ELABORATING THE POSITIONING MESSAGE OF WINE BRANDS ON THE ITALIAN AND RUSSIAN MARKETS

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Abstract:

The aim of this study was to create general guidelines on positioning for emerging wine brands on the Italian and Russian markets in line with identifying the differences in how consumers perceive wine brands on both markets and communicating with them accordingly. To achieve this goal, firstly the authors have conducted a deep theoretical study of the concept of brand positioning and brand differentiation and identified the key peculiarities of consumer behaviour on the wine market. As for the next step, the current state of the wine market in Russia and in Italy was examined and a comparative analysis was performed. To get a better understanding of the specifics of local wine markets, the authors conducted an expert survey in Russia and in Italy. As for the final step of the research, the authors carried out a consumer survey to analyse consumers' perception of wine brands in Russia and in Italy using the method of perceptual mapping. The results of the study show how consumers on two markets, a typical “wine country” market, as the Italian one, and a “non-wine country” market - the Russian one, perceive wine brands and how this knowledge can be used by marketers in consumer communicating and elaborating brand positioning strategies for wine companies.

Keywords: brand positioning, perceptual mapping, brand differentiation, Italian wine market, Russian wine market, positioning strategy, wine brands

Introduction

The wine industry has become highly globalized over the last two decades. Import tariffs decrease, reduction of logistics costs and simplification of customs procedures have led to a rapid development of international wine trade (Anderson, 2004). This has forced wine companies to work in the conditions of a constant growth of the market, and therefore in a highly competitive environment. Furthermore, although each year the world produces different volumes of wine depending on the yield, the volume of the world consumption is always inferior to the volume of the world production (OIV, 2018). Thus, the necessity to have a well-thought brand positioning strategy, tailoring the message in consumer communication and a clear understanding of how to differentiate the product seems to be cogent for all wine producers operating on the international market today.

Brand positioning gives a significant competitive advantage for companies both on domestic and international markets (Roth, 1992). Success in communicating positioning strategy clearly can lead to decline in a product's price sensitivity, alter consumer preferences, and ultimately have a positive effect on financial results of the firm (Carpenter et al., 1994). Suzuki (2000) found out that the employment of "a high-quality positioning strategy has considerable effect on profit". Furthermore, Hooley et al. (2001) proved that there is "an association between adopting a unique and high-quality positioning strategy and better performance". Miles and Mangold (2005) also discovered a positive relationship between effective brand positioning and a company's success in the marketplace. Thus, the importance of the concept cannot be underestimated and has to be studied carefully before implementing it in a firm's marketing strategy.

To achieve the stated goal, the authors formulated the following research tasks:

1. define the concepts of brand positioning and brand differentiation;
2. identify the key features of consumer behaviour and brand positioning on the wine market;
3. examine the current state of the wine market in Russia and in Italy and conduct their comparative analysis;
4. reveal existing positioning practices of wine brands in Russia and in Italy conducting an expert survey;
5. assess consumers' perception of wine brands in Russia and in Italy using perceptual mapping.

The results of the study have practical value for the Russian and Italian wine companies as they include recommendations on the elaboration and implementation of wine brands positioning strategies for the Italian and Russian markets.

Literature and Research Review

The concept of brand positioning has always been analysed by researchers from two major perspectives: consumer and managerial (organizational). Al Ries and Jack Trout (1969) argued that the main principle of positioning is not to create something new and different from others, but to manipulate what is already living in the minds of consumers, use existing connections by means of carefully thought out communication with the target audience. Merle Crawford (1985) supported this approach by claiming that positioning is the instrument for making up and managing customers' perceptions of a product. David Arnott (1993) defined positioning as "the deliberate, proactive, iterative process of defining, measuring, modifying, and monitoring consumer perceptions of a marketable object". Philip Kotler (2000) considered positioning to be "the act of designing an organization's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the target market's mind". Solomon et al. (2004) supposed that, in a broader sense, positioning encompasses all marketing activities that are used to create or change associations a customer has with a particular product. Tony Ellson (2004) assumed that positioning is a process of endowing a product with a number of unique features that distinguish it from competing goods. Bhimrao Ghodeswar (2008) connected positioning with "achieving differentiated images apart from competitors' brands/offerings and meeting customer needs/expectations". Jack Trout (2012) summarized that positioning is the way a company differentiates itself in the mind of customers and underlined that positioning is especially relevant in terms of communication process.

According to the definitions mentioned above, brand positioning is usually associated with the concept of brand differentiation (Tripes et al., 2014). A brand can be differentiated from others by changing characteristics of a product itself, related services, distribution channels, as well as a product's image (Ruiliang, 2010). In the article when the authors use the term 'differentiation" they mean "image differentiation". Image is the way customers perceive a brand and its products. For effective image differentiation a company must create a clear brand's appearance and form its value proposition, which serves for transmitting brand's emotional message to the public (Lau & Phau, 2007). Thus, image must be transferred with the help of every possible contact point with consumers and all components of the marketing mix (Park et al., 1986). Companies with well-communicated brand images have higher chances to get a significant market share, gain a competitive advantage, and, as a result, improve their performance (Nandan, 2005).

According to Tony Spawton (1990) wine consumers can be divided into four segments: the connoisseur, the aspirational drinker, the beverage wine consumer, and the new wine drinker. The first group of consumers are well versed in wine culture, know how to distinguish the "good wine" from the product of poor quality and have an extensive experience in drinking various types of wine. The second group called “aspirational drinkers” tend to buy only premium wine and view it as a means to obtaining high social status among certain groups of people. The beverage wine consumers choose wine based on its low/affordable price (regarding their budget) and are not interested in its quality or other essential characteristics of the product. Hall et al. (1997) agreed with Spawton on the first three segments but argued that the fourth segment of “new wine drinkers” was actually “enjoyment led” type of consumers, who are not concerned with getting specific knowledge about wine and use drinking just to get some fun and relax.

According to Lockshin et al. (2000) small wine companies should choose as their target audience the connoisseur segment as small wineries usually produce high-quality expensive wine in small quantities. They specialize in certain varietals and only sell the vintage if it turned out to be of good quality. The customers from the connoisseur segment are not price sensitive; they drink wine on a regular basis and are mostly concerned with the wine’s quality and production technology. Connoisseur consumers use the brand in a functional manner and are especially interested in the specificities of wine, such as grape variety, region of origin, vintage, winemaker and so on, because, according to their opinion, these components of the wine brand reflect its quality. Consequently, small wine companies in their brand positioning should concentrate on these elements of the product and emphasize the functional role of each one of them.

Furthermore, since connoisseurs view purchasing wine as a hobby, they constantly try to enhance their knowledge about wines with the help of several credible sources, such as annual wine guides and popular wine critics’ ratings. This means that for small wine producers it is better to spend marketing budget on getting recommendations from those authoritative sources. The symbolic roles that a brand plays for the connoisseur segment relates to a high level of consumers’ involvement in product choosing process. Connoisseurs spend big amount of time and put a lot of effort when purchasing a product, so, once it is done the chosen brand acts as a form of self-expression and a sign of a self-image for them. In the conditions of the scarcity of marketing resources typical for most small companies, the best strategic decision for them is to connect all possible brand associations to the company’s name, increasing brand awareness of each company’s product.

Russian and Italian Market Overview

According to Euromonitor (Euromonitor, 2021) the sales of wine in Russia is lower than the volume of sales wine in Italy (with 904 million litres and 2317 million litres respectively). Wine consumption in Russia remains largely undeveloped, and most of the population still prefers to drink wine at home rather than in restaurants or bars. The main reason for this is high prices of wine in the HoReCa segment (they exceed the prices in retail almost three times). Moreover, Russian consumers remain loyal to inexpensive sweet and semi-sweet wines, which account for 60-65% of the total wine consumption in the country. At the same time, the demand for more expensive imported wines grows among people with upper middle income, who travel a lot, are acquainted with wine consumption culture in European countries, and are more open to new types of wines, which appear on the market. The millennials search for diversity in their drinking habits and try to get educated in the field to make conscious consumer choices (Moiseenko, 2017).

Italians drink wine for every social event, like family celebration or aperitif with friends or business dinner with colleagues. For that reason, sparkling wine being drink more appropriate for special occasions is gaining high popularity nowadays in the country where still wine has been major beverage for centuries. It is expected that in the next five years Italian wine companies will have to focus mostly on this perspective segment of the market (Wine in Italy, 2017). Furthermore, Italian consumers are concerned with the issue of environmentally friendly and sustainable production. Companies that specialize in organic or bio wine currently experience sustainable growth. Hence, "going green" is likely to become the most profitable marketing strategy for Italian wine producers in the nearest future.

Expert Survey

To carry out the analysis of the Russian and Italian wine markets, the authors conducted an expert survey among the representatives of wine stores and restaurants in two cities: Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, and Viterbo, Italy. The main criterion for the selection of experts was their experience in the field of wine sales. The List of Experts is presented in the Annex 1.

The expert survey helped to reveal a significant growth potential in wine production and sales on the Italian and Russian wine markets. All experts stated that, despite the existence of high level of competition on the wine market of both countries, the potential for growth is obvious not only for big manufacturers with a long history but also for small wineries. The expert from the wine store "Go to Wine" noted that Russian wine producers can achieve the rapid growth in the nearest future, as in the last several years significant investments in the wine industry have been made – "local producers buy vineyards, bring experienced oenologists from France and Italy; they are really concerned about the quality of the product". He also added, "the quality of domestic wine is enhancing, though, it is still produced mostly for internal consumption".

Regarding the European wine market, experts agreed that it is highly oversaturated, but even on it, new players have every chance of success, "as long as the product is of high quality for a reasonable price, consumers will buy it". However, experts also named several problems that small wineries on the Italian market face. The first one of these is high barriers of entrance to large retail chains that, as we mentioned earlier, sell 34.4% of wine in the country. Only big manufacturers have the resources to pay the entrance fees and launch a product line for supermarkets, small companies are forced to sell only in specialized stores and to HoReCa. The next issue that was mentioned by the Italian experts is price dumping, which some producers use to increase sales. Sometimes they must sell big amount of wine for a price that does not even cover its production cost when the vintage is becoming too old and cannot be stored any longer. Obviously, price dumping is not always the best solution and has negative consequences not only for the seller, but for the whole industry as well.

According to the experts, all wine producers can be divided into two categories: modernists and classics. The former position their product as "high-quality wines, understandable and accessible to the average buyer". Modernists use bright, non-standard packaging and memorable marketing legend to differentiate from competitors. These companies aim their promotion campaigns mostly at consumers who prefer uncomplicated, casual wines. Classics, in turn, in their positioning focus on the versatility and complexity of wine and as the target audience choose customers who can evaluate its unique properties. This group includes producers of biodynamic and organic wines, who emphasize the classical production technology of their wines.

As for the methods of brand promotion, according to the Russian Federal Law No. 38-FL "On Advertising" (Consultant Plus, 2006), it is prohibited to advertise wines (except wines of domestic production) through mass media, including television, radio, press, outdoor advertising, or the Internet as it is done in Italy. Advertising is allowed at the points of sale of alcoholic beverages, but due to its high cost, this channel of promotion is not available to many producers. In this regard, the most widely used method of wine promotion in Russia is event marketing. For instance, a famous brand of elite sparkling wine "Louis Roederer" in collaboration with a popular Moscow night club "Soho Rooms" annually organize fabulous events to advertise their product for their target audience, which is wealthy Moscow citizens. Both in Russia and Italy wine brands also often act as sponsors of sommelier competitions, for example, the company "Moët Hennessy" was among the partners of the XVII sommelier Championship 2017.

Therefore, due to the scarcity of allowed advertising methods on the Russian market the opportunities for companies depend on the sales channel they choose. According to the CEO of the wine restaurant "Dodici Wine & Kitchen", it is quite difficult for producers to differentiate their wines in the restaurant menu, especially when we talk about wine restaurants that have up to 100 different positions in their menu. The choice of the guest is greatly influenced by the opinion of the sommelier or waiter who serves him, so it is very important that the restaurant staff be well versed in the wine they sell and better like it. To this end, the brand ambassadors of wine companies conduct technical tastings, provide all the necessary information about their product, and even develop a loyalty system for restaurant employees. We have to notice that such system of promotion in the HoReCa segment is typical for Italy as well, where the level of competition is so high, that only personal acquaintance and friendly relationship between the producer and the owner of the restaurant can guarantee stable sales of the wine in the restaurant.

In retail segment, there are more ways to promote the wine brand, but they are also limited by several factors. For example, one of the most effective ways to increase sales of wine in the supermarket is to place it on pallets at a reduced price; however, ultimately for a producer it can be unprofitable. Another quite effective way to attract the attention of the consumer and enhance sales is useful gifts. “Wine accessories that are sold only in specialized stores, and sometimes cannot be easily found in our city is the best choice”, says the CEO of the wine store “Time for Wine”. Both in Russia and Italy brand promotion is usually carried out through the participation of manufacturers in various thematic exhibitions, competitions, ratings. Experts agreed that nowadays there are quite a few opportunities to introduce the product in the professional community. However, this method, at the same time, is risky, as the opinion of the jury is always subjective, and the wine cannot be estimated in the best way. Therefore, experts from both countries recommend taking part in widely recognized ratings and with full confidence in the quality of the product.

Experts in Russia identify four main criteria based on which consumers make their choice of a wine: the country of production, the region of production, varietal composition and much rarely manufacturer. According to the expert from the wine restaurant "Dodici Wine & Kitchen", the average consumer primarily chooses wine by grape variety and a country of production. “Guests, who understand the wines a little better, pay attention to the region as well. The name of the winery is less important because of their large number, in most cases, guests simply do not know them”, he says. The CEO of the wine store “Time for Wine” supports this opinion; she says, “Consumers find it difficult to navigate in the variety of wines on the market, the easiest way for them to make a choice is to depend on the grape variety and the country or region of production. If once the customer liked, for example, Merlot from Bordeaux by Chateau Reynon, in the future he is likely to look at the shelf of Merlot wine from the Bordeaux region, and the name of the brand most likely will not be remembered by him”.

As for the Italian consumers, the number of factors that influence their decision-making process is bigger since most of the population of the country has deeper knowledge and broader experience in the world of wine. The expert from the wine restaurant "Enotria by Angoletto Della Luce" names the following criteria, which his guests most commonly pay attention to while ordering a bottle of wine: a region of origin, grape variety, a vintage, a producer, appellation, and gastronomic compatibility with the ordered dishes. The shop assistant from Enoteca "Viterbium" says that besides the features mentioned above "the customers can also be interested in the technology of wine production, the winemaker's name and the wine evaluation by authoritative ratings if it has any".

Consumer survey and the "perceptual mapping"

To analyse the brand positioning practices existing on the Italian and Russian wine markets the authors adopted a consumer-based analytical technique called "perceptual mapping". Such map is a two-dimensional (or multidimensional) coordinate system, on the axes of which significant characteristics of the product are deposited (Chaturvedi & Carroll, 1998). Perceptual maps portray the position of the brand in Euclidean space visualizing consumers' evaluation of it in relation to competitors and to the "ideal" brand regarding essential attributes of the product and overall brands' similarity of one to another. Comparing the brand's current position with the "target" or "ideal" one is a conventional procedure for estimating effectiveness of the positioning strategy of the product (Dillon et al., 2001). Perceptual mapping technique has several key principles, which must be carefully followed. Firstly, consumers, acting as respondents, in assessing the product must be guided not by their knowledge about it but their emotions and feelings towards it. This principle comes from the very concept of the brand positioning, because as it was mentioned earlier, in its basis lays the formation of an emotional image of the brand (Carson, 2001).

The next important aspect of this technique is the parameters by which consumers evaluate goods. Many subjective characteristics describing the image of the product in the mind of a customer can be grouped and then allocated to a limited set of factors (Nevaeva, 2005). Finally, the application of the perceptual mapping technique allows collecting data about real consumers' opinion on certain products or brands since respondents are not asked to answer direct questions about them but to evaluate a particular parameter with the use of scales (Skorobogatykh, 2004). It is also crucial to avoid the product's characteristics with negative meaning (especially, adjectives beginning with the prefixes "un", "dis", "in", "non", etc.), and not to use negative values on scales.

Hence, the perceptual mapping procedure is carried out according to the following algorithm:

1. The first step is the collection of vocabulary used by the consumers in relation to the product. This stage can be carried out by means of focus groups or several

expert interviews (Alba et al., 1987). Respondents are asked open questions, and then their answers are analysed for the presence of adjectives describing essential attributes of the product. As an alternative to these methods, a content analysis of customers' feedback of products can be carried out (Kamakura & Moon, 2014). At the end of this step, a list of the most regularly used adjectives are selected for further research using frequency analysis.

2. The next stage can be realized both by means of focus groups and by means of mass consumer survey. Here the semantic differentials technique is applied. It consists in the construction of scales with characteristics-antonyms on the poles (for example, classic-fashionable, mass-exclusive, democratic-conservative, etc.). Respondents evaluate the product of different brands on each of the scales. In general, it is recommended to offer each respondent no more than 5-6 brands for evaluation.
3. After that each brand is located on perceptual maps (several two-dimensional or one multidimensional) according to the results of the survey. Therefore, the positions occupied by brands in the market are visualized. With the help of the "brand mapping" technology, niches unoccupied by competitors and potential opportunities for further development of the brand are identified (Fedorov, 2003).
4. Based on the obtained results, a brand positioning strategy is elaborated: the key ideas of communication message are defined, a semantic core for advertising campaign is gathered, archetypes of advertising campaigns and the most suitable channels of communication are selected (Ivashchenko, 2006). Before the implementation of the developed strategy, testing of advertising materials is carried out.

Following the algorithm, on the first stage the content analysis of the customers' feedback of the wine on the sites-aggregators irecommend.ru, otzovik.com, and the site of online-store winestyle.ru (for the Russian market) and on the site of online-stores vivino.com and xtrawine.com (for the Italian market) was conducted to search for the adjectives which are used by consumers to describe their perception of the product. In total, 352 reviews of Russian buyers and 276 reviews of Italian buyers were analyzed. After that a frequency analysis was carried out, with the help of which 5 most used groups of synonymous adjectives were selected. The list of the adjectives, their repetition frequency and their antonyms are presented in tables 1-2.

Table 1. Content and frequency analysis results for the Russian wine market

Groups of synonymous adjectives	Repetition frequency	Antonyms
well-balanced, harmonious, mild, easy to drink, gentle, pleasant	252	unbalanced – cannot be used due to a negative meaning
basic, casual, simple, table wine, everyday wine	245	premium
intense, vivid, full sophisticated, rich, interesting	241	boring, tasteless – cannot be used due to a negative meaning
elite, premium, upmarket, prestigious	238	basic/casual
modern, trendy, contemporary	227	classic

Table 2. Content and frequency analysis results for the Italian wine market

Groups of Synonymous Adjectives	Repetition Frequency	Antonyms
intense, persistent, full-bodied, vivid, sophisticated, rich	203	boring, tasteless – cannot be used due to a negative meaning
basic, casual, simple, fresh, light, everyday	176	premium, elite
well-balanced, velvety, wrapping, mild, pleasant, round, gentle	135	Unbalanced – cannot be used due to a negative meaning
classic	124	modern, trendy, contemporary
mineral, fruity	101	spicy, tannic – too precise characteristics related to a particular type of wine, and not to the brand as a whole

At the next stage, massive online surveys of consumers both in Nizhny Novgorod (Russia) and in Viterbo (Italy) were conducted to determine the consumers' perception of wine brands. Nizhny Novgorod and Viterbo were chosen for the research as typical medium-size cities in their origin countries, which allows to extrapolate the results of the study to all similar cities in Russia and in Italy respectively. As a survey distribution channel in Russia the most popular social networks Vkontakte and Instagram were chosen, while in Italy Facebook and Instagram were used. The sample was formed by the method of "snowball", the choice of which was made due to its high effectiveness and ease of use in conducting online surveys through social networks.

From the Russian (n=383) and Italian (n=325) samples 38 were excluded for they reported that they do not drink alcohol in Russia, and 25 for the same reason in Italy. After that another 47 were excluded from the Russian sample and 29 from Italian sample for the reason that they cannot be potential consumers of wines in the average price category. The reason for exclusion was the age under 18 and average income per month less than 30742 rub in Nizhny Novgorod (Federal State Statistics Service, 2017), and less than 1169 euro per month in Viterbo (ISTAT, 2016). The final sample in Russia is n=298 with 58% female and 42% male. It is close to the Russian gender distribution with 54% female and 46% male (Federal State Statistics Service, 2017)/ The final sample in Italy is n=271 with 47% female and 53% male, which is also close to the gender distribution in Italy with 51% female and 49% male (ISTAT, 2016). Possible violations of the representativeness of the samples by the number, age and income of the respondents should be attributed to the limitations of the study.

Furthermore, based on the studies on consumer behaviour on the wine market and the results of the expert surveys conducted in Russia and Italy, the authors came to conclusion that on the wine market of both countries in some cases consumers make choice of the product based not on its brand, but the country or the region of origin. It is more specific for Russia where most of the population has scarce knowledge of foreign wine producers. Therefore, the respondents in both countries were asked to estimate not only wine brands but also countries and regions of production. For each country 40 most popular wine brands, countries and regions were selected for the further research according to the data from the annual reports of the Euromonitor (Euromonitor, 2021) and the experts' opinion.

The results of the content analysis of the customers' feedback of the wine (tables 1-2) allowed the authors to build two semantic differentials by which the respondents were asked to evaluate the wine brands/regions/countries: modern – classic and premium – casual. Following the methodological recommendations of the perceptual mapping technique each respondent was asked to choose not more than 5 wine brands, regions, or countries they know the best for the further estimation. At the final step of the research, based on the results of the mass survey in Russia and Italy the perceptual maps for the Russian and Italian markets were built (Figures 3-4 respectively).

On the perceptual map of the Russian wine market (Figure 3) the existence of a high concentration of brands, regions and countries that position their wines as classic casual can be noticed. This group mostly consists of popular Russian wine brands such as "Fanagoria", "Viktoria", "Rossiiskoe Igristoe", "Chateau Taman", "Moskovskoe", "Dolina", "Vilash", "Olymp", "Monastyrskaya Trapeza", "Izumrudnaya Loza" and others, and the wine manufacturers from the Crimea, Abkhazia and Georgia.

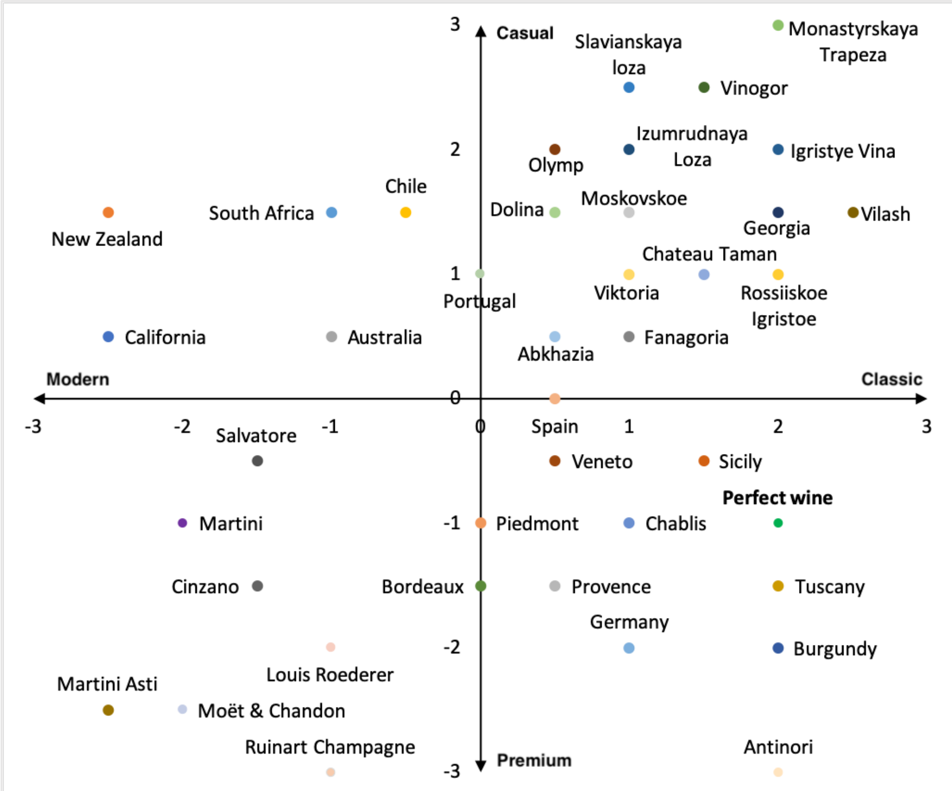

Figure 3. Perceptual map of the Russian wine market

Two major wine producing countries Portugal and Spain take intermediate positions on the map, the first one classified by the consumers as classic casual/modern casual, and the last one described as classic casual/classic premium wines. A few brands fall into the category of modern casual wines, with all of them being wine producing countries and regions of the New World: New Zealand, Australia, Chile, California and South Africa.

According to the consumers' opinion, classic-premium wines are produced in the old European wine countries and regions such as Veneto, Provence, Chablis, Burgundy, Tuscany, and Germany. The famous Italian wine brand "Antinori" was also put onto this part of the map, while the French wine region Bordeaux took an intermediate position between modern casual and modern premium wines.

Finally, the group of modern premium wine brands include some popular Italian brands from medium price segment "Salvatore", "Martini", "Martini Asti", "Cinzano" and the famous French wine brands from high price segment "Moët & Chandon", "Louis Roederer" and "Ruinart Champagne". When choosing the "perfect wine" the Russian consumers most frequently named classic premium wine.

Figure 4. Perceptual map of the Italian wine market

On the perceptual map of the Italian wine market (Figure 4) it can be noticed that the Italian wine brands dominate on the market, and the highest concentration of brands exits in the group of classic-premium wines (around 35% of the estimated brands fell into this category).

Three premium brands "Berlucchi", "Donna Fugata" and "Cabreo" took an intermediate position between classic and modern, while classic brands "Giordano" and "St Michael-Eppan" were assessed to be between casual and premium wines.

As classic casual wines the Italian consumers mostly perceive big manufactures of 'bulk' wines with the average price around 1-4 euro per liter. For instance, those are such brands as "Tavernello", "Castellino", "San Crispino" and others.

A few brands fell into the category of modern casual wines, the Italian sparkling wines being the most popular of them; these are wines such as "Freschello", "Cinzano", "Canterino Secco".

The wines of the Italian company "Riunite" took an intermediate position between classic casual and modern casual categories, while "Martini Asti" sparkling wines were put on the map between classic casual and classic premium wines.

One fourth of the estimated wine brands were categorized by the consumers as modern premium. Among them some major Italian producers of elite wines can be found, like “Bellavista”, “Livon”, “Ferrari”, “Mionetto”, “Tramin” and famous French wine brand from high price segment “Moët & Chandon”.

As for the perception of the “perfect wine” of the Italian consumers, their preferences lay down between classic premium and classic modern wines.

Brand Positioning Guidelines for Emerging Wine Brands

To elaborate a set of recommendations on the brand positioning for young wine companies the authors sum up the findings of the perception mapping, the expert survey, and the literature review. According to the perceptional maps, on the Russian market there is a high concentration of brands in classic casual wines segment, while on the Italian market the segment of classic premium wines has the highest level of competition. As the authors mentioned before, for small wine companies it is more efficient to target the connoisseur consumer segment. Consequently, the authors suggest emerging wine brands to position themselves as the premium wines on both markets. Therefore, the choice for the Russian market lays between classic premium and modern premium segments, while for the Italian one it is narrowed down to only one option, which is a modern premium segment. Owing to the perceptual maps, it is also possible to analyze the consumers’ perception of the “perfect” wine. Most of the Russian customers named classic premium wines as their most desirable product choice, while in Italy the respondents did not get to be so precise about their preferences and could not decide between classic premium and modern premium segments. Hence, in Table 3 below we give the recommendations on the positioning strategy of emerging wine brands on the Russian market regarding classic premium segment, while for the Italian one they will correspond to modern premium wine segment.

Table 3. Recommendations on the Positioning Strategy of Emerging Wine Brands

Russian market	Italian market
Brand positioning	
Classic premium wine	Modern premium wine
Target segment	
- Men and women - 35+ with high level of income - Connoisseur segment - Businessmen, top management, officials - Travel a lot, are familiar with the culture of wine consumption - Drink wine at least once a week	- Men and women - 30+ with upper middle income - Connoisseur segment - Intelligent young specialists - Travel 1-2 times a year, familiar with the culture of wine consumption - Drink wine at least 2-3 times a week
Goals of the advertising campaigns	
- The enhancement of sales	- The increase in demand and enhancement of sales
Key ideas for advertising campaigns	
- The face of the brand is a famous person (an actor, a singer etc.) - Strong marketing legend - Communication message: “a private winery in Italy” - Emphasis on small volumes of production, exclusivity, following classic traditions of winemaking	- The face of the brand is an opinion leader in the “wine world” - Communication message: “young local winery with an innovative approach to the winemaking” - Emphasis on small volumes of production, following environmentally friendly, innovative technologies of production
Main communication channels	
- Cross-marketing activities with jewelry stores, car dealers, five stars hotels and premium class restaurants, elite beauty salons, fitness clubs, luxury clothing stores - Participation in domestic wine exhibitions - Closed wine tastings for the target audience - Personalized loyalty program - Distribution of POS-materials of high quality through the partners and in points of sale - Social media marketing aimed at showing the exclusivity and authenticity of the winery situated in Tuscany	- Participation in international exhibitions - Advertising in annual wine guides - Participation in local wine festivals - Development of tourism to the winery - Social media marketing aimed at showing the production process, young team, experts, innovations - Collaborations with famous wine critics and bloggers - Video blog from a sommelier/winemaker

Conclusion

The purpose of the paper was to elaborate the positioning strategy for emerging wine brands on the Italian and Russian markets. In order to achieve this goal, the following tasks were performed by the authors: the concepts of brand positioning and differentiation were defined; the key features of consumer behavior and brand positioning on the wine market were identified; the analysis of the current state of the wine market in Russia and in Italy was carried out; the existing practices of positioning practices of wine brands in Russia and in Italy were revealed; the consumers' perception of wine brands in Russia and in Italy were assessed.

For the consumers on the Russian market it was proposed to use the communication message “a private winery in Italy” and put an emphasis on small volumes of production, exclusivity and classic traditions of winemaking; while for the Italian consumers as the most effective communication message it was suggested to use the slogan “young local winery with an innovative approach to winemaking” and accentuate the small volumes of production, and environmentally friendly, innovative technologies. As for the key communication channels for the Russian market, it was proposed to use such marketing tools, as cross-marketing with premium segment companies; event-marketing through participation in domestic wine exhibitions and organization of free wine tastings for potential distributors; social media marketing; loyalty program. As the main channels of communication with the Italian consumers the authors have named event-marketing through participation in international wine exhibitions and local wine festivals, and development of tourism to the winery; social media marketing including collaborations with bloggers and a video blog from the sommeliers; advertising in annual wine guides.

The results of the study have practical value for young wine companies as they can be easily implemented in their positioning strategy on the Italian and Russian markets. Furthermore, during the research, the comparative analysis of two wine markets: a long-established Italian one, dominated by domestic brands and occupied by the consumers with high level of knowledge in the field, and relatively young Russian one, with wine producers from different countries and consumers with undeveloped wine consumption culture, was conducted. The results show how consumers on two typical types of markets perceive the brands existing in their market space.

These findings can be used by the scientists and practitioners in the field in conducting further research or elaborating recommendations on brand positioning for young wine companies.

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Annex 1

Company	Expert	City
Enoteca “Go to Wine”	Manager	Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Wine restaurant “Negroni”	Restaurant manager	Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Wine store “Time for Wine”	CEO	Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Wine distributor “Simple”	Marketing manager	Moscow, Russia
Sommelier school Lenwine	Wine expert	Sochi, Russia
Wine restaurant “Dodici Wine & Kitchen”	CEO	Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
Enoteca “Viterbium”	Shop assistant	Viterbo, Italy
Enoteca “Tuscia”	Shop assistant	Viterbo, Italy
Restaurant “Enotria by Angoletto Della Luce”	Restaurant manager	Viterbo, Italy
Bar Enoteca Gustangolo	CEO	Grosseto, Italy
Winery “Tenuta Dodici”	Manager	Grosseto, Italy
Enoteca “Il Bacchino”	Manager	Massa Marittima, Italy

ВЫРАБОТКА ПОЗИЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ ВИННЫХ БРЕНДОВ НА ИТАЛЬЯНСКОМ И РОССИЙСКОМ РЫНКАХ

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Аннотация:

Целью данного исследования является разработка основных рекомендаций по позиционированию новых брендов вин на итальянском и российском рынках в соответствии с выявленными различиями в том, как потребители воспринимают винные бренды на обоих рынках, и поиск соответствующих форм коммуникаций с потребителями. Для достижения поставленной цели авторы, во-первых, провели глубокое теоретическое исследование концепции позиционирования и дифференциации бренда и выявили ключевые особенности поведения потребителей на рынке вина. На следующем этапе было изучено текущее состояние рынка вина в России и Италии и проведен сравнительный анализ. Чтобы лучше понять специфику местных винных рынков, авторы провели экспертный опрос в России и Италии. Что касается завершающего этапа исследования, авторы провели опрос потребителей, чтобы проанализировать восприятие потребителями брендов вин в России и Италии с помощью метода карт восприятия. Результаты исследования показывают, как потребители на двух рынках, типичном рынке «страны вина» – итальянском, и рынке страны, не являющейся «винным краем» – российском, воспринимают винные бренды и как эти знания могут быть использованы маркетологами в коммуникациях с потребителями и разработке стратегий позиционирования бренда для компаний, торгующих вином.

Ключевые слова: позиционирование бренда, карта восприятия, дифференциация бренда, рынок вина Италии, рынок вина России, стратегия позиционирования, винные бренды