

Consumer perspective on de-alcoholised wines



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[Basic Wine](#)

30 June 2023

The low and non-alcoholic industry has seen **significant growth** with the rise of the so-called mindful drinking trend. It is speculated that the demand for lower and alcohol-free alternatives can be attributed to a shift towards health-consciousness. There is a greater focus on wellness and mental well-being, particularly by the Generation Y consumer group^{1,2}.

Although some low and non-alcoholic beverage types such as light and alcohol-free beer have already achieved commercial success, certain products, such as dealcoholised wine, have not seen the same. Several potential challenges may prevent the wider acceptance and growth of low and non-alcoholic wines. Limited research exists, especially concerning consumers' motives to purchase dealcoholised

wine, as well as their preferences and perceptions. A research group from Stellenbosch University set out to gain **much-needed insight into how Generation Y consumers behave regarding dealcoholised wine in terms of motives, preferences and perceptions in a South African context**³. This blog post will report on the study's main findings.

Why Gen Y?

Generation Y, also called **Millennials**, refers to a group of consumers born between 1980 and 2000^{4,5}. Generation Y consumers are of significant interest to businesses and marketers due to the **large size, decision-making power, purchasing power and influence of the group over other generational groups**^{2,6}. As the **largest segment of the South African population**, Generation Y consumers are important to the local economy⁷. Because of the **open-mindedness of the group towards innovation**, **Generation Y consumers are an attractive consumer target market for new products**⁸.

Materials and Methods

A sample of **626 South African Generation Y** male and female wine consumers responded to a self-administered, non-interactive web-based questionnaire. As the study centralised around the topic of dealcoholised wine, respondents who were familiar with the product, and have consumed it, were included. A screening question was included about whether or not the respondents had purchased dealcoholised wine in the past 12 months.

The primary objective of this study³ was to investigate the **preferences, motives (to purchase/not to purchase) and perceptions of South African Generation Y** male and female consumers in terms of the dealcoholised wine product. Questions about **demographics, consumption and purchase behaviour, preferences (attribute importance), motives (to and not to purchase dealcoholised wine), and perceptions** were asked. Questions regarding how **regularly respondents purchase dealcoholised wine, their preferred dealcoholised wine type, where they purchase the product and how much they are willing to pay for a bottle of dealcoholised wine**, were included.

Results

Emphasis on taste

The study clearly identified “**taste**” as the **most important consideration** when purchasing dealcoholised wine. Therefore, emphasis should be put on incorporating “taste” of dealcoholised wine when attempting to reach South African Generation Y consumers.

Experience the product

The study showed that **consumers have a need for opportunities to experience dealcoholised products first-hand**. Therefore, a fundamental part of making dealcoholised wine more appealing to Generation Y consumers, and encouraging them to make a purchase, should involve **providing opportunities to taste and experience the product**. Respondents indicated that “I have tried it before” is one of the most important considerations when purchasing dealcoholised wine and consumers who had a **positive taste experience** with a dealcoholised wine, are **likely to purchase the product again**.

Expectations of a dealcoholized wine

Dealcoholised wines are faced with the challenge of a **poor perceived taste** that is not comparable to regular wine. Therefore, it is important for producers of dealcoholised wine to explore possible methods and approaches to preserve the flavours and aromas found in wine when reducing the alcohol content in the beverage. There is a **need for more research on dealcoholised wine from a production, chemistry and sensory point of view**.

Other than that, the **consumers’ expectation that dealcoholised wine should taste exactly like regular wine should be managed**. The marketing of dealcoholised wine could focus on aspects such as the **functional benefits** that the beverage can provide (e.g., “to avoid drinking and driving”, “health value”, “to reduce my alcohol intake” and “to avoid getting drunk”), rather than focusing on the fact that it is a wine-based product.

Availability

The respondents of the study reported that “**limited availability**” and “**it is difficult to find**” were the **most prominent motives not to purchase** dealcoholised wine. Generation Y consumers seem to be unsure of where dealcoholised wine can be purchased. It seems that dealcoholised wines are not sufficiently available in purchase locations and that where they are available, they are not sufficiently advertised or displayed. Consumers will be more likely to be aware of where dealcoholised wine is available if **promotional material and communications include information regarding where and how** these products can be purchased.

- The respondents of the study indicated that the preferred purchase location for dealcoholised wine is from **supermarkets**, followed by **bottle stores**. Wine estates, restaurants and online did not seem to be popular purchase locations for this product category. A possible reason for this result is that the latter channels currently do not widely offer dealcoholised wine products. For example, although some restaurants may offer alcohol-free options such as mocktails, dealcoholised wine offerings are still limited.

Price

The study showed that Generation Y consumers **largely consider the price** of a dealcoholised wine when making a purchase decision. Dealcoholised wine is generally priced similarly to regular wine, as there are a number of **additional steps** in the dealcoholisation process that lead to increased production costs. Consumers are, however, unlikely to be aware of these additional processes, and **likely do not understand the reason for the similarity in price** when compared to its alcohol-containing counterpart. Dealcoholised wine is therefore still viewed as being expensive or overpriced.

- The respondents of the study indicated that the **amount they are most willing to pay** for dealcoholized wines falls within the price bracket of R50 to R100.

Focus on benefits

It is clear from trends identified in the results of this study that dealcoholised wine is a product that is largely purchased for functional reasons. This focus on **functional benefits** is evident in the relatively **high importance** given to attributes such as “contains very little or no alcohol” and “health value”, as

well as motives (to purchase) such as “to avoid drinking and driving”, “to reduce my alcohol intake”, “to avoid getting drunk” and “I like to stay in control”. **Marketing efforts should focus on these functional benefits.**

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a number of useful implications and recommendations for producers and marketers of dealcoholised wine on how they can **better appeal to South African Generation Y consumers.**

The study showed that “taste”, “price” and “I have tried it before” were identified as the **most important considerations** when purchasing dealcoholised wine, with “taste” being significantly more important compared to other attributes. It is advised that resources are focused on the **taste** of the dealcoholized wine, from both a production and marketing perspective, the **pricing** of the product, and providing Generation Y consumers with **experiences** with dealcoholised wine.

Overall, the respondents of the study seem to be **motivated to purchase** dealcoholised wine predominantly for reasons such as “to avoid drinking and driving”, “I like the taste”, “to reduce my alcohol intake” and “to avoid getting drunk”, which are mainly functional in nature. **Producers and marketers of dealcoholised wine are advised to focus on these functional benefits provided by dealcoholised wine.**

In terms of motives **not to purchase** dealcoholised wine, respondents were seemingly most bothered by “limited availability”, “it is difficult to find”, “lower quality than regular wine” and “I dislike the taste”. Lastly, dealcoholised wine was perceived as being **healthier, but more expensive** compared to alcohol containing wine.

Results from this study provides valuable insights on how to design **better products and promotional strategies** to meet the needs of promising consumer groups such as Generation Y consumers.

References

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