangkok and other large cities to serve the growing demand. It reported that Thailand has 7 million wine drinkers. Wine sales grew at 13% in 2014, reaching 18 million liters. Red wine is still the most popular, accounts for 81% of the category, and Cabernet Sauvignon was the most popular type of still red wine, followed by Shiraz (Wine in Thailand, 2015).

Despite more availability of budget wine, unit price of wine recently increased by 6% in 2014 due to the restructuring of the alcoholic drink excise tax imposed in late 2013. The Ad Valorem excise tax imposed on wine increased to 36% of the product value with the maximum tax rate at 60% of product value. This is imposed together with the effective tax rate per liter of pure alcohol with a special

condition stating that if the alcohol content is higher than 15% degrees, an additional tax of Bt3.00 per liter per degree will be charged. Wine with the retail selling price of under Bt600 will be exempted from Ad Valorem tax. These high excise tax and tariff rates imposed on wine also triggered the problem of illegal imports of foreign wine smuggled through the borders of Thailand (Wine in Thailand, 2015).

As wine market in Thailand is growing, there is a great opportunity to understand what the main criteria that drive Thai consumers to purchase premium wine are. Thus, the study of 'Influences On Consumers' Purchase Decision for Premium Wine' has been chosen to be a part of a contemporary topic in applied marketing. The purpose of this research is to summarize useful information about premium wine market. The result of this study is beneficial to premium wine business owners, marketers, or anyone who is interested in this area of study to have a better understanding on how they can communicate to target market. With in-depth data of how consumer attitude and perception, marketers can design their marketing strategies to convey right message to premium wine drinkers so that they can better focus on factors that have impact on buying premium wine.

1.2 Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to explore and to understand the key drivers in consumers' mind and consumer behaviors in buying premium wine from wine stores in Thailand.

These followings are objectives:

- To explore Thai consumer behaviors and attitude towards premium wine
- To understand influential factors that impact purchasing decision on premium wine

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Wine drinkers cannot be generalized by genders unlike beer or hard liquor which tends to be consumed by male in Thailand. Instead, the target consumers of wine are classified by lifestyle and income level. Urban consumers who have modern lifestyle are the core drinkers of wine in Thailand. More specifically those who have experienced western culture and have high purchasing power. Previously wine had been consumed by middle-age people, but due to the healthy growth and increasing demand, it is now expanded to the younger people (Wine in Thailand, 2015).

2. Wine is served at most social functions and being a wine drinker is perceived as a sign of social status in Thailand and since 2010 a significant number of pubs, bars and restaurants serving wine have been established and this growth continues. As such, wine has achieved a high level of acceptance among Thai consumers, typically aged between 25 to 55 years. Since Thailand law strictly prohibits the promotional activities of alcoholic behaviors, running open advertising is not possible. However, arranging wine tasting event or offering discount at retailers are allowed. Therefore, the current marketing strategy used in promoting wine is to give promotional discount at hotels, pubs, or restaurants which is called on-trade sales (Wine to Thailand, 2015).

3. James Suckling, the famous wine critic, sees Thailand is one of the most exciting premium wine markets in Asia because it has many consumers of fine wine (Millar, 2014). He defined a premium wine consumers are those who buy that costs above USD \$20 or 650 baht per bottle (Millar, 2014).

4. Thai consumers typically are willing to pay an average of \$23-29 (Baht 800 – 1,000) per bottle of wine. Most view \$14 (Baht 500) as the minimum price for good taste and good quality wine. Middle-aged consumers as well as white collar workers are the main target groups. Additionally, wine drinkers believe drinking wine is considered to offer heart health benefits (Sirikeratikul, 2009).

5. The research by Punyanuch Loyma from Chiangmai University summarized that when customers purchase wine, value for money is the most important factor, while taste is the most important product attribute followed by year and production process respectively. For packaging, the respondent value brand the most and followed by the design of packaging. In term of distribution channel, target respondents tend to purchase a bottle of wine from the store near their home.

6. The research on Consumers Behavior on Alcoholic Beverages in Bangkok Metropolitan shows most of the samples buy wine in restaurants and on celebrating or partying occasion. The marketing mix factors have impact on buying behavior of wine are taste, price, wide selection, and sales promotion. Gender and occupation are also factors that affects consumer behaviors at the significant level of 0.5 (Putthangkuranon, 2001).

7. There are three different occasions that people drink wine. Each occasion has its own value. The hedonic value is for fun and enjoyment is the dominant value for parties. Next, the more external value of being well-respected is the dominant value for business function. Lastly, having a drink by oneself is the internal individual achievement related to self-fulfillment. The study also indicates that taste and price are the most important factors across three occasions (Hall & Lockshin, 2010).

8. Most Thai consumers are unfamiliar with wine, in spite of growing wine consumption in Thailand. Thai consumers, thus, tend to depend on wine brand and reputation in purchasing a bottle of wine. Furthermore, consumers cannot taste wine before purchasing it, which may lead consumers to perceive more risk in the purchase of wine in comparison to other alcoholic beverage, so it would be beneficial to provide a variety of opportunities for Asian consumers to learn more about wine in an effort to reduce the risks that Asian consumers associate with wine purchases (Lee, 2009).

9. A research study attempting to answer if male and female differ in their attitude and behaviors towards wine consumption, drinking occasion and motivation between men and women. The study included in-depth interviews with 30 men and women who drink wine as well as an online survey with 305 wine consumers (155 men

and 150 women) residing in California. The results show strong similarities between men and women in many perspectives and there are also some surprising differences (Thach L. , 2012).

The results show the top 4 occasions to drink wine are the followings:

- With Meals at Fine Dining Restaurant
- Non-Meal: Special Occasions/Celebration
- With Meals at a Friend's House
- Non-Meal: To Socialize with Friends

These occasions are the same for male and female. In terms of their motivations to drink wine, both California men and women reported that their top three motivations were:

- because wine enhances food
- they like the taste
- it helps with relaxation

This study also shows red wine are the most popular for both male *and* female. However, women drink more white wine than men. There is a statistically difference between men and women for wine consumption—women reported lower frequency than men. Moreover, in term of motivations to drink, the study shows that women drink wine for socializing and relaxation, while men drink wine to exhibit knowledge and focus more on technical aspects (Thach L. , 2012).

10. Due to the complexity of wine, it is harder for the wine industry to understand the market. Preferences for wine seem to be not only heterogeneous among the population (Blackman et al. 2010). A study by David Palma (Palma et. al. 2014)suggests to segment the wine drinkers based on occasions and motivations. He conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups in order to propose these segmentations-tradition, social cohesion, sophistication, and self-indulgence.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research was conducted in exploratory research and qualitative research (in-depth interviews). Exploratory research helps the researcher to understand various aspects of consumer behavior, refine elements, and set a firm definition of premium wine to be used in the next stage. Qualitative research was used to gain consumer insights and motivations to drink premium wine. The research process began with secondary research in order to understand a situation of wine market and market trends in Thailand as well as to explore the conceptual frameworks from past researches, and list out the definitions to be used in designing in-depth interview questions. Then it moved to qualitative research including both in-depth interviews and observations.

3.1.1 Definitions used in this research

- i.) Budget wine means wine that costs under 1,000 baht per bottle.
- ii.) Premium wine means wine that costs 1,000 baht per bottle or more.

3.1.2 Secondary research

Secondary research was conducted to obtain information regarding the current market situation, consumer trends and studies that had already been done and already explained in existing theories. Secondary research sources included academic journals and articles from Euromonitor International, google scholar, and other credible websites.

3.1.3 Primary research

Two types of primary research which are observations and in-depth interviews were employed so as to gain consumer insights and consumer behaviors in

order to uncover the key drivers that influence such behaviors, and more importantly consumer decision-making process towards premium wine.

3.2 Sampling Selection

Purposive sampling was chosen in the study in order to select targeted informants. The specific method of sampling for recruiting interviewees was a mix of purposive and snowballing sampling. First, a purposive sampling method was used to obtain early interviewees. These interviewees were asked for their referrals that likely to match the researcher's criteria. Followings are the criteria in selecting in-depth interview respondents.

- Male or Female respondents above 25 years of age
- Must have purchased and drink premium wine in the past year
- Must reside in Thailand

3.3 Data Collection

A total of 25 respondents were recruited at convenient through my friends' network. Two respondents out of 25 were managers of fine dining restaurants and the rest were consumers of premium wine (Appendix B). Brief introduction about the research objectives was given to potential respondents prior to the interview. The whole interview is designed to last 40-45 minutes. A list of semi-structured questions was used to guide the interviews. The questions pertained to premium wine drinkers' general information, behavior, and perceptions towards purchasing premium wine. For some respondents, probing was required for further exploration and clarification. The interview conversations were digitally recorded (Refer to Appendix A for the list of interview questions used in the interviews).

Additionally, two wine store owners were recruited because they knew what brand and what type of premium wine customers purchased or whether the promotion drove their desire to purchase which will take approximately 10 minutes.

Observation was conducted at pubs and restaurants in Bangkok (HOBBS and The Deck) on dinner time 6pm to 10pm. Target respondents were observed to discover how they select a bottle of wine from wine list and on which occasions for example celebration party, dating, or dinner.

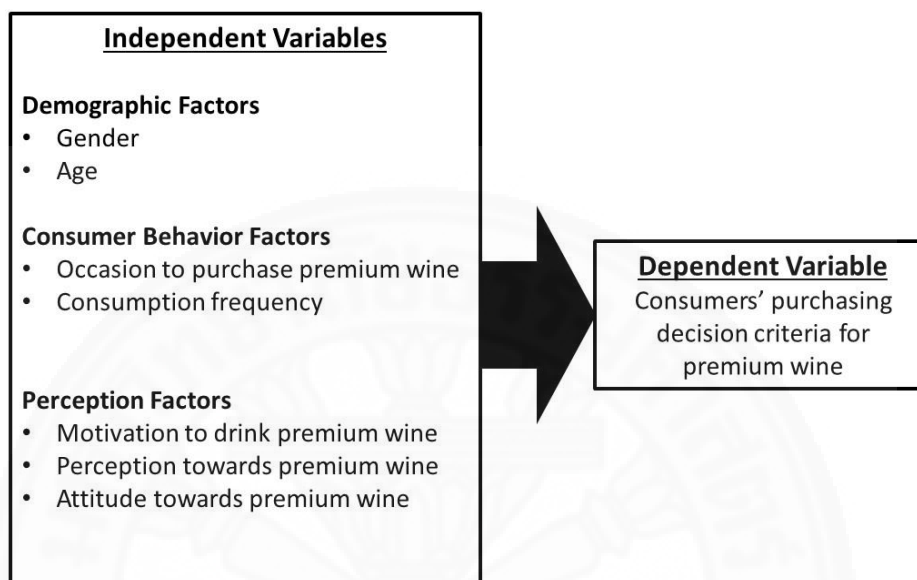
3.4 Data Analysis

Observations were employed to study on consumer behavior in their nature atmosphere, and in-depth interviews were conducted via either face-to-face interview or telephone interview (up to respondent preference).

Data obtained from the interviews were first transcribed and recorded in spreadsheet. The patterns in responses were observed to identify possible consumer insight in term of attitude, purchasing behavior, and buying decision-making process. Recording audio was the backup of transcript. The theoretical framework presented in the next section defined research variables employed in this study.

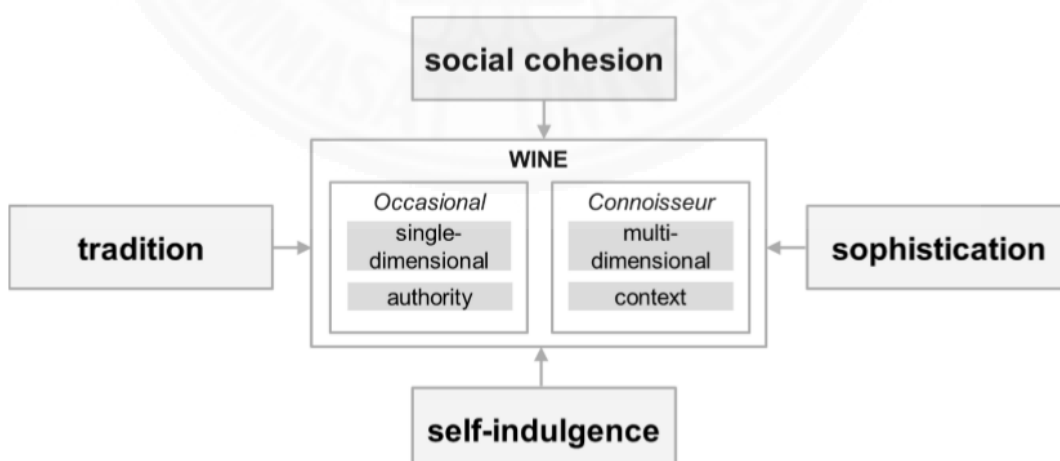
3.5 Theoretical Framework

Figure 3.1. Theoretical Framework



In this study, the underlying conceptual framework is shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2. Consensus map



Consensus map with four motivations for drinking wine, and two classes of consumers (Palma et. al. 2014). This framework was developed to propose segments for wine drinkers.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Secondary Research – Key Findings

Thai Agency News reported that wine sales through online channel grow at least 5% every year for the past 5 years and is continue to grow more (Wine Sales Go Up Around The World, 2015). In Thailand, with the expansion of 4G network and the number of smart phone users are now more than 50% of the population. It is inevitable that now everyone is moving to eCommerce and mCommerce. In wine market, now wine beverage become popular among younger people, so many wine stores and retailers are now selling wine online.

Despite the fact that every wine store is selling their products over the internet, credit card payment is still not popular for Thai customers. Thais still prefer to pay by cash than any other methods. Hence, cash on delivery is still the most popular way to pay for goods online (Wine Sales Go Up Around The World, 2015).

4.2 In-depth Interviews with Premium Wine Drinker – Key Findings

A total of 24 premium wine drinkers were interviewed – 18 were male, 6 were female. Most respondents hold at least Bachelor's Degree. Most were business owners and management position, earning 40,000 baht or more per month. The majority (20/24) of respondents believe drinking wine is good for their health condition.

More than half reported they started drinking wine when while they were studying or living aboard.

Table 4.1 Key Findings of In-Depth Interview with Premium Wine Drinkers

<p><i>Reasons for drinking premium wine</i></p>	<p>The main reasons that the respondents decided to drink premium wine because they want to try taste.</p> <p>Men say wine is like an art or history. They love to learn about wine and talk about wine with friends. Wine is like a hobby.</p> <p>Women say they never study about wine. It is just purely for socializing and partying with friends.</p> <p>“I want to know try to see if the taste is a lot better than budget wine” – Pong, 31</p> <p>“First time I was curious to taste it but then it keeps premium wine for special occasion” – Huak, 35</p> <p>“I like it because the taste is smoother” – Aum, 40</p> <p>“Wine is like my hobby. It’s more complex than other beverage and there are a lot to learn. And when you know the origin of it and how it was made or what types of grapes it made of then you will enjoy more when drinking” – Rak, 48</p> <p>“No I never study about wine at all. Places select my alcoholic drinks.” – Jern, 29</p> <p>“I just drink to have fun with friends” – Nate, 36</p>
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<p><i>Consumer behavior and occasion to drink premium wine</i></p>	<p>Most of them say they stock up premium wine at home and always drink with friends.</p> <p>Male respondents love to drink premium wine with their friends who have knowledge about wine or only special occasion with family once a year like (anniversary, birthday, career promotion)</p> <p>All respondents reported they drink premium wine with meal either at the restaurants or at home</p> <p>Most of respondents always drink with friends</p> <p>“I do stock up premium wine at home. I only drink premium wine on special occasion like celebration or self-reward” – Korn, 40</p> <p>“I normally drink budget wine at least one time per week but for premium wine I drink with my family for special occasion.”– Tle, 38</p> <p>“I stock up a few bottle at home and only drink premium when I have to drink with highly respect person or special celebration” – Nate 36</p> <p>“I always drink premium wine with meal. Wine enhances the taste of food taste and vice versa”— Pai 34</p> <p>“I never drink wine alone in a normal situation” – Beer 30</p>
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<p><i>Consumer purchasing decision behavior</i></p>	<p>Many respondents plan in advance before drinking wine. They bought premium wine when they purchase at Foodland and Wine Connection, Central Plaza, Duty Free, overseas, or buy directly from wholesaler.</p> <p>“I always buy from King Power or directly through suppliers because I know wholesale cost and cannot afford to pay at retail price” – Korn, 40</p> <p>“I ask my friends to buy when they are on business trips or buy at duty fee” – Golf, 32</p> <p>“Always buy premium wine at Foodland or Wine Connection” – Ton 36</p> <p>“Central Plaza has better wine than Foodland and Wine Connection” – Watty 31</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>How do they buy</u></p> <p>Majority reported that they would select from type of wine first and then look at the price.</p> <p>Salespersons had influences on their purchasing decision</p> <p>“Sales promotion could make me change my mind” – Wisarn, 62</p> <p>“When select a bottle of wine, I look at type of wine I would like to drink first and then look at the price if it is in my range I will buy” – Pong, 31</p>
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<p><i>Consumer purchasing decision behavior</i> (Continued)</p>	<p>Most of respondents spend 1000-3000 baht for a bottle of premium wine.</p> <p>“I always spend 1000-2000 baht per bottle” – Jern 29</p> <p>“I spend around 1500-3000 per bottle” – Huak 35</p> <p>They trust the rating from wine experts</p> <p>“I use application to scan the barcode and see the rating” – Aum 40</p> <p>“I trust the rating on blogs or rating from application” – Bengie 37</p>
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Based on the findings from in-depth interviews, premium wine drinkers can be segmented into three segments of the framework figure 2 excepts traditional segment does not exist in Thailand.

Segment 1: Social cohesion (n=10)

This group is a social drinker. They drink premium wine as a part of socializing with friends and co-workers. They do not know much about wine. Wine is just a drink associated with food. This group seek a social image and premium wine can classify their role and status. In fact, wine is not their first choice of alcoholic drinks.

Segment 2: Connoisseurs (n=8)

This group usually stocks up premium wine at home and have knowledge about wine. Most of them are viewed by their friends as wine gurus or specialists. Some extensively write web blog or review about wine. This group has only men and they think of wine as a hobby and spend a great amount of money on premium wine.

Segment 3: Enjoyment-oriented (n=6)

This group is self-indulgence. They drink premium wine to enhance the food taste and enjoy the taste of wine. Sometimes research for a good wine. They tend to stock up wine for special occasion, but do not intend to become wine expert. Normally this group seek for great food and good wine for their enjoyment and self-reward.

4.3 In-depth Interviews with The CA Wine – Key Findings

My father is a California wine enthusiast. He has been a sole distributor of California wine since 1996. Back then wine market in Thailand was very small. We keep adding more and more wine from other countries into our portfolio. Wine market in Thailand experienced dramatic growth in 2011 onwards. The trend is now shifting to more New World wine.

In fact, we are B2B business; we sold wine to hotels and restaurants in Bangkok. Most of our customers are loyal customers and they always repurchase. When we give seasonal discount, they always purchase more volume.

Yes, we also sell online to end-customers. Starting from last year, many large players started to sell their products online and many small importers sell via Facebook Fanpage. In order to stay competitive in the market we will need to sell through online channel.

-- Pueng the owner of CA Wine Store.

4.4 Observation – Key Findings

Premium wine drinkers drink premium wine with a group of friends and the type of wine they ordered depends on food type. An occasion were celebrations, reconnect with friends visiting from overseas. In selecting for a premium wine, the group dominated one person who the group believe had a lot of knowledge about wine to choose the wine at the restaurant. When consuming, everyone tasted the wine and commented whether they like it or not.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are not much different between men and women in drinking premium wine.

The results show a slight different in premium wine drinking behavior for men and women. Both men and women believe premium wine is good for health and it can enhance food taste. They usually drink with meal and do not drink premium wine alone, so they drink with their friends or family in a special occasion such as birthday, wedding anniversaries, graduation, and career promotion event.

In term of differences, men tend to show off their knowledge about wine as they study about wine history, grape types, the origin of wine. Men think of wine as an art or a hobby. On the other hand, women drink wine for socializing with friends and relaxing from work.

Premium wine drinkers usually drink premium wine with friends who share the same interest in premium wine.

Premium wine drinkers reported that they like to drink premium wine with friends and never or very hardly do they drink premium wine alone. They often talk about wine and try new wine they bought with friends who have some knowledge about wine as they believe it is worth to share with the people who know the value of it.

Premium wine marketers should design their marketing campaign and program based on the characteristics of the proposed segments

Markets of premium wine can design marketing mix to match lifestyle and values of the proposed segments in this study which are Social cohesion, Connoisseurs, and Enjoy-oriented based on their attitudes and behaviors.

Marketers must utilize online channel.

Online channel is a must due to the expansion of 4G mobile communication technology and a growing numbers of smart phone users. Wine beverage become popular among younger people, so many wine stores and retailers are now selling wine online and in the near future people will definitely buy goods via smart phone. This study recommends wine store owners to think about mobile platform to sell their products via mobile applications. In term of online payment, credit card payment is still not popular among Thai customers. Thais still prefer to pay by cash than any other methods, so cash on delivery method should be an option for online payment.

There are limitations of this research. First, sampling method in this study will be based on non-probability samples due to the definite number of population are not known. The sample selection did not represent an equal number of respondents in terms of gender and age groups. Next, research findings cannot represent the entire population in Thailand. Lastly, due to time and budget constraint this research will focus on the premium wine drinkers who reside in Bangkok.

This study of “Influences on Consumers’ Purchase Decision for Premium Wine” can be further conducted to enhance the results for better contributions. The initiatives are suggested if the study were to be further researched: 1) a quantitative study can be conducted to find relative sizes of important segments when premium wine become more popular and accessible and 2) a possibility of segmenting the market with alternative key segmenting variables, for instance, segmentation by lifestyles, attitudes, or psychographics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
(PREMIUM WINE DRINKERS)

General consumer information:

1. Introduce yourself: name, age, educational background, occupation and industry and range of personal income.
2. How long have you been drinking premium wine?
3. How often do you drink premium wine?
4. What is your favorite type of wine?
5. Is wine your default beverage when you drink alcoholic beverage?

Consumer behavior and decision making:

6. How often do you purchase and what price range you purchase premium wine?
7. How do you purchase premium wine?
8. Do you stock up premium wine?
9. Which places (home/restaurant/friends' house) and occasion you drink premium wine and which place and occasion you drink budget wine?
10. Do you conduct any information search before purchasing?
11. Do you usually drink premium wine with meal or non-meal?
12. Do you drink premium wine alone or with somebody?

Attitude and perception:

13. When did you start drinking wine and why did you give it a try?
14. Were there any reasons to switch from other alcoholic drinks to wine?
15. What made you switch to or try premium wine?

APPENDIX B
LIST OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Industry
Bengie	F	37	Digital media – Supervisor	Entertainment
Chi	M	29	Digital media specialist	Non-profit organization
Ton	M	36	Business owner	Automotive
Tle	M	38	Business owner	Textile
Wisarn	M	62	Business owner	Hardware
Vit	M	31	Managing director	Chemical
Jern	F	29	Graduate student	-
Watty	M	31	Broker Banking	Banking
Korn	M	40	Restaurant manager	Services
Aum	M	40	Restaurant manager	Non-profit organization
Keaw	F	40	Event organizer	Entertainment
Golf	M	32	Business owner	Interior design
Chef Pong	M	31	Chef	Service
Ting	M	33	Web developer	IT
Huak	M	35	Channel manager	IT
Beer	M	30	Business owner	Service
Pui	F	28	Operation manager	Manufacturing
Rak	M	42	Columnist	Media
Pueng	F	32	The CA wine owner	Food & Beverage
Pornsak	M	62	Bali wine owner	Food & Beverage
Pong	M	31	Business owner	Beauty & skincare product

Pai	M	34	Business owner	Energy
Hong	M	29	Sales manager	Automotive
Atcha	F	35	Accounting	Manufacturing
Kittichai	M	37	Business owner	Food & Beverage
Nate	M	36	Real estate developer	Real estate



BIOGRAPHY

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