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E-commerce and Italian Wine: can they match successfully?

A Mystery Shopping analysis

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Abstract

Italian Wine, a distinctive product made in Italy, and e-commerce are two topics that are assuming increasing relevance in the last period. This thesis proposes a Mystery Shopping analysis aimed at establishing to what extent this distribution channel is exploited by wineries. The research starts from a description of international trends like globalization and technological innovations and their impact on the economy. Successively the reader can find specific information about Italian wine, both from the supply and the demand side. Particular attention has been paid to changes in consumers' habits and to the fact that customers are assuming growing importance from a managerial point of view (Customer Satisfaction Management). After that, we have analysed a representative sample of e-commerce websites, where a foreign client can buy Italian wine. To simplify the analysis, we supposed to be an English-speaking client who is going to buy "Prosecco". In order to evaluate the quality of these e-commerce sites we selected from literature about twenty parameters whose level of importance has been established by millennial cyber-consumers through an on-line survey. Finally, the mystery shopper technique has been used to investigate to what extent these parameters were developed in the selected websites.

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

In this chapter we are going to present a collection of issues that have inspired the following dissertation. We will talk about some recent news that have particularly influenced both our modern society and the wine sector; such news are supported by technological innovations, which are deeply changing our lives. E-commerce seems to be the future of the economy and it is increasingly involving the food sector, giving small businesses the chance to export their goods. It is therefore reasonable to ask ourselves whether Italian wineries are adequately facing this challenge and whether the quality of their service is acceptable.

1.1 Changes and New Opportunities

We are living in a dynamic world that evolves generation by generation, it has been like this since its outset; but from the industrial revolution, humanity seems to evolve at a higher speed. The dimensions of this change are now global, thanks to the rise of new technologies, deeply connected with the IT sphere. We will see human beings are naturally driven by their culture, a force strictly related to their birthplace and to the society where they grow up. This concept has quite blurred borders and it is influenced by several issues like migration and globalization; it entails even more intercultural interactions between individuals, and widely different traditions and believes are meeting each other increasingly. Specifically, globalization is an essential element of the economic history of mankind and it is leaving a mark in our present time in several different manners, from the way people act to the impact humans have on the environment. Actually, there is no agreement on the positivity or negativity of the globalization process. On the one hand it has scientifically and culturally enriched the world, as a matter of fact many people benefited from it economically as well; but on the other it has been criticised, because inequality levels may have been increased by the introduction of new technologies and investments of foreign capital in developing countries (The Economist, 2013).

Today like never before, it is essential to consider the interaction among countries; every enterprise, especially those operating at an international level, should be familiar with what is happening around the world. Every year many events occur and mold humankind, for example last 2016 has been a year of deep political changes, environmental accidents and social issues in more than one country. In the USA new political trends are arising with Trump's election, who seems to strive for protectionism, and also in the United Kingdom people have made an historical decision with the Brexit approval and the consequent exit from the European Union. These facts were not predicted and their future implications on the economy and the next generations are only assumable. The increase in terroristic attacks in Europe or the military coup in Turkey have also influenced people's behavior, as they represent new causes of worries, similarly to the persistent global warming and its related environmental problems like the strong earthquakes in Ecuador and Italy. Some events do not directly influence the markets, but they have an impact on people and their behaviours.

In the food and beverage sector, another issue has echoed in 2016, it regarded *Alibaba*. *Alibaba* is a big on line marketplace, already popular in Asia, gaining fame in the rest of the world as well. September 9th, 2016, *Alibab*a has organized a big event known as "Tmall 9.9 Global Wine & Spirits Festival", the first event dedicated to wine and alcoholic beverages with the intent to promote imported wines and spirits among Chinese consumers and especially among the new generations. Italy participated too and it has been represented by 50 national wineries. Since this happening, we got the idea to analyze the combination of wine sales and e-commerce and understand how Italy is moving into this direction. We have decided to assess a sample of Italian wineries' on-line shops to understand how this channel is working for the international market.

1.2 Italy: Unexplored Fields in Wine Market and E-Commerce

The economic crisis of these last years has hit hard in many areas, including food products. It has modified food habits, but not in the same way everywhere: for example, in Greece consumers have preferred less expensive products characterized by prime price, in Italy the poorer classes are moving away from the Mediterranean diet, but in Iceland crisis can have a positive effect because it is favoring health-promoting behaviors through the reduction of alcohol consumption in favor of fruit and vegetables (Contini et al., 2015). We will later see, in chapter 2, a specific law which connects income and consumptions, that is the Engel law.

By the way, the appeal of Italian food (and also of Italian wine) is out of question, but the strategies adopted by enterprises to reach foreign markets must be updated. The demand of wine has strong ties with seasonality and end-of-year festivities, but the overall tendency of a contraction in food expenditures is not true for wine sales. This sector has helped the country face the recent economic recession, and it preserves lots of unexplored possibilities. A missing piece is the enhancement of online sales. It seems this old country ("old" also because its population is getting older) is a pool of unique traditions and specific know-hows, but it is also still, it hardly adapts to new trends. A common problem among Italians is the fear to ride the change and so they are always "late". Wine is not something new for Italians; Italy is a place where vineyard plantings meet their perfect environmental condition to grow. The Mediterranean climate is optimal for prosperous cultivation and the land itself seems to be the right *territoire* for this product. If we go back to the time of ancient Romans, we discover that people used to grow vineyards in their land, producing renowned wines, which represented not only a big fortune but also a big pride. Ancients used to call a part of Italy *Enotria*, a Greek word that means place where you can plant and farm the vine (Dell'Annuziata, 2012). But times change, today wine producers recognize this product generates a low turnover compared to the investments (Joseph R., in *Il Sole24Ore*, 06th April 2016). In the wine sector it seems there are two apparently opposing phenomena:

- The increase of mass-produced wine, because people's purchases' are influenced by price, and there is low involvement with the product;
- The specialization towards narrow markets, because of people searching for higher quality standards, who pay attention to attributes other than price (for instance, country of origin, grape variety, certifications etc.).

This means there is a polarization of consumers towards opposite behaviors (Contini et al., 2015). Italian enterprises nowadays need to focus on the people that will decide and change the consumption in the immediate future: the under 35 generation who buys via smartphone and tends to inquire more and more about the quality and the origin of food.

Internet has enabled an epochal transformation, becoming the largest horizontal infrastructure created by men, upon which any business model or production strategy can meet the needs of consumers. Italy is the second European manufacturing power, but the size of its businesses remains on average small. However, the digital economy makes size a much less important factor than before. Thanks to the web, a micro enterprise can become a micro multinational, without major infrastructure investments, and being visible in every place of the planet. Unfortunately, what we read on newspapers, makes us think Italian firms are not "surfing" this opportunity. Around 60% of the businesses has a *.it* internet domain, but it is mostly used to read mail or have more visibility (but in a passive way, because they think it is enough to have a website where they can be found); only 15% of firms uses its domain to communicate and for marketing activities (so in an active way) and even less (only the 9%) to sell its products through the e-commerce (Zunino, 2016). The truth is that Italian food industry is facing the technological revolution with opposite trends: in some cases, it acts as "business schools", but in others with absolute immobility (Mangiaterra, 2016).

From the side of consumers, today there is some evidence people all around the world use on-line channels to search information, but also to purchase products. Internet has not to be seen as another world anymore, but it is rather an extension of the real one. We should take advantage of it from now, because especially for new generations, it is becoming part of the human beings' genetics. Corporations can have full control of what information to post on their official websites (Garcia-Retamero, Rieskamp, 2008), but the opinion of other people is considered to be more reliable because people rely more on the wisdom of a large group of persons (Huang & Chen, 2006). Since customers can effortlessly voice transparently and publicly what they actually experience, across social platforms or simply through the web, we realize they have never been so influential and powerful in reshaping business practices. Customer's need is the basis of businesses, and without it a company doesn't exist, so it would be wise to give them the necessary attention and properly satisfy their requests.

1.3 What will be discussed in the Next Chapters

In the next chapters, we are going to address the main topic of this dissertation from two different points of view: the suppliers' and the consumers'. The thesis aims at assessing the adequacy of Italian companies in facing the e-commerce challenge, their ability to keep tight ties with the final clients and to exploit the related big data.

Suppliers

After an overview about the importance *Made in Italy* assumes for the national economy, we start our journey with the wine and particularly Italian wine. From its ancient roots until today, wine has played a symbolic role for several cultures, especially for the Italian one. Continuing the considerations on the supply side, we will describe the market size (from both a national and international point of view) discovering opportunities and threats. The opportunities, among others, can be new distribution channels, i.e. e-commerce; while the threats are, for instance, agro-piracy and wine forgery. Moreover, we will focus on quality certifications like DOC/DOCG, and the case study will be carried out on *Prosecco* wine. The reason of such choice is its worldwide *sparkling* success compared to the other wines.

Consumers

Then, we will pay particular attention to the demand side, because of the increased influencing role of consumers. We will discuss about cultures and generations, about how they can change during times and how they may modify purchase habits too. We will see today people choose to consume wine for different reasons than in the past, and also the amount of product drunk have changed. Focusing on clients has become an imperative, so we are going to write an excursus about customer satisfaction and some techniques to evaluate it (for example the mystery shopper one, that we will use in the last part of this dissertation). We will also analyze the website evaluation theory, because e-commerce is implemented across them. Websites are informatics' but also marketing's tools and for this reason we will find different criteria to evaluate their quality.

Research

Finally, we will conduct an empirical research to assess the quality of the Italian e-commerce and to verify its adequacy to export abroad. The research opens with a description of the method we will adopt. We will consider a sample of Italian wineries, and we will select the ones that sell through e-commerce. We are going to describe which items will be evaluated and how they have been selected. Then, we will report the observations acquired during the investigation as mystery shopper, which have suggested the final conclusions.

CHAPTER 2 – The Taste of Italian Wine

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader some knowledge about the Italian wine market. It opens with some reflections about the importance of agriculture and food for the Italian economy and goes on describing the wine product and its supply inside and outside the country. Particular attention has been addressed to the distribution channels and to the status of e-commerce in Italy.

2.1 Italian Economy and *Made in Italy*

The first association that naturally comes with Italy is food. The art of cooking is deeply linked with the Italian culture and the quality of ingredients is the main character of this story. Evidence is scattered throughout the past, but the most recent remark is the choice to establish Expo in Milan last year. In 2015, Italy became a new reference point, an innovative cultural pole, where many people met and shared their knowledge. Food and agricultural products were the subject of this big and famous event: pavilions were dedicated to specific countries, but also to specific clusters (for example coffee, cocoa, and so on). In particular, Italy wanted to effectively convey its essence into this exhibition, and chose to represent the tradition of its regions. There was an area composed by many restaurants, each one dedicated to the different habits of the peninsula: a demonstration that Italy is a proud country and also conscious of the variety it has inside. This heterogeneity is sometimes difficult to catch from outside.

The pulling sectors of the Italian economy are: agricultural, fashion, furniture and metal-mechanical[1]. All together these sectors are able to create a particular image of the country, because they communicate a set of particular virtues. If we ask what the common factor among these sectors is, the answer will be the *Made in Italy* value they contain. The government is addressing investments to the internationalization of *Made in Italy,* economically helping firms to promote their business abroad[2]. The concept of *Made in Italy* was born in the 80s, when Italian producers were affected by forgery from foreign countries. This brand was established because of counterfeiting, in order to guarantee the Italian origin of products. Nowadays this

[1]Sectors that have been mentioned in the article: http://www.pmi.it/economia/mercati/news/95495/made-in-italy-in-ripresa-i-settori-traino.html
[2] For instance, we refer to the attached document of the administrative order 14th March 2015, reachable at: http://www.mise.gov.it/images/stories/commercio_internazionale/piano_straordinario_made_italy/piano_promozione_straordinaria.pdf

brand is very popular among consumers due to its particular meaning and it creates a sense of trust in clients. To list some features of *Made in Italy*, we can mention: high quality, fashion and innovation. Thanks to these fixed attributes, Italian products gain high value and more desirability from the foreign perspective; goods are able to respond to the expectations of consumers and create satisfaction.

One of the most representative categories of *Made in Italy* remains the agricultural one and we can find confirmation of that in the last report of Istat, the Italian statistical institution. Before analyzing such data, we would like to underline that such agricultural products are very different from the industrial ones, because:

- Agricultural raw materials depend on seasons and cyclic nature, they are perishable and non-homogeneous;
- The product has a nourish destination;
- There are different standards of quality and lengths of the product life cycle[3].

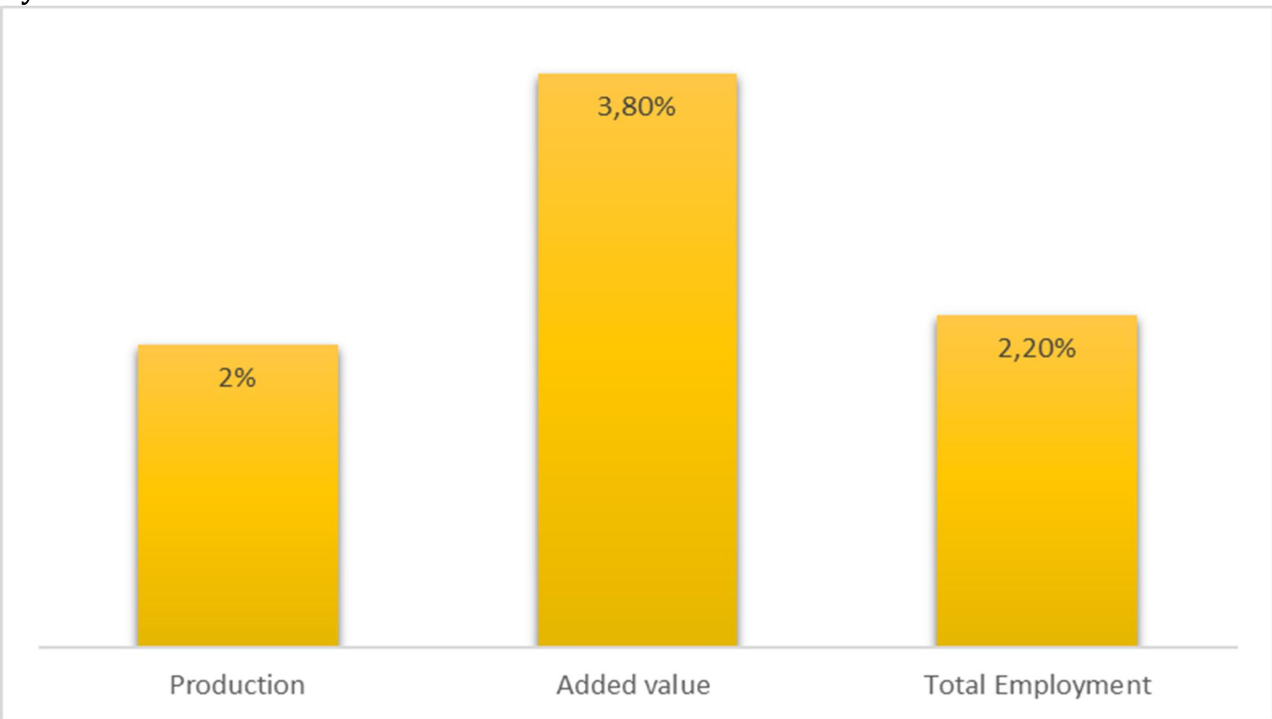
Origins and quality of raw materials make the difference, but they are not constant in time and space because they are organic and their features are not only depending on human action. When we talk about an agricultural product, we have to remember that some variables are external and given. If we take as an example the product "wine", we will see the quality and the quantity of grapes produced depends largely on the environment. The winemaker cannot control the climate, sun or rain in the vineyards, or new plant illnesses. A bad year could compromise the harvest and so there will be a low production (for instance this happened in 2014[4]). For what concerns the nourish destination, it means people will feed themselves through the product: they will literally consume what they are buying. This represents a burden and a responsibility for suppliers, because it is important to guarantee high quality products to preserve consumers' health. Quality is defined like the set of proprieties that a product should have to totally satisfy the expectations of consumers and in agro-food products qualitative attributes respond to nutritional, sanitary and organoleptic standards. Talking specifically about wine, it is clear people buy it to drink it. The product has particular characteristics to be taken into account also from a nutritional perspective, because it generates calories, it contains

[3] Pilati L. (2004), "Marketing Agro-alimentare", UniService, Trento
[4] http://www.intravino.com/grande-notizia/per-i-vini-del-veneto-la-2014-e-unannata-da-dimenticare-in-fretta/

specific minerals, vitamins and so on; producers should periodically arrange controls to verify that standards are maintained and so the quality is being guaranteed.

Let's now describe by figures the economical trend in the agricultural and food sector. First of all, there has been a general positive trend in the Italian agricultural economy in 2015. The total added value of the agricultural sector amounts to 33.1 billion euro and it represents 2.3% of the total national added value. It has grown up by 5.6% price based and by 3.8% quantity based compared to 2014. Positive impacts have been observed also on employment and investment sides (a growth of 2.2% has been registered in the labor units employed and investments have experienced a recover of +0.6% after a decrease of -6.1% in 2014). In the following graph, which is referred to the year 2015, we can see the percentage of change of the added value compared to production and employment (figure 2.1). Food industry has also a positive trend in 2015: compared to the 2014, added value is grown by 4.2% price based and 2.3% quantity based.

Figure 2.1 – Percentage change of agricultural sector in production, added value and unit of labor – year 2015



Source: Author's elaboration on data from Istat 2016b

First of all, the following figures are not representative of the real value of agriculture and food industry, that are respectively 4.00% and 14.40% (table 2.1). The observer should take into account the entire food supply chain to understand how much the agricultural sector impacts the national economy. There are several divisions which are linked to agriculture, sometimes indirectly, because agriculture carries out a "supporting function" for industry and trade. Without the production of raw materials, there are no products to transform and retailers together with all the tertiary industry will suffer as well (Callegari, Valentini, 2014).

Table 2.1 Added Value at Factor Cost of the Food Supply Chain in Italy - 2012[5]

Agriculture	€ 26,926.00
Food Industry	€ 22,153.00
Trade and Distribution	€ 47,557.00
- Wholesale	€ 9,953.00
- Retail	€ 19,565.00
Food Service	€ 18,039.00
Total Food Supply Chain	**€ 96,636.00**
Total Economy	€ 673,402.00
Agriculture's Share of Total Economy	**4.00 %**
Food Supply Chain's Share of Total Economy	**14.40 %**

Source: Author's elaboration on Callegari, Valentini (2014)

The importance of the agricultural sector is confirmed also by some recent news of *Il Sole24Ore*[6]. It claims agro-food products represent 9% of all national exports. From January to August current year, the value of agro-food exportations amounted to around 24.5 billion euro: this demonstrates foreign consumers request Italian food and beverage, positively affecting the national economy. Among all agro-food products, Italian wine is living an unprecedented momentum: it is defined "the 'bishop' of the *Made in Italy"*, because in this time, it is having a huge success all around the world. Agro-food products and wine nurture great opportunities, but they are also victims of some critical situations. We are going to further discuss about this and we will underline that although its potential, Italian wine can still improve its image: engagement on communication and distribution can help reach a more stable position in the international arena.

2.2 Italian Wine

Nowadays when people satisfy human needs like eating and drinking, it is not only for their outliving anymore. They are also looking forward to satisfying a pleasure. We are going to see

5 Million euro values. Total economy includes private sectors, except finance and insurance ones.
6 Il Sole 24 Ore is an Italian national daily business newspaper owned by Confindustria. The article we are referring to here is "L'industria alimentare sale a quota 24.5 miliardi", 10th October 2016.

moreover in chapter 3 *New shopping habits* that consumptions are assuming a symbolic meaning day by day. As we have seen, there is one culture that is standing out in this field, the Italian one. Italian people are well known all around the world for their famous cuisine and good taste in combining dishes with drinks. So many different drinks exist and within all this great variety, one is very interesting. Wine is a product that has a long story and lots of peculiarities, a product that the majority of people have tasted at least once or have heard about. To describe what wine is and what is important to know about it, we start from its origins and go through time to understand its evolution and what it has become now.

2.2.1 Brief History of the Product

There is no real agreement on when and where wine was born, but it is common to state that it already existed in the Neolithic Era. If we get a look to the encyclopedia, we can find out that wine is a thousand-year-old, typical of Mediterranean culture drink. Indeed, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans started to develop viticulture techniques very soon. Wine became very popular also for everyday consumption during the Roman Empire. In this period there was a big spread of vine growing in the Old World. During centuries, wine grape cultivation established well in Europe. But later, with the discovery of Americas, it was exported to the New World too. Its diffusion in these new territories started from South America and Mexico. From 18th century, it was also brought to Australia[7] and New Zealand. By the way, we have more than one reference in mythology for wine, both in Greek and Latin cultures; this underlines the importance of this beverage to them. We cannot forget the Gods consecrated to celebrations and wine, like Bacchus or Dionysus, but the Christian religion also involves wine during its holy celebrations: in these circumstances wine becomes symbolically the blood of Jesus Christ.

From the past to nowadays, several innovations have occurred in the process of making wine**.** When we speak about wine production, we should use a specific terminology like winemaking or vinification. The process starts with the selection of the grapes and ends with the bottling of the finished wine and trade. Some wines can also be produced by adding ingredients, other than wine grapes. For example, producers can use different fruits, plants or honey to flavour the wine. The kind of wine we want to produce is strictly connected with the kind of grapes and the process implemented. To make some examples, in the *Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG*

[7] For what concerns Australia, we will discuss a specific example in paragraph 2.4 Prosecco wine and Veneto Region

production, we use grapes from *Glera* vine (only 15% of grapes can be from other vines as *Verdiso, Bianchetta trevigiana, Perera* and *Glera lunga*, according to the procedural guideline dictates[8]). On the other hand, if we want to produce a sweeter sparkling wine, to better combine a dessert, like for example a *Moscato d'Asti*, we have to transform white *Moscato* grape. It is not simple to describe a general process to make wine, but we can distinguish two general categories: still wine production (without carbonation) and sparkling wine production (with carbonation). Generally, the process includes fermentation phase, which allows the transformation from juice to alcoholic drink (due to the action of particular yeasts on sugars). With sparkling wines such as Champagne, an additional, "secondary" fermentation takes place inside the bottles, dissolving trapped carbon dioxide in the wine and creating the characteristic bubbles. Depending on the color of the wine, red or white, the skin of the grape will be held or taken off. The time from harvest to drinking can vary. It can be from a few months to over twenty years for wines of good structure.

2.2.2 The Production Side

In this paragraph, our attention will be put on the supply side of Italian wine and we will talk about its size and composition. We used data both from the presentation edited by Ismea[9], revised on July 2016, and the last public statement[10] of *Organisation international de la vigne et du vin* – known like OIV. Thanks to these sources, we have been able to sketch the recent Italian wine industry dimension and to compare it with other foreign countries. We want to give a mark of what concerns the values we are considering. We will be using different measures as a reference: some will regard volumes and others will regard added values and for this reason we kept them divided. They will show some correlations, but not always in a linear way.

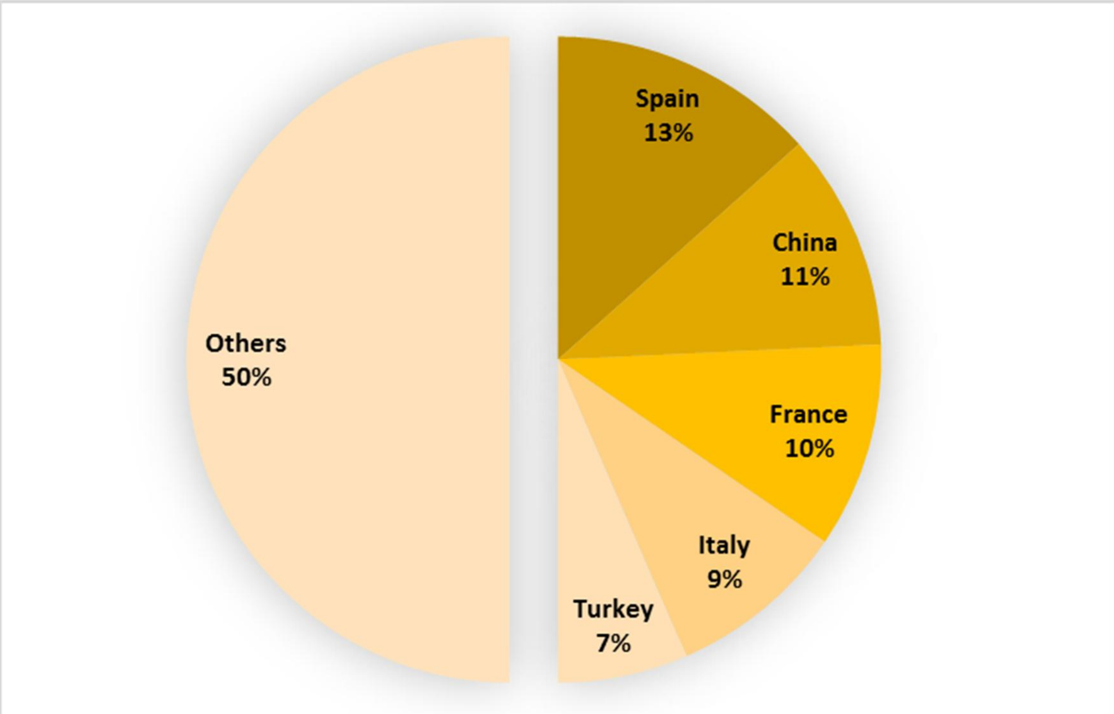
Volumes

In 2015, the vineyard reached 7,5 million hectares globally and the production of grapes has resulted in 76 million tons; therefore the wine production for 2016 has been estimated around 259 million hectoliters, one of the poorest in the last 20 years. Actually 2016 was marked by adverse climate conditions, which affected the production in various countries, but generally,

[8] The specific procedural guideline of Conegliano Valdobbiadene – Prosecco can be found here: https://www.regione.veneto.it/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=74cdb8c7-b08a-40e5-8010-41671dda9fc2&groupId=10701
[9] The italian food market service institute (http://www.ismea.it). The presentation we are referring to, can be found on-line here: http://www.ismeamercati.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3525#MenuV
[10] http://www.oiv.int/en/oiv-life/oiv-report-on-the-world-vitiviniculturalsituation2016

despite the decline in vineyard surface area, there has been an upward trend in grape production since 2000 (+17%). Those opposite trends may be explained mainly because of a rise in yields, as well as the continual improvement of wine-making techniques. As figure 2.2 shows, countries with the biggest area under vine are Spain, China and France. These countries, together with Italy and Turkey, represent 50% of the total vineyard surface area of the world.

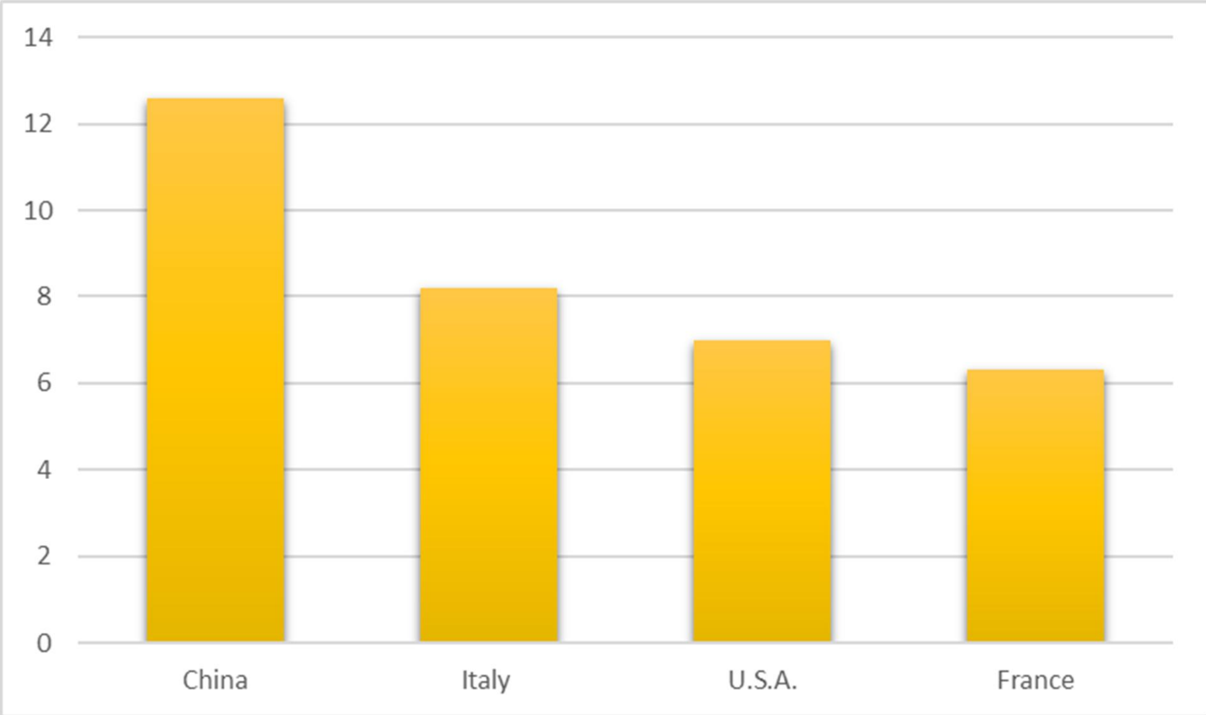
Figure 2.2 – Distribution of the world area under vines



Source: Author's elaboration on data from *World Vitiviniculture Situation* report - OIV 2016

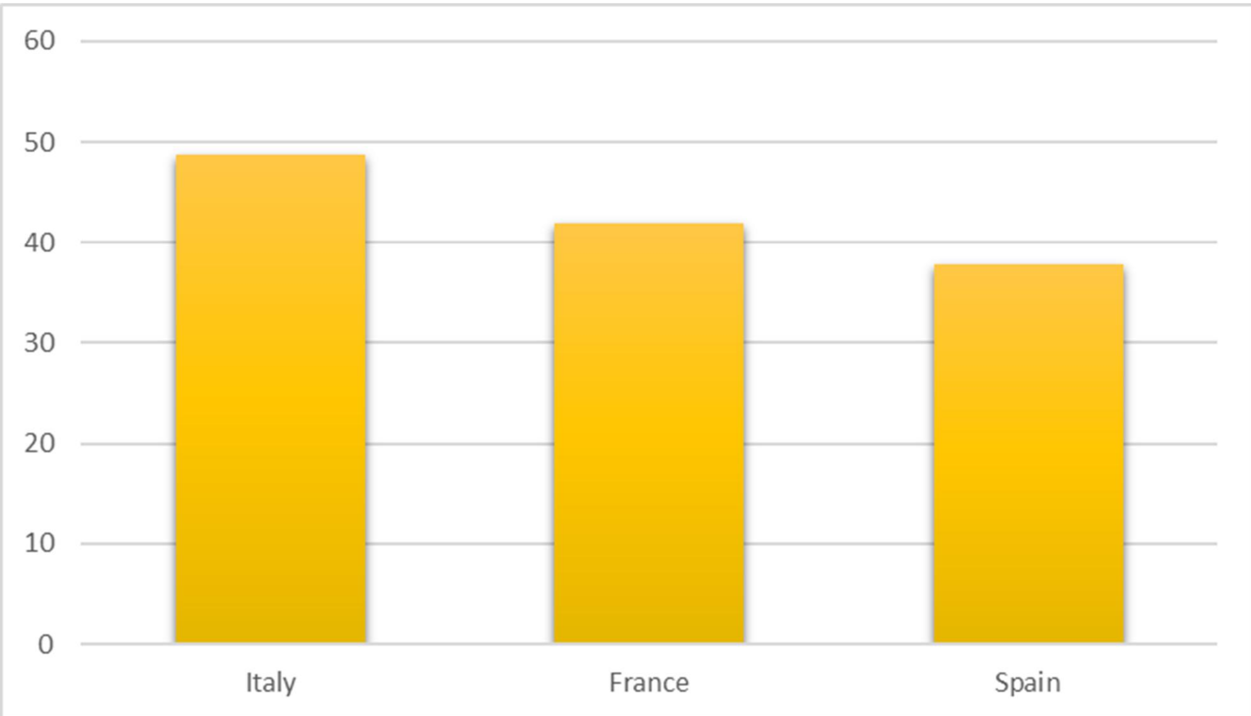
As far as quantities produced, we can say Italy is well positioned both at global and at European level. As we can see in the following graph (figure 2.3), the major grape producers in 2015 are China, Italy, United States and France. With 8.2 million tons of grapes produced, Italy is at the second place in the global rank, and at the first position in the European one. Since grapes have different uses (i.e. dried, table, wine), we focused our attention on those destined to wine production only. In this perspective, Italy confirms its position as the leading world producer with 48.8 million hectoliters, followed by France (with 41.9 mhl) and Spain (with 37.8 mhl) (figure 2.4).

Figure 2.3 – Global grape production of the main countries (tons) – 2015



Source: Author's elaboration on data from *World Vitiviniculture Situation* report - OIV 2016

Figure 2.4 – Global wine production of the main countries (mhl) – 2015



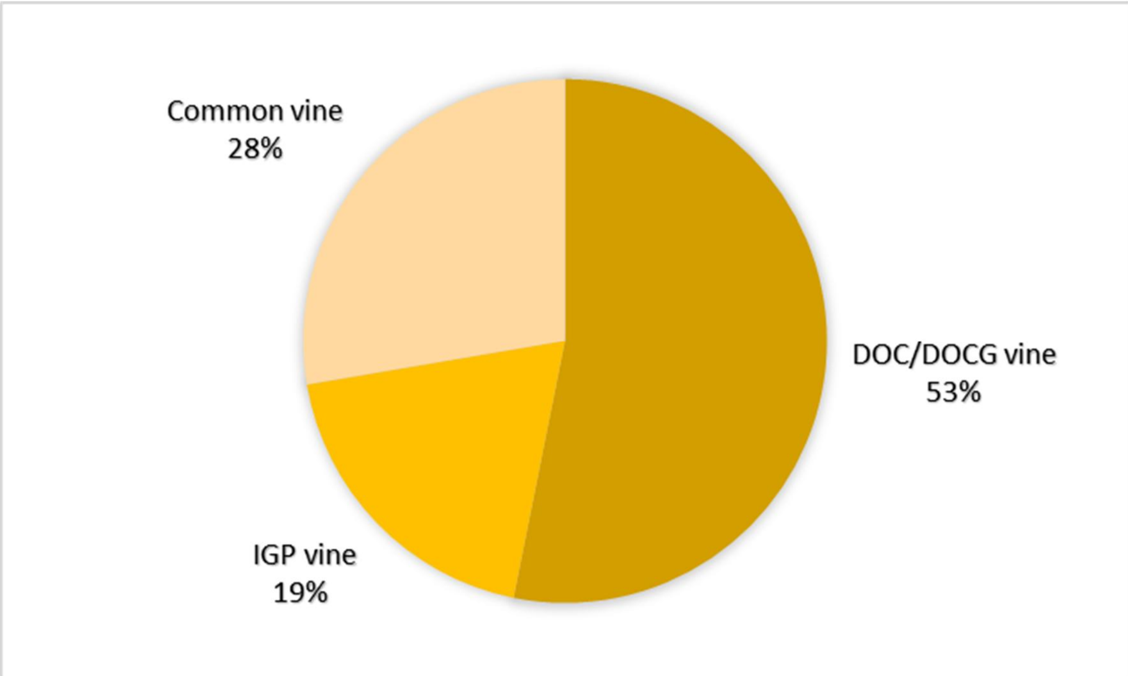
Source: Author's elaboration on data from World Vitiviniculture Situation report - OIV 2016

Now, if we want to focus our attention only on Italy and make further considerations on it, we can note that this sector is very multi-coloured, rich and different, almost regionalized. There are lots of vine varieties in Italy, around 90 kinds for 77% of the cultivated surface. Lands dedicated to the cultivation of vines are distributed among different qualities of wine, usually separated in DOC/DOCG, IGP and common wine (about the peculiarity of each quality, more clarification will be done later[11]). To give more information about this, we are reporting some figures by Ismea. In Italy the surfaces under vine amount at (figure 2.5):

- 341.070 hectares for DOC/DOCG
- 123.066 hectares for IGP
- 177.606 hectares for common vine

For a total of 641.742 hectares. More than 50% of the surface is DOC/DOCG dedicated and this demonstrates that winemakers have understood the importance of investing in quality (represented by certifications).

Figure 2.5 – Lands distribution in Italy among different Qualities of Wine - 2015



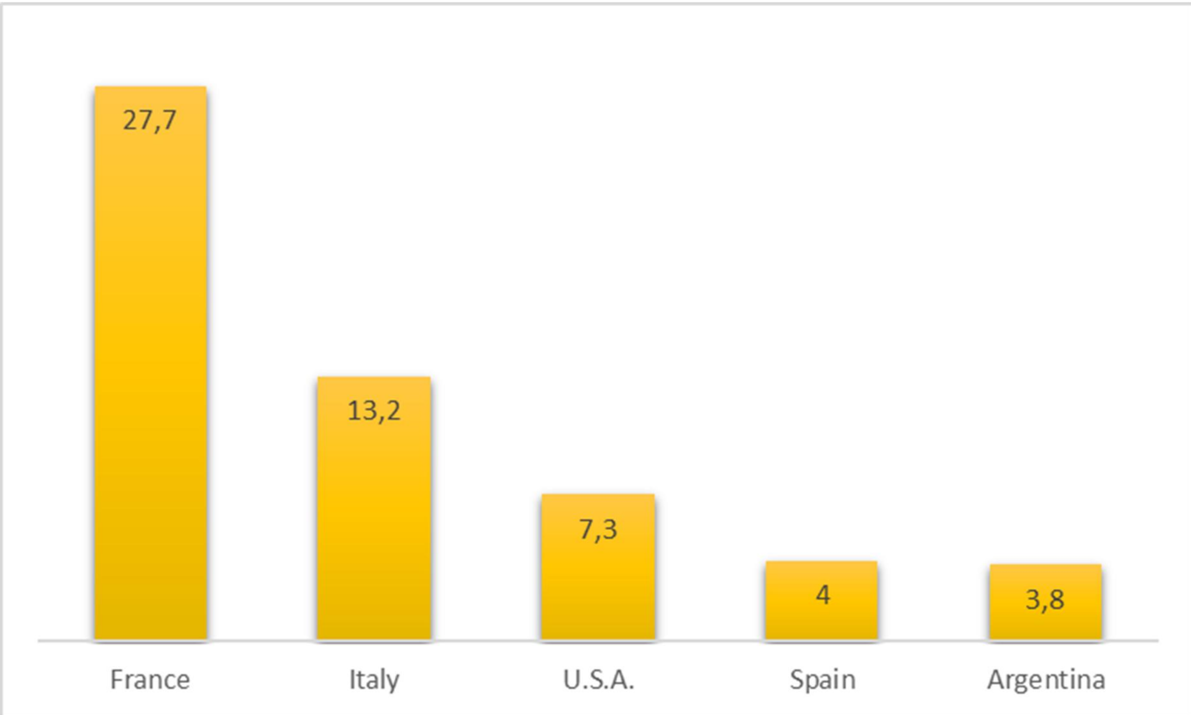
Source: Author's elaboration on data from Ismea report 2016d

[11] See paragraph 2.2.3 *Europe, Quality and Certifications. Are Italian Wines DOC, DOCG or IGT?*

Value Added

Now let's move to the value added registered. Between 2014 and 2015, Ismea has registered a positive increase of the turnover for the Italian wine supply chain. It has shifted from 12.350 to 12.474 million euro, with a variation of +1%. Actually, if we look to the price index, the interpretation is not so linear. We should also take into consideration the different qualities of wine. As a matter of fact, the report tells us that only DOC/DOCG wines had a positive trend regarding prices. On the contrary, for the other two categories, IGP and common wine, it was negative. If we move our attention to the international level (figure 2.6), we can see Italy remains in the top three, but its position has decreased in favour of France[12].

Figure 2.6 – Wine value in top countries (Million euro) - 2015



Source: Author's elaboration on data from the article of *I numeri del vino,* 2016

Sector Composition

Now we are going to describe some common features of the Italian winemakers, to better explain how this sector is composed. The Italian wine production system is characterized by strong fragmentation of farms and however their number has strongly decreased over the past three decades, at the same time the areas intended for certified products showed an increase.

[12] These data come from the article of *I numeri del vino*, and they are little different from what Ismea reported for the same period. They underline Italian production is estimated to be lower the French one too.

Many players have been spread all around the peninsula (however there are some places more famous than others) and quite often, they are entrepreneurs involved in a small family business. For this reason, the majority has to arrange their business with low managerial skills, construed more on experience than on formal education[13]. This impacts also their ability to export abroad; it becomes hard to cope with competition of big international players, when there are little management knowledge and few contacts in the network. Anyway, the argument about exportations will be analyzed more in depth in paragraph 2.3 *The Role of Distribution*.

The wine production system shows a clear differentiation among farms in several terms (for instance production costs, level of vertical integration of the production process, and so on) and this means a frequent separation of the supply chain, resulting in a reduction of the value added for the farmers. In literature, we can find that producers are divided mainly into three different groups, based on the origin of the wine grapes they use (self-produced or purchased on the market):

- Farm wine cellars;
- Industrial wineries;
- Cooperative wine cellars.

The latter are the most important in terms of wine production, but farm wine cellars are the most numerous (Gori, Sottini, 2014). Besides the wine processing establishments, in Italy there are also many collateral players, like bottlers (since bottling is a production stage that is often not economically convenient, especially for the small farms). Other important institutes are specific inter-branch organizations acknowledged as consortia, currently represented by categories of growers, winemakers and bottlers. They are representatives of the economic activities linked to the production and at least to one of the phases of processing or trade. These organizations, according to the European regulation, can take actions to improve the knowledge and transparency of the productions and the markets, predict the productive potentials, record prices, coordinate the release of products in the market also through research and market studies, explore potential export markets, implement actions in the defense and promotion of protected designations of origin, geographical indications, quality

[13] Those considerations are founded on the *6° Censimento generale dell'agricoltura* (2010) realized by Istat.

labels, organic products. Briefly, they should serve promotion and protection functions (Gori, Sottini, 2014).

To conclude this part, we would like to refer to an article[14] of Massimo Bergami (2016), an Italian journalist of *Il Sole24Ore*. He has recently suggested three directions that should be taken into consideration to improve this sector and gain competitive advantage on value added terms, because he believes that only if SMEs change their attitude, they can be successful in the future. The directions are:

1) Aggregation of different firms, in a collaborative perspective, especially for activities like promotion, marketing and distribution. One example is ISWA – Italian Signature Wines Academy[15].
2) Exploitation and/or integration of new technologies in the business; IT can create new opportunities and reinvent the business. With regard to the services offered, producers can add e-commerce, for example to allow people shopping 24/7.
3) Use of Big Data: they can make possible to have a more precise segmentation of customers.

Before presenting the distribution perspective, we will offer a digression about quality and certifications of wines, to better understand what they stand for.

2.2.3 Europe, Quality and Certifications. Are Italian Wines DOC, DOCG or IGT?

European Union (EU) was born after the Second World War. Nowadays, it stands as a unique example of economic and political union between 28 European countries. The EU bases its roots on the idea that countries that trade between each other become economically interdependent, and are more likely to avoid conflicts. From the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), in 1958, between six countries, this organization has grown year by year, and has included more countries of the European continent. starting from a mere economic union, it has turned also into a political union, dealing all sort of issues, from climate, environment and health to external relations and security, justice and migration. European policy is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its member countries and among its juridical activities we can find Regulations. In particular, we want to pay attention to the Council Regulation number 510/2006 of 20th March 2006[16], that provides dispositions on agricultural

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[14] "Come tradurre i nostri vantaggi in maggior valore", Il Sole 24 Ore, 04/09/2016
[15] http://www.iswacademy.com/values.html
[16] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006R0510&from=EN

products and foodstuffs from a defined geographical area. When there is a link between characteristics of certain products and their geographical origin, they can be recognized from EU and protected from imitation. In particular, they may be identified either as a protected geographical indication (PGI) or as a protected designation of origin (PDO) – that is, IGP or DOP, if we would like to follow the Italian anagram[17]. These products will be easily recognized by consumers because they carry EU symbols on their labels, giving consumers clear and concise information on their origin (see figure 2.7).

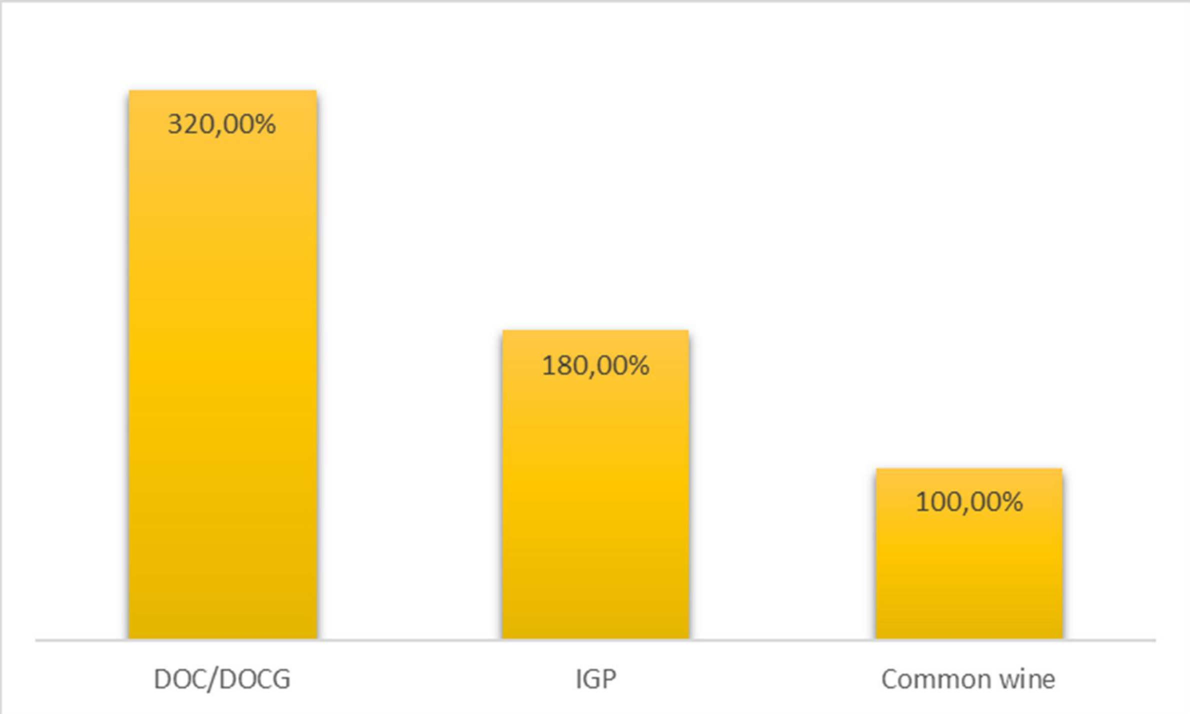
Figure 2.7 – EU symbols for DOC and IGP Italian products

Source: http://www.dop-igp.eu/

The introduction of these two terms has benefitted the rural economy, since it boosts farmers' income and supports populations of remote areas. By the way, the two types of geographical descriptions are different, and we can notice that the link with the area is stronger for DOPs, because DOP describes foodstuffs that are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognized know-how, while IGP only indicates a link with the area where at least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation has taken place (an evidence of this, can be found on the relative price of wines in figure 2.8: DOC/DOCG are more expensive). Only a group of producers may ask to register a product and the applications are addressed to the member state where the geographical area is situated. Indeed, verification of compliance of a product with certification specifications is ensured usually by one or more public authorities set up for this purpose or by one or more product certification bodies.

[17] Since the topic of this thesis is Italian wine, we decided to adopt the Italian description DOC/DOCG and IGP for the rest of this work.

Figure 2.8 – Compared prices in percentages (Common wine=100) among different wine qualities



Source: Author's elaboration on data from Ismea report 2016d

Actually wine-sector products depend on another regulation, that is the Commission Regulation (EC) No 607/2009, 14th July 2009[18], but terms and procedure to obtain certifications are quite similar. When we talk about DOP wines, we should distinguish between DOC and DOCG, because in the second case origins of wine are not only controlled, but also guaranteed. When wines and foodstuffs are recognized from the authority of competence, they are officially registered in reserved books.

Italy is one of the most active countries in this field and it has obtained 269 certifications during 2014; Emilia Romagna and Veneto are the two regions with the major number of certifications: 41 and 36 respectively. About Veneto region, we can say more and focus also on how many kinds of wine are certified: it is possible to count 52 names (14 are linked to DOCG category, 28 to DOC and 10 to IGT). For each wine, a specific procedural guideline is available on-line and it describes into details all the characteristics requested (rules for agriculture, labelling, bottling…). Industry experts have raised some concerns about the goodness of a big quantity of

[18] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:193:0060:0139:EN:PDF

certifications. Essentially, in their opinion if there are too much certified products, their value will decrease and consumers could feel disorientated (Scarci, 2016).

But how do foreign consumers perceive these recognitions? If it is true Italy is the first country in obtaining DOP and IGP certifications (Istat, 2016a), maybe other countries are less sensitive to the importance of these labels and they probably do not know what these labels stand for. On the other hand, accreditations rise up reputation of firms, and undoubtedly have a positive impact in business relation networks. Maybe in order to increase Italian export and spread the meaning of these certification, more promotion should be made, most of all by consortium.

2.3 The Role of Distribution

After the description of the production side, we want to understand the role of distribution in wine sector. We would like to start with a general introduction and then focus on wine distribution, while constantly giving a digression about the e-commerce.

Distribution is the essential phase of goods and/or services delivery and its main aim is to manage the finished products movement from the firm to its customers. Several factors influence the distribution system of a country and they are in particular:

- The level of development of the country;
- Local regulations;
- Customer shopping habits;
- Market size.

Distribution channels develop in an ongoing way and this is due above all the new technologies (let's think for example to the internet, PC, smartphone etc.). On this side, we can distinguish between traditional and innovative channels. On the other side, theory distinguishes different distribution channels on the number of intermediaries involved in the supply chain. Intermediaries are agents, wholesalers and retailers, and they play a role of mediation that makes possible, and sometimes easier, the transaction between manufacturer and consumer. This is the case of sellers reaching an agreement with local partners, or, in specific underdeveloped country markets, where wholesalers play a fundamental role in bridging the gap between demand and supply, because they are the only one able to sustain all the arrangement of the country's supply system. Based on how many intermediaries there are, it is possible to distinguish between direct or indirect (and for indirect, also short or long) distribution channels. Direct channels are better for complex products and services; this kind of products have to be presented and explained directly by the company to clients. Indirect channels on the other hand, are good solutions for products and services which are well known or pretty standardized.

Since there are several channels of distribution and different rules in each country, it becomes very important evaluate the different choices before deciding the firm's strategy. Logistic activities include handling, transport, inventory, labeling and storage, but when we are moving abroad our goods, we have also to be aware of the fulfilment of other kinds of obligations. Sometimes bureaucratic obstacles can become strong entry barriers for foreign companies and they can feel discouraged to carry on exports. Furthermore, international retailers must face decisions related to standardization/adaptation issues. If they choose adaptation, it becomes very important not only think about the retailing format, but also about the proposal of a specialized offer in terms of assortment, promotion and selling techniques.

Constant improvement in the logistic system is essential in order to reach the necessary speed of response to customer requests and be able to manage the international growth of the company. Firms should also take into account factors like:

- The stage of the product's life cycle;
- Competition of the market.

Nowadays some firms adopt a multichannel strategy, that means the company uses different channels, from direct to indirect but also traditional and innovative, often with differentiated offers and/or brands. This solution advantages also consumers, because they have a bigger range of choices and opportunities. It becomes fundamental the company succeeds in the integration and coordination of these different sales channels, otherwise customers will feel confused and unsatisfied. A possible way to reach integration and coordination, is using the internet. Internet gives millions of opportunities, but its power reveals itself only when a lots of people use it, according with Metcalfe law (Vescovi, 2007). A quotation about internet declaims it "is at once a world-wide broadcasting capability, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location"[19]. It reduces theoretically distances

[19] http://www.internetsociety.org/sites/default/files/Brief_History_of_the_Internet.pdf

between users and costs of communication. On the other hand, it could be difficult use it efficiently. We will see in the next paragraph, 2.3.1 *E-commerce Channel,* how the internet is affecting distribution in a revolutionary way.

An additional comment is due to the influence that country's culture could have on consumers' and suppliers' decision to use one channel instead of the others. From a research of PWC[20] emerges there are some differences between Italian retail system and other foreigner's systems (the research took into account 19 countries), but it is possible to see some common convergence on the adoption of new technologies for shopping. It is useful recognize nowadays there are off-line and on-line "places", where people can obtain information, compare products and make the final decision. On-line shops can be reached across different usable devices like PC, tablet and smartphone, and each lead a different experience in costumers. The use of new technologies spreads with different speeds among countries and it is also "generation-depending". The research found out Italians are still preferring shopping into physical shops, but there is a new tendency to use on-line services too, to compare prices and collect more information (i.e. shopping advices, find out the product needed, make comparisons, localize the nearest shop, and so on). Digital natives are obviously more inclined to use their device and in the near future they will change markets trends importantly. About consumers' habits we are going to tell more in chapter 3 – *New Shopping Habits*.

Now we are going to better describe the e-commerce and then we will focus on wine distribution. What PWC has not considered in its research are novelties introduced by platforms like *Amazon* or *Alibaba*. They contribute to make possible the purchase of drinks and food through the web. There has been a reinvention of businesses also in sectors ever connected with tradition and this represents a turning point for our society.

2.3.1 E-commerce Channel

If now in many countries it is common buying and selling goods and services via the web, in Italy e-commerce is sluggish. There is a controversy on what Italian firms think and what they do; quite all Italian firms recognize the importance of new communication tools like internet, but 33% of them do not have their own internet domain. The domain ".it" is considered a good way to digitalize the business, because is cheap but trustable, and there is a good connection

[20] You can find it here: https://www.pwc.com/it/it/industries/retail-consumer/assets/docs/total-retail-2015.pdf

with *Made in Italy* appeal. Unfortunately, only 9% of small enterprises have an e-commerce service available and in the most of the cases it is only a sort of shop window with a remote option to make an order (Mangiaterra, 2016). The reasons that drive companies to implement the e-commerce seem to be different and depending on their size. The BEM Research (2016) points out the smaller enterprises would use internet as a sales channel to extend their access to foreign markets. On the other hand, e-commerce can represent also a challenge: in Italy SMEs are scared to activate a direct online channel, because of intermediaries' influence. Intermediaries think e-commerce is a threat for their business and actually they are essential for SMEs to survive offline, so it can happen they discourage SMEs to attempt this kind of ventures. Contrary to this supposition, a good on-line channel is not a substitution, but rather a completion of the off-line activity. In other countries e-commerce is having a large implementation because it can solve several problems, like for example in China where big distances of the Asian continent and the crushed distribution system impede consumers.

Introduction about E-commerce

E-commerce can exist only thanks to the internet. Origins of the internet date back to the Cold War and what motivated the development of this new technology were first military and then research reasons. From the 90s internet started to be of public access and first implementations were directed to business, because it is suitable to carry out several kinds of services thanks to its interactive nature. Then, companies have begun to incorporate internet-supported transactions in their businesses, but the usage patterns differ from one sector to another. This fact led to define two terms, which are e-business and e-commerce. They are two different concepts, because the former refers to the conveyance of economic and commercial activities into the web, while the latter states for the direct selling through the web. We can say moreover *e-business* includes all the external and internal transactions and *e-commerce* only regards external transactions with customers and suppliers. Due to the previous considerations, we can say e-commerce is only a part of e-business.

E-commerce is generally defined as a commercial activity that takes place on the internet. It has its appeal, because it is easy and cheap to implement; it has been a top issue for retailers from the begin, when growth rates led to believe that in the future online shopping would become a dominant sales channel. Actually experts warn that only if you invest and allocate specific human resources on it, the service can work well and help you make profits. At confirmation of that, although some on-line suppliers achieved notable successes with sales, the spread of electronic trading has remained far below its potential. It has become evident, particularly from the failure of many 'internet-only' providers, that even high sales are often not enough to reach the profit threshold. Retail activities have a high e-business potential, however they meet the same barriers as traditional mail order services, for example customers want to touch the goods, there are problems of high rates of returns, and the inability of small suppliers to serve mass markets that prevents the theoretically possible ‘global expansion’ (Preissl, 2003). *Amazon* is one of the first example that come to mind when we talk of e-commerce: this company has undoubtedly paved the way for internet selling in several sectors and continually improves its offer. The low-cost internet operations allowed *Amazon* to offer substantial price discounts and larger selections, and adapt the offers to the several countries where it is located. *Amazon*’s early success depends in particular on two services it has offered and which have permitted the adaptation to costumers’ preference:

- Customized recommendations based on:
    - Tracking customer’s browsing;
    - Buying patterns.
- Product peer-reviews that gave it a sense of community.

Anyway, we should remember Amazon is a big market place and it is not equally comparable to small firms which produce and sell directly their products (Vescovi, 2007). Information technology systems have used it in the retail trade for a long time, chiefly in logistics and payment transactions, but they are still evolving: there are ongoing improvements in the flows of material and information and in the introduction of new services.

E-commerce Size

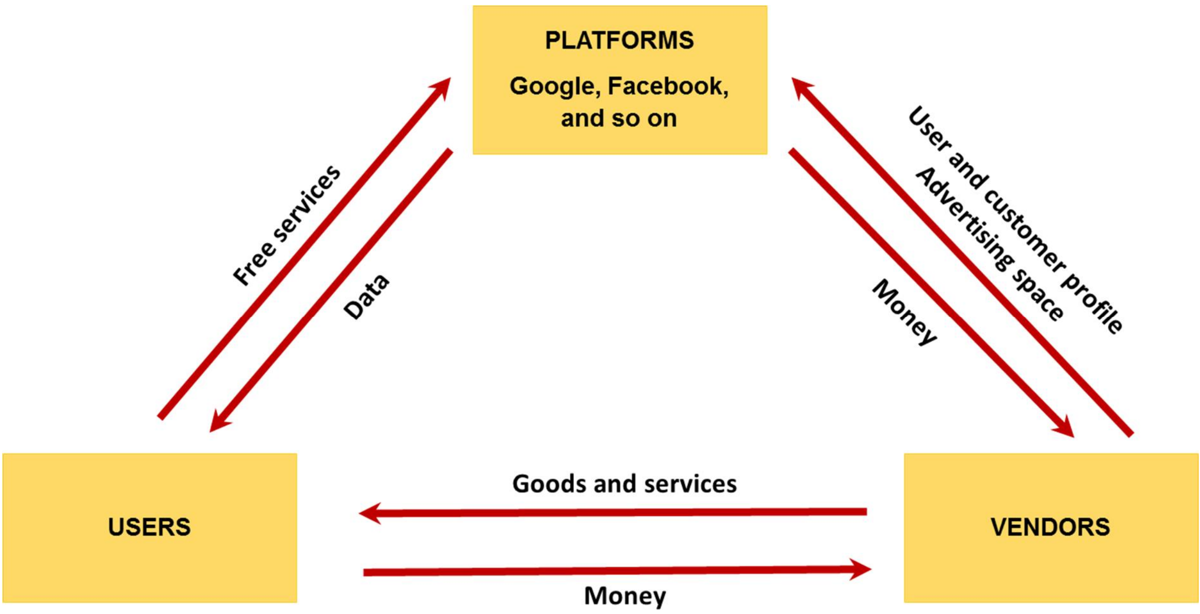
We stated e-commerce is not so widespread in Italy and now we are going to describe specifically its dimension. In support of this, we will refer to the BEM Research that offer a picture of the actual e-commerce dimension in Italy.

In 2015, the total amount of on-line sales in the world were around 1,671 billion dollars: they represented the 7.4% of the total retail market. E-commerce is generating every year more incomes and so its trend is positive. The biggest markets in the world are USA and China, also because of the presence of players like *Amazon* and *Alibaba*, which have their roots in these countries. These big players are at the same time international firms, and so they give the possibility to many little businesses to enter into foreign markets through their platforms (for example, think to *Made in Italy* shop window in *Amazon*, which gives the opportunity to sell abroad Italian crafts products). Those marketplaces have two different customers:

- The user: who uses the service
- The advertiser: who wants to reach the user.

So, it is a two side market, that raises difficult questions about competition policy. Actually these platforms are not exerting monopoly power over users, but rather monopsony power over advertisers (in the most of the case we have few buyers). Unfortunately, big marketplaces increase competition, damaging traditional players, which suffer lower margins and big data loss (figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9 Internet users trade personal data for useful services

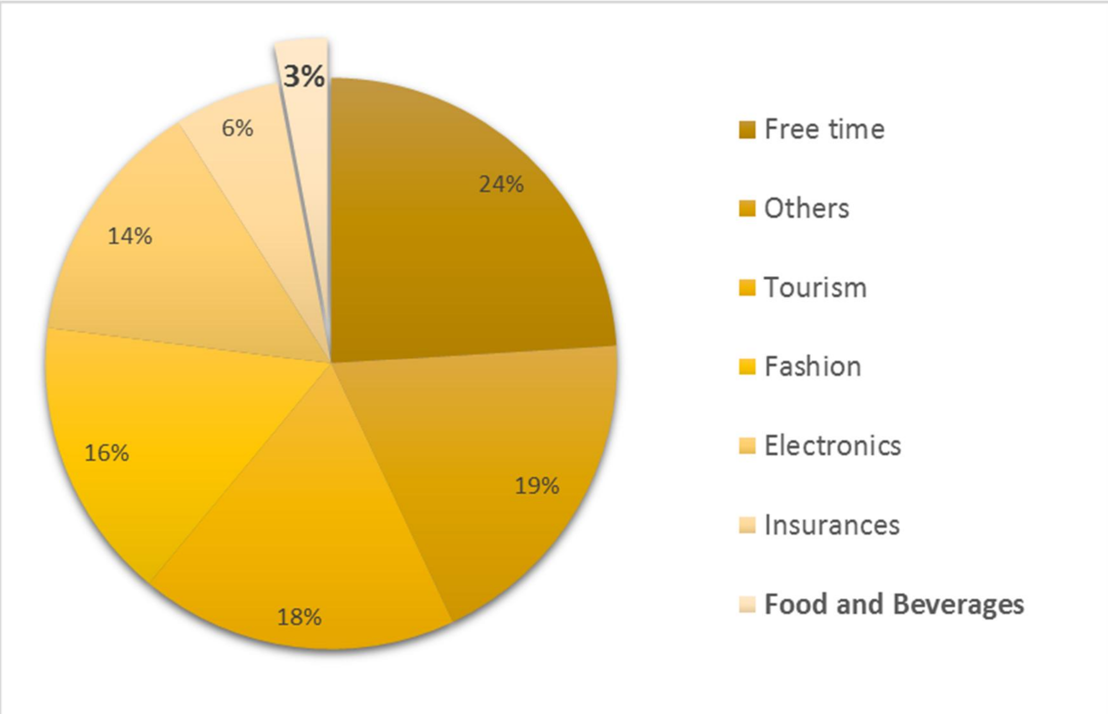


Source: Author's elaboration on World development report 2016

As regards Italy, there are 16,000 firms which offer e-commerce and the majority are located between Lombardy and Latium. In 2015 e-commerce reached approximately 29 billion euro of turnover, placing Italy at the 7th position in the European rank. After all, two thirds of the European turnover are generated by UK, Germany and France. Italy confirmed the positive trend about turnover, but this growth is dictated most of all by foreign operators which have entered in the national market (to give an example we can quote *JustEat*, which has bought the Italian *Clicca e Mangia*). Actually, 41% of firms rely on marketplaces like *Amazon, Ebay* and *Alibaba* to offer an e-commerce service. This choice is suggested from the attached services offered by big marketplaces, i.e. free tests translation and currency converter. For what concerns conversion rate (that is the transformation of visitors into buyers), the Italian average is 1.5% and it is now lower than the previous year. This underlines the need of an improvement in the websites management.

Another interesting information regards how turnover is distributed among sectors: free time and tourism seems to be the main reasons for Italians to use e-commerce, but some evolutions are coming (figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10 Turnover distribution among sectors – Italy, 2015



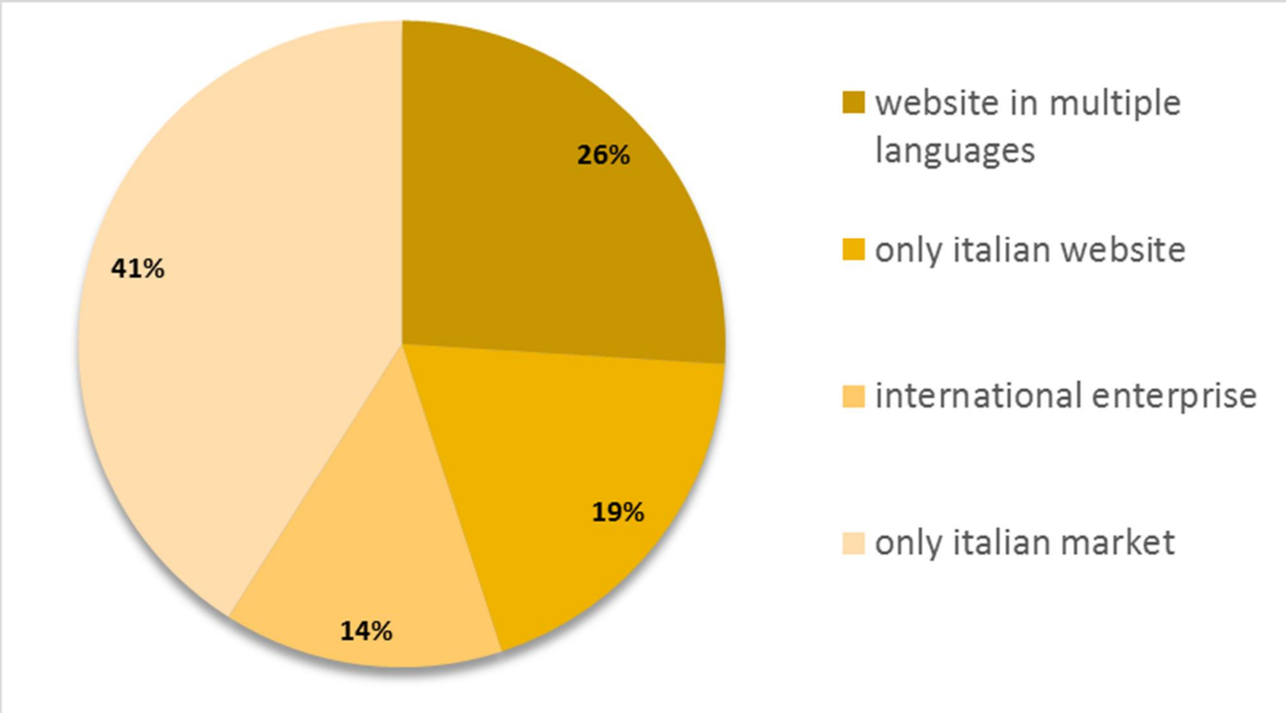
Source: Author's elaboration on data from BEM research 2016

Specifically, food and beverages sector, which now represent the 3% of the turnover, has strongly grown (+77%) from the previous year, thanks to:

- New players coming
- Rise of fresh food delivery.

Finally, let's look at how Italian firms face the international markets. As we can see in figure 2.11, lots of firms decide a priori not to be present in foreign markets (41%) and anyway, outside this group, there are few enterprises that commit to open up effectively to foreign markets (for example 14% has a website only in Italian language). Furthermore, firms that operate abroad are mainly operating in Europe, even if there is an increasing tendency to reach furthest countries. There is great potential for e-commerce to serve global markets, but it has not been exploited so far.

Figure 2.11 Strategies of Italian companies for foreign markets penetration



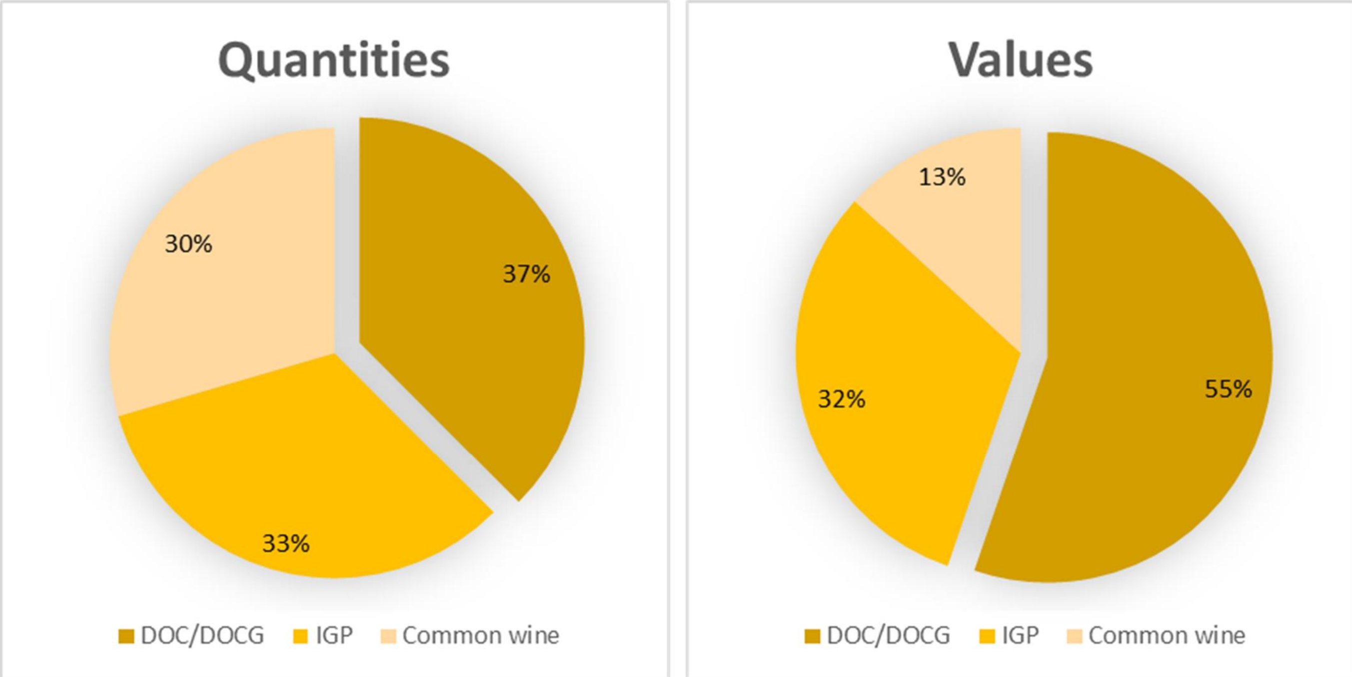
Source: Author's elaboration on data from BEM research 2016

2.3.2 Wine Distribution and On-line Possibilities

Let's then consider wine distribution. We want to understand how Italy is dealing with the evolutionary international arena in the wine sector. The study regards how Italians are selling their wine abroad and how e-commerce channel impacts on their business. Wine can be sold unbottled or most frequently bottled and so for this analysis, we are considering bottled wine.

Wine is exported abroad similarly to other agricultural products. In a global comparison between exporter countries, Italy is at the second place both in quantity and value terms. Spain comes first considering quantities, while France values based. The average quota of Italian exports is approximately 48% of wine produced. In 2015 Italians have exported around 20.1 million hectoliters of wine for a value of 5.4 billion euros. This value represents 14.7% of the entire agricultural exports of Italy. In the first semester 2016, the exported value has already reached the amount of 3 billion euro. The following graphs show comparisons among exported categories: on the left the distribution is about quantities, while on the right it refers to economic values (figure 2.12). It is clear how DOC/DOCG wine takes the biggest part in this scenario (above all from the right graph), since 7.5 million hectoliters of DOC/DOCG were exported, for a value of 2.98 billion euro; the reason is that spumanti and *Prosecco* are very appreciated abroad (Ismea, 2016d).

Figure 2.12 Italian wineries' exportations in 2015



Source: Author's elaboration on data from Ismea report 2016d

According to Ismea, the first five markets where Italy exported its wine in 2015 are:

1. USA
2. Germany
3. United Kingdom
4. Switzerland
5. Canada

Moreover, Italian export is deeply regionalized, but five regions are particularly active in the international markets and they represent 83% of exports. The first region of this bunch is Veneto, which matters 33%[21].

Although wine is an agricultural product, it is different for example from fresh food, which perishes soon. So, when we are searching for its best distribution channel, it is possible to

[21] Those percentages refer again to quantities and values. We chose to employ average values because the first five regions hold the same value in both cases, that is 83% for quantities and 83% for values. About Veneto the two values are respectively 32% and 34%. Since they are not so far, we retain useful for the reader compute the average.

consider more than one option. But critical aspects emerge; let's think for example when we are in a shop. Usually we buy a kind of wine that we have already tasted or we will ask to some experts or acquaintance we trust on, which is a good choice for that dish or for that special occasion. When we orient ourselves only on the base of the label, it will be hard to find out easily the right wine. The label on the bottle cannot help us too much because it gives only objective information, i.e. alcohol percentage, the name of the wine, if it is sparkling or not, if it is white, red or rosé, and so on. Actually, sometimes you can find some more indication (maybe about the suggested use), but in the most of cases this is not enough to understand if it is what we are looking for. Wine is connected with experience and emotions and so this product needs to be explained. Only after knowing its story, you can recognize and appreciate different kinds of wine and their value; this fact put some constraints on how you can sell wine. Players should define carefully their distribution strategy, for the same reasons of coordination and integration we told about in paragraph 2.3 *The Role of Distribution*. The direct channel becomes a perfect way to narrate wine, particularly when the purchase is done directly in the winery. On the other hand, indirect channels help when distance becomes longer: retailers are able to distribute bottles into different shops and also in different countries. Considering all these factors we understand that e-commerce is a dormant power. Unfortunately, Italian firms are late in adopting e-commerce in their business: in 2014 only 71% of Italian firms had a website and among this group, only 17% had also e-commerce (Marsella, Milani, 2016).

From the article "I canali di vendita del vino nel mondo", edited in June 2016 by *I numeri del vino*, it is possible to make some estimated considerations about the use of e-commerce in the wine sector. Authors have considered wine sale in some countries and used data from a research made by *Wine Intelligence*[22]. What emerges has been that some countries (like France, UK, Spain, USA and Australia) are facing a growth of "online/direct to consumer" retail, because supermarket websites are now becoming important selling areas and based on the culture of these countries, customers need less physical contact with the product. On the other hand, for example in Germany, another trend regards the consolidation of supermarkets and hard discount dominance. Italy is also evolving and main trends are the presence of large national hypermarket chains, which are gaining at the expense of smaller independent grocers, and the

[22] We are referring here to the research published in March 2015, for the International Trade Fair *ProWein*, which takes place every year in Germany. Countries analyzed have been: France, Germany, UK, Spain, Italy, USA, Japan and Australia. The presentation can be found at the following link: http://www.wineintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Wine-Intelligence-for-ProWein-Wine-retail-trends-8-countries-presentation.pdf

growing influence of hard discounters. The wine business report 2015[23] states wine sector is undoubtedly late in adopting online selling and the majority of winemakers has only a window website.

It is useful to recognize two categories for wine sellers: producers (or wineries) and retailers (who buy the finished product and are responsible only of their distribution). The wine business report 2015 identifies several models that wineries can adopt to be present online and we listed them in the table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Online business models

Business card	The winery chooses to have its own website, but it shows only information about the firm and of its products. We can say the website is a sort of *shop window* site.
Commercial support	Here in addition to information, users can make orders. This is not still an e-commerce, because the winery forwards the orders to local suppliers. The advantage is to avoid conflicts with traditional channels.
Integrated commercial support	This model is similar to the one above, but in addition firms offer other services or products, like merchandising. (Actually this model is not present in the wine sector.)
Differentiated e-commerce	Users can buy products directly from the websites, but there is a differentiated offer between off-line and on-line channels. This strategy enforces the brand without modifying in the distribution balance. (This form is not adopted by Italian wineries.)
Complete e-commerce	The classic e-commerce model: users find the whole product portfolio both online and offline. This model generates conflicts between wineries and retailers, and has to be well managed.

Source: Author's elaboration on WINE Business Report 2015

[23] You can find it at the following link: http://www.businessinternational.it/download/Wine-Business-Report.pdf

As concerns retailers, we can identify four models:

- General retailers (for example Amazon, Ebay, Alibaba…);
- Agricultural products retailers only (for example Giordano Vini);
- Specialized retailers (for example Xtrawine, Callmewine...);
- Niche retailers, which focus on particular typology of products (for example doyouwine.com that sells high quality wines from Pedmont).

Actually, only few enterprises are having success in this sector, which combine wine and on-line sale. We can cite for instance *Giordano Vini* (with 16% of its profits coming from e-commerce) or other wine retailers like: *Tannico, Vinitaly, Svinando, wineOwine,* and *Mezzacorona.* There are also several foreign players, like *Vivino, Amazon, The Majestic Wine* and *Alibaba,* to list some names. Italian firms are conscious of the big opportunities enshrined by e-commerce, but at the same time they have some concerns. Wineries recognize e-commerce is a way to enforce their brand, but its implementation is also costly and can generate conflicts with traditional retailers. Moreover, lots of firms declare turnover generated by e-commerce is only around 5-10%. There have been various attempts by small realities to experiment this new way, but there has been also high mortality of firms.

2.4 Prosecco Wine and Veneto Region

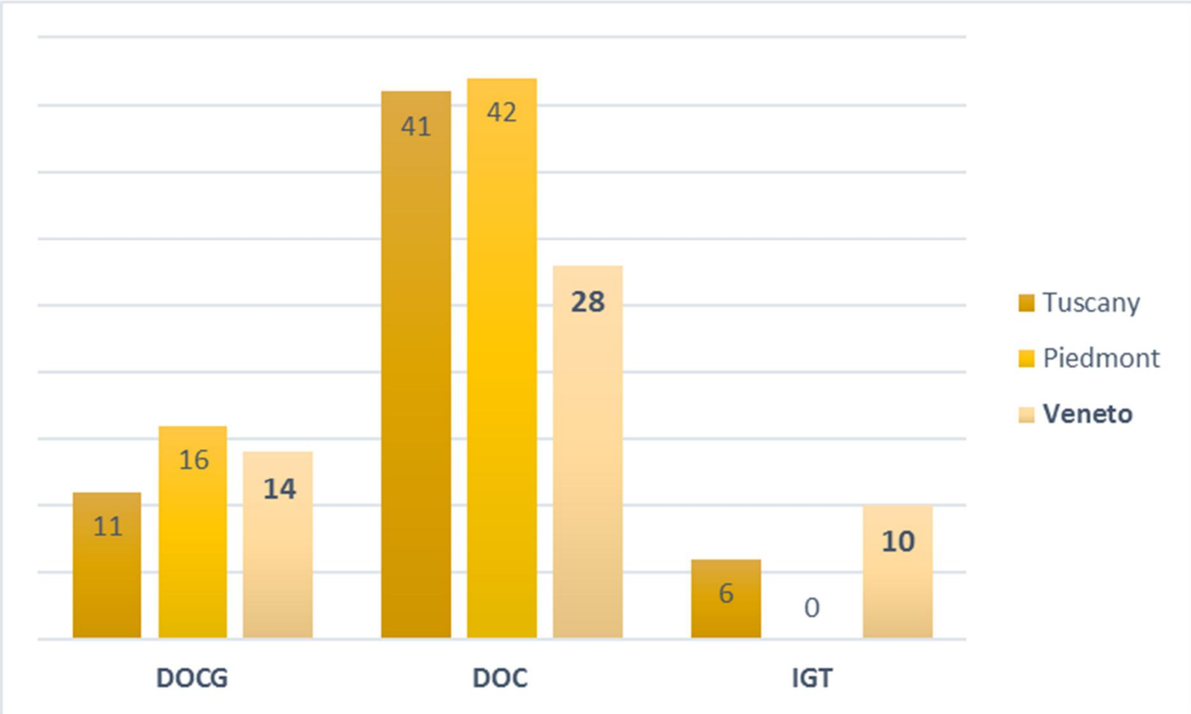
Now, we are analyzing an example of particular success, that is *Prosecco.* This special kind of white sparkling wine, hailing from Northern Italy, is having particular approval abroad in these years, so much that there are even cases of imitation in other countries, such as Australia, where it is produced the same kind of wine[24]. This specific industry has been able to face the global crisis focusing on exports, and has grown both in values and volumes, despite of the difficulties it presents because it requires lots of hand and hard work[25].

Prosecco is adaptable to several dishes, from cocktails to desserts and the region where grapes are cultivated and where wine is produced is Veneto region. The most famous area is specifically in Treviso, and it is composed by 15 districts. It is a wine that is categorized like DOC/DOCG. Veneto is particularly suitable to the production of wine, and Ismea has showed that this region detains the record of production among Italian regions for what concerns wine. In 2015, 8 million hectoliters of wine have been produced here. It is also the region with the

[24] Dal Zotto Australian Prosecco makers: they planted the first Prosecco vines in this land.
[25] Vineyards requested for this wine can grow only on hills, and because of slopes the usage of machines is limited.

highest quota of vineyard DOC/DOCG dedicated, compared to the national scenario, but the number of recognitions in this category are third with respect to Tuscany and Piedmont, for an amount of 28 versus more than 40 in the other two regions (figure 2.13). *Prosecco* has come up as a very unique case, so that the last year UK demand was of 86 billion of bottles, 50% more than in 2014. By the way, the main objective of winemakers of *Prosecco* has to remain first of all the quality; the commitment has to be focused on how to save tradition because only in this way Prosecco can go on to perform the symbolic role of the Italian talent (Menghini, 2008).

Figure 2.13 – Number of DOP/IGP Recognitions among Tuscany, Piedmont and Veneto



Source: Author's elaboration on Ismea, 2016d

In 1962 it is born an organization dedicated to *Prosecco*, called *Consorzio per la tutela del Prosecco di Conegliano e Valdobbiadene,* and obtained for its wine the recognition of DOC in 1969 and DOCG in 2003. The aim of this organization is to safeguard the original materials and control the process implemented to make this specific product, but also to provide technical assistance and promote product awareness in Italy and abroad. Actually we are not talking about general Prosecco, but specifically of Valdobbiadene and Conegliano districts, two cities well defined nearby Treviso. Only this wine can be declared "DOCG". It represents a true and valuable resource for the area, because it generates profits for the wineries but also for the territory. It attracts people and so incites new forms of tourism, like food and wine tourism. Therefore, there are several stakeholders depending from this wine and it has high importance for the whole community. It is possible to identify a special network with different players, and each one can be defined crucial. From the fermentation to the bottling and sale, we can see people from various kind of industries involved in the process of winemaking: farmers, agents responsible for machines like crushers or presses, producers of bottles and cork taps, supplying of other services, and in particular agritourism owners. In fact, in the last 15 years, there has been a boom of a new concept of tourism, that goes through the valorization of typical products, and many restaurants and B&B have decided to promote their regional food and beverages to make unique the experience of their guests[26]. This scenario reflects a similar situation in other parts of Italy.

Focusing our attention on wineries devoted to *Prosecco*, we find again small enterprises, overall with a family business structure; but we note some advantage in comparison to the general scenario, maybe thanks to the presence of the *Consorzio.* They are organized in a cooperative form and they are more accustomed to invest in professional figures, like wine experts. We are glad to note this is what Bergami[27] previously suggested. Additionally, over the years, lots of them have started to offer more lateral services. They are not just selling *Prosecco* DOCG, but they also offer host services, degustation and the possibility to enter into the winery and visit it. Especially this last service is very important, because consumers can "meet" the product where it is made and understand deeply its value. We said wine is culture, and this is a way maybe the most effective to advertise this culture, because it involves directly the client. As far as *Prosecco* distribution, the major sales channels are GDO and what we call HORECA, a syllabic abbreviation of the words Hotel/Restaurant/Café. *Prosecco* sales suit well with this kind of channel, because hotel, restaurants and cafés usually search products with high level of quality but at a good price. Other channels that have an important role in distribution of *Prosecco* are, in order of importance, wholesalers and direct selling. This last one is principally the choice of local consumers, who live nearby the area of production (Menghini, 2008). About the e-commerce channel, in 2014 it represented less than 1% of volumes, considering the Italian market.

[26] There is a new form of tourism that has been very fashion nowadays and it is defined wine&food tourism. It is based on the scope to find out particular places that are connected with regional delights. The new tourist chooses to go somewhere, not only to relax or visit monuments, arts and so on, but also or first of all to experience the local cuisine. In literature you can find different definition of these tourist, for example "food-trotter".
[27] We resend to paragraph 2.2.2 The Production Side.

Abroad, it is exported first in Europe, especially in Germany and Switzerland, but also UK and USA are becoming strategic markets (Distretto Conegliano Valdobbiadene, 2015). Since this wine already shows to be highly appreciated abroad, the subsequent analysis in chapter 4 *The Empirical Research* will use *Prosecco* as the objective.

CHAPTER 3 – New Shopping Habits

Consumers are the cornerstone of each economic activity, because they are an essential part of each transaction. Nowadays, consumers are very different from the past and this is due to the fast evolution of society, affected by internationalization and globalization. This chapter is about understanding how society has changed during the last century and capturing the new role of clients nowadays. We are going to see new trends in customer management and a little about the role of culture. Finally, we will analyze how to carry a website evaluation on, to be able to asses in the next chapter if Italian wineries are responding efficiently to the new customers' need.

3.1 A New Society, a New Kind of Market

Society implies a highly structured system of human organization for a large-scale community and has mutated during the last century. It is possible to distinguish several differences between past and present society; from the second World War until today, in every country many events have occurred and they have changed people's attitude. Societies are dynamic: during the 40s, several nations, first of all Europe, were poor and starved because the global conflicts, and these conditions influenced their consumption choice. The main purpose of people in that time was surviving and, according to Engel law[28], a high percentage of income was food destined. In the following decades, thanks to the economic growth during the 50s and 60s, and the fall of Berlin wall (1989), societies started to be richer and people turned their consumptions' behaviors. They started to be more sophisticated and asking different goods, not only basic ones; several products became "status symbols", as household appliances and cars, and globalization affected consumers' choices. From this evolution, people paid more attention on how and on which services were offered by firms and they began assuming more market power. From the mass society[29] we have shifted to a more dynamic and emotional society. Now people are searching to distinguish themselves from the mass and they try to do this also across what they buy (McCracken, 1986; Schiffman, Kanuk, 1997).

[28] The Engel law observes that as income rises, the proportion of income spent on food falls, even if actual expenditure on food rises. Ernst Engel was a German statistician (1821-1896), who gave important contribution to economics science.

[29] That is a society whose members were characterized by having segmentalized and impersonal relations, a high degree of physical and social mobility, a "spectator" relation to events, and a pronounced tendency to conform to external popular norms.

Nowadays we have in front of us persons less predictable and more demanding. Expectations are different now than in the past, because clients are searching for more quality in what they choose and they are also sensible to other themes like environment sustainability, fair trade and their own health; aspects that are new for the classic business. In this evolution, we can notice that a big role has been played by new technologies, because they have changed the way to arrange trade and also the way people communicate and relate with each other. Thanks to the new technologies, people have access to a lot of information about everything, anywhere and anytime they want, so we are assisting to the rise of a society that is up-to-date and disenchanted (Tomisaka, 1995). Today people can even purchase food from their home, using devices like laptops or smartphones. For this reason, we want to explore the new distribution channels, also from the consumers' point of view. In particular, we want to focus on the role of internet, because it does not offer only a new way to buy things, but it also affects the way clients buy those things. We know the *World Wide Web* is a pool of accessible information and this gives more possibilities to consumers during the purchase process, helping them to make the choice (Vescovi, 2007). Today it is common to start the purchase process making a "market research" on-line, because it is time and cost convenient. There is the chance to collect information about its price, special features, weaknesses or strengths (thanks also to other users' comments), find out the product or inasmuch also the service directly on-line. It is a tool that can drive our choice easily and make us more content. In this time, buyers are not waiting any more commercial advertisement to know what they are looking for; only "pull" strategies[30] are going to be effective.

Another important trait of society regards generations that create it. A generation is a stock of population that shares the same birth-time period and particular connected experience; they were present during certain events that have impressed their time. Members of one generation have lots in common with each other but little with the "neighbouring" generations (Mattiacci, 2015). Today we can recognize principally three kinds of generations, which are coexisting and they are described as: Baby Boomers, Generation of transition and Millennials (Istat, 2016c). Baby boom generation includes people who were born between 1956 and 1965; then we find generation of transition (1966-1980) and finally, we have Millennials, who were born from 1981 until 1995. Actually there is an additional segmentation, described as "networks

[30] A push promotional strategy involves taking the product directly to the customer via whatever means, ensuring the customer is aware of your brand at the point of purchase. A pull strategy involves motivating customers to seek out your brand in an active process.

generation" people born from 1996 to date[31]. In particular Millennials and networks' generation present unique features and it is interesting to focus on them: they have affinity with technology and media and they are disenchanted from symbols and fictions of the twentieth-century society. Additionally, it seems there is a reverse of the pedagogical relationship with the antecedents, because this group of population is able to collect information individually, without necessary learning from parents or other adults. Sometimes even happens that they are "teachers" of their ancestors. Most of all Millennials are becoming the next important group of consumers and they diverge from other generations of consumers because they tend to search emotional experiences and praise sharing economy.

Let's remark that relations with customers have become critical as never before, and not by chance costumers are now considered the market power owners. It is always more frequent the interaction between customers and suppliers; the relationship between firms and final consumer is becoming closer and it is not so strange to see clients collaborate with producers to create the good or the service they want. Some trends that in the 3rd millennium have influenced consumers' behavior and that summarises the previous concepts are (Iasevoli, 2000):

- Clients have power with regards to knowledge and information;
- The evolution of consumption models implies people are looking for something more individualistic and personal;
- Offers are now more complex and integrated (products become deeply related to services);
- Supply and demand are always more interdependent;
- There is the need and the duty to respond quickly to the market;
- It becomes essential to forecast client's moves and build a flexible structure, ready to change and adapt, also because there are high levels of competition.

Drawing now deeply on food and beverages consumption, that it is also configured like a process with several steps, we can see how it has experienced the same change flows depicted above. In fact, we already talked about the enrichment of population and the connected Engel

[31] Although the subdivision regards especially Italian society, we think it is usable also for other countries. We are conscious years of reference can vary, so we suggest the reader to verify them before use in further researches.

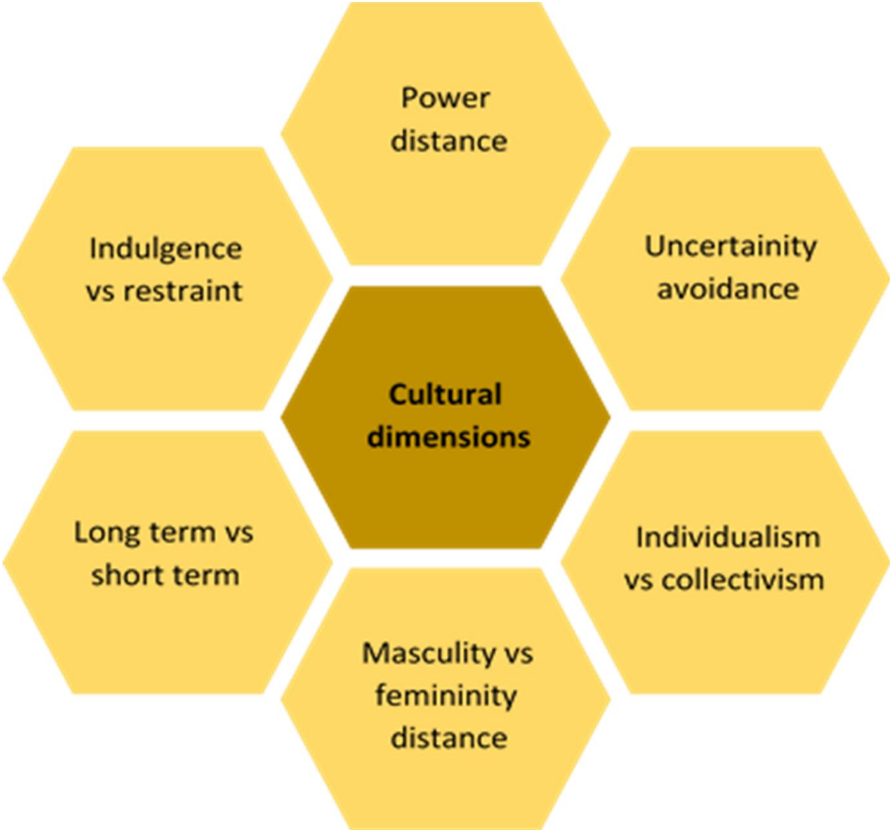
law, but income is not the only factor of conditioning. We have also to remember that society has a new configuration, because for example now more women are working than in the past, and this fact has changed the way families organize their meals. Moreover, society is getting older and also multi-cultural, so it becomes naturally that the way we eat and drink is changing: what we are expecting and looking for during shopping now it is different than some years ago. The general trend which is affecting the demand involves more quality, individuality and awareness of products. Wine sector has evolved too, and it is becoming more like an industry characterized by high level of competition and professionalism, but maybe it is time to shift the attention also to customers' behavior (Oliver, 1997). We will examine in depth this argument in paragraph 3.1.2 *Wine Consumptions*.

3.1.1 The Renown of Culture

People are travelling and moving between countries and new "melting pot" communities are arising, not only in America, but also in Europe and in other main lands; societies are in this way becoming multi-cultural. Cause of this evolution are migratory flows, but also the new way the world is organized, for example think to the easiness of moving with trains, airplanes, and so on, or the way firms conduct their business at international levels, often with the need to shift people from a location to another to provide the right skills in right places at the right time. But what does it really mean culture? And how is the multi-culturalism affecting societies?

The concept of culture has a lot of different definitions since many anthropologists have examined it. The original meaning goes back to the Latin verb of *colere*, which means "to till", "to tend" or "to cultivate". There are a lot of different definitions, but to choose one, we can consider for instance the Hofstede's idea of culture. This anthropologist described it as: "[…] the framework of beliefs, expressive symbols, and values in terms of which individuals define their world, express their feelings, and make their judgments […]" (Durham, 1991). Furthermore, he has developed a famous model to explain culture, basing his thinking on the fact that culture can have more dimensions. The anthropologist lists six dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, long-term vs short term orientation, indulgence vs restraint (figure 3.1.). These dimensions help the observer to evaluate the general trend of a group of people from the same culture; for example, he/she can predict if individuals are more self- or group- oriented, or tolerant regarding time delays, and so on.

Figure 3.1 – Hofstede's Cultural dimensions



Source: Author's elaboration on Hofstede's model

But we can also consider another point of view, i.e. the one that comes from the Project GLOBE's statement (Robert, 2004), where culture is defined as: "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that results from common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations". Culture-based experiences begin to influence and permeate our psychological natures at a very early age so that people become psychosocial individuals very early in life. It is clever noticing also that culture can be perceived consciously and unconsciously, because of its concurrent explicit and implicit nature. Many people do not analyze their perceptions of what is right and what is wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, fair and unfair or what should be important and unimportant and for this reason culture could be described as a "silent language". Actually, the meaning of culture is not static, but rather dynamic and it is confirmed that generations have the possibility to change the set of rules of one culture as time passes by (think about what we said before, with regard to Millennials). But on the other side, culture is also a deep factor of influence of the human activities, because people are driven by the way they naturally act. This is why it is considered a collective and not an individual phenomenon.

It is possible to identify important and varied functions related to culture:

- Orientation function;
- Meaning foundation function;
- Motivation function;
- Identity foundation and integration function;
- Order function;
- Complexity handling function;
- Identification.

To better explain the previous list, we can say that culture helps to be able to evaluate what is wrong and what is right, but it also produces a significance for the individual's acting. Culture can make people hurry to do something, provides a sense of membership in a certain group and at the same time a limit to other social groupings; through that, a common behavior control is developed. Culture establishes order in the head of people, makes the living together easier, because everybody has similar values and behaviors and, within a culture behaviors and actions are justified automatically opposite others.

So, the fact societies are becoming multi-cultural means there are several groups of people that are interacting with each other, but with different social conducts. The impact of culture as a powerful force in regulating human behavior is so natural and automatic that only when we are exposed to people with different cultural values or customs we become aware of how culture has molded our own behavior (Schiffman, Kanuk 1997). Many studies have succeeded in establishing links between culture and consumer behavior (McCracken, 1986) and associate consumer behavior directly with culture: culture is the all-encompassing force, which forms personality, which in turn is the determinant factor of consumer behavior (Wallace, 1965). We decide to analyze more in detail the culture of North America. We make this choice to gain more information to address our future empirical investigation.

How we will see in paragraph 3.1.1 *Wine Consumptions*, data tell us Americans are the major consumers of Italian wine, and so first we have asked ourselves what make them choose Italian products. Italian sound is often connected to the concept of quality, something good and "sustainable", and these are peculiarities that lure the attention of foreigners, who see Italy like a cheerful place. Different cultures have different expectations, and in Americans' culture, for example, they expect to see prices without tax when they do shopping or they use to change easily products, if they regret their choice. Furthermore, when talking about alcohol, we should remember that between the two World Wars there was *Prohibitionism*. This period is part of the American cultural luggage and has affected Americans' habits until nowadays: they have strictly rules about alcohol consumptions, for example, people are allowed to drink alcohol only after 21 years old and, in particular in big cities, you will not see people drinking beer or wine along the street, but only inside restaurants or cafeterias. From websites like www.exportusa.us, it is possible to know also what discerns American Millennials from the other consumers and why. It is possible to see an evolution of their taste and purchase habits, for example they start preferring organic food, more linked to sustainability and health, and they prefer shopping in little specialized stores. They like shopping in different places, not only in a big mall, and this is why "specialty store" model is arising. They are also very used to the e-commerce, because this is another way to purchase special products and also particular food. If we are wondering what causes underling this transformation, we can list several factors[32], like: the growth of population in cities and the simultaneous reduction of spaces, that consequently pull the choice to buy what it is needed, instead to make stock; the appreciation of income, that permits niche consumptions; their learning system: they like to experience and discover by themselves, they are active and they like internet surfing to find out ideas and novelty. Furthermore, in 2012 it has been made a research about American Millennial wine consumers. It has demonstrated that Millennials are more concerned with making a mistake in wine choice compared to the older consumers, so they are more apt to seek information (Atkin, Thach, 2012). Usually they trust friends or family, or get information by reading shelf talkers[33]; on the other hand, they rely less on geographical cues such as region of origin to determine wine quality, and pay more attention to medals won, label imagery, and alcohol content.

This short lecture about Americans closes this part about culture, but gives us important points for reflection for our present research. Let's now go to the next paragraph, dedicated to wine consumption trends.

3.1.1 Wine Consumptions

This paragraph concerns wine demand and its evolution in the last years. Wine is generally regarded to be a complicated product for costumers, because it involves both risks and social

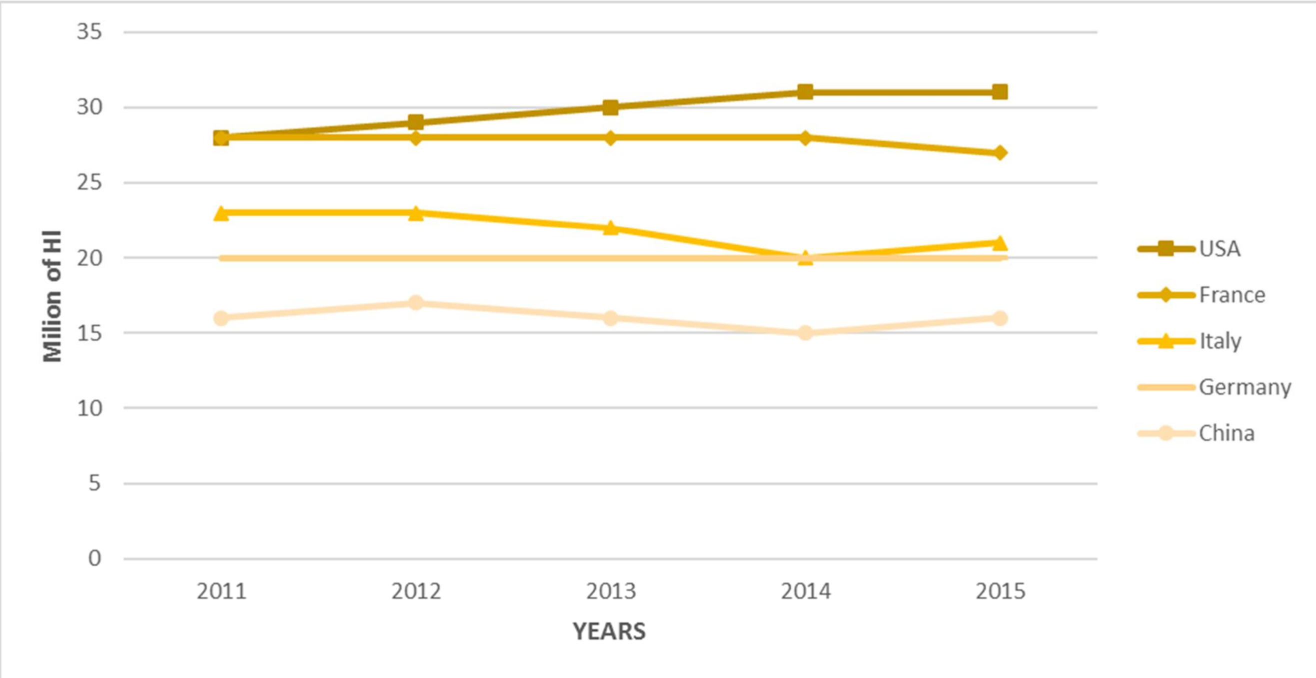
[32] http://www.exportusa.us/tendenze-acquisti-alimentari-negli-usa.php

[33] Printed card or other sign attached to a store shelf to call buyers' attention to a particular product displayed in that shelf.

benefits. Usually, there is no possibility to test the contents of a bottle before purchasing it, so the decision process implies a risk-perception strategy, that can suggest to learn about wine before making a selection (Atkin, Thach, 2012).

Data from OIV - *Organisation international de la vigne et du vin* tell us that the general consumption of wine in 2015 have been estimated around 240 million of hectoliters. The first consumer remains USA, with an amount of 31 million of hectoliters[34] (figures 3.2).

Figure 3.2 – Evolution of Wine Consumption in the first five countries – trends 2011/2015



Source: Author's elaboration on data from World Vitiviniculture Situation report - OIV 2016

Now most of the people drink wine in special occasions or in case they are "expert" and so they know well the product and its peculiarities and they can appreciate it. On the contrary, in the past, wine was more an "invigorating food", and not just a pleasure. Actually, consumptions are decreasing, but at the same time more quality is required and we can find confirmation of that in the specific case of Italy. If we look at consumptions referred to two categories, common and DOC/DOCG wines, we discover that Italian consumers prefer drinking certified ones (Ismea, 2016c).

In the book *Economia del vino: tradizione e comunicazione* (2008), authors support the idea that wine consumptions are changing, and they believe that what seems to guide the change is:

[34] Info collected from OIV analysis

- The evolution of demand;
- The rise of distribution power;
- The importance of the brand;
- The rise of competition.

The behavior of wine buyers is predicted by a previous experience with the product. Usually, the customer already knows the product, because he/she has tasted it in some other occasion or because he/she recognizes that kind/category of wine. Consumers often employ information about the place of origin of a product to make inferences about its quality (Verlegh, Steenkamp, 1999). It is rare that wine purchase will be classified like an impulsive action, but the consumer is rather collecting information before ending it. Without considering the category of wine experts, the most of people who buy wine are driven in their choice by price, alcoholic percentage and packaging. Also trust on brands has an important role, but we have to be aware that brands actually can be related to two entities:

- To the winery, and so connected to the popularity of that firm which produce that wine;
- To the vineyard or kind of grape used, and so connected to the popularity of that wine or the area where it is produced.

We can observe that in the case of wine, the factors which drive the purchase, are the same both off-line and on-line (Faraoni, 2015). To go back to the specific American customers, what we can add is that maybe they are not really conscious about Italian geographical structure and probably they know only the big famous cities, unless they have spent some times in a particular area, so the value of information will differ for them.

3.2 Customer Satisfaction

It has been revealed from the actual scenario that now it is important not only how the client acts during his/her shopping, but also understand what he/she expects over the whole process. We have already seen, consumers are different from the past and now they are more informed, demanding and sophisticated. The consumption is assuming more and more a symbolic meaning, so when consumers buy something, they are not only demanding the singular good or service, but they also wait for an experience or a satisfaction of their social needs. A new business culture is at this point requested; we should now talk about *relational marketing* (Tomisaka, 1995). Relational marketing differs from the classic one, because it builds first of all a relationship between customers and producers and then it considers the rest. It is important first to understand and satisfy client's needs, because only in this way the business can be successful and fruitful. We can define this new relation like a new approach of cooperation between customers and producers. Often clients are becoming involved in the production process, both in goods and services design, to make them highly tailored, and the internet is an important tool in this context, because it can enable this cooperation.

Another related doctrine regards *customer satisfaction*. To create an excellent customers' experience, it is important to focus on expectations; from expectations we can measure customers' satisfaction. When a firm reaches a good customer satisfaction, it gains also in competitive advantage because customer satisfaction has positive spillovers. It generates for example loyalty, the purchase of additional products and services, positive word of mouth, less attention to competitors marketing strategies, more ideas directly coming from consumers and less costs in general. Of course, it is easier to think about customer satisfaction when the output of the firm is a service, but we need to make a caveat, because buying a product means also benefiting from a service. From this point of view, customer satisfaction has to be explored in two directions: one regards the product and the other the service. Actually to enhance customer satisfaction in the most efficient way, the company may focus on the service, because it can be adapted easier and faster. Characteristics of the service are recognized to be (Japan Management Association Consiel, 1995):

- Intangible aspect: it is something individual and emotional, abstracted;
- Contemporaneous aspect: the production and the consumption are on the same time;
- Human centered aspect: it is done from people to people.

Lots of firms claim they are devoted to their customers, but it is important also note that this concept is easy to understand but difficult to implement in reality; it has to become the company's philosophy to be effective. We can define customer satisfaction as the perception of pleasurable fulfillment, that occurs when retailer performance matches or is higher than consumers' expectations (Oliver, 1997). Furthermore, customer satisfaction has been related with customer loyalty and customer value (Iasevoli, 2000). Economy of variety, that is shifted from standardization to personalization, and the evolution of marketing, from transactions centered to relations loving (known also as individual marketing), have been the principal causes of this customer satisfaction trend. Lots of studies have been developed about this argument, and each of them describes customer's satisfaction as the duty of listening and satisfying customers' needs in the best way. We want to remark that the basic idea is not focusing on the design of a single offer anymore, but rather on the analysis of the whole process and the suggestion to rest also in the previously and following phases of the transaction (since the potential client comes to us until the after-sales service). Several extra activities are requested now and it is wise to evaluate which of them are important to provide and to enhance. We know that every business is apart, and customer services should be individually designed: there is no perfect rule, but on the contrary it is possible follow specific methods. Since many studies have been developed on this matter, it is natural expecting more methods to measure and evaluate customer's satisfaction. Here we try to describe some of the common traits, that we found significant for our research and useful to outline a general idea about this topic.

We begin considering two critical starting points:

- The analysis of clients' expectations;
- The company's current offer.

Maybe the client is in our shop because he/she has a problem, but is not sure what is the right solution. In this case the expectation will comprehend a shop assistant who listen the costumer, understand his/her needs and suggests the best solution. Sometimes the offer is not complete, because there is a lack of service: imagine when we have the good solution for our potential costumers but we are not in the condition to delivery it on time. So first of all, it is requested the collection of information about these two aspects and this can be made directly or indirectly, according to the evident involvement of clients or with the use of filter or other indicators. Collecting information requires to know and understand the real path of the consumer, when he/she chooses the offer, and to do this it is possible create a flow chart that describe the whole process. In this chart the analyst should list all the activities the consumers do or are involved in from the starting moment of the purchase process until the after-sale service demand. All the steps can be designed through the observation of reality or asking to clients and operators; also focus group can be very useful. In marketing it is common also the implementation of tools like scenario and personas: they are used to recreate credible stories about costumers, which helps managers and employees to realize what is going on during the process and so work with a "human center" orientation. The step further is the traceability of critical situations and the analysis of the problems that can emerge. Finally, the company should elaborate solutions to solve its mistakes and periodically verify the right implementation of new solutions.

Since the collection of information is the crucial point in customer satisfaction, we decide to pay more attention on it. In particular, we want to introduce a technique we will use later in chapter 4 *The Empirical Research*, that is *mystery shopping.* This method is a diagnostic tool often used in the restaurant industry to evaluate employee's performance and monitor the process and outcomes of services, also in comparison with other competitors; its implementation is really common in famous companies like *McDonalds* or *Disney*, in fact it provides a specific snapshot of a business's functioning at the time of the shopper's visit (Kephart, 1996). Surprisingly little discussion of the technique has appeared in the academic literature, maybe because this technique is like a hybrid way to collect information: something direct and indirect at the same time. What we mean, is that it can be a compromise between investigations made by experts and surveys collected from costumers. Mystery shopping is defined like a procedure to assess in original way customer satisfaction and consist in hiring and training people to behave as real customers instead of neutral observers; they have goals, time constraints, and expectations (Narvaez, 2006). Mystery shoppers should accurately note what is good and what can be improved in the service process, and then they are asked to report what they note to the company's agent (Van der Wiele, Hesselink, Jwaarden, 2005). Unlike common customer surveys, this is a form of participant observation in which the researcher interacts with those being observed and look for critical failure points (Wilson, 1998). Organizations can decide to focus on specific areas of investigation in a cost effective way. Another advantage of mystery shoppers is they can identify more gaps, because they are obliged to check the entire list provided while real customers typically concentrate on attributes that are more important for them. The fact mystery shoppers are trained, permits the implementation of a more objective method and the adoption of standardized research tools lead to obtain data that can be used also in cross-cultural comparison. Cross-cultural researches help to assess the generalizability of empirical findings (Kozak, Bigne, Andrea, 2003). Mystery shopping suits good to collect both qualitative and quantitative information, even if in the most cases this evaluation regards principally the quality of service. Somewhere this kind of studies is so popular that it became a newspaper, for example in Japan where the client's voice is a sort of barycenter for the business. *Kurashi no techo* (translated as "Notebook of Beautiful Life") is a Japanese newspaper where the voice of clients take place very well, because in each number a debate is opened regarding the use of some common products and readers are called to say what they think about them, explaining pros and cons. In this case, the research is promoted from users to users, but it is not rare to see a company that decides to hire mystery shoppers to evaluate its services.

To summarize we can understand that the company should do its best and make an effort to give to consumers more than their expectations. Only in this way a relationship based on trust and loyalty can start and proceed. It has been proved that satisfaction in people is deeply connected with their emotions, and it has also an impact on their future choices, determining trust and loyalty; so a good decision is to pursue an emotional engagement with clients. Contrary on what people commonly think, emotions can be transmitted also when we are using an e-commerce website, through i.e. the design of the page, the pictures used but also across the information provided and received.

3.3 Website Evaluation

Websites are playing a significant role in the overall marketing communication mix, they complement direct selling activities, provide supplemental material and basic company information to customers, and project a corporate image. Thanks to the growing phenomenon of e-commerce, websites are assuming even more a critical position. They can influence the consumers' behavior and so there is the need to assess their quality. There are evidences that poorly developed websites will harm "click firms" as well as "bricks-and-clicks"[35] ones, because the online purchase experience influences customers' satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. The website of a company is becoming one of the more important tools in the competitive environment, but there is no guaranty that the company will gain competitive advantage only creating it (Davidavičienė, Tolvaišas, 2011**)**. Prior studies indicate that satisfaction toward an e-tailer and its success depend primarily on customers' evaluation of performance on various online store attributes. For this reason, it becomes relevant for businesses to develop tools for analyzing consumer perceptions when they are using the websites: what is their level of satisfaction? which items does this satisfaction increase?

The analysis of website's quality can be made from three different points of view:

- Consumer;

[35] We are referring here to activities developed only online ("click firms") or that have online and offline presence ("bricks-and-clicks").

- Designer;
- Owner.

Then, outcomes can be different, because the three perspectives do not always correspond; for instance, the website can satisfy the concept of quality for the designer, but does not encounter the request of the owner. Anyway, it is better when we choose to consider the consumers' point of view; they are the final users of websites and e-commerce and only they are able to say if the service is working properly. We can consider several features of the online platform, which can generate satisfaction in its users, but also annoyance and so it is necessary identify a list of criterions to evaluate. Previous studies have presented many discussions and proposed many guidelines, principles and measurements (for interface designs e.g. Nielsen, Mack, 1994; Wroblewski, Rantanen, 2001; Shneiderman, Plaisant, 2005). For example, a clumsy interface hinders users' efforts to search efficiently for information; a number of studies have demonstrated that an effective website interface should avoid certain characteristics which users dislike, such as disconnected links, and build up its attractive features such as aesthetic layout and user-friendly interactions (e.g. Zhang, von Dran, 2000; Yang, 2003). Website's performance influences the market response and the levels of satisfaction, trust and loyalty of clients. Internet is a real retailing medium of this time and the evaluation of its performance is not a matter of only one branch of knowledge, but it involves both marketing and information systems subjects. It is easy to explain why marketing and information systems should collaborate in this assessment: there are two kind of dimensions involved in internet usage, because it is a communication and transaction vehicle and so on the one hand the consumer's evaluation and satisfaction will concern the on-line relationship with the supply side, but on the other hand it is important also the computing action, that is the effective use of the machine, so in this case information systems knowledge is requested. Additionally, there is also an interactivity dimension, which plays a crucial role in this assessment too. We consider interactivity like "a synchronous reciprocal communication characterized by *active control over* and *affective reactions to* the information sent and received" (Lascu, Clow, 2008), and from this definition it is clear how the results of the information exchanged depends on the subject who decide to start the communication and search for it first. It is difficult to control all the variables and forecast the market response outcomes, but it is possible to make an attempt.

Although different studies have been made, both in marketing and information systems areas, for this work it seems more relevant to consider the efforts made to join them: only in this way we are able to build an effective evaluation schema. For this purpose, we have considered some researches (in particular Lascu, Clow, 2008 and Jin, Park, 2006). The sources have presented different items, that have been judged in collaboration with different kind of experts and users. The researchers have voted the more relevant ones and supposed particular relationships between them and the market response outcomes. Here we report in detail these works, which represent the literature we used in the next chapter 4 *The Empirical Research*.

Lascu and Clow's paper presents a four factor correlated model with the following four main clusters:

- Customer service;
- Transaction reliability;
- Problem solving ability;
- Easiness of navigation.

Each cluster contains several items, for a total of 15. The positive evaluation of them leads to define excellent the Website considered. To give a major detail, that can be useful in the next chapter, we report the items in the table 3.1. The website evaluator can assign different importance to the items. Subsequently, managers can use the same items to evaluate the expectations regarding excellent Websites and the performance of the company website, and then compute the difference between expectations and performances to assess satisfaction.

On the other hand, from a different study (Jin & Park, 2006), we can consider another group of online store attributes, that have a positive influence on consumer trust and satisfaction toward e-commerce. They are:

- Website design;
- Order fulfillment;
- Communication;
- Merchandising;
- Security/Privacy;
- Promotion.

Table 3.1 Four Factor correlated Model

Easiness of navigation	• Have little clutter • Have a few or no banners
Customer service	• Allow customers to reach a customer service center at all times • Have a customer service center that is always willing to help clients • Have a customer service center that will promptly respond to customer inquiries • Have a customer service center that is consistently courteous • Have a knowledgeable customer service center that can address client questions
Transaction reliability	• Deliver orders when they promise to do so • Deliver quality products • Protect customers' personal information • Offer safe transactions
Problem solving ability	• Have the customers' interests on mind • Tailor their offering based on customer preferences and/or previous purchase • Allow you to compare prices with other sites • Show a sincere interest in solving customers' problems

Source: Author's elaboration on Lascu and Clow (2008)

Actually this research has proved that order fulfillment, merchandising, security/privacy, and promotion are the attributes more apt to increase trust and satisfaction and this result can be used in our future investigation. Also in this case, major detail for each group of items can be found in table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Evaluation of Online Store Attributes

Website design	• In this website, I can enlarge product pictures. • This website provides product pictures from various angles. • This website design has a nice impression.
Order fulfillment	• This website provides error-free ordering and delivery. • Information on delivery time and fee is available. • This website delivers ordered products without defects.
Communication	• This website provides personalized information for me. • This website makes purchase recommendations that match my needs. • This website cares about business with me by sending thank you mail. • I feel that this website appreciates my business. • This website sends me information that is related to the purchase item.
Merchandising	• Detailed merchandise information is provided. • I can easily find the product that I need in this website. • Merchandise purchase procedure is fast and easy in this website. • Wide variety of products is provided in this website.
Security/Privacy	• My personal information is confidential in this website. • Credit card information is secure in this website. • This website clearly states privacy policy.
Promotion	• Online discount coupons are provided in this website. • This website provides a mileage program (e.g., accumulating points to earn free gifts). • This website offers customer services that provide monetary benefits such as no interest up to 18 months installment.

Source: Author's elaboration on Jin & Park (2006)

Finally, we have chosen to describe also a third tool, that is the WebQual instrument, because despite there has been no published description of its development through multiple iterations of data collection, it has been reported in various conference papers and it has demonstrated having strong measurement validity (Loiacono, Watson, Goodhue, 2007). It lists the follows 12 dimensions:

- Informational Fit-To-Task;
- Tailored Information;
- Trust;
- Response Time;
- Ease of Understanding;
- Intuitive Operations;
- Visual Appeal;
- Innovativeness;
- Emotional Appeal;
- Consistent Image;
- On-Line Completeness;
- Relative Advantage.

We want to specify that this study has been conducted to understand what can influence the reuse of a website and following this intention, they have tested and handled those several dimensions. Finally, they grouped them into the follows macro groups, which represent the directions to determine the reuse of a website:

- Usefulness;
- Ease of use;
- Entertainment.

Moreover, experts of this field advice that it is too simplistic make the assumption that consumers' evaluation of online store attributes and the impact on market response outcomes are identical across customers. As a matter of fact, consumer experience in the purchase of service or goods across the web makes the difference. This means that for examples order fulfillment and security aspects are more important for consumers with less purchase experience, while a more expert consumer may be more interested on particular promotions.

This few examples have demonstrated how huge can be the variety of items that the analyst can take into consideration during the evaluation. Depending on the source we elect, we can find out other dimensions that in different situations can be considered more or less important. For example, also customer service availability and responsiveness are in some case predominant user concerns and other researches have find out that customer support is one of the most important dimension of the website interactivity. Thank to this researches, we have been able to define a schema to conduct our investigation and we are going to describe it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 – The Empirical Research

Finally, we are describing our empirical research and its related results. It has consisted in a particular investigation of a sample of Italian wineries' websites, to assess the actual quality of e-commerce service in this sector. We are going to explain the procedure we adopted combining mystery shopping method with customer satisfaction and website evaluation guidelines.

4.1 The Method

We know mystery shopping is seen as an effective and efficient instrument to gain more in-depth knowledge about customers' perception of the service's delivery. It is also referred to as secret, phantom, or anonymous shopping and it is having a pretty success in the web[36]. Contrary to what one might imagine, this method is considered traditionally more an objective rather than a subjective approach, also in determining quality (Dawson & Hillier, 1995; Morrison, Coleman, & Preston, 1997; Sharp, Page, & Dawes, 2000; Wilson, 1998). Mystery shopping analysis can be conducted also to evaluate websites quality because we can consider them like virtual shops which are suppling services. This investigation technique is also moving closer to new technologies, and for example, during the 2011 in the Netherlands it has been developed the *Roamler app*, that permits users to act and participate as mystery shoppers during some challenges launched by several firms; this app is available also in Italy from the 2014 and it is only an example (other instances are *BeMyEye, ClicandWalk* and *Chek.App*). Retailers must continually improve shopping experience and to achieve this goal, web-retailers can take a lesson from "bricks-and-mortar" colleagues and use mystery shopping tool, because this can underline areas of improvement. Nowadays a retailer's web presence is generally the first interaction with a customer and in some cases, it is also the first "place" visited.

To assess our sample of websites, we adopted the following measurement process, typical of mystery shopping analysis. It consists of three steps, which are:

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[36] You can easily find out agencies that offer this kind of service, for example, we can address to http://webmysteryshoppers.com/, http://www.mysteryeshopper.com/, https://www.secretshopper.com/ or http://www.drachsi.com/mystery-shopper/.

- Defining goals: the first step aims at define the variables we want measure and so to construct a sort of check list for the mystery shopper. It is very important to pay attention to the possible failure steps of the process we are analyzing, because they are critical for the definition of quality we want to reach;
- Gathering data: the person who collect the information, should be independent, critical, objective and anonymous to conduct an effective inquiry and report reliable final results;
- Reporting the results: this final step, is the moment when the mystery shopper makes a report and he/she presents it to the responsible managers of the company.

In the next paragraphs, we will see how the investigation has been conducted concretely, from the check list construction until the collection of information through the websites visits. This is a pioneering research and an exploratory analysis. For this reason, we decided to use a single agent to check the actual condition of e-commerce in the wine industry for a sample of sites. In future researches, more agents could be involved and investigations could be repeated over a period of time.

4.2 Analysis Description

Our aim was to establish to what extent the e-commerce distribution channel is exploited by Italian wineries and at the same time evaluate the quality of the service offered to date. In particular, we decided to restrict our investigation to *Prosecco*, since it represents a successful case study. To reach the goal, we should identify the parameters to evaluate the quality of the service and form the sample of websites to analyze. So, we have considered a representative number of firms from Veneto region, and selected websites where clients can buy Italian wine. From literature we obtained about twenty parameters which level of importance has been established by millennials cyber-consumers through an on-line survey. Finally, we used mystery shopper technique to investigate to what extent these parameters were developed in the selected websites, supposing to be an English-speaking client who was going to buy *Prosecco*.

4.2.1 Defining Goals

The initial step of defining goals has consisted in the selection of the items to assess. We start our analysis creating a check list to evaluate the websites (table 4.1); this list of items has been well-established from the literature that we already mentioned in chapter 3, paragraph 3.3 - *Website Evaluation* and contains both marketing and information system parameters (Lascu, Clow, 2008; Jin, Park, 2006; Loiacono, Watson, Goodhue, 2007).

Table 4.1 Items to evaluate e-commerce in a website analysis (continuing on page 57)

Items to evaluate
1- The website is present in the first page of Google Chrome, when I search the product
2- In the website, it is possible choose between different languages
3- The website has a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen
4- There are filters that make me able to easily find out what I am looking for, because I can sort products by their features
5- The website is working properly on different device like Smartphone, PCs and Tablet
6- When I search for information, I can find data about: - Brand of wine - Price of a standard 0,75 litre bottle - Year of production - Alcoholic percentage - Food combination suggestion - Country of origin - Reason of specialty, as i.e. Certifications like PDO, PGI or particular awards - Taste, because it is well described with specific adjectives, for example fruity, full-bodied, and so on - Kind of wine, so if it is sparkling, dry, still and so on
7- I can find a wide range of choices and the product is available in the most of the cases
8- I will receive suggestion for other purchase, also combined with my order
9- The website offers several promotions
10- Promotions are described in a clear way
11- I can easily manage my shopping cart and delete part of the order without restarting all the purchase process
12- I can create a “wishing list”
13- I can make comparison between products within the website
14- There are pictures of the product

Source: Author’s elaboration

Table 4.1 Items to evaluate e-commerce in a website analysis (following from page 56)

15- I can enlarge the picture and see the product from various angles
16- I can choose between different payment methods
17- Delivery time and cost were clear since the beginning
18- There are multiple choices in delivery time and costs
19- The website offers a customer assistant service or it is available on social page, like i.e. Facebook
20- I can find and write comments about products and general satisfaction

Source: Author's elaboration

The danger to select wrong items and omit fundamental ones was clear, so we decided to involve a group of millennials to reduce this risk and ask them to establish the most important items across a survey. To publicize the survey, we used *Google forms* application because it is easy to implement, reliable and available on the web. In addition, its interface lets the audience send the opinions effortless and permits a logical organization of the answers, because it collects responses also in excel sheet format. The survey was available from the begin of December 2016 for three weeks, and was publicized among university students of Venice, through a message on *Facebook* social page and moodle during some classes; we collected totally 89 answers. We submitted the form to students, because we were searching for a representation of Millennials' and Networks' generation. Previously, in chapter 3, paragraph 3.1 – *A New Society, a New Kind of Market,* we have seen they will be the most relevant group of customers in the near future. Now, we are going to describe how we built the survey and which results we obtained (the complete questionnaire can be found in the Appendix 1).

The survey was organized in two main parts, preceded by a briefly introduction. We considered worthwhile to explain why we were asking to answer to this survey. We explained the research was about on-line purchases. We maintained the answers anonymous from the beginning, in respect of the privacy of people who contributed. Furthermore, we built the survey in Italian language, because we believed the audience felt more comfortable answer when they well understand the questions.

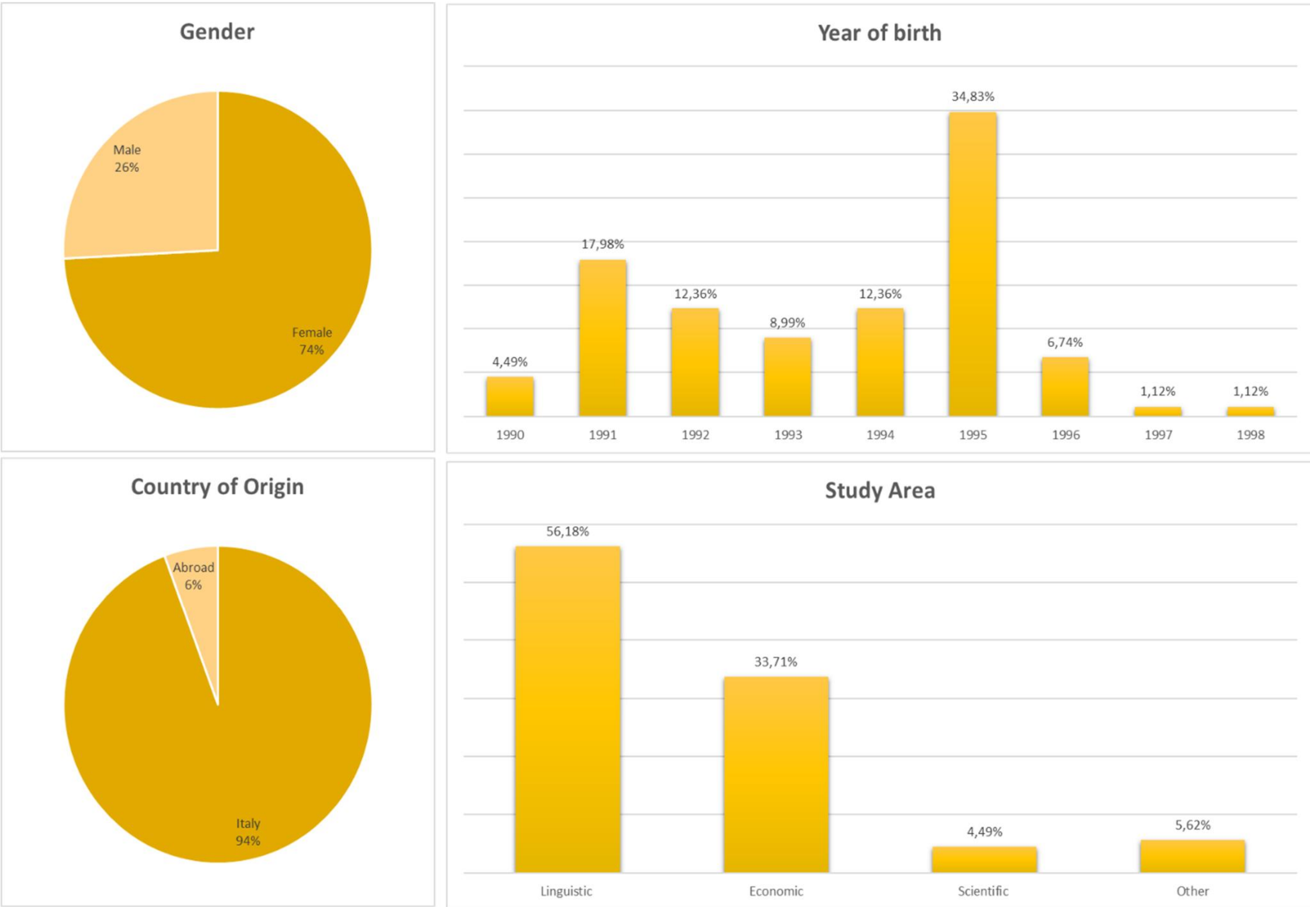
In the first part of the survey the main aim was to collect general information about:

- Gender;
- Year of birth;

- Birth place;
- Study area.

To reduce biases, the possible answers had default values to choose from. For gender was possible to select “Male” or “Female”, valid year of birth was between 1990 and 2000, options for birth place were “Italy” or “abroad” and for study area we inserted four alternatives: “economics”, “linguistic”, “scientific” and “other”. The sample was composed by 74% of women, around 21 years old and with linguistic or economical background. Only 6% was born abroad (figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Description of the Sample: Gender, Year of Birth, Country of Origin and Study Area

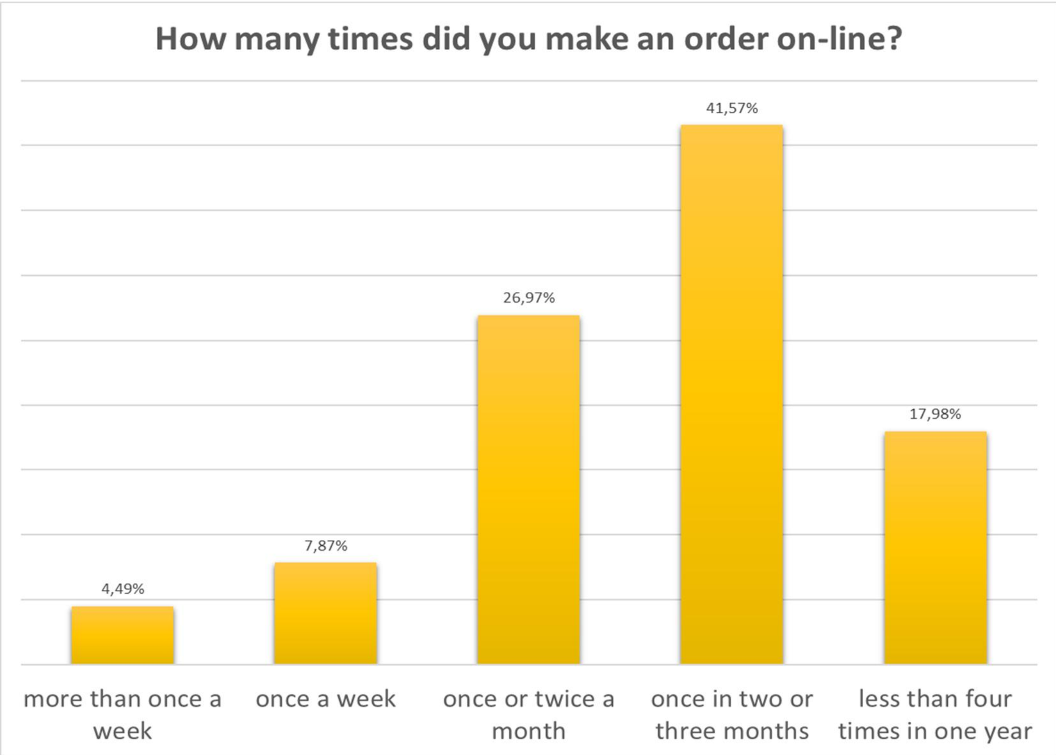


Source: Author’s elaboration

After the first part, the survey presented a fork and distinguished between who had experience in e-commerce purchases and who never buy anything through the web. We hold to be true close the survey for the second group, because if the person interviewed has not experience, we supposed he/she does not know what can be really important during the process. According to our forecasts, 98.88% had previous experience about on-line shopping and so we obtained 88 complete surveys.

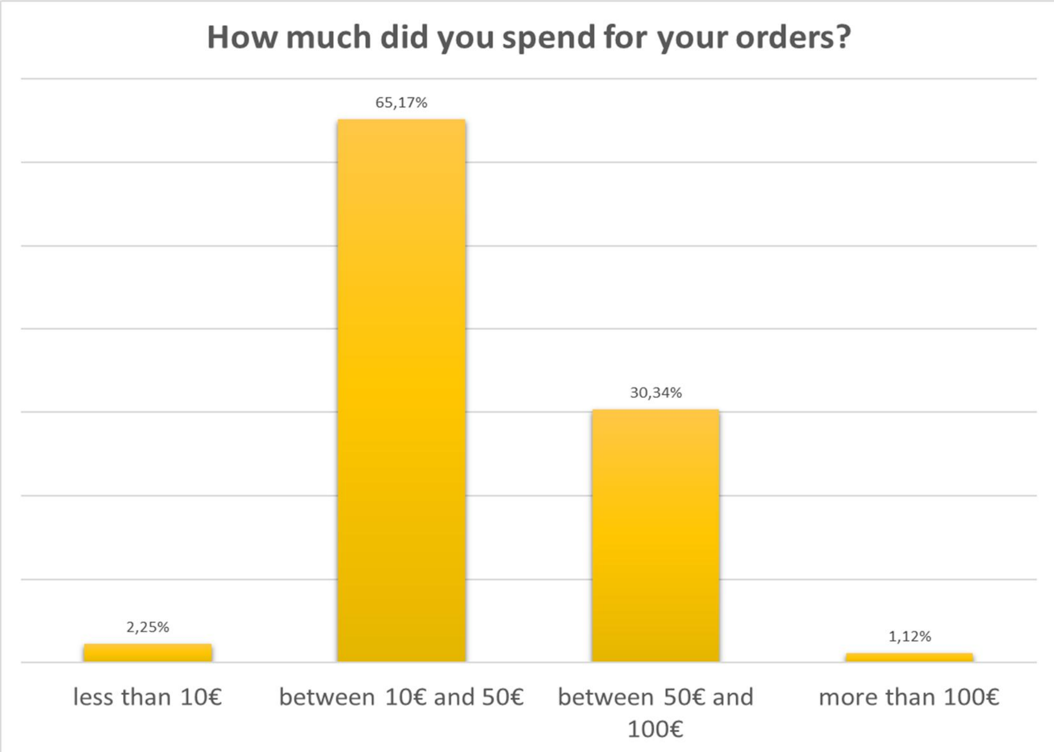
For this 98.88% of population the survey went on and presented some question to assess their experience: we asked how many times do they make an order in one year and how much they do spend on average for each order. Also in this case, we arranged default values. For the first question there were five possibilities to choose from, and they were: “more than once a week”, “once a week”, “once or twice a month”, “once in two or three months”, “less than four times in one year”. The second question presented the following four answers: “less than 10€”, “between 10€ and 50€”, “between 50€ and 100€” and “more than 100€”. We used euro currency because our survey was spread across people living in Italy, where the currency is euro. Almost 70% of our sample did an order between 4 to 12 times per year and the average expenditure has been between 10 and 50 euro (figure 4.2 and 4.3).

Figure 4.2 Frequency in percentage of on-line purchases



Source: Author’s elaboration

Figure 4.3 Average expenditure in on-line purchases



Source: Author's elaboration

The survey ended with the items' evaluation. We picked items from table 4.1 and we asked to assess the importance of each one according to the interviewee's perception, in a 10 points scale, where 0 was "not important" and 10 "very important". We used a Likert scale, because the range of options can help interviewees to better express their opinion, instead of asking only if he/she agrees on the importance of that item. We omitted the first item "1- The website is present in the first page of Google, when I search the product", because we wanted to take it in consideration anyway in our analysis, and in question number 6, we did not specify the content of information we refer to.

With the collected opinions, we were able to select a smaller group of items, judged more important. To identify them, we attempted different systems. First, we tried to calculate the average score assigned by the population. We computed the weighted average for each question (table 4.1) and after we computed the mean of these averages and we obtained the value 8.17. With this figure we were able to split items into two groups: above or under the mean 8.17.

Table 4.2 Item's average rating

Item	Weighted average
1 In the website, it is possible choose between different languages	8,66
2 The website has a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen	7,39
3 There are filters that make me able to easily find out what I am looking for, because I can sort products by their features	8,67
4 The website is working properly on different device like Smartphone, PCs and Tablet	9,42
5 When I search for information, I can find data about:	9,34
6 I can find a wide range of choices and the product is available in the most of the cases	7,84
7 I will receive suggestion for other purchase, also combined with my order	8,20
8 The website offers several promotions	5,50
9 Promotions are described in a clear way	8,22
10 I can easily manage my shopping cart and delete part of the order without restarting all the purchase process	8,37
11 I can create a "wishing list"	5,83
12 I can make comparison between products within the website	7,58
13 There are pictures of the product	9,01
14 I can enlarge the picture and see the product from various angles	8,99
15 I can choose between different payment methods	9,49
16 Delivery time and cost were clear since the beginning	8,52
17 There are multiple choices in delivery time and costs	8,17
18 The website offers a customer assistant service or it is available on social page, like i.e. Facebook	8,41
19 I can find and write comments about products and general satisfaction	7,64
Total mean:	**8,17**

Source: Author's elaboration

To know if the mean was representative of our sample, we verified the coefficient of variation (CV). This is a standardized measure of dispersion of a frequency distribution and is defined as the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean. Its value should stay under 0.15 to be judged positively. Since for 79% of the items the CV were above this value, we deduced that this was not a good system to select the items. We verified the presence of a polarization of the answers, that means population was often divided in two extremes, and so the mean represents poorly this distribution.

Table 4.3 Item's Coefficient of Variation, I, II and III Quartiles

Item	CV	I Q.	II Q.	III Q.
1 The website has a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen	0,18	8	8	8
2 In the website, it is possible choose between different languages	0,26	6	8	9
3 There are filters that make me able to easily find out what I am looking for, because I can sort products by their features	0,21	8	9	10
4 When I search for information, I can find data about:	0,11	9	10	10
5 There are pictures of the product	0,15	9	10	10
6 I can enlarge the picture and see the product from various angles	0,24	7	8	9
7 I can find a wide range of choices and the product is available in the most of the cases	0,17	7	8	9
8 I will receive suggestion for other purchase, also combined with my order	0,26	4	5	7
9 The website offers several promotions	0,19	7	9	9
10 Promotions are described in a clear way	0,19	8	9	10
11 I can create a "wishing list"	0,31	4	6	8
12 I can make comparison between products within the website	0,22	6	8	9
13 I can easily manage my shopping cart and delete part of the order without restarting all the purchase process	0,14	8	9	10
14 I can choose between different payment methods	0,17	8	10	10
15 Delivery time and cost were clear since the beginning	0,11	9	10	10
16 There are multiple choices in delivery time and costs	0,16	8	9	10
17 The website offers a customer assistant service or it is available on social page, like i.e. Facebook	0,21	7	8	10
18 The website is working properly on different device like Smartphone, PCs and Tablet	0,24	7	9	10
19 I can find and write comments about products and general satisfaction	0,24	6	8	9

Source: Author's elaboration

In order to account negative skewness distribution of ratings we decided to count how many people assess a grade greater than 8 (according to the total mean we found), and then select those items for which more than 75% of the population judged the importance of the item over the cut-off value (8) (table 4.3). Finally, we got a set of 9 items (colored in table 4.3), which submit specific area of investigation. In particular, users judged more important websites easy to use and with high reliability. They are more interested in completing the purchase, than in the extra service the platform can offer.

Table 4.4 Percentage of population that judged the importance of the item over the cut-off value 8

Item	% of population which judged more than 8
1 The website has a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen	**86,36%**
2 In the website, it is possible choose between different languages	52,27%
3 There are filters that make me able to easily find out what I am looking for, because I can sort products by their features	**82,95%**
4 When I search for information, I can find data about:	**96,59%**
5 There are pictures of the product	**92,05%**
6 I can enlarge the picture and see the product from various angles	63,64%
7 I can find a wide range of choices and the product is available in the most of the cases	68,18%
8 I will receive suggestion for other purchase, also combined with my order	18,18%
9 The website offers several promotions	70,45%
10 Promotions are described in a clear way	**75,00%**
11 I can create a "wishing list"	29,55%
12 I can make comparison between products within the website	59,09%
13 I can easily manage my shopping cart and delete part of the order without restarting all the purchase process	**92,05%**
14 I can choose between different payment methods	**86,36%**
15 Delivery time and cost were clear since the beginning	**96,59%**
16 There are multiple choices in delivery time and costs	**80,68%**
17 The website offers a customer assistant service or it is available on social page, like i.e. Facebook	72,73%
18 The website is working properly on different device like Smartphone, PCs and Tablet	72,73%
19 I can find and write comments about products and general satisfaction	60,23%

Source: Author's elaboration

4.2.2 Gathering Data

In this section we are describing how we have chosen the representative sample of e-commerce websites and how we have gathered the data. In this case as well, there were concerns regarding how to select the reference population, since our aim was to select a representative sample of firms producing wine in Veneto region.

We started extrapolating a list of firms from the AIDA database. AIDA contains comprehensive information about 1 million companies in Italy. We searched for a list of firms from the "beverage industries" and "rural activities"[37] sectors and we obtained a dataset with 22,071

[37] We consider the ATECO 2007 code and we selected:

- 01 Coltivazioni agricole e produzione di prodotti animali, caccia e servizi connessi records. Wine sellers were a little part of this group and we needed to filter it further. For example, other types of beverage industries (not just wine) were included in the sample; the results regarded the entire country (Italy), not just Veneto region. So the following step was the selection of Veneto region's firms, by filtering its provinces: Belluno, Padova, Rovigo, Treviso, Venezia, Verona and Vicenza. Then we set up a conditional formatting for the column "registered name", and we coloured the cells that contained words like "wine", "winery" or "spumante". We chose not to include firms in closure and for this reason we added a rule to the conditional formatting set to highlight the ones was in such status. We made a second manual control to verify names without the mentioned keywords. For example, in case of "registered name" columns that had only a proper name like "Mario Rossi SRL", we looked for it in the web to understand the firm's core activity. If there were connections with wine production and/or distribution, we associated them to the "wine sellers" group; in this second check we took into consideration firms with at least 10 thousand euro of annual added value and/or more than 3 employees, because we think that under such benchmarks, enterprises could be just secondary businesses. At this point we had a total of 167 firms. Then the list was sorted by decreasing added value and, when the added value had the same value, we sorted by decreasing number of employees. This dataset allowed us to segment the sample and separate big firms from smaller ones. Due to the fact that big firms have more resources, but smaller firms are more copious, we formed our sample with a representation of 30 big firms from the top and 30 more firms distributed among small and medium realities. We chose the first big 30 records of our list and then we chose 15 firms from the bottom with at least 10 thousand euro of added value, and 15 records in the middle. Finally, we searched if they had a website and if they had an e-commerce service. We conducted this part of the research looking for their registered name in *Google*, and if we did not obtain satisfactory results, we tried searching their "#Tax Code# + it" in the web. In appendix 2 we can find the table in which we describe the block of the selected sixty firms.

- 11 - Industria delle bevande

Table 4.5 Sample dimension compared with the population

Group	Firms		Annual added value (thousand Euro)		Employees	
	N.	Share %	N.	Share %	N.	Share %
Population	167	100%	2,608,351	100%	3,436	100%
Sample	**60**	**36%**	**1,923,123**	**74%**	**2,204**	**64%**

Source: Author's elaboration

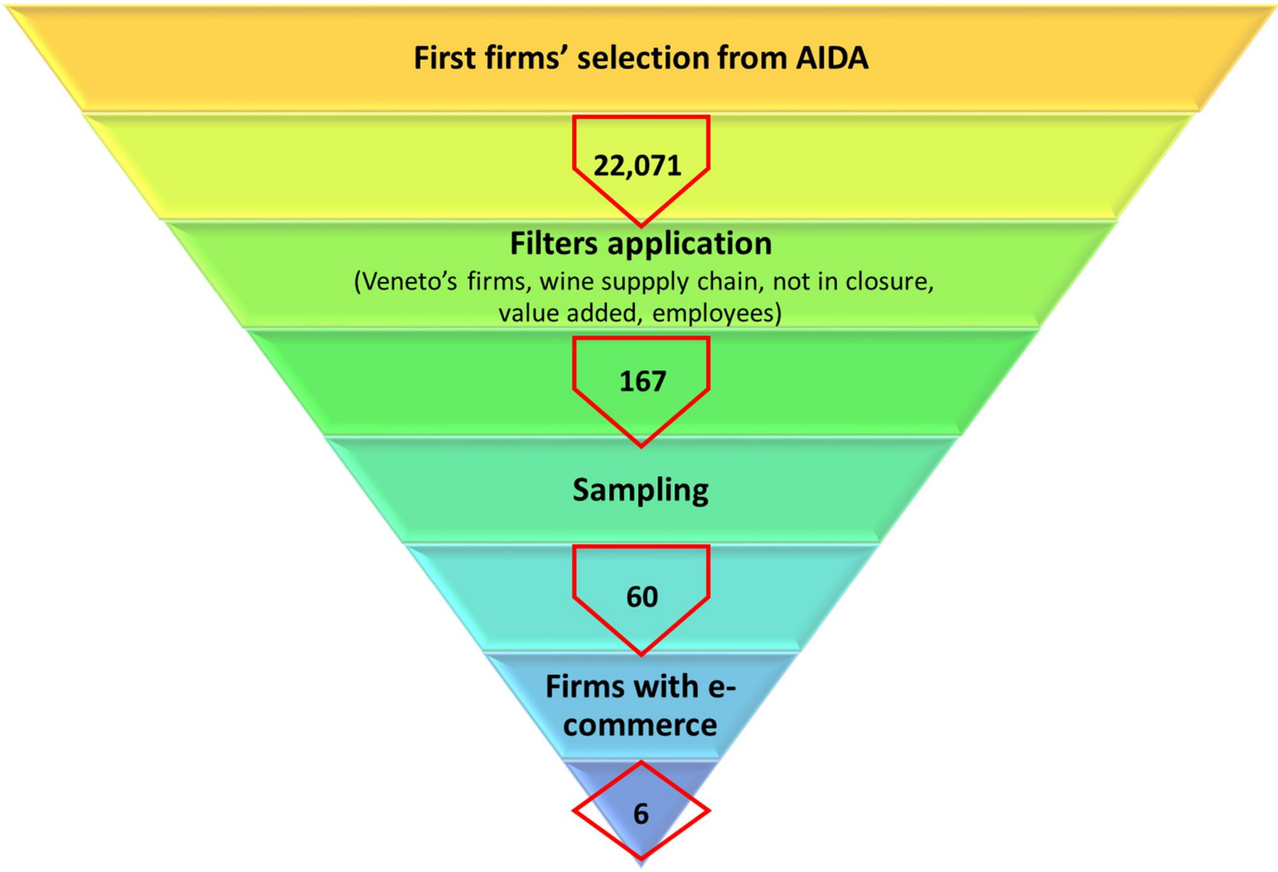
Our sample represented a turnover equal to 1,923,123.487 thousand euro per year (74% of the dataset composed by 167 firms) and employed more than 2000 people (64% of the entire dataset composed by 167 firms) (Table 4.4). 85% of the firms in the sample has a website, but only 10% has an e-commerce service (Figure 4.4). These percentages are quite coherent with the national scenario; we have seen in chapter 2, paragraph 2.3.1 *E-commerce Channel* that in 2014 71% of Italian firms has a website and 17% has also an e-commerce. Then it was possible for us to focus our investigation on 6 websites.

Figure 4.4 Percentages of firms in the sample with website and e-commerce

Source: Author's elaboration

To give to the reader a reference schema of the process that we followed selecting firms, we have included a flowchart that briefly outlines all the steps of the process (figure4.5).

Figure 4.5 Flowchart representing the firm selection



Source: Author's elaboration

To complete the research, we chose not only to focus on wineries, but also to consider some B2C marketplaces, which can function as benchmark. We have chosen to analyse *Amazon, Tannico, Vinitaly Shop* and *Majestic* for different reasons:

- *Amazon:* because it is the first successful example that comes to mind when we think of e-commerce; moreover, it has a specific "shop" dedicated to wines (we refer to the existence of the specific department "Wine & Champagne Shop");
- *Tannico:* because it presents itself as the largest online wine shop in Italy since its birth in 2012, with a catalogue of over 7,000 labels, and 500,000 bottles shipped in the last year[38];

[38] http://www.tannico.it/chi-siamo

- *Vinitaly:* because it is connected with the famous event (carrying the same name) and it develops direct collaborations with the most famous, but also new emerging Italian wineries;
- *Majestic*: because it is a foreign platform dedicated to wine sales.

Many small businesses decide to use those platforms, because otherwise they cannot enter the on line market alone; marketplaces as *Amazon, Tannico, Vinitaly* and *Majestic* can help them in terms of organization (for example to carry out marketing and/or logistics activities, but also to export). On the other hand, these retailers mediate the relations with costumers and this can weaken the small companies: they lose part of their control over the sales as well as useful data about clients. It seems that joining e-commerce through a platform could be a compromise between "ride the wave" or "just watch the others".

4.2.3 Mystery Shopping in Action – Reporting Results

In this last part we are describing to what extent parameters were developed in the selected websites, according with what we observed. We acted like a mystery shopper, pretending to be a foreign English-speaking customer who was searching for a bottle of *Prosecco* through the *Google* search engine.

We started the analysis figuring out how a general customer acts when he/she wants to buy Italian wine online. The following is a possible scenario:

> "I visited Italy last summer and I tasted *Prosecco* in a restaurant: it was very good. I am going to throw a party in two weeks and I would like to amaze my friends with this special drink; I want to serve original *Prosecco*! I will open my laptop and will surf in the web. Actually I don't remember the brand, but I know it is produced in Veneto and it is a white sparkling wine, so I will start to search using some related words…"

We were aware that on-line researches depend on location and historical research patterns, so it was difficult to objectively assess the results especially for the first item. To verify the item "the website is present in the first page of Google, when I search the product", we needed first to choose some keywords to insert in the searching tool (if we had obtained the keywords directly from the websites, it could have been better, but unfortunately *Google AdWords* is private). We attempted to find some words connected with the research of *Prosecco*, using *Google trends* but this method was unsatisfactory because the results were unrelated: "prosecco gummies", "plaza centro prosecco" (that is a specific brand), "prosecco crisps" and so on. Then, we decided to select some keywords directly from our scenario and we chose the following:

- *Prosecco;*
- *Prosecco Veneto;*
- *Prosecco buy;*
- *Italian wine;*
- *Sparkling wine;*
- *Prosecco online;*
- *Prosecco price.*

We searched those words in www.google.co.uk, but we did not find any wineries contained in our sample. On the contrary, marketplaces (the benchmark) appeared in some cases (table 4.4). It was not possible to assess a grade to this item, because the answer was just "yes" or "no". Anyway, this first step underlined a general weakness of the individual wine sellers, because they are hardly visible on the web[39].

Table 4.6 – Presence of the website in the first page of Google results

	Website						Benchmark			
Keywords	**X1**	**X2**	**X3**	**X4**	**X5**	**X6**	**Amazon**	**Tannico**	**Vinitaly Shop**	**Majestic**
Prosecco	no	no	no	no	no	no	**yes**	no	no	**yes**
Prosecco Veneto	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	**yes**	no	no
Prosecco buy	no	no	no	no	no	no	**yes**	no	no	no
Italian wine	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	**yes**
Sparkling wine	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	**yes**
Prosecco online	no	no	no	no	no	no	**yes**	**yes**	no	**yes**
Prosecco price	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no

Source: Author's elaboration

[39] We know to be visible on line, websites should be for instance frequently upgraded or receive a considerable number of visitors. For a small reality those processes could be unsustainable, due to a shortage of resources or to the scarce notoriety of the firm.

After the opening research, it was time to assess the previously selected items on each website. We decided to stay on the single website until the end of the test, to better simulate a real purchasing process. The research was done in the same time period for the entire sample (one day). In each website the user searched for a bottle of *Prosecco* and the purchase process has been conducted almost entirely, it was interrupted right before the payment. The user assigned each item a grade from 0 to 10, where 0 means the item was not satisfying at all, and 10 means it was completely satisfying (table 4.5). Note that item number 3 – "When I search for information, I can find data about…", included further details that we mentioned in paragraph 4.2.1 *Defining Goals* and that we retained useful to create a specific table for all the data related to the question (table 4.6). The presence or shortage of some product information contributes to the assessment of the item.

The reader can immediately notice that 5 websites out of 6 present "n.a." (that is "not available") in their rows. Since the mystery shopper is supposed to be an English-speaker person, the user changed the language of the website from Italian into English. When doing so, the online shop "disappeared": the link to reach the shop was not there anymore. Those wineries do not deliver wine abroad through e-commerce, but some of them might receive orders via direct contact. Due to this fact, it was impossible to assess the selected items because they were not available a priori. We have retained useful to analyse them anyway, but separately.

Table 4.7 Items extent in the websites analysed

Item	Websites X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6
1 - The website has a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen	7	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2 - There are filters that make me able to easily find out what I am looking for, because I can sort products by their features	8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
3 - When I search for information, I can find data about …	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
4 - There are pictures of the product	8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
5 - Promotions are described in a clear way	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
6 - I can easily manage my shopping cart and delete part of the order without restarting all the purchase process	10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
7 - I can choose between different payment methods	8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
8 - Delivery time and cost were clear since the beginning	10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
9 - There are multiple choices in delivery time and costs	5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Website average	**8.22**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**

Source: Author's elaboration

Table 4.8 Explored products information item for each website

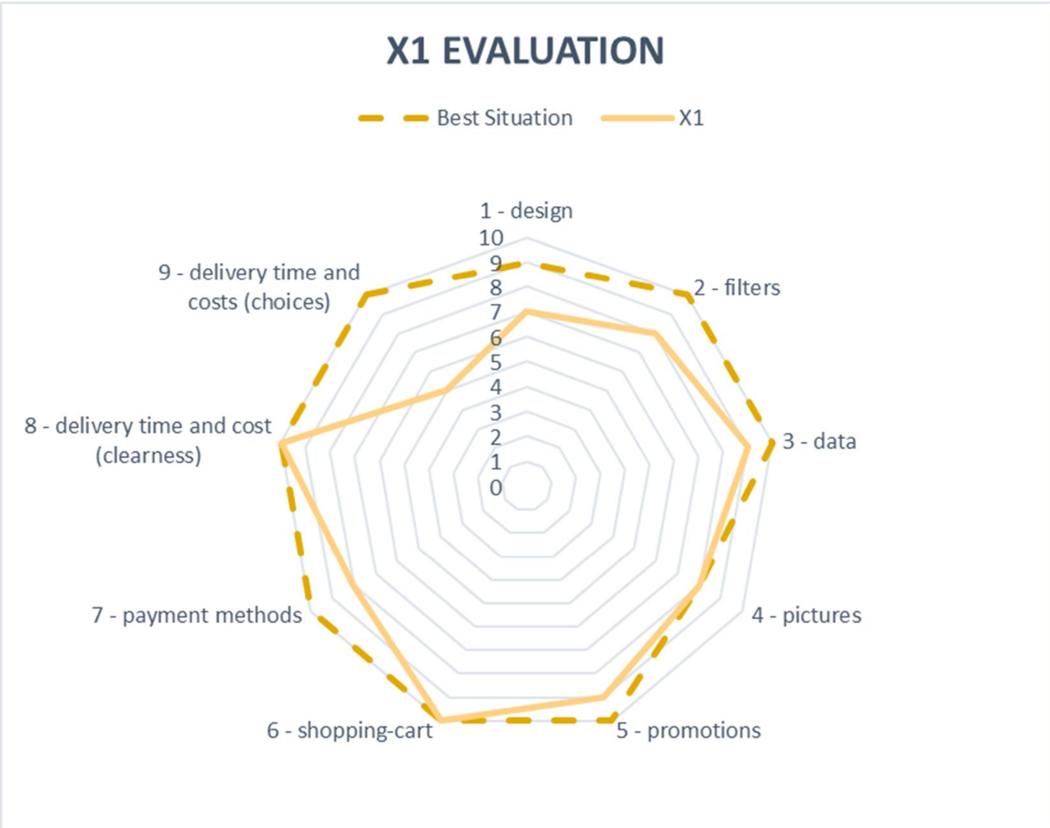
	Websites					
Information	**X1**	**X2**	**X3**	**X4**	**X5**	**X6**
Brand	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Price of a standard 0,75 litre bottle	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Year of production	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Alcoholic percentage	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Food combination suggestion	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Country of origin	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Reason of specialty, as i.e. Certifications like DOC/DOCG, IGP or particular awards	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Taste, because it is well described with specific adjectives, for example fruity, full-bodied, and so on	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Kind of wine, so if it is sparkling, dry, still and so on	9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Average	**9**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**	**n.a.**

Source: Author's elaboration

X1

X1 was the only website that allowed to the user to surf the on line shop as a foreigner. This website has been judged on average 8.22. Its strength is the shopping cart management and the clear information about delivery time and cost. On the other hand, its weakness consists in the choice of delivery time and cost: the only possibility to modify them is to complete the purchase within certain hours or to spend at least a certain amount of money on wine (figure 4.6). At the end of process the buyer is informed that the company delivers only within Italian borders so the foreigner consumer's order may not be satisfied anyway.

Figure 4.6 Graphic representation of the website evaluation – X1[40]



Source: Author's elaboration

[40] The *Best Situation* represents an idealistic website according to the evidence. We selected the maximum grade assigned for each item among the "classifiable" websites (that is the group composed by X1, Amazon, Vinitaly and Majestic) and we obtained this reference point.

Benchmarks

The analysis was repeated for all four marketplaces (we mentioned them in paragraph 4.2.2 *Gathering Data*) to create a benchmark. To assess the second sample, we followed the same procedure as earlier. Again, we pretended to be an English-speaker user and we stayed on the single website until the end of the test and in each website we searched for a bottle of *Prosecco.* We conducted the purchase process almost entirely, stopping right before the payment. Again, we assigned each item a grade from 0 to 10, where 0 means the item was not satisfying at all, and 10 means it was completely satisfying. In this sample as well, there has been a case in which we were not able to assess: *Tannico* is a marketplace that would have gained an average score of 8.33, but it sells wine only to Italian consumers so it was left out (again we analyse it anyway, but separately). We summarised the mystery shopper investigation in the following tables (table 4.9 and table 4.10).

Table 4.9 Items extent on the online marketplaces

	Websites[41]			
Item	**Amazon**	**Tannico**	**Vinitaly Club**	**Majestic**
1 - The website has a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen	9	n.a.	9	9
2 - There are filters that make me able to easily find out what I am looking for, because I can sort products by their features	10	n.a.	10	9
3 - When I search for information, I can find data about …	5	n.a.	10	7
4 - There are pictures of the product	7	n.a.	8	8
5 - Promotions are described in a clear way	9	n.a.	10	7
6 - I can easily manage my shopping cart and delete part of the order without restarting all the purchase process	10	n.a.	10	10
7 - I can choose between different payment methods	8	n.a.	10	9
8 - Delivery time and cost were clear since the beginning	10	n.a.	10	9
9 - There are multiple choices in delivery time and costs	10	n.a.	2	10
Website's average	**8,67**	**n.a.**	**8,78**	**8.66**

Source: Author's elaboration

[41] Specifically, the investigation has been made in the follows websites:
- www.amazon.com;
- www.tannico.it;
- www.vinitalyclub.com;
- www.majestic.co.uk.

Table 4.10 Product's information item for each online marketplaces

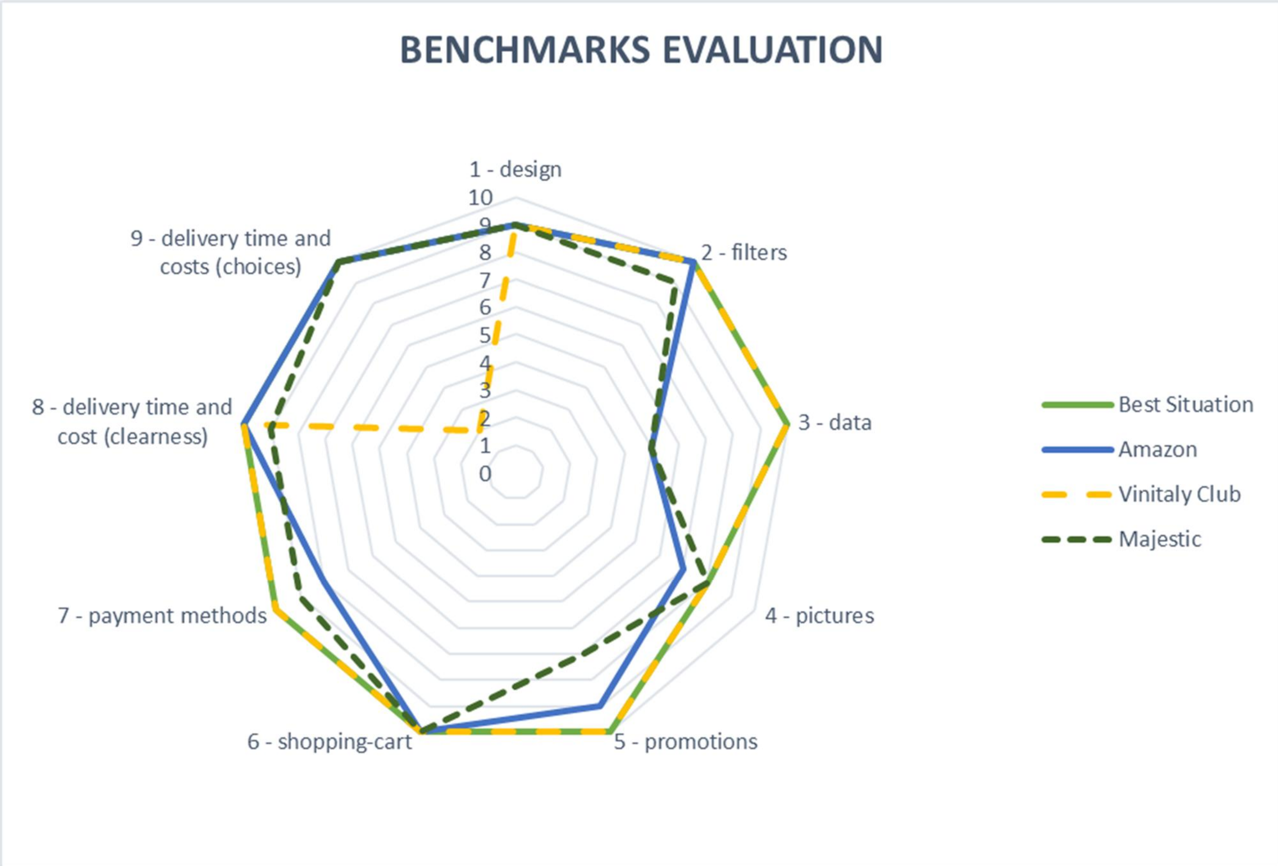
Information	Websites[42] Amazon	Tannico	Vinitaly Club	Majestic
Brand	9	n.a.	10	9
Price of a standard 0,75 litre bottle	9	n.a.	10	9
Year of production	0	n.a.	10	0
Alcoholic percentage	9	n.a.	10	9
Food combination suggestion	0	n.a.	10	9
Country of origin	9	n.a.	10	9
Reason of specialty, as i.e. certifications like PDO, PGI or particular awards	0	n.a.	10	0
Taste, because it is well described with specific adjectives, for example fruity, full-bodied, and so on	0	n.a.	10	9
Kind of wine, so if it is sparkling, dry, still and so on	9	n.a.	10	9
Average	**5**	**n.a.**	**10**	**7**

Source: Author's elaboration

Some strengths and weakness are common traits. Marketplaces generally have a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen and the shopping cart is easy to manage. Moreover, filters are very well set up and they can be used together (however inside those shops, customers have a huge variety of products, so it is a duty to give them the possibility to select specific features searching goods). Specifically, *Amazon* and *Majestic* are strong also for what concerns delivery time and cost information, to communicate them from the begin and for the possibility to choose among different options. *Vinitaly Shop*'s is particularly hale in information about the product and clearness of promotions. Furthermore, it has a very rich choice in payment methods. On the other hand, those platforms are not perfect, so the user can encounter some weaknesses here too. *Amazon* and *Majestic* present again similar feature and they should improve in the products' description, which is in some points scarce. *Vinitaly Shop* could be better for what concerns time delivery choice (figure 4.7).

[42] See note 39

Figure 4.7 Graphic Representation of the Website Evaluation – Benchmarks[43]



Source: Author's elaboration

Unclassified Websites

Let's make some further considerations and extend the investigation to the rest of the sample, discovering which are strengths and weaknesses of "Italian-to-Italians" e-commerce in the wine sector. Again we assessed the items with a grade from 0 to 10, where 0 means the item was not satisfied at all, meanwhile 10 means it was completely satisfied and we summarize their evaluations in tables (table 4.9 and table 4.10).

Before presenting each website individually, we advance that a general weakness was the scarce possibility to choose between different delivery times and costs. On the other side, a common strength has regarded the shopping chart management, which was well set up every time.

[43] See note 40

Table 4.11 - Items' extent in the websites (only for Italian clients)

	Websites for Italian clients					
Item	**X2**	**X3**	**X4**	**X5**	**X6**	**Tannico**
1 - The website has a modern design with a logic disposition of the modules on the screen	8	7	6	7	5	9
2 - There are filters that make me able to easily find out what I am looking for, because I can sort products by their features	8	6	6	6	5	10
3 - When I search for information, I can find data about ...	8	9	8	8	9	10
4 - There are pictures of the product	9	7	8	7	6	8
5 - Promotions are described in a clear way	7	6	5	8	7	10
6 - I can easily manage my shopping cart and delete part of the order without restarting all the purchase process	10	10	10	10	10	10
7 - I can choose between different payment methods	8	7	8	8	5	9
8 - Delivery time and cost were clear since the beginning	6	7	7	10	7	7
9 - There are multiple choices in delivery time and costs	0	2	0	0	2	2
Website's average	**7.11**	**6.78**	**6.44**	**7.11**	**6.22**	**8,33**

Source: Author's elaboration

Table 4.12 Explored products information for each websites (only for Italian clients)

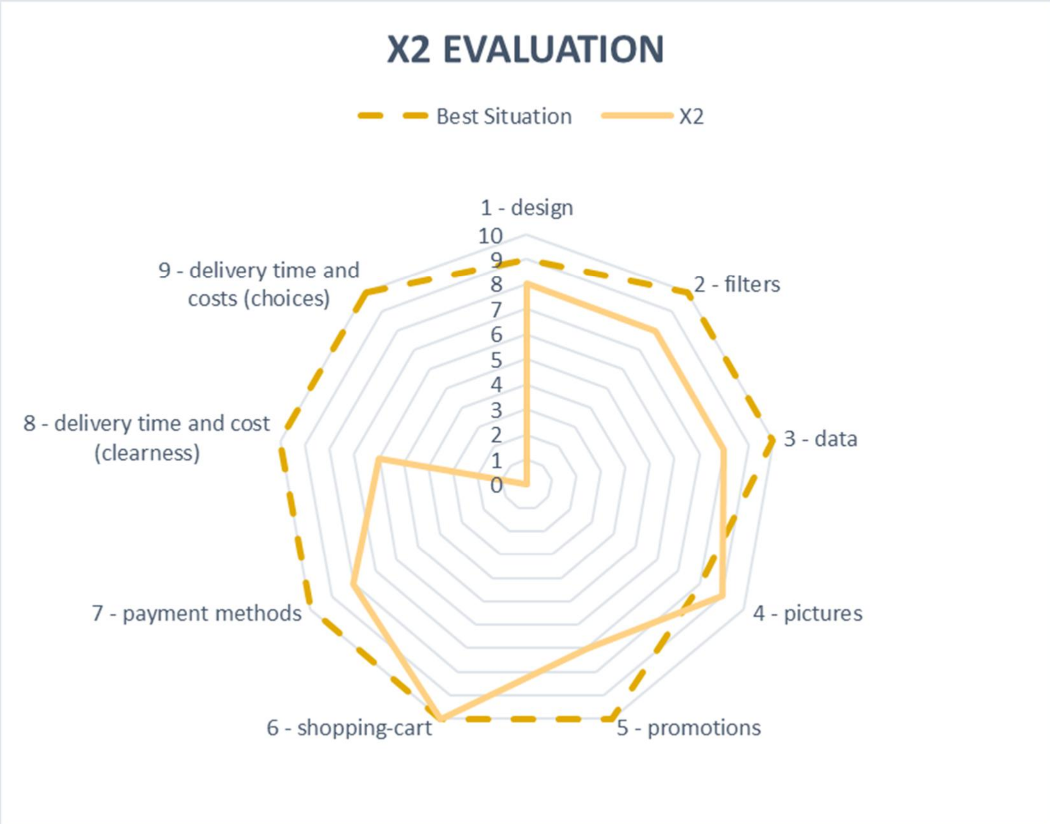
	Websites for Italian clients					
Information	**X2**	**X3**	**X4**	**X5**	**X6**	**Tannico**
Brand	9	9	9	9	9	10
Price of a standard 0,75 litre bottle	9	9	9	9	9	10
Year of production	0	9	0	9	9	10
Alcoholic percentage	9	9	9	9	9	10
Food combination suggestion	9	9	9	9	9	10
Country of origin	9	9	9	9	9	10
Reason of specialty, as i.e. Certifications like DOC/DOCG, IGP or particular awards	9	9	9	9	9	10
Taste, because it is well described with specific adjectives, for example fruity, full-bodied, and so on	9	9	9	0	9	10
Kind of wine, so if it is sparkling, dry, still and so on	9	9	9	9	9	10
Avarage	**8**	**9**	**8**	**8**	**9**	**10**

Source: Author's elaboration

X2

This website has an average rate of 7.11. Its strength regards the pictures, which can be enlarged. On the other hand, its weakness consists in the lack of delivery times and costs since the beginning. At the moment of the purchase it is possible to see only the delivery costs, with no time indication (figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Graphic representation of the website evaluation - X2[44]



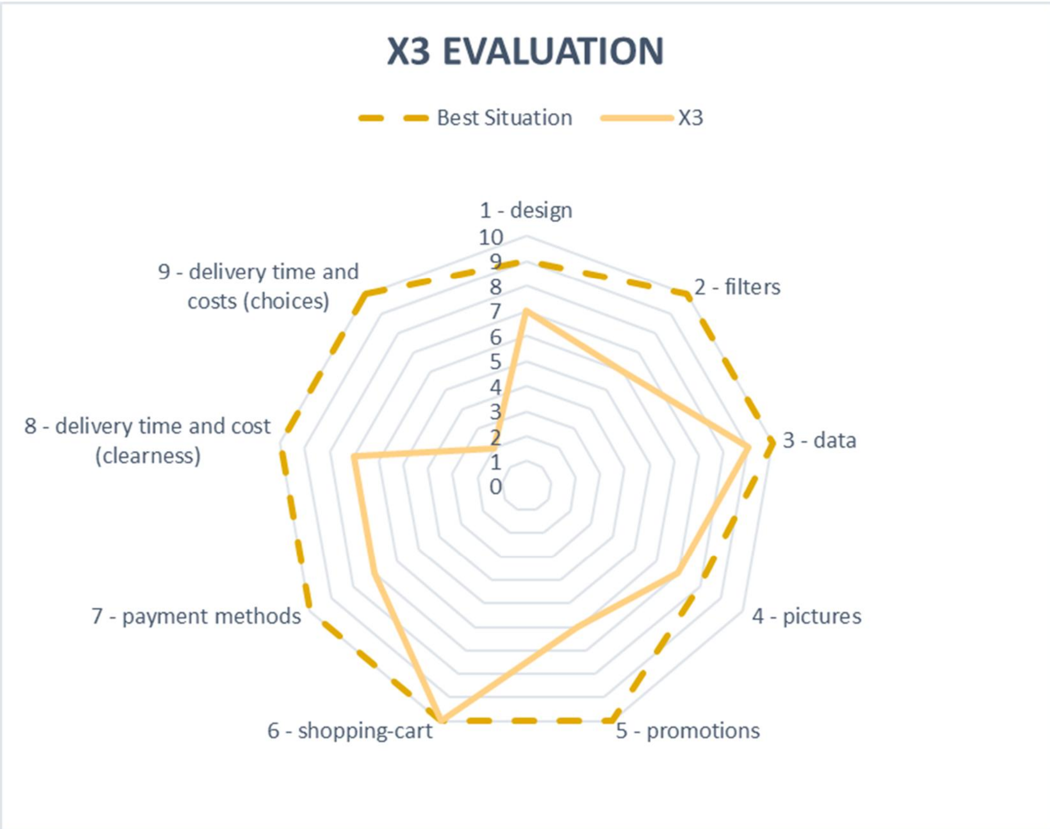
Source: Author's elaboration

[44] For this and next graphs, see note 40

X3

This website has an average rate of 6.78. Its strength is information, which can be found entirely. On the other hand, its weaknesses consist on filter settings and promotions. Filters are scarce and useless if you do not know the brands of the winery, but fortunately there is a searching tool; promotions may be present, but they are reserved to newsletter subscribers, and they are not clearly described in the website (figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9 Graphic Representation of the Website Evaluation – X3

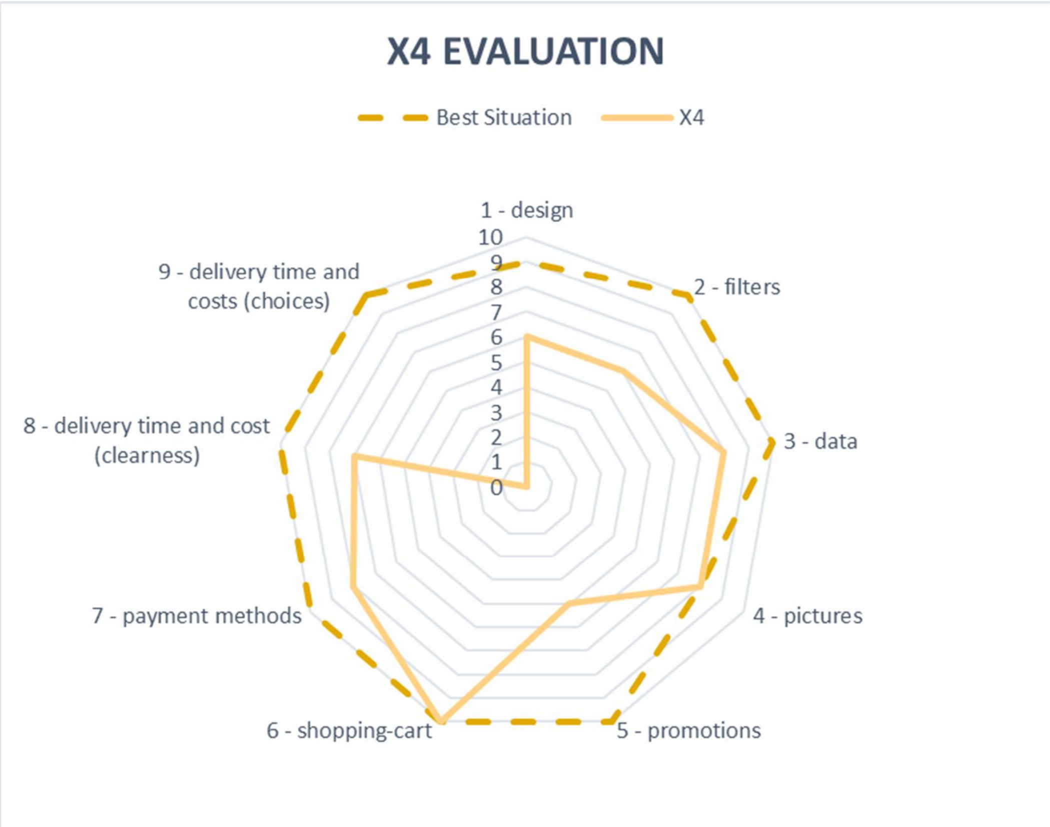


Source: Author's elaboration

X4

This website has an average rate of 6.44. Its only strength is the shopping cart management, and it has several weaknesses. Since the beginning, the presentation appears too essential and the main page picture has low definition (although products pictures are of good quality); filters are based only on two categories of wine: dry or sparkling, but fortunately, again, there is a searching tool. Finally, its main deficiency is the fact that users are obligated to create an account to be able to see the price of the bottles: this has negatively influenced the assessment of promotions clarity (figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10 Graphic Representation of the Website Evaluation – X4



Source: Author's elaboration

X5

This website has an average rate of 7.11, the same as X2, but for different reasons. Its strength is the clear information about delivery times and costs, which can be found directly in the home page, and the food combination suggestions with foreign food as well. On the other hand, its weakness is the filters setting. Filters are scarce and cannot be combined; one excludes the other (figure 4.11).

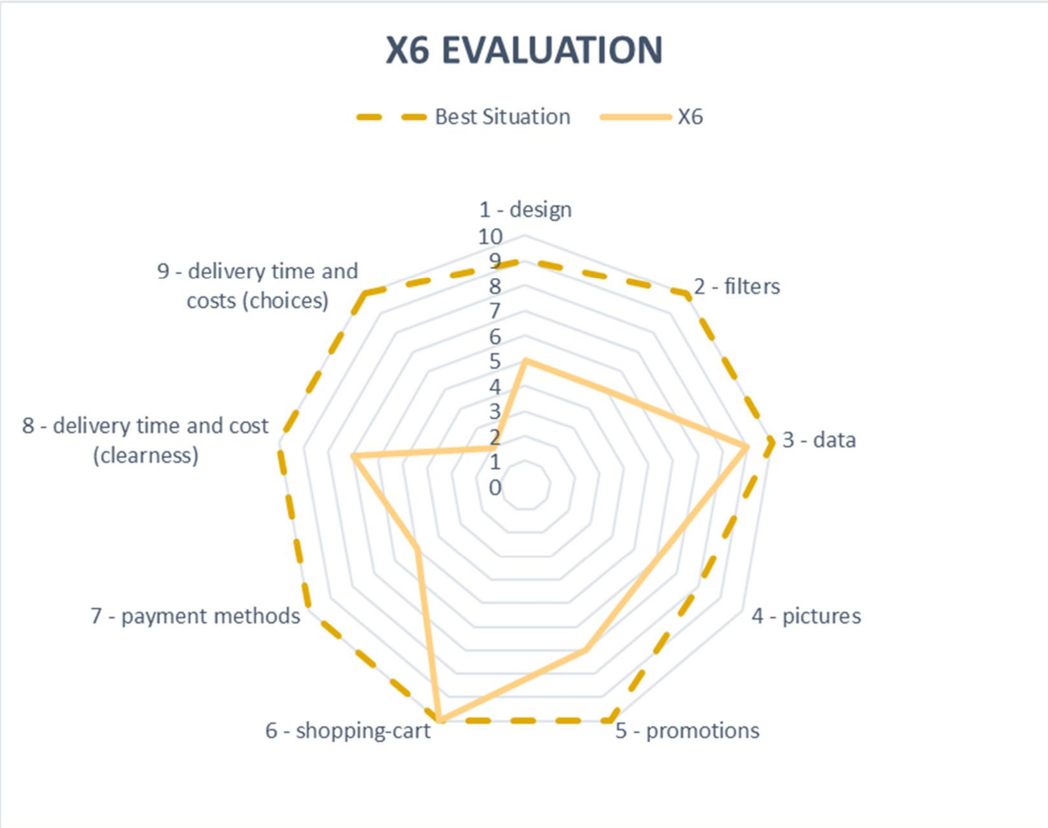
Figure 4.11 Graphic Representation of the Website Evaluation – X5

Source: Author's elaboration

X6

This website has the lowest average rate, that is 6.22. Its strength regards information about products, which are complete, but it has a few weaknesses. For example, the main page of the shop focuses on promotions and filters seem to be made for people who work for the winery instead of customers. There are no searching tools, so it is difficult to find products. Pictures are good quality, but when enlarged the user has to click twice to go back to the shopping. There is also inconsistency between the terms used in the policy of payment section and the effective possibilities, because the choice appears to be between credit card or PayPal, but in the order fulfillment it is possible to pay only through credit card, since there is not physical button to select the PayPal payment method (figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12 Graphic Representation of the Website Evaluation – X6

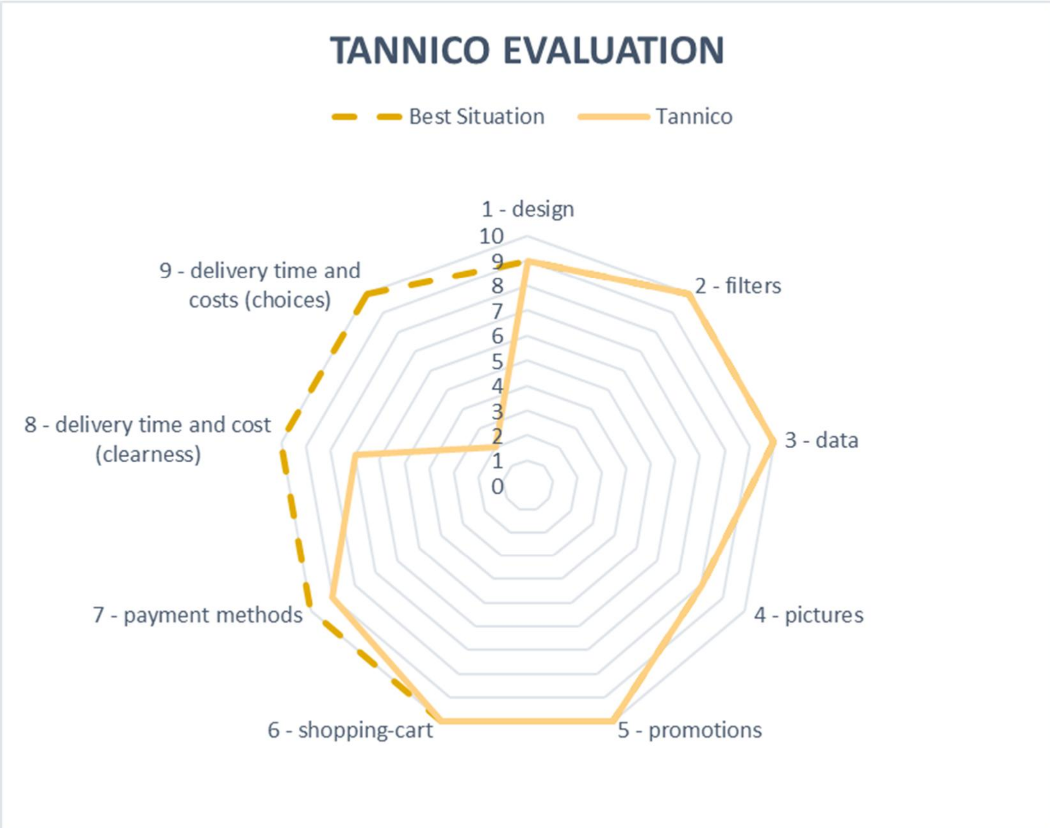


Source: Author's elaboration

Tannico

This website has an average rate of 8.33. Its strength regards filters and information about products, which are complete. It is also strong as regards promotions and the shopping cart. Again weaknesses are delivery time and costs sphere.

Figure 4.13 Graphic Representation of the Website Evaluation - Tannico



Source: Author's elaboration

Concluding remarks

E-commerce and Italian wine can match successfully: this is what our mystery shopper has proved through the previous analysis, however the answer is not so simple. Wine is an agricultural product and its commercialization has some constraints, but compared to other products from the same category, like for example fresh food, it is more apt to be sold on-line. E-commerce is relatively young and it represents a novelty to many entrepreneurs and most of them in Italy are still familiarising with it. The percentages are probably not really representative of the reality, maybe they are underestimated because it is difficult to entirely catch the number of firms both on and off-line, but, especially in the food sector, there is evidence that only a small number of e-commerce sites exists: Italian firms are late.

We cannot ignore IT is having a huge impact on our lives and that it has affected our habits. Experts recognise the high potentiality of e-commerce and that it could represent the future of the retail system. Since demand and supply are strictly interdependent, businesses need to evolve. Internet enlarges the traditional borders and makes the impossible possible for several enterprises, chiefly the ones exporting abroad. It also allows small firms to be present all around the world, so the factor "size" is becoming less important than in the past. At the same time managers should be careful, because it is not so easy to efficiently handle the *World Wide Web*: it is true few resources are required, but it is also true that they have to be properly implemented and constantly assessed. Decisions have to be consistent with the firm's strategy, which has to be defined in advance. The implementation of e-commerce service should reflect and sustain the company's goal, otherwise it will present an extra problem. It is useless to have a "fashion" e-commerce if it is not fitting with the main activity and it does not work properly. Furthermore, when the firm adopts a mixed distribution strategy, it has to remember the two channels (off-line and online) are related (for example, brand reputation comes from both) and they should be coordinated. Today there are a few examples of firms in Italy that are taking advantage of e-commerce, but thanks to our research we can say this little group is doing moderately well. Perfection is very hard to reach and some weaknesses could be fixed. Runnig a website has its duties and the entrepreneur has to be aware of them; the online product is partly different from the off-line one, even when talking about of the same bottle of wine. Specifically, Italian wineries lack on visibility and have scarce options in delivery choice (most of the time, delivery is outsourced to external couriers and the winery has little control on them.

Anyway, logistics is a much broader issue and it should be analysed on its own. Right now enterprises can choose different ways to be online: on the one hand they have the possibility to be do it directly; on the other, they can rely on a marketplace. Both decisions pose threats and opportunities: the former leads the firm to maintain the bargaining power on final consumers and collect information about them (in other words, to hold the "big data"), but it requires high skills and time consumption. On the contrary, the latter presents less effort with regard of marketing and logistics activities (because they are handled by the hosting platform), but there is a loss of contact with the customer. Furthermore, it is not clear if marketplaces are helping small businesses to be more visible or if they help competition to prevail: this issue could be a trampoline for future research, which may also involve knowing how many firms are already using such marketplaces and how it is affecting their business.

However, every consumer lives the online/off-line experience differently and this has to be taken into consideration. Customers are very important in businesses and their satisfaction has to be prioritised in the firm's strategy. This means not only mechanical fulfillment of standard procedures, i.e. ISO 9001, but also the achievement of a higher awareness of the client's needs. It is crucial to understand how the consumer perceives the service and a convenient solution could be to "play its role": when managers look at service through the costumers' eyes, they will understand if they are doing their job well. Thanks to this approach, we have uncovered the main problem in our sample: since we have ascertained that wine export is a great resource for the country, we expected to find export-oriented wineries, but when making website assessments, we surprisingly found out that the majority of them that have the own website are not using e-commerce to export. It seems Italian wineries have the ace in the hole, but they are not willing to play.

Lastly, we are ending this work with a last remark. We are now more conscious of the limits and prospects of Italian wineries in the IT field. The web can become the new tool for exports, but we know SMEs cannot completely face this challenge on their own. Due to the composition of the sector, which is characterized by many players and high specialization, public institutions or consortia participation is needed. They should enhance communication and invest in resources education; as well as be sponsor of ventures and concretely boost this channel, in order to help not only individual businesses, but also the entire economy, especially because soon this will not be just a choice any more.

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Appendix – 1: The Survey

Survey: “Siti di e-commerce: fattori d'importanza”

“Ciao, sono una laureanda dell’università di Ca’ Foscari e sto conducendo una ricerca sugli acquisti fatti tramite Internet. Ti chiedo la gentilezza di dedicarmi meno di dieci minuti del tuo tempo per compilare il seguente questionario, che costituisce una parte importante del mio lavoro.

Prima di iniziare voglio rassicurarti sul fatto che i dati che rileveremo sono completamente anonimi e saranno trattati in modo aggregato nel massimo rispetto della privacy.”

SEZIONE 1 DI 4

Per iniziare, ti chiedo di indicarmi:

1. Se sei:
   a. Maschio
   b. Femmina
2. Quando sei nato/a:

   ____

3. Dove sei nato/a:
   a. In italia
   b. All’estero
4. A quale area di studi appartieni:
   a. Linguistica
   b. Economica
   c. Scientifica
   d. Altro

SEZIONE 2 DI 4

5. Hai mai fatto acquisti sul web?
   a. Sì
   b. No

SEZIONE 3 DI 4

6. Quante volte hai fatto un ordine?
   a. Più volte la settimana
   b. Una volta alla settimana

c. Una o due volte al mese
d. Ogni due o tre mesi
e. Meno di 4 volte l’anno

7. Qual è stata la tua spesa media per ogni ordine?

a. Meno di 10€
b. Tra i 10 e 50€
c. Tra i 50 e i 100€
d. Oltre i 100€

SEZIONE 4 DI 4

“Ora ti chiedo di immaginare di essere in un sito web da cui puoi effettuare un acquisto. Di seguito trovi un elenco di fattori che rendono più o meno facile il processo di selezione e acquisto on line.

Esprimi il tuo giudizio sull'importanza che ciascun fattore ha nel rendere più agevole l’acquisto on line, dove 0 è “per nulla importante” mentre 10 è “assolutamente importante”.”

1) Il sito è moderno e ha una presentazione logica ed intuitiva

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

2) Posso scegliere tra diverse lingue, tra cui la mia

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

3) Esistono dei filtri che mi aiutano a trovare quello che sto cercando

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

4) Per ogni prodotto sono disponibili informazioni chiare e specifiche

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

5) Il sito presenta un’immagine del prodotto

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

6) Posso ingrandire l'immagine del prodotto

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

7) Esiste un'ampia gamma di prodotti, tutti immediatamente o a breve disponibili

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

8) Il sito propone suggerimenti per l'acquisto di altri beni

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

9) Il sito mi offre particolare promozioni o sconti

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

10) Le promozioni offerte sono facili da comprendere

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

11) Posso creare una "lista dei desideri"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

12) Nello stesso sito, posso effettuare confronti tra più prodotti

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

13) Mi è sempre chiaro in che fase dell'ordine sono e ho la possibilità di modificare il carrello acquisti in qualsiasi momento

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

14) Posso scegliere tra diversi tipi di pagamento

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

15) Mi è chiaro fin da subito quali sono i tempi e i costi di spedizione

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

16) Ho la possibilità di scegliere tra diverse modalità e tempi di consegna

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

17) Esiste un servizio di assistenza clienti e/o una pagina social che mi permette di interagire direttamente con l'azienda

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

18) Il sito web funziona bene da diversi dispositivi (PC, Smartphone, Tablet)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

19) Posso leggere e lasciare recensioni sulla mia esperienza di acquisto

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Per nulla importante									Assolutamente importante

Appendix – 2: Selected firms

Wineries from Veneto extrapolated by AIDA

ID_Firm	Annual added value (thousand Euro)	Number of employees	Presence of the website	Presence of e-commerce service
1	213.599	348	yes	yes
2	154.482	95	yes	no
3	144.074	189	yes	no
4	134.459	93	yes	no
5	102.417	167	yes	no
6	86.863	105	yes	no
7	77.800	36	yes	no
8	75.338	54	yes	no
9	72.654	63	yes	no
10	64.912	103	yes	no
11	56.290	62	yes	no
12	52.611	56	yes	no
13	45.726	47	yes	no
14	40.678	65	yes	yes
no 15	40.065	37	yes	no
16	39.040	47	yes	no
17	38.202	33	yes	no
18	37.384	38	yes	no
19	37.111	37	yes	no
20	36.487	37	yes	no
21	35.697	46	yes	no
22	33.212	38	yes	no
23	32.426	0	yes	no

ID_Firm	Annual added value (thousand Euro)	Number of employees	Presence of the website	Presence of e-commerce service
24	31.448	12	no	no
25	29.569	35	yes	no
26	28.990	14	yes	no
27	28.878	30	yes	yes
28	27.225	43	yes	no
29	25.815	34	yes	no
30	21.618	30	yes	no
31	5.903	10	yes	yes
32	5.631	14	yes	no
33	5.552	17	yes	no
34	5.460	17	yes	yes
35	5.314	23	yes	no
36	5.167	10	yes	yes
37	5.120	3	no	no
38	4.976	6	no	no
39	4.918	7	yes	no
40	4.853	26	yes	no
41	4.823	10	yes	no
42	4.735	12	yes	no
43	4.715	12	yes	no
44	4.693	11	yes	no
45	4.692	10	yes	no
46	282	13	no	no
47	244	0	yes	no
48	203	2	yes	no

ID_Firm	Annual added value (thousand Euro)	Number of employees	Presence of the website	Presence of e-commerce service
49	165	3	no	no
50	155	0	yes	no
51	83	0	no	no
52	76	0	no	no
53	58	1	yes	no
54	46	1	yes	no
55	43	0	yes	no
56	34	0	no	no
57	34	1	yes	no
58	32	0	no	no
59	30	1	yes	no
60	15	0	yes	no

Source: Author's elaboration on AIDA records