

Wine Marketing Strategy: Considering Connectivity of Opinion Leadership, Trust, and Fashion Consciousness

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KEYWORDS <i>fashion consciousness, opinion, trust, purchasing behavior, wine</i>	ABSTRACT The study investigates the mediating influence of consumer trust in information sources as well as the interaction between product knowledge and wine fashion consciousness. The results of the PLS-SEM approach applied via SmartPLS v. 4.0 confirm that consumers' decisions and market trends can be influenced by opinion leaders who highly value expert reviews and sellers. In the wine industry, when producers and consumers conflict over quality information, confidence in information sources mediates. Practically, knowing opinion leaders and seekers can enable the wine business to create more successful marketing plans that strengthen customer trust and awareness of wine products.
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1. INTRODUCTION

According to a report by DataM Intelligence (2023), the global wine market achieved a value of \$402.5 billion in 2022, with projections indicating growth to \$603.7 billion by 2030, driven by a compound annual growth rate of 5.2% from 2023 to 2030. The Asia-Pacific region is expected to witness the highest yearly growth rate. However, the abundance of wine varieties, brands, styles, and prices has made it challenging to understand the underlying factors influencing wine purchases, hindering manufacturers' ability to predict consumer preferences (Corduas et al., 2013).

Investigating intrinsic and extrinsic sensory drivers of preferences, decisions, and perceived quality (Oyinseye et al., 2022; Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2012; Sáenz-Navajas et al., 2016; Yang & Lee, 2020) research in wine-related domains has historically concentrated on consumers' cognitive features. Recent research, however, emphasize the interplay between sensory and emotional dimensions since they indicate that hedonic reactions by themselves are inadequate to understand consumer impressions (Danner et al., 2020; Mora et al., 2021; Niimi et al., 2017; Ristic et al., 2019).

Wan et al. (2001) noted that consumer fashion awareness of particular items can have a major impact on consumption behavior and purchase decisions. Although consumer fashion consciousness greatly affects buying decisions and consumption behavior for different products, including wine, current research mostly studies consumer behavior from the standpoint of product involvement (Aurifeille et al., 2002; Bruwer & Huang, 2012; Cox, 2009; Hollebeek et al., 2007; Lockshin et al., 2001; Lockshin et al., 1997; Torri et al., 2013), therefore neglecting the part of fashion consciousness (Charters & Pettigrew, 2005). The diversity of wine and the different degrees of consumer wine expertise make it challenging to evaluate product quality before purchase, which causes consumers to rely more on recommendations than on own investigation. Regarding technical rather than aesthetic characteristics of wine, consumers also seek various sources; professional opinions are more appreciated for technical features and friends and relatives for aesthetic ones (Duhan et al., 1997).



The wine market also faces an issue of information asymmetry, where producers and buyers possess different quality information. Several studies have suggested (Dodd et al., 2005; L. Lockshin et al., 2006; Ristic et al., 2016; Vigar-Ellis et al., 2015) that consumer familiarity and involvement with a product appear to elicit different responses to information from various sources (salespeople or experts). While consumers usually derive quality based on outside signals, producers focus on objective quality related with production and sensory aspects (Lockshin & Rhodus, 1993; Sáenz-Navajas et al., 2013).

Though consumers know about wines, their conversion into purchases is still little researched. Little study has looked at how consumers with different degrees of product knowledge respond to confidence in information sources. This paper investigates consumer fashion consciousness and its impact on product knowledge and information acquisition tactics as well as the mediating function of perceived confidence in many knowledge sources in order to close these gaps. It also examines certain consumer actions connected to drinking patterns of wine.

Targeting Taiwanese consumers, the study aims to find, under consideration perceived confidence in information sources, the correlation between wine fashion consciousness and product knowledge. Academic research as well as pragmatic applications in the wine sector benefit from the framework of the research paper, which comprises of an introduction, literature review, research framework, methodology, empirical analysis, and conclusion.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consumer Behaviour

Understanding product knowledge is fundamental in comprehending customer behavior (Long-Yi & Chun-Shuo, 2006). Strong predictors for grocery purchases, according to Hummel et al. (2024), are psychological traits. Park and Ha (2014) discovered that subjective norms had indirect effects on recycling intention behavior. In understanding how consumers gather product information, this study differentiates between opinion leadership and opinion seeking (Flynn et al., 1996; Vigar-Ellis et al., 2015). Opinion leaders and seekers help to define consumer behavior according to subjective knowledge and degree of involvement (Marks, 1981; Dangelico et al., 2022).

1) Opinion Leadership

Opinion leadership refers to the use of one's point of view to affect other people, such as influencing buyers. As Rogers & Cartano (1962) describe opinion leaders, they have great impact on the choices of others. From the receiver's point of view, Engel et al. (1990) provide a more pragmatic definition of opinion leaders as people who actively seek out advice. This study emphasizes that opinion leaders come from any demography and are not just connected with better socioeconomic level. This elucidation offers a concise grasp of opinion leaders' role as influential individuals within society. Previous research has also shown that they have a greater impact on consumer behavior (Vuuren et al., 2007a)

2) Opinion Seeking

Opinion seeking applies to seeking out information on individual issues. In marketing research, opinion-seeking has received less attention compared to opinion leadership. However, Shoham & Ruvio (2008) suggest these concepts aren't mutually exclusive. Opinion leadership and opinion-seeking activities have shown a modestly positive link, according to studies including those of Bertrandias and Goldsmith (2006) and Clark et al. (2007). Though both opinion leaders and searchers may have experience, Tejavibulya & Eiamkanchanalai (2011) that their impact on others' purchase decisions differs. Though they seek guidance, opinion seekers may not always follow suggestions because of their knowledge. For example, Bruwer & Thach (2013) discovered that word-of-mouth from opinion leaders is mostly relied upon by visitors to American wine regions. According to Aqueveque (2006), wine experts lower perceived risk for opinion seekers, therefore raising their purchasing power.

According to Riviezzo et al. (2011), young wine drinkers looking to present wine knowledge are more prone to ask opinions. But this study uses Flynn et al. (1996) concept of opinion-seeking behavior—that is, people seeking advice when making judgments about purchases—especially pertinent in the context of wine purchasing given the variety of goods and brands and related perceived risks.

Trust Theory

A pillar of the relationship between stores and customers, trust is absolutely vital for encouraging good interactions (Ganesan, 1994; Handfield & Bechtel, 2002; Sahay, 2003; Wray et al., 1994). Hart & Saunders (1997) describe trust as the dependability on positive expectations of an entity's ability, capacity, and compassion, embracing honesty and competency even in vulnerable circumstances. Wu et al. (2023) do, however, separate trust into cognitive and emotional forms. Cognitive trust is the conviction in the qualities of the vendor deserving of confidence. Emotional trust, on the other hand, suggests comfort and confidence devoid of rational evidence (Gong et al., 2020).

Consumers' impressions of trust center on honesty, kindness, and expertise (Xu et al., 2016). Integrity is commitment to established values like honesty; benevolence indicates care for the best interests of the customer; and competence suggests professional aptitude (Haidt et al., 1993; McKnight et al., 2002; Gefen, 2004; Benbasat & Wang, 2005; Schlosser et al., 2006). Humphreys & Carpenter (2018) observed that social risks, choice uncertainty, and fear of poor decisions influence



trust dynamics in the wine market. In analyzing trust, this study centers on consumer trust in wine store salespeople and experts, considering cognitive trust in knowledge competence and emotional trust in integrity and benevolence.

For consumer decision-making, trust in wine transactions spans salespeople as well as professional advice (Lockshin et al., 2001; Gerlach & Li, 2022). From producers to stores, wine experts—who range in nature—have a big influence on consumers toward appropriate decisions for different events (Grohmann et al., 2018; Lesschaeve, 2007). Research sometimes ignores the nuances of these specialists in spite of society awareness, focused more on differences in expertise than the larger consumer trust background (Otheguy et al., 2021; Honoré-Chedozeau et al., 2020; D'Alessandro & Pecotich, 2013). Emphasizing consumers's impressions and acceptance of salespeople and experts, this study looks at variables of cognitive and emotional trust.

Fashion Consciousness

Through many research stressing its importance, fashion consciousness is clearly important in determining consumer behavior and purchase decisions (Wan et al., 2001; Zhang & Kim, 2013; Rezaei, 2015; Sebald & Jacob, 2020; Evans et al., 2022). It reflects a strong passion in appearance and current trends, which causes people to give personal presentation first priority over pricing or product considerations (Zaman et al., 2019). As people try to keep their trendy status, it shows a care for many facets of fashion, including pleasure, cognition, emotion, and conduct, even if it does not necessarily imply knowledge in fashion (Bakewell et al., 2006; Gutman & Mills, 1982).

Fashion consciousness stresses the need of adjusting the newest fashions and displaying one's personality while yet merging with product involvement has distinct qualities (Shim & Gehrt, 1996; Walsh et al., 2001; Wells et al., 1971). Style consciousness, which emphasizes long-term personal identity (Evans et al., 2022), contrasts with this predisposition toward novelty and trendiness which stresses Linking fashion consciousness to social identity and social comparison theories, researchers have investigated the psychological bases of this consciousness (Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012; Zhang & Kim, 2013). People could choose specific brands or products to show their social power relative to others or to convey their identity (Roberts & Jones, 2001).

This study intends to adopt the perspective presented by Schindler & Holbrook (1993), which asserts that fashion encompasses all constituent parts of material objects, their application behaviors, and the visual elements that might lead to fashion cognizance (e.g., the appreciation and consumption of wine). Therefore, the term "fashion" can be applied to all aspects of personal appearance that provide both hedonic and utilitarian value to consumers. The connotation it refers to may be influenced by current political, economic, or social events (Evans et al., 2022). Individuals interested in and concerned about the latest trends in clothing style or specific consumer products (including wine) or maintaining a high level of awareness regarding fashion are termed fashion-conscious (Nam et al., 2007; Wells et al., 1971). This consciousness combines various dimensions of fashion, including the hedonic, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects (Bakewell et al., 2006).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

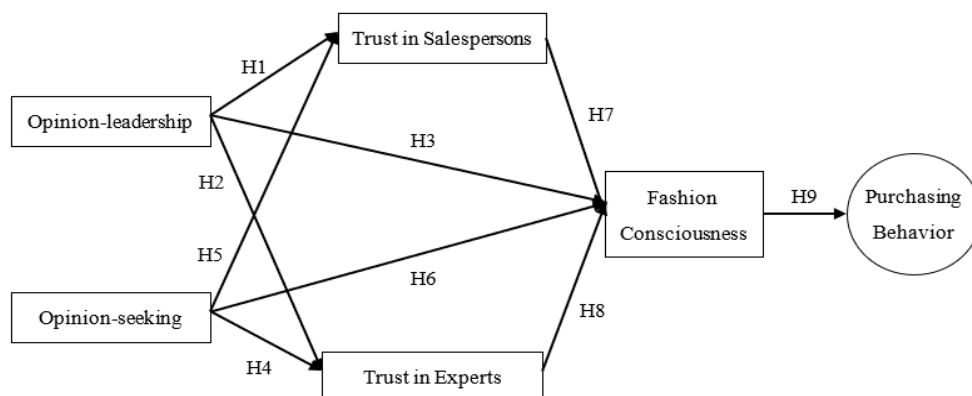


Figure 1. Research framework

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework established in this study grounded in the theoretical and existing research. Here is an explanation of each hypothesis.

H1: Consumers with opinion-leadership have a relationship to trust in salesperson.

Opinion leaders are those who, by their points of view and guidance, affect the purchase choices of others (Rogers and Cartano, 1962; Engel et al., 1990). According to this theory, opinion leaders are prone to trust salesmen since they are considered as educated and can offer insightful advice that they could apply to guide others, therefore preserving their power.



H2: Consumers with opinion-leadership have a relationship to trust in experts.

Professionals are supposed to be trusted by opinion leaders, who have tremendous impact over the decisions of others, due of their authoritative knowledge and reputation in specialized fields. Expert trust gives opinion leaders proper guidance and keeps them current (Lockshin et al., 2001; Gerlach & Li, 2022).

H3: Consumers with opinion-leadership have a relationship to fashion consciousness.

Primarily trendsetters who keep current with the newest styles and fashions, opinion leaders are (Wan et al., 2001; Zhang & Kim, 2013; Rezaei, 2015; Sebald & Jacob, 2020; Evans et al., 2022). According to this theory, being an opinion leader and having a strong degree of fashion consciousness go hand in hand since keeping stylish helps people keep their influence and status (Bakewell et al., 2006; Gutman & Mills, 1982).

H4: Consumers with opinion-seeking have a relationship to trust in experts.

Opinion seekers actively look for advice and information before making purchasing decisions (Flynn et al., 1996; Riviezzo et al., 2011). This hypothesis suggests that these consumers are likely to trust experts because experts provide reliable and credible information that helps reduce uncertainty and perceived risks associated with their purchases (Aqueveque, 2006; Bruwer and Thach, 2013).

H5: Consumers with opinion-seeking have a relationship to trust in salesperson.

Salespeople may provide tailored advise and insights that enable these customers to make wise judgments, hence opinion seekers also trust them. Opinion seekers, who depend on such contacts to negotiate the wide spectrum of wine goods, depend on trust in salesmen (Duhan et al., 1997; Flynn et al., 1996). As Long-Yi & Chun-Shuo (2006) point out, salespeople are a great source of information for opinion seekers because of their capacity to provide insights into the technical and aesthetic features of wine.

H6: Consumers with opinion-seeking have a relationship to fashion consciousness.

Opinion seekers, who seek information and advice, are likely to be fashion-conscious because staying informed about the latest trends is essential for making confident and socially accepted purchasing decisions (Flynn et al., 1996; Riviezzo et al., 2011; Lertwannawit & Mandhachitara, 2012; Zhang & Kim, 2013).

H7: Consumers who trust salespeople increase their fashion awareness.

The theory is that people who trust salesmen become more conscious of their clothes. Reliable salespeople can provide relevant and modern fashion advice, therefore increasing the consumer's awareness of fashion trends (Bakewell et al., 2006; Xu et al., 2016).

H8: Consumers who trust in experts increase their fashion awareness.

Like H7, this theory suggests that trust in experts drives more fashion consciousness. Professional expertise and ideas help customers to stay current on the most recent fashion trends (Gong et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2023). By means of their specialist knowledge, experts provide insights that enable customers to remain updated about the most recent fashion trends, therefore increasing their fashion awareness (Gerlach & Li, 2022; Grohmann et al., 2018).

H9: Consumers' fashion consciousness positively affects purchasing behavior.

Fashion consciousness, marked by a strong interest in appearance and trends (Sebald & Jacob, 2020; Evans et al., 2022), influences buying behavior since buyers give trendy and attractive products top priority. This theory consistent with the results of Bakewell et al. (2006) and Zaman et al. (2019).

Questionnaire

Integrating relevant literature proposed by various scholars, this study focuses on the primary constructs of fashion consciousness, perceived trust (including trust in salespersons and experts), and consumer behavior (opinion leadership and opinion-seeking). It employs a Likert seven-point scale as the primary measurement tool. Referring to the studies conducted by various scholars, this research has made appropriate modifications to their research items to derive questions that align with the products studied in this research.

Sampling Design

This study mostly used Taiwanese customers as the subjects. To enable affordable data collecting, we developed an online questionnaire using Google Forms and emailed participants via social media and email channels. Moreover, the online survey platform included tools to identify and minimize problems with incomplete questionnaire answers, so improving the completeness and efficiency of obtained answers. For sample collecting, we therefore chose online questionnaires. Data collecting for this project ran August 14, 2023 until August 21, 2024. Over this time, 506 surveys in all were gathered. Ten invalid answers were dropped from the overall count of valid questions because of inconsistent completion; the tally came out to be 498. About legitimate questionnaires, the response percentage came out at 98.41%.



Data Analysis Methods

The study used SmartPLS v. 4.0 for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis to validate the proposed model following the procedures Anderson and Anderson & Gerbing (1988) and Hair et al. (2013). PLS-SEM was chosen for its exploratory and theoretical-building characteristics, the intricacy of the structural model comprising mediation analysis with six components, and the computing capacities and user-friendliness coupled with the SmartPLS application. After that, path coefficient computation and validation of the structural model will follow reliability and validity investigations. The structural model will have last explanatory power.

For validity and reliability analysis, we followed instructions suggested by Hair et al. (2016). For each item, standardized factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's α , and average variance extracted (AVE) helped to assess convergent validity. Moreover, discriminant validity was evaluated applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion to ensure that measurement constructions are unique depending on their interrelatedness; with the square root of the AVE for every construct exceeding its correlations with any other construct, as advised by Fornell & Larcker (1981).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Sample Data

The study gathered 498 legitimate samples overall. The study findings indicated a 54:46 male-to---female ratio. The main age group among the respondents was 45 to 54 years (37.6%), whereas their ages were generally between 35 and 54 years (63.7%). Respondent with a master's degree or more made 28.7%; those with a university or college degree made 51.8%. Household yearly income fell largely between 510,000 and 2,000,000 NTD; the most typically observed range was 510,000 to 1,000,000 NTD. Regarding their experience with wine consumption, most answers were "sometimes" (46.6%), then "few" (31.5%). These data reveal that the respondents' basic backgrounds have a normal distribution.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

In this study, the PLS-SEM method is employed to test the model. Convergent validity is assessed for construct reliability, and discriminant validity is examined for construct validity (Ho et al., 2022). These studies produce the following discussion of their findings:

1) Reliability Analysis

Table 1 shows that every item in the last batch of measurement items has a loading value of 0.8 or above, therefore demonstrating suitable internal consistency. Table 1 of this paper indicates that with average variance extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.732 to 0.860, the constructs show composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's α values above the advised threshold of 0.7. These findings indicate reasonable degrees of convergent validity in the constructions of the measuring model.

Table 1. Convergent Validity of Constructs

Constructs	items	Loadings/ Weights	t-value	p-value	CR	AVE	Cronbach α	rho_A
Opinion-leadership (OL)	OL1	0.884	57.253	0.000	0.942	0.845	0.908	0.911
	OL2	0.936	111.808	0.000				
	OL3	0.937	108.782	0.000				
Opinion-seeking (OS)	OS1	0.915	75.976	0.000	0.94	0.84	0.905	0.908
	OS2	0.935	120.063	0.000				
	OS3	0.899	67.562	0.000				
Trust in Experts (TE)	TE1	0.882	57.049	0.000	0.933	0.823	0.892	0.892
	TE2	0.939	118.407	0.000				
	TE3	0.899	68.656	0.000				
Trust in Salespersons (TS)	TS1	0.944	141.876	0.000	0.948	0.86	0.918	0.92
	TS2	0.920	67.234	0.000				
	TS3	0.917	82.505	0.000				
Fashion Consciousness (FC)	FC1	0.889	84.876	0.000	0.916	0.732	0.878	0.885
	FC2	0.822	47.891	0.000				
	FC3	0.894	75.836	0.000				



	FC4	0.814	33.091	0.000				
Purchasing Behavior (PB)	Freq	0.314	3.412	0.001	-	-	-	1
	Price_bottle	0.427	2.866	0.004				
	Quantity	0.389	2.232	0.026				

Note: Purchasing Behavior (PB) is a formative construct

2) Validity Analysis

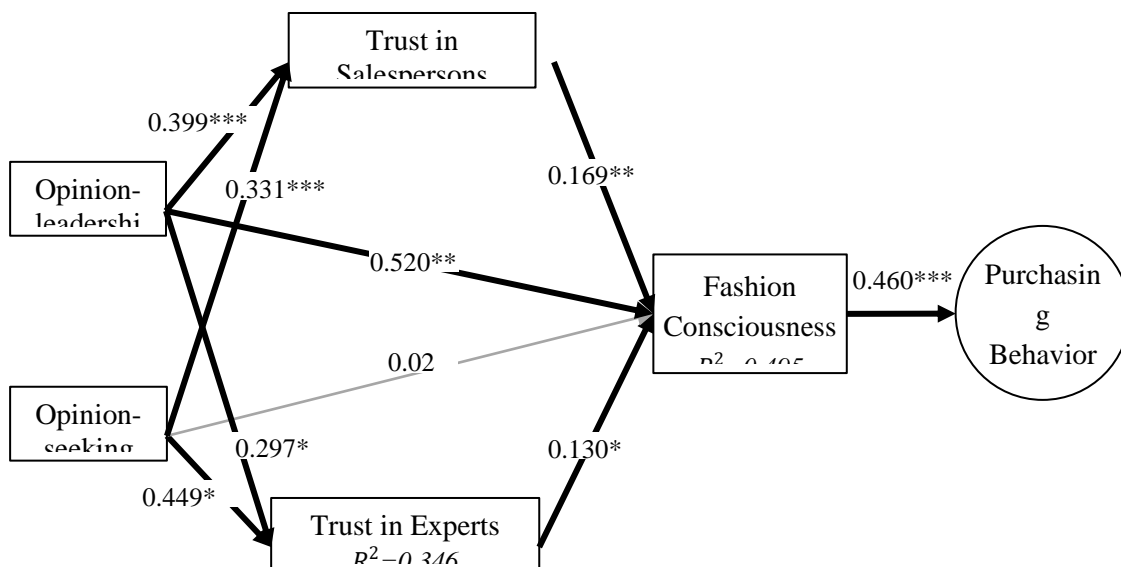
To establish discriminant validity, Fornell & Larcker (1981) suggest that each construct's square of the AVE should be greater than the inter-construct correlations with any other construct. As indicated in Table 2, the square of the AVE for each construct (ranging from 0.856 to 0.927) is greater than the interconstruct correlations with any other construct. Consequently, the constructs in this study exhibit good discriminant validity.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Analysis

	FC	OL	OS	TE	TS
FC	0.856				
OL	0.655	0.919			
OS	0.271	0.210	0.916		
TE	0.466	0.391	0.511	0.907	
TS	0.515	0.469	0.415	0.712	0.927

Notes: FC=Fashion Consciousness; TS=Trust in Salespersons; TE=Trust in Experts; OL=Opinion-Leadership; OS=Opinion-Seeking

Model Analysis



Notes : $p < 0.05^*$, $p < 0.01^{**}$,

Figure 2. Results of the Research Model

Opinion-leadership, trust, and fashion consciousness

According to the model analysis results, consumers inclined toward opinion leadership also showed trust in sales personnel ($\beta=0.399$, $p < 0.001$) and professional reviews ($\beta=0.297$, $p < 0.001$). These findings support hypotheses H1 and H2 of this



study. This finding is consistent with the research showing opinion leaders, because of their influential character, are likely to rely much on informed sources to keep their leadership status (Rogers and Cartano; 1962; Flynn et al., 1996).

Moreover, consumers who lead opinion-leading activities were much correlated with fashion consciousness ($\beta=0.520$, $p=0.001$), implying that people who tend to influence others have fashion consciousness. This outcome agrees with studies by Wan et al. (2001) and Zhang & Kim (2013), so supporting hypothesis H3. These results complement earlier studies showing that opinion leaders greatly affect customer behavior (Vuuren et al., 2007b). Furthermore, the strong correlation between opinion leadership and trust in salespeople and experts supports results from Riviezzo et al. (2011) that opinion leaders frequently use their influence to influence others' purchase decisions, so depending mostly on trustworthy sources for technical knowledge (Duhan et al., 1997).

Opinion-seeking, trust, and fashion consciousness

Reversing hypothesis H6, the model analysis results show no link between fashion consciousness ($\beta=0.025$) and opinion-seeking behavior. Opinion-seeking consumers, on the other hand, supported hypotheses H4 and H5 by displaying great trust in salespeople and experts. The opposite of opinion-leading consumers, opinion-seeking consumers might trust experts ($\beta=0.499$, $p < 0.001$) more than sales personnel ($\beta=0.331$,).

This result is in line with the theory that opinion seekers often consult several sources before making a decision and might depend more on professional opinions for technical elements (Aqueveque, 2006; Bruwer and Thach, 2013). The absence of link between opinion-seeking and fashion consciousness could imply that although these customers search for opinions, they do not always transfer this conduct into fashion-conscious buying patterns.

Mediation effects of trust and fashion consciousness

Table 3 shows results of additional investigation of the mediation effects of fashion consciousness and trust. Fashion awareness indicates that opinion leaders with high fashion consciousness are more proactive in their purchase, therefore confirming the mediating role hypothesis (H7, H8). It moderates the association between opinion leadership and purchasing behavior ($\beta=0.239$, $p < 0.001$). Trust in salespeople greatly moderates the link between opinion leadership and fashion consciousness, which results in proactive buying behavior ($\beta=0.031$, $p < 0.01$), therefore supporting earlier studies on the influence of salesperson trust on consumer behavior (L. Lockshin et al., 2006).

While opinion leaders value expert advice, it does not directly translate to higher purchasing activity; trust in experts has a small mediation effect ($\beta=0.038$, $p < 0.01$) on fashion consciousness and no significant influence on purchasing behavior ($\beta=0.018$, $p > 0.05$). As Dodd et al. (2005) stress, this emphasizes the complex function of confidence in several sources.

Opinion-seeking consumers create fashion consciousness by trust in salespersons ($\beta=0.056$, $p < 0.05$) and experts ($\beta=0.058$, $p < 0.05$), therefore enabling more proactive buying behavior ($\beta=0.026$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that, in line with Ganesan's, (1994) and Hart & Saunders's (1997) results on trust's influence on consumer relationships, trust is a fundamental component in forming fashion consciousness and consequent buying behavior

Table 3. Indirect and mediating effects.

	Total effects		Total indirect effects		Indirect effects			Bootstrap 95% CI	
	Coefficient	T statistics	Coefficient	T statistics		Coefficient	T statistics	Percentile	Bias corrected
OL → PB	0.287	10.052**	0.287	10.052***					
					OL→FC→PB	0.239	8.798***	[0.189 : 0.296]	[0.183 : 0.289]
					OL→TS→FC→PB	0.031	2.462*	[0.008 : 0.057]	[0.008 : 0.058]
					OL→TE→FC→PB	0.018	1.920	[0.001 : 0.037]	[0.001 : 0.037]
OL → FC	0.626	20.257**	0.106	4.720***					
					OL→TS	0.068	2.557*	[0.017 : 0.119]	[0.019 : 0.120]



					→FC			0.122]	0.124]
					OL→TE →FC	0.038	1.973*	[0.002 0.078]	:[0.002 : 0.078]
OS → PB	0.064	3.684***	0.064	3.684***					
					OS→TS →FC→P B	0.026	2.413*	[0.006 0.049]	:[0.007 : 0.049]
					OS→TE →FC→P B	0.027	1.947	[0.001 0.055]	:[0.001 : 0.055]
					OS→FC →PB	0.012	0.599	[-0.028 0.049]	:[-0.027 : 0.050]
OS → FC	0.140	3.804***	0.114	4.821***				[0.066 0.211]	:[0.068 : 0.213]
					OS→TS →FC	0.056	2.490*	[0.014 0.103]	:[0.017 : 0.106]
					OS→TE →FC	0.058	1.988*	[0.003 0.118]	:[0.003 : 0.118]

Notes: FC=Fashion Consciousness; PB=Purchasing Behavior; TS=Trust in Salespersons; TE=Trust in Experts; OL=Opinion-Leadership; OS=Opinion-Seeking

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

Targeted at Taiwanese consumers, this study provides important new perspectives on the complex interaction of consumer fashion consciousness, product knowledge, trust in information sources, and purchase behavior in the wine industry. By means of an analysis of the relationships among opinion leadership, opinion-seeking activities, and trust in both salespeople and experts, the study underlines the complex character of consumer decision-making processes in the context of wine purchases.

The results show that those who show propensity toward opinion leadership usually have great faith in expert reviews and salespeople, which in turn relates with a greater fashion consciousness. This shows how important opinion leaders are in forming consumer impressions and decisions as well as in generating market trends. Driven by their faith in salespeople and experts, fashion consciousness's evident mediation effect on the relationship between opinion leaders and buy behavior demonstrates that fashion-conscious people are more inclined to participate in proactive buying.

Moreover, the study shows that instead of salespeople, opinion-seeking activity is mostly related with trust in experts. Though opinion seekers show a strong dependence on professional advice, this does not directly transfer into more fashion savvy. Still, the mediation study shows that opinion seekers' fashion consciousness could be developed by trusting salespeople and professionals, therefore affecting their purchasing behavior. This difference between opinion leaders and searchers emphasizes the complex connections of several consumer kinds with information sources and purchase decisions.

At last, the studies underline the crucial part trust—both cognitive and emotional—plays in consumer behavior. Fashion awareness of consumers determines their buying behavior; it is much influenced by their faith in salespeople and professionals. This result follows the general consensus in trust theory that consumers' trust in information sources determines whether or not minimizing perceived risks and uncertainty related with wine purchases is possible.

Implication

The study provides perceptive study for those working in the wine business. Understanding the different activities of opinion leaders and opinion seekers allows businesses to change their marketing plans. Encouragement of the fashion side of wine consumption and the use of reliable salesmen will help opinion leaders to get more active. Professional reviews and confidence building based on expert opinions could be more beneficial for those who search viewpoints. On the other hand, it is more crucial to develop confidence by means of experienced salespeople and reputable consultants. Not only increases



fashion awareness but also influences purchase behavior dependent on confidence. Reliable sources enable customers to be educated about wine, so helping to close the information asymmetry in the wine market and so allowing consumers to make reasonable decisions and so improve their relationship with the product.

Furthermore with reference to academic research. This paper emphasizes the relationship between fashion consciousness with trust and opinion dynamics in customer behavior particularly in the wine sector. It emphasizes in next studies on consumer behavior the need of including cognitive and emotional aspects of trust.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There should be two limitations of this research to mention. First, the study focused simply on Taiwanese consumers without considering regional differences, therefore influencing wine fashion consciousness by means of various consuming patterns and attitudes. Investigating these geographical differences will help future studies to provide a whole knowledge.

Second, the study excluded other possible sources such family and friend input as it concentrated exclusively on salespeople and professional reviews as sources of product knowledge. It also lacked distinction between the many types of professional reviews—online material, journals, publications, newspapers, etc.). Future research on these components could help to clarify trust impressions. Moreover, the research on consumption patterns focused just on wine purchase frequency, expenditure, and volume, thereby neglecting the location of purchases. Future research should investigate if consumers with different patterns demonstrate differences in their purchase locations, therefore affecting their expenditure pattern.

7. AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

First author proposed the basic concept of the research, organized the approach, and assessed the outcomes. Acting as a foundation for further advanced research, the second author assisted with data collecting, data analysis, and initial manuscript draft preparation. To ensure the force and clarity of the presented arguments, the third author closely reviewed and corrected the work. Oversaw the entire process; the fourth author assured technical direction and guarantees of adequate completion of the research process.

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