



Ethicality as a trend in the future wine market

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Abstract

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Predicting future trends can be valuable for companies working in the wine industry. To understand the future trends, futurists often conduct trend analysis' that contemplate changing consumer behaviour through megatrends and weak signals. Megatrends are trends that are slow to form and influence on a global scale, where weak signals refer to issues that are potentially emerging that could have significance in the future.

In the wine industry many organizations conduct trend reports to keep up with the current demand and to enhance their position in the market. When predicting trends, the scholars own background and motives influence the results deducted from the given signals. Understanding the changes in present is the base when creating different scenarios that could take place in the future.

The purpose of this thesis was to identify the most important future trends taking place in the Finnish wine market. The research was designed to be beneficial for the companies involved in the wine trade. The results of this thesis can be helpful in preparedness for the future, creating marketing strategies, and to conduct more efficient trend analyses.

The theoretical framework focuses on defining the term trend more specifically and clarify the roles people have in the creation and spread of trends and about the ways trends can be predicted. Megatrends that have the most impact on the future wine market are researched and the role of weak signals in trend analyses. Study of consumer behaviour reveals what kind of factors influence consumer decision making and how consumers choose their wines.

Ethicality in wine trade was examined more closely. This included ethicality in the wine trade, ecologically produced wines, health trends impacting consumer behaviour and the rising demand for no-and low alcohol products.

Qualitative research was conducted by semi-structured interview for two experts from the Finnish wine market. Representing Alko and wine importing company called Viinitie. Due to the subjective nature of trend research the emphasis of the thesis was on the literature research.

The research results indicated that the future consumers will increasingly favour ethically and ecologically produced wines. A rising segment among wines will be the no- and low alcohol (NoLo) products. These findings we're in line with Alko's latest trend report.

Keywords

Wine, trends, megatrends, weak signals, ethicality, health

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1 Introduction

Trends are something people often take for granted, but still have different definitions for. When predicting the future, current trends are often used as a tool to support the visions that we might have about it. Defining trends and taking a closer look on how they are generated reveals us the mechanics of trends, as well as the segments people usually represent in the spread of trends. The distinction between a trend and a fad is mainly the time span of their impact. Trends are seen as evolving over time, while building popularity, as fads are defined as a style, activity, or interest that is very popular for a short period of time (Cambridge dictionary 2022). They both have an important role in the wine market of Finland. Like their general definition, trends impact sales for longer review periods, as fads may impact sales more steeply, but for a shorter period of time.

When immersing oneself into literature it becomes clear that predicting trends is not about foreseeing the future, and even the best predictions are only indicative. However, there are methods that can be helpful in creating better organizational strategies for the future (Hiltunen 2016, 215). This thesis has been written from the point of view of marketing, so that it could assist Finnish wine marketers in their preparedness for the future. When reviewing the latest literature, it reveals insights that can be used as an advantage when creating a wine marketing strategy. The study of consumer behaviour from a marketing perspective allows us to better understand what kind of reasoning consumers use when purchasing products. To supplement general consumer behaviour patterns the study of consumer behaviour is researched more specifically from a wine marketing perspective. The research of wine consumer typology reveals the factors impacting consumer decision making when choosing wines.

To understand the future, we must first understand the changes in motion that are impacting the future. Major changes on the global level referred to as megatrends are shaping the present and future into a direction that is widely acknowledged by scientific communities. Study of megatrends should be a premise when creating trend analysis', Furthermore, there are underlying changes in the environment referred to as weak signals. Futurists detect these signals to complement trend analyses and to create alternate scenarios that could take place in the future. When creating future trend predictions, it becomes clear that there can be widely alternating scenarios of the future that are also closely linked to the scholars' own motives and worldview. There is a section in this thesis dedicated to the prediction of trends to further illuminate the methods and factors associated with the process.

The technological development over the last century has changed the world profoundly. People spend great deals of time online and news travel in an instant. This has made us more aware of the world around us and to reflect our own position in the world. The growing awareness has led to more enlightened consumers. Megatrends like climate change have changed the decision making on governmental level and impacted the mindset of average consumers. Nowadays, many are taking actions to reduce the negative impacts they have on the environment. Ethicality and transparency in actions is becoming a requirement, as people want to deal with responsible companies. Nowadays, consuming can also be about taking a stand, as ethical and green labels are designed to reduce negative impacts on social and environmental issues through consumer choice. The shifting attitudes have fundamental impacts on different industries. Wine industry is no exception. From the perspective of wine marketing changing consumer behaviour and change in public opinions pose a challenge. The growing demand for ethically and sustainably produced products is shaping the industry from wine producers to wine consumers. However, wines produced using ecological methods are still dividing opinions among consumers and experts. The study of green consumer behaviour is an intriguing and a complex field that is examined closely in this thesis.

Because of the growing awareness, people have started to reconsider their lifestyle choices. According to the statistics Finnish people live substantially healthier lives than 20 years ago (Hiltunen 2016, 139.) The alcohol consumption has been decreasing since 2007. Favouring healthier lifestyles has been a pivotal part in the rise of low-alcohol- and alcohol-free products. In the year 2021 the Finnish alcohol distribution monopoly (for alcoholic beverages over 5,5 percentage alcohol content) Alko announced that this was the first year when alcohol-free products surpassed ciders in overall sales. The number of alcohol-free products has quadrupled since 2011 in Alko's selection (Alko 2022). The wine producing technology for low-alcohol and alcohol-free products has taken giant leaps in the past years, which has enabled the production of better quality wines. The rise of alcohol-free products has been acknowledged in Alko's trend analyses and it is highly likely that this trend will build momentum in the future instead ending up as a fad. The wine marketers and producers should acknowledge the consumers' need for healthier wines as wine consumers tend to adopt healthy lifestyles easily (Higgins & Lanos 2015.)

To complement the literature review I did qualitative research to deepen my knowledge about the subject. Two key players from the Finnish wine market field were selected to be interviewed in a semi-structured thematic interview. The themes raised in the interviews were in line with the research about the future trends. It seems that ecological and ethical aspects maintain and strengthen their importance in future consumers' decision making.

The future cannot be foreseen but some predictions can be made about it. What are the most likely consumer trends that affect the future of the wine market in Finland? This question is of the essence of this thesis.

1.1 Benefits

This thesis was created to benefit companies in the wine trade industry in Finland. Companies that are heading towards the future should be concerned about trends as this might better their position in the future market. As trends are a vague term clarifying the most common definitions for the word and focusing on the creation and spreading of trends reveals insights and the fundamentals of trends. To be better prepared for the future it is important to have knowledge about how consumers are known to behave and how they behave in purchase situations. Even though, it is becoming increasingly challenging to segment consumers as groups there are fundamental psychological factors affecting consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour is explained in general basis and more specifically based on the factors that play importance when selecting wines. This knowledge could help wine importers to choose the right kind of products.

Other industries might also benefit from the findings presented in the thesis. Trends are researched and followed closely by numerous industries; this thesis might clarify some issues about trends and help in creating more efficient trend analyses. Green consumer behaviour is increasing popularity also outside wine markets.

1.2 Delimitations

Wine types and categories are not presented in this thesis. This thesis does not explain the fundamentals of wine making, wine laws, or focus on wine characteristics or flavour profiles. Although, the qualitative interview provides some history about the flavour profile preferences of Finnish consumers. The wine market overview was outside the scope of this thesis. This includes further details about the producing and consuming countries, how wine markets work in general or legislation issues. Past wine trends are not researched in this thesis, some current trends are researched, if they are connected to the future trends. Online wine sales are also excluded from future trends, even though this will probably impact Finnish wine market substantially. Alko's position is not reviewed thoroughly, as the role of Alko might be different in the far future. These topics will be briefly discussed in the discussion section. The focus was on the trends that can be best justified by existing literature research and expert interviews.

2 Defining trends

When looking at the word trend in the dictionary, the word is described as the general direction of change: way of behaving, proceeding that is developing and becoming more common (MerriamWebster 2022). The term trend can be associated broadly to many things like fashion, economics, data analytics, digital technology and more. Trends are what is happening at a given time and are broadly connected to popularity. However, at the same time they are a consequence of previous events. The main reason that trends are used as a tool for future studies is that the trend tendencies might remain the same in the future (Hiltunen 2017, 57.)

The term trend is frequently used in media and by experts from various fields. The meaning of the word is often taken for granted and used for policy arguments based on the presumption of the word. We might hear decision makers using expressions like: “if current trends continue” or “long term trend indicates”. It appears that these frequently used phrases seem to give technical precision that lends professional import into the discussion, but that precision remains ambiguous. It leaves aside the question of what is really meant by the word “trend”, because the scientific meaning is seldom given. Often terms like current, emergent, or long term are cited to lend precision to the concept, thereby creating a misleading appearance of the scientific origin of their usage. Misleading, because it is not possible to have intelligibility in these statements without making the component terms themselves unambiguous: What is meant by a trend? How are the terms ‘current’ and ‘newly emerged’ interpreted in the long term? Is it possible to discuss and measure with clarity any quantity that is indeterminate? (Phillips 2010, 2.)

To understand the word trend and what it means it is necessary to know about the history of the word. In the twentieth century the word was used mainly among statisticians and economists. The original meaning of trend in old English was “to turn”. In statistics, trend means the direction of a curve. It is often used when the direction of the curve is not that obvious. When there is a slight change in the curve, a statistician might talk about a positive or a negative trend, instead of referring to the curve going up or down (Vejlgaard 2008, 6.) Trends or the direction of change can be either ascending or descending or possibly in stasis throughout the review period (Hiltunen 2017, 59.) Statisticians rely on factual data to compare the curves based on recorded statistics. For a historian these statistics have significance. However, for a trend sociologist or someone from the world of fashion these are not trends at all. In the fashion industry trend is a prediction of something that is going to happen and be accepted by an average person. The fashion industry

started to use the word in the last third of the twentieth century. And it is mainly because of the fashion industry that the interest in trends became part of our everyday life (Vejlgaard 2008, 7.)

It is evident that trend means different things to different people. First magazines that used the word trend were fashion magazines. The word referred to new products and designs. This is still the way how many people perceive the word trend. We might see magazine headlines like: "New furniture trends". In this case, trend means product news. A person working in design can use the word to describe new car collections by the manufacturers. This refers to product development, as this is something that is going on in the car industry at the moment. Finally, a trend sociologist will talk about a trend moving from the trendsetters to the mainstream. In this case, trend refers to a process of change (Vejlgaard 2008, 8.) However, these three uses of the word are interconnected. You can say that a trend is a process of change that (sometimes) comes about because of product development that (sometimes) result in new products. How you define it is dependent on this portion of flow you are focusing on (Vejlgaard 2008, 8.)

Journalists focus on the first definition, product news since they write about news. For example, the Times Magazine has featured "trends" column, focusing on the latest in fashion, technology, travel and cocktails. This is how the majority of the consumers understand the usage of the word. The second definition referring to product development is being used by many industries, from fashion to technology. In this case the word refers to product development that is happening in the trend setting companies. They create something that is new and set inspiration to other companies that try to copy these products. The third definition points to a process of change that is initiated by trendsetters and moves into the mainstream; ultimately this change may even fall in popularity. This usage indicates that if something is a trend, it is in a very early process, so it focuses on the very first signs of change. (Vejlgaard 2008, 9.)

In the case of wine industry, the meaning of a trend is a mixture of the definitions mentioned earlier. For instance, wines from certain region may increase their sales in the short term because of a TV-show or a movie. This is the trend sociologist's way of using the word, as it is moving from a trendsetter into the mainstream. One of the latest trends in the industry has been natural wines that are produced in traditional ways without the use of pesticides or additives, using wild yeasts and left unclarified. This refers to the example from the car industry as product development that is happening at the moment.

People often tend to think that trends are mysterious and happening “out of the blue”, although this is a common misconception, as they only might appear so. Since trends are a social process, it means they are created by humans (Vejlgaard 2008, 10). Trends are something that evolve slowly over time and build constantly instead of coming and going. This is what separates them from fads that are defined as a style, activity, or interest that is very popular for a short period of time (Cambridge dictionary 2022). Many trends can lead to a long-term change as their popularity builds over time. Trends have the potential to influence our culture more broadly, beyond an individual industry. One way of looking at it is that trends can help in solving problems. Over time they begin to gain power because they are not tied to a specific moment in time, but rather the progression of time.

The word trend can be described as the new way of doing things, an innovation in business models and something that spread from a small group into a larger one. This way of thinking is called the diffusion of innovation. It originated in Iowa in the 1930's where a group of scientists (Ruan & Gross 1943) began to explore how different ideas spread in the agricultural industry. They noticed that diffusion of innovation amongst a community is phased. When Joe Bohlen and George Beal researched the same subject, they summed up the mental process of the adopters in the following stages: **Consciousness**: When a person receives information about an innovation but lacks the specific details. **Interest**: A person gets interested in the innovation and wants to learn more about it. **Evaluation**: If the person thinks that the innovation could work, they will try it. At this phase the experiment is only small-scale. **Adoption**: A person adopts the innovation, is pleased with it and continues the use of it. Professor Everett Rogers Popularized the diffusion theory of innovation in 1962. The basic idea was to divide adopters into segments, based on how quickly they adopted the innovation (Hiltunen 2017, 27-29).

New innovations are initiated by innovators. Innovators are the ones who create products or modes of operation. Roughly speaking they present 2,5 percent of the adapters. Similarities between innovators are often the willingness to try new things and take risks, even if the innovation doesn't kick off as anticipated. Based on this theory the new innovators might not be the most respected people within the community but are in key position in bringing new innovations to the community. (Rogers, E. 2010.)

Henrik Vejgaard is a trend researcher who has addressed innovations and the spreading of trends. According to him the role of the innovators is quite minute when it comes to the acceptance of the trends in the society. When bringing a trend into a market the biggest weight is on the trend setters, who decide what trend they will adapt. Trend setters are often seen as unique individuals

who have a lot of influence and who orient positively towards change and who have followers amongst the masses (Vejlgaard 2008, 9). This group of people is referred to as the early adopters who present about 13,5 percentage of the innovation adopters. These people are often respected people within their society and have built a vast network (Hiltunen 2016, 29.) Nowadays, there are social media celebrities who promote their innovations on platforms like Instagram, Facebook or TikTok. This has been noticed by companies from many industries and these “influencers” are the new norm of marketing products. However, it is noteworthy that TikTok, Facebook and Instagram strictly prohibit any type of alcohol advertising on its platform.

The next group of people in this theory is called the early majority. They are the ones who adopt trends slightly earlier than the majority. What connects these people is the decision-making process, which is a bit longer compared to the innovators and early adopters. They also have the need to see the trend being utilized before adopting it. Even though they are open to new things, it is important for them that the innovations are approved in the society. Nevertheless, they are a valuable link in the chain before the trend to spreads into society (Hiltunen 2016, 29.)

The last category is called the late majority or the late mainstream. A defining character of these people is their scepticism towards innovations. The late majority is inclined towards traditions and reluctant towards any kind of change. They do not adopt new innovations until they feel pressured to do so. Usually, they adopt innovations after everyone else has adopted them. One of the great motivators to do so seems to be peer pressure (Hiltunen 2016, 30).

According to Rogers (2010) the factors that influence adoption of certain innovations are the following: **Relative benefit** determines whether the innovation is better than its predecessor. Relating to economic factors or customer satisfaction in general. **Compatibility**: If the innovation is compatible to the user’s existing values and practices, the adoption happens faster. **Complexity**: Is the innovation difficult to comprehend or use? **Experimentability** refers to the experimental nature of the innovation. Can it be tested before adopting? And finally, **perceptibility**: How do other people perceive the benefits of the innovation? If the relative benefit, compatibility, experimentality and perceptibility are experienced to be great and the complexity is perceived to be low, the innovation is usually adopted faster.

Trends have been researched substantially by the fashion industry. The theory of change indicates that certain groups of people are in key position in deciding whether trends start to spread to the masses. As fashion is a broad concept, in this research the word refers to styles, colours, and

customer trends. Three interesting theories about the spread of trends are called trickle-down, trickleacross and trickle up. These theories have been created during different time periods and are based on the idea on how fashion trends spread from the upper class of the society to lower class (trickle-down), from lower class to upper class (trickle-up), or within certain classes (trickle-across) from innovators and opinion leaders. As today's societies don't have such clear distinctions between classes, today's upper class can refer to movie stars and other celebrities. They are key people in promoting innovations in the 21st century (Eundeok, Fiore & Hyejeong, K 2014).

Spotting the origin of a trend can be tricky, as they boil down to social forces among which styles and tastes change (Envato 2019.) When these changes have been shared and accepted by a critical mass, they begin to take root firmly in the public psyche and may even return as a part of cyclical process.

2.1 How to predict trends?

A good baseline for future predictions is that understanding how the world changes in real time is more valuable than trying to guess what happens 20 years from now. The majority of the decisions we make in life happen in short term, even though we might describe them differently. When you decide to marry someone or change your career role, it all happens in short term per se. Long-term decisions start in the short term, so when you understand how the world is changing in real time, it is more valuable to your day-to-day career and life than trying to figure out what is going to happen in the far future (Bhargava 2019, 3).

When considering the amount of media we are exposed to on a daily basis it can be difficult to figure out how things are going to turn out in the future. Navigating through the information overload and finding cues and weak signals about future trends takes discipline and can be indicative at best (Bhargava, 2019, 10). The job of futurists is to anticipate the future, instead of foreseeing it. At its core is the visualisation of different images of the future, as well as considering their probabilities. Anticipation focuses on the question: what if? instead of when (Hiltunen 2016, 35).

So how can trends be predicted then? One way of trying to address the dilemma is to collect ideas of the current events and try to connect them to the future. Detecting trends this way is a combination of observations, curiosity, and insights of historical and current events. The downside of the approach is that it cannot be measured by data. However, the truth of scientific research, just like the

truth behind many equally complex areas of study, is that experiments aren't the only nor the most accurate way to gather data (Bhargava, R. 2019, 11). Trends are hardly ever a measurable phenomenon that can be fitted neatly on a spreadsheet. Spotting fractions of trends is possible, but they need to be pieced up to create a coherent image. It is important to keep an open mind and adopt ideas that might be contradictory to your personal views of the world. Going outside your usual sources of information and opening your mind to unconventional ways of thinking can help in making connections between the things you read. The premise for predicting trends consists of being able to be objective, having insight, having proof from multitude of sources and envisioning ways to apply the trends. When predicting trends, it is wise to consider them as describing something that people will do and believe as a result (Bhargava 2019, 14).

According to Hiltunen (2016, 215) when anticipating future trends one of the best tools is to create scenarios of the future. It is important that the scenarios are different from each other, for example so that some developments are exaggerated, and some are underestimated. It is useful to ponder how these scenarios would impact the operating environment of your business if the trend would become massive and significant, if the direction of development would remain the same, or if the trend would disappear without having a major impact on anything. This contemplation can possibly help to shape your organizational strategies so that product and service selection will meet the needs of consumers in the future.

Some important qualities that can be associated with trend anticipation are curiosity, being observant, being fickle, being thoughtful and being elegant. Curiosity is about asking why, immersing oneself into learning, improving one's knowledge by asking questions and investigating. Being observant is learning to notice even the smallest details in life and stories that others might fail to recognize as significant or fail to observe. Being fickle is the art of moving from one idea to another without becoming fixated or overanalysing each idea in the moment. Thoughtfulness is about developing a meaningful point of view, whilst considering alternative viewpoints without bias. Elegance is needed to piece the ideas together by describing disparate concepts and connecting them in a simple and understandable way (Bhargava 2019, 24-33).

When predicting trends another important distinction to be made is the subjectiveness of predictions between trend curators. As humans are individuals, the way we interpret and connect the signs of change vary from one curator to another. Also, the motive of the trend curator should be taken into consideration. If the motive is purely from a marketing related the outcome is different than what a futurist might deduct from the given signals. Futurists tend to contemplate the bigger picture, which in this case means the wider and longer-term changes in the environment. It is also

important to understand that the predictions are only indicative. What happened yesterday or today is not a guarantee of what will happen tomorrow. Therefore, one should stop and ask questions like: what could happen to this trend in the future? Are there weak signals (signs) that the course of this trend might change? (Hiltunen 2016, 10). However, there are inevitable changes that are on motion called megatrends. Reflecting on these trends it is a safe way to make predictions from both marketing and general futurism point of view.

2.2 Weak signals, complementing trend research

Weak signal refers to an indicator of an issue that is potentially emerging, that could have significance in the future. It is something that has happened but somehow seems strange, surprising, ridiculous, or scandalous to us (Hiltunen 2010, 365). Usually, they take us by surprise and challenge our current thinking. Weak signal can be divided into three parts: 1. The thing or the phenomena itself, 2. the signal – a news item, image service, object or event – that tell us about it, 3. the interpretation, meaning how the signal is received and how it is linked to the interpreters' own insight or worldview and how it is used (Hiltunen 2008, 247.) What makes the signal weak is the interpretation. The strangeness or surprisingness of the signal depends on the interpreter, and how it reflects to the perceiver's interpretive framework, their existing worldview and notion of the current situation (Dufva & Rowley 2022, 10.) Through weak signals we can identify our own assumptions of the present and the future. The key is to allow yourself to interpret weak signals from other perspectives. Our own values and ideals affect the way we interpret these signals. This helps us to understand why something that is familiar to us might be surprising and strange for others (Dufva, & Rowley 2022, 10).

Weak signals are generally used to expand the view of alternate futures, mostly as a part of a trend analysis. Mostly weak signals are used in a sense of preparedness for the future, but they can also refer to highlighting and challenging the assumptions we have about the future. Approaching weak signals from this angle allows us to expand the selection of alternate futures and makes it possible to find underlying directions of the future that we had not thought of before (Dufva, & Rowley 2022, 9).

When talking about weak signals three approaches stand out. According to Dufva & Rowley (2022) the first is focusing on identifying trends that are clear in the present and pondering the consequences they have on the future. This approach is based on the assumption that the future

can be predicted by the trends in the present and focusing on the changes behind these trends gives us valuable insight. This approach mainly refers to preparing for the future.

If we want to approach the future predictions on the conceptual basis that there is no clear picture of the future, and it is something humans build together, this leaves room for discussion of the desired alternate futures and how we should construct them. This approach can be referred to as the planning of futures

The third and least used approach is focusing on challenging the current assumptions that we have about the future. The main goal is to expand the knowledge we have at hand and challenge the outcomes that are predicted to happen. With more identified futures it is possible to limit the surprising situations and become more prepared for these scenarios. When we have many alternate futures reviewed side by side, they may reveal desirable futures that had not previously been considered (Dufva & Rowley 2022).

We often tend to think that the future is just a continuation of present, in which things are roughly the same, just faster, bigger and more efficient (Dufva, & Rowley 2022, 8). Mostly the future is viewed through the changes brought by technology, where other things remaining the same. This is mainly because it is harder to anticipate the future of societal changes or changes in values, mindsets and actions. However, now the futurists emphasize the recognition of surprises and the discontinuation of the status quo. Futurists talk about postnormal times when surprises and conflicts rule and the concept of normal is increasingly useless (Sardar & Sweeney 2016, 1-13).

When the COVID-19 pandemic started in spring the 2020 it demonstrated concretely how the future might be very different from what we had thought. As often in the case of crises, this pandemic raised a question: how well do we know how to prepare for and identify different surprises? Taking a narrow, cautious or short-term view of the future, it is easy to ignore phenomenon like pandemics or refugee crises. Often the impacts of crises are unexpected and more far-reaching than one might think. The unpredictable changes interlinked with big and small changes are leading into unforeseen consequences. As uncertainty grows, the future can seem more blurred than before (Dufva & Rowley 2022, 3). Is it possible to widen our perspective and identify emerging and existing phenomena and their impact on the future?

The effects described by megatrends are relatively well known. But to be better prepared to think about and influence the future, we must not only to broaden our thinking about the future, but also

to make knowledge about the future more tangible and its impact more immediate at the level of people's everyday lives (Sitra 2022) The future surprises us mostly because relating the future to today's actions and choices is difficult. It is more useful to reflect the predictions on the data available. Even though the impacts of major megatrends are already in motion they may still come as surprise for some of the population, whether it is ecological crises, power-related trends, or demographic development. However, the megatrends alone are not sufficient to provide us an image of the future, since being focused on megatrends alone leaves us blind for underlying surprises. Therefore, weak signals are used to complement trend analyses, not only not only because they bring unexpected scenarios to the mix, but they also challenge us to think differently and from multiple angles. Trends are often thought of in terms of continuities and pondering the "what next?" question, whereas weak signals focus on discontinuities and encouraging us to ask: "what if?" (Sitra 2022).

2.3 The inevitable Megatrends

The concept of megatrend was first introduced in 1982 by John Naisbitt. They are referred as major, long-term phenomena that change slowly, that are often in connection with each other and cannot be transformed in an instant (Naisbitt 1982). Megatrends are large directions of change that have vast impacts globally (Hiltunen 2016). They are inevitable changes happening in the world affecting environmental, economic, political, industrial, and everyday life of individuals around the globe. Their development is often believed to continue in the same direction (Dufva 2020). These changes do not come as surprise, but they are rather familiar things, changes that are already in motion and are highly likely to keep happening in the future. Examining megatrends takes into consideration the changes in trends in the present and different views of the future. Furthermore, it means assessing how the past and present actions are likely to impact the future we are heading towards to. Research of megatrends is an essential part of reflecting on different visions of the future. Besides examining a singular megatrend, it is essential to recognize the wider entirety the trends are connected to and how they reflect on the other trends (Dufva 2020).

When presenting megatrends, the natural starting point would be climate change, as many trends should be viewed in relation to it and specifically to the actions, we humans take to overcome this threat. Climate change means the shift in the conditions of the average weather around the world. The average temperatures have been rapidly increasing globally, mainly because of the fossil fuels humans burn and use as a source for energy, to power our homes, transportation, and factories

(BBC 2021). According to the literature and expert reviews climate change is the most influential megatrend affecting future wine market.

Climate change is potentially a threat to all forms of agriculture. It is especially true in the narrow climatic zones that are suitable for growing wine grapes since wine grapes are particularly prone to variations in climate and long-term climate change. The global warming over the last fifty years has appeared to have benefitted the quality of wine grown worldwide, but projections for the future warming on a global, continental and wine region scale may have both positive and negative impacts. On the bright side there might be new areas open for viticulture and increase those areas viability or it may have severe impacts on the ability to adequately grow grapes and to produce quality wines. However, it is likely that the climate change will have numerous potential impacts on the wine industry, like increasing the scarcity for water supplies, additional changes in grapevine phenological timing, affecting the balance composition and flavours of grapes and wine. Regionally the changes vary depending on the climate zone, but they may include changes in varieties grown, mandatory shifts in the regional wine styles and spatial changes in viable wine growing regions (Jones 2006, 1).

Because today's viticultural regions exist in narrow geographical zones it makes them particularly prone to any short or long-term climate changes compared to more broad acre crops. In general, the climate defines the overall wine styles that regions produce, while the variability in yearly climate affects vintage quality differences (Jones 2006, 2). Therefore, climatic changes, that influence both average and variable conditions have the potential to change wine styles. The observed temperature changes during the past century have affected agricultural production viability by impacting the growing season, winter hardening potential and frost occurrence. (Carter et al. 1991, 261-269; Menzel & Fabian, 1999, 397; Easterling et al. 2000, 417).

Climatic suitability is extremely important in wine viticulture. Some key climatic metrics that are followed by viticulturists are the degree-days (heat unit theory), which refers to grape growing commencing at a particular base temperature (Ibis Geography 1987), average temperature of the growing season and temperatures of warmest months. Average temperatures during the growing season usually define the climate-maturity potential of premium quality wine varieties that grow in cool, intermediate, warm and hot climates (Jones 2006, 1).

When comparing grapes, a great example would be between Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. Cabernet Sauvignon typically grows in regions spanning from intermediate and warm to hot

climates with growing seasons that range roughly from 16,5–19,5 degree Celsius. Pinot Noir on the other hand is usually grown in cooler climates spanning from cool to lower intermediate climates where growing seasons that range roughly from 14–16 degree Celsius (Jones 2006, 1-2). Even with the limitations cool to hot climate suitability places on quality wine production, it is evident that the impacts of climate change are not likely to affect all varieties and regions, but rather they affect the climatic thresholds whereby continued warming might push regions outside of the possibility to produce quality wine with existing varieties (Jones 2006, 1-2.)

The other vital aspect of climate change in this context is the change in customer behaviour. The demand for ecologically produced products is likely to grow in the future. Previous studies suggest that consumers are increasingly concerned about the effects of conventional agricultural food and wine production practices on the wellbeing of the environment and on human health. It seems that the consumers today believe strongly that sustainable wine is equal to or better than conventionally produced wines and are prepared to pay higher prices for such wines (Forbes, Cohen, Cullen, Wratten & Fountain 2009.) However, it is noteworthy that in questionnaires the consumers tend to place greater emphasis on the ecological qualities of the products than in the actual shopping situation when they must pay a higher price for such products. Therefore, the market research assessments are subjective and do not always reflect real life (Hiltunen 2016.)

The population is ageing and becoming more and more diverse. In the future it is increasingly difficult to view Finns as a one group. The structure of population is changing due to longer life expectancies and lower birth rates. In fact, this is a broader phenomenon in the Western society – young people are becoming a minority. This raises questions as the younger people cannot be solely responsible for incorporating new approaches, sustainability, and technologies into the way society is operating. The functioning capacity of an individual may become a more important factor than one's age. It remains to be seen how the future societies will look like when a growing part of the population is over sixty-five and reaching the matured age of one hundred years is not unheard of (Dufva, M. 2021). In 2020 there were more 65-year-olds than 5-year-olds for the first time in human history. According to predictions the amount of 65-year-olds will double compared to 5-year-olds by the year 2050 (Jeffrey 2016)

As the statistics about alcohol consumption according to customer segment or age are scarce or non-existent, it remains speculative how the ageing of the population will affect the wine market in Finland. However, this dilemma could be approached from a marketing point of view and by focusing on target market principles. For example, some research indicates that baby boomers

(born in 1946–1964) have the highest frequency of purchasing wine at price points from 15 to 20 euros, and the lowest sparkling wine consumption frequency (Carollo, Fong, Gabrieli, Mulatti & Esposito 2022, 416.), even though sparkling wine has been one of the fastest growing wine categories in the past years.

Technology has developed tremendously during the past century. The computing capacity of computers is constantly increasing, which enables quick technological development in the future (Hiltunen 2016, 52) As technology keeps developing it assimilates quickly into society and everyday life. More and more data is being accumulated and the significance of this data is becoming more important. Technology can provide new and more effective ways of producing energy and using resources (Dufva 2020.) The price of technology has decreased substantially. Devices that were once financially available for large companies only, are already being purchased by average consumers (Hiltunen, E. 2016, 52.)

Biotechnology could provide effective solutions to build vine resistance against external threats like diseases, pests and even climate change. Genome sequencing is a process in which DNA sequence of the genome is fully or partially determined (Wikipedia 2022). When applying genome sequencing into noble grape varieties it could assist in cloning grape varieties that are more resistant to future blights and better adapting to climate change (Dixon, Williams & Pretorius 2022.) Genome sequencing could help to solve challenges related to sluggish wine fermentation and possibly reshaping aroma profiles and alcohol content of wine according to consumer preferences (Dixon et al 2020). Similarly, the genome sequencing of three strains of the main wine spoilage yeast, *Brettanomyces bruxellensis*, revealed the gene responsible for the unpleasant “medicinal” off-flavour in wine, as well as the genes involved in sulphite tolerance (Curtin, C.D.. 2012-77). These findings about the genomics of *B. Bruxellensis* have the potential to help wineries with cleaner diagnostics and ways of battling outbreaks of sulphure-resistant contaminants in wineries (Curtin 2012, 78).

Another promising technology development that could help the wineries to save money and time is the artificial aging process. Aging is an important phase of winemaking that improves the quality of wine. High-quality wines are traditionally placed in oak barrels for aging, some wines are produced by aging on lees, biological aging, temperature aging method and so on. These methods are both time-consuming and expensive, which affects the wineries’ production capacity and economic benefits. Modern technology has the capacity to simulate oak aging, such as micro-oxygenation. Utilizing artificial aging technology could potentially shorten aging time, improve wine quality, and therefore reduce production cost. (Ma, Wang, Wang, Qinyu, & Qian 2022, 152-153). However,

there are factors like unclear reaction principles and unstable quality that restrict the commercialization of artificial aging technology (Ma et al 2022, 152-154). With further research and testing artificial aging could possibly benefit the wine industry in the future.

As the wine packaging has a significant environmental impact on the product, science might be able to come in aid with the development of new packaging materials. Nanoscience is a multidisciplinary field that gathers researchers from chemistry, biology, physics and engineering, creating interest across many industries (Sanguansri, & Augustin 2006.547-548) Nanotechnology focuses on the design, production, and application of structures through controlling their size and shape in nanoscale. Amongst the numerous applications of nanotechnology, nano-enabled strategies have stood up as a tool for smart and active food packaging systems. It is estimated that within the next decade approximately 20 per cent of food packages will be made using nanotechnology (Daneeshiya, Maleki, Amini, Behrouzian & Latifi 2020). Traditional food packaging systems are mainly designed to serve a purpose as a protection from physical impacts, but the smart food packaging systems can perform in more varied and complex roles, like improved permeability for important molecules (Mei & Wang 2020.) The need for lighter materials has become more apparent to create more environmentally responsible packaging. Nanotechnology could be helpful in tackling the issue.

2.4 Consumer behaviour in marketing

Consumer behaviour and marketing are closely linked. Generally marketing is a customer of consumer research, therefore studying consumer behaviour from a marketing point of view allows us to better understand the reasoning consumers have when they are purchasing certain products or services. In this case the evidence is gathered by combining methods of marketing research, psychology, and social sciences (East, Singh, Wright, & Vanhuele 2022, 4.) This approach is intended to provide an answer to questions like: Why and how people purchase and use goods and services? What kind of reaction do they have on prices, advertising, and store interior? What kind of mechanisms function to produce these responses? If the marketer can get answers to these types of questions, they are able to make better managerial decisions. (East et al 2022, 4-5). The approach taken to receive these findings culminates in a method called empirical generalization. These findings that have stood the test of repeated investigations (East et al 2022, 5).

Sometimes, marketers give more attention to the effect than the explanation for what is causing it. Identifying a specific group of people who might be heavy users of a product is valuable, but often the question why is not researched as rigorously. If the motive of consumers can be clarified it gives the marketers an opportunity to design better communications to capitalize on this and perhaps to predict other products these groups could be interested in. To do so the marketers need to accept new evidence whenever it becomes available. In some cases, this may include adjusting sensible practices because of new findings (East et al 2022, 5).

Traditionally consumer behaviour has been studied by creating models of the purchase decision process. Often such models were expressed by creating boxes and arrows representing all the connections and components behind the rational decision of a consumer. These models are often based on the idea that a consumer is supposedly absorbs product information into their memory and process it when a need emerges. After further evaluation and research on alternative products a purchase is made. After this the customer goes through post-purchase evaluation, being either satisfied or dissatisfied.

Nowadays, such models are not embraced with enthusiasm. Often the case is that they overstate the rationality of the consumer decision-making. Another problem is that they are hard to test in practice since it is difficult to find satisfactory measures for all the components (East et al 2022, 6). In some cases, consumers might discover all the alternatives, evaluate these and choose the product that seems best, but sometimes consumers choose first and justify their decision later – if they justify it at all. Therefore, rational decision models might suggest what people ought to do (normative), but they are not effective in describing what people actually do (descriptive).

Nowadays, textbooks give more attention to partial decision models, in which the rationality of the process is incomplete, while much of the repeated purchase occurs automatically as a habit. Usually, this sort of decision-making ranging from rational to automatic is referred to as the degree of involvement with the product. It is more likely that people are more involved and give more thought to their choices when they are buying something for the first time (East et al 2022, 6). To further illuminate the decision making, we can concentrate on the cognitive model of behaviour often referred to as the neoclassical approach. The cognitive model is focusing on the rationality behind the purchase. This type of decision assumes that consumers investigate and compare alternatives, before making a purchase. To capitalize on cognitive decision-making marketers might provide information that leads the consumer to reject alternatives.

Current belief is that consumers spend more time reflecting on the alternatives when they are making an important purchase for the first time. By doing so the primary intent is to avoid costs and secure benefits (East et al 2022, 7). However, this type of modelling has had some criticism, because for many purchases this type of decisioning doesn't occur frequently. The main findings based on the research (Beatty & Smith 1987, 83-95) indicate that people do not conduct much search before making a purchase. Even in the consumer durable market carefully thought decisions are quite rare, since most purchases are either buying a replacement for an existing product or making an additional purchase (East et al 2022, 7). Often the case is that the purchase is made first and justified later.

It is noteworthy that individual consumers don't often act on their own when making purchase decisions. Even when people think they are deciding on their own, their opinion is often swayed by groups and especially the word to mouth received previously from other people. Sometimes, people might base their decisions on the information they are exposed to by the mass media. Other factors that often effect the consumers' decisions are social pressure and fashion trends. Consumers are above all feeling creatures that often make decisions based on their feelings and non-rational needs, to get respect from their peers for example. Therefore, modern-day marketing focuses on invoking feelings and mental images, instead of appealing on customers' rational needs. In the wine world word to mouth and specialists' reviews play an important role in spreading of the trends.

Based on the latest research (Hiltunen 2020, 63-64) some of the most important factors affecting consumer behaviour (and decisions of purchase) are narrowing down the consumer as an individual, as a part of community, based on their operating environment and the prevailing market and commodities. As an individual the consumer is driven by personal and psychological factors. The relationship between an individual consumer and their community is viewed as greatly affecting the purchase decisions they make. People often place importance on the opinions and values of their inner circle.

Purchasing process is often initiated by external stimuli and the needs they raise. Consumers are imposed to stimuli and new needs by advertising, environment and from their communities. An individual consumer, community, markets, and the environment are interconnected by a network of different needs. All of these create pressure for change and demands for each other. Changes on the operating environment may create new needs for the markets. On top of this the consumers also have internal needs like hunger or getting respect (in general) (Hiltunen 2016, 23). Ultimately there are many factors that dictate the purchasing decisions of an individual consumer. It boils

down to personal preferences and group dynamics. Personal qualities like age, personality, life situation, gender, values, ideas etcetera all influence on the decisions they make.

2.5 How and why consumers choose wines?

Today consumers are facing an ever-expanding array of wines, all with characteristics designed to catch their attention, arouse their interest, and encourage to come back for more – from well-known brand names to attractive labelling. Choosing a wine has become more challenging for many consumers (Sutanonpaiboon, & Atkin 2012, 1). Yet purchase decisions are not usually made on a whim. Consumers assess wines based on obvious and less obvious attributes, depending on their general wine expertise. At the essence of an effective wine marketing strategy is understanding what consumers are looking for in wine and where a particular product is considered to be at the price-value fulcrum (Robertson, Caitlin & Botha 2018, 159).

Product knowledge is a very important factor in wine evaluation, yet it is often overlooked. This knowledge can be objective or subjective. Objective knowledge refers to what individuals actually know about wine in a practical sense, often associated with expertise and experience. Subjective refers to what people believe or think they know, often associated with hearsay, preconceived ideas, or bias. Even though, objective knowledge is considered more reliable, it is subjective knowledge that is increasingly influencing consumer behaviour in the wine industry. From a wine marketer's viewpoint objective and subjective knowledge are equally important. It boils down to the customer segment that is needs to be reached, as wineries tend to target average consumers differently from experts (Robertson et al 2018, 160-161). Although, according to studies the price of a wine seems to be the most dominant attribute influencing decision making, regardless of the level of expertise (Robertson et al 2018).

The intrinsic attributes of wine include colour and taste. The extrinsic attributes of wine include price, age (or vintage) brand or region of origin (Robertson et al 2018). These have different appeal to consumers' senses as extrinsic attributes are considered to have more complex meanings to consumers in contrast to intrinsic ones. However, these attributes cannot be separated, which makes the wine production and marketing inextricably linked. Extrinsic attributes are defined as something that is known or can be known before buying a bottle of wine and are disconnected from the actual characteristics of wine. The contemporary wine marketing literature is increasingly

focused on the wine's extrinsic attributes, leaving little room for research about product knowledge – both objective and subjective – influencing the consumer's attachments on extrinsic attributes (Robertson et al 2018).

Vigar-Ellis, Pitt and Caruna (2015, 679-685) developed “wine knowledge typology” in 2015 to provide a tangible guide to the different variations and degrees of wine knowledge amongst consumers. This typology divides wine consumers into four categories:

1. Neophyte is a consumer with low objective- and subjective knowledge. A consumer who doesn't know a lot about wine and also believes they don't. Dictionary defines neophytes as people who just started learning or doing something (Merriam-Webster.)
2. Snob is a consumer with low objective knowledge and high subjective knowledge. Consumers who overestimate their knowledge about wines.
3. Modest is a consumer with high objective knowledge and low subjective knowledge. A consumer who knows more about wine than they think.
4. Expert are consumers with high objective-and subjective knowledge. A consumer who believes they know a lot about wine and who actually do (Robertson et al 2018).

Even though, it may be oversimplifying to generalize wine consumers into four categories, literature about the subject supports some characteristics of different types of wine consumers. For example, the relative wine knowledge of an individual has a profound effect on the extent to which they are motivated to search for information about a particular wine. Also, many consumers tend to overestimate their knowledge about wines. Furthermore, experts place a great importance on the origin of wine, its official ranking and chateau name, while novice consumers often base their wine choices of price, age, and bottle design (Roberston, J. Ferreira, C & Botha, E. 2018 pp-162-163).

The interaction between price and quality is a key area of interest in the economic field and has been extensively researched (Roberston, J. Ferreira, C & Botha, E. 2018). When it comes to wine purchasing behaviour, the general unanimity is that price is strongly interrelated with the perceived quality. From a consumer's perspective the price of a wine bottle is not only about affordability but is also a signal of the brand value. Even though, consumers usually take several attributes into account when selecting wines, those with less brand knowledge tend to correlate price as a quality indicator. What makes wine brand such an effective marketing tool is that it evokes emotions and feelings in people, which can be exploited through an interesting story and the interaction of words and images. The essence of this story line is the region of origin, a characteristic that can make a brand stand out. Usually, the brand of a wine brand has more impressions among the more

knowledgeable consumers, while experts often consider other attributes in addition to the brand. Novices often rely on first impressions and are generally more leadable by a country or a region of origin, than the actual brand (Roberston, J. Ferreira, C & Botha, E. 2018).

When a blind tasting was conducted it revealed that price was not in correlation to consumer preferences. However, interestingly when provided with the denomination of origin the consumers were more willing to pay increased price for wines in all price points. Additionally, when wine production methods were mentioned, it affected the sensory profile of wine evaluation and increased consumers' liking expectations (Wiedman et al 2014; Vecchio et al 2019). Consumers also gave higher ratings for wines that were presented with additional information about the production process of the product, and when conventional wines were presented as organic (Wiedman et al 2014).

3 Ethicality in wine trade – more than a trend

Generally, ethics refers to a branch of philosophy with a core intent of seeking to understand and to determine how human actions can be estimated right or wrong. There are many theories dedicated on clarifying how ethical decisions are to be reached. Consequentialism for example, suggests that any action must be viewed in terms of the results of the action. We may approach businesses from an ethical viewpoint and judge them based on how they treat their employees or the environment, what kind of product they produce and how will it impact people, either financially or regarding their health. Virtue ethics assumes that there are certain character traits that can be deemed virtuous, and, in a specific role, make an organisation or person praiseworthy or otherwise (Richardson 2005, 440-441). For a business to appear ethical they should incorporate inherent morality in all their actions, rather than carrying out virtuous deeds to get temporary advantages. Transparency in actions and in written codes of practice need to be visible for all potential clients.

Nowadays, developing such codes of practice is a custom for many organizations. They have a primary intent to ensure that their members behave in an ethical manner. Emphasizing matters like honesty, mutual trust and disclosure of product risk can be the premise for codes of practice. In wine production, New Zealand and South Africa have developed bodies that regulate production methods (WOSA 2002). However, sometimes the case is that these ethical codes do not comply with the theory of virtue ethics, as they are not implemented by heart. Wiebe (2000) states that where regulation is enforced, organizations will seek ways of circumventing it. Laczniak and Murphy (1992, 47) appear to disagree, commenting that When punishment are enacted for violation of professional codes of conduct, unethical behaviour is less likely to occur. (Richardson 2005, 441.) Fear of consequences seems to be greater motivator for many companies, rather than the notion of virtue.

According to Laczniak and Murphy (1992, 47) ethical principles should be measured by factors like product safety, environmental friendliness, disposability and clarity of use on products put to sale. In this context a great example are? Nestle's baby-milk products in the Indian markets without usage instructions that are understood by potential clients. As the product itself and the methods of productions are admissible, the marketing methods may not be. All these factors are of great importance. Consumers have different viewpoints, and they need to be respected because this has an impact on the company's image.

When examining the themes found in papers, advertisements and the internet, there are multiple examples of the use of the word "ethical" associated with wine. Often it refers to stewardship of

land, production, and the condition of workers. Companies like Fairtrade have made ethicality the cornerstone of their buying policy and societal benefits that have accrued to third world producers (Richardson 2005, 445). The Finnish alcohol distributing monopoly Alko for example, demands transparency in all production chains and sends its own teams of researchers to designate areas, to investigate if the conditions of production are adequate. An alcohol wholesaler Raisin Social comments that in the recent years there has been growing concerns among consumers that the goods they buy should be produced in conditions that are safe and decent (Richardson 2005, 445.) By ensuring that these concerns have been fulfilled, the producers in various countries are using ethicality as a tool for marketing.

When talking about ethicality in an alcohol related business, some factors should be considered. The ethics of the land refers to ruling out the efforts to influence those below the legal drinking age and those whose consumption approaches or exceeds recommended alcohol guidelines (Richardson 2005, 445.) Countries like the UK has advertising controls that prohibits companies from making people look more attractive when drinking alcohol. In the USA trade restrictions laws prohibits trading of alcohol across state boundaries besides via legal state wholesalers.

Subjected to such restrictions, wine producers can still advertise to improve the market position of their products. For example, E & J Gallo winery, which is the largest exporter of Californian wines, has spent over 500 million dollars in advertising since 1977. A large portion of this advertising is allocated to target a small core of consumers and especially the ones reading the two main UK wine magazines, Wine Maker and Decanter. Advertising in these magazines tends to supplement regional articles by sponsoring them. (Richardson 2005, 446). This is mainly marketing for a converted audience (Jaeger 2000.) However, wine columns in newspapers are potentially a great way of attracting new customers.

Such wine-related activity can be considered as largely ethical, providing it comes within national production and follows advertising guidelines (Richardson 2005, 446.) However, it is possible to be dropped out from this classification. In the 1980's Austrian wine was widely shunned in export markets due to their use of unacceptable additives. This was viewed as lowering their standards by other countries. Sometimes political turmoil might influence countries' wine exportation. For example, Spain and South Africa that were once viewed as politically unacceptable, are now ethical producers, thanks to reforms (Mansson 2000).

In the future firms are more likely gain competitive advantages by following ethical marketing stances (Gauzante & Rachford 2000). As high ethical principles are incorporated in the production

it may be marketed by emphasizing the ethical aspects of the product. Whether this is a case of virtue ethics seems questionable, as some institutions might feel pressure from their ethically inclined customers, as others might genuinely try to influence social and environmental policy goals by purchasing (Ethical consumer 1997). Despite their actual motives, recent cases indicate that producers are grasping the concept of ethical behaviour and viewing it as a significant marketing factor.

Organic viticulturists are a great example of using ethicality as a marketing tool. They are a small but influential part of the world's wine industry, known to emphasize environmental issues. The corner stone of this kind of marketing is to highlight the natural and healthy nature of the products. Instead of using chemical pesticides, these viticulturists use environmentally friendly pest control and healthy fertilizers, in their efforts to build soil fertility naturally. It is not just individual producers that capitalize on the organic angle as a competitive edge. Wine producing countries like New Zealand and South Africa have begun to realize that taking an ethical stance in production has the potential to improve the image of their industry leading to improved sales (Richardson 2005, 447).

South Africa has been widely known for having a poor image as a wine producing country as the working conditions for vineyard workers have been neglected. However, now they have taken correcting actions as the wine industry association for ethical trade was launched in 2002 with the support of several supermarket groups in UK. New Zealand has founded a program called Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand. The growers are committed to providing the best practice model for environmental management and a system that ensures to address consumer concerns about environmental and grape production issues (Richardson 2005, 447). After all it might be about the appearance of behaving ethically and following codes of practice in using ethical virtues in their advertising, since the consumers have grown more conscious and want to deal with companies that are responsible.

Ensuring ethicality in the beverage supply chains can be demanding, as they are often complex entities consisting of a wide range of operators, including suppliers, producers, ingredient suppliers and bottling plants. When planning ethical and sustainable measures it is crucial to determine the origin of the products. Alko is collecting information about the products all the way back to the production facilities. To ensure ethicality in product selection they are using World Bank's Amfori Business Social Compliance Initiative listing to identify risk countries. High-risk countries involve a risk due to the conditions the ingredients are produced in. Information about the high-risk country's products is traced back to the farms. Risk countries refer to those in which beverage industries have had shortcomings on environmental and social issues. Social risks are addressed as

negligence of human rights like child labour, safety issues, health of seasonal workforce or excessive working hours. Alko demands that all its beverage suppliers complete and apply the principles of BSCI's code of conduct training (Alko 2022a).

Alko's latest review of the 2022 alcohol trends stated that one of the key trends is the growing demand for corporate responsibility. The companies involved in the alcohol trade have a prerequisite to incorporate social responsibility in their supply chains. The European Union is committed to preventing any human right violations in companies' value chains as a part of its duties of care. The individuals working in these supply chains need to have safe working conditions and the opportunity to sufficient livelihood. Providing versatile training for suppliers and producers is one way of ensuring the fulfilment of these issues (Alko 2022a). According to Anu Koskinen, the selection and procurement director of Alko, companies are increasingly required to take social responsibility in their supply chains, as transparency and openness are the lifeblood of trading (Alko 2022e).

3.1 Ecological wines are relevant in the future market

Eco-labels are a way of signalling consumers about the environmental attributes of a product. Their goal is to lay out clear and credible information about the product's reduced environmental impact, thereby eliciting increased demand for products perceived environmentally favourable (Delmas & Gergaud 2021, 1-2). The majority of eco-labels requires the endorsement of standardized sustainable practices, the certification of these practices by an independent organization, and the signalisation of this certification via a label that is placed on the product. The aspects usually taken into consideration can be the product's carbon footprint (packaging material & recyclability), the use of pesticides in cultivation, the use of additives or animal products in the production process and the appropriate treatment of workers in supply chains (Viinimaa). In theory, this leads to reduced environmental and social impacts of the product through consumer choice.

Today there are over 460 eco-label programs worldwide, which is a substantial increase from the few dozen that existed in the 1990's (Yokessa & Murette, 2019. 119-120) However, despite this growth the consumers have had uneven responses to such products. There are studies that have suggested that the abundance of environmental labels can lead to information overload, resulting in scepticism towards and confusion about eco-labels (Brécard, 2014; Lyon and Montgomery,

2015). There have also been cases of greenwashing, which refers to labels that have misleading information about the product's environmental benefits.

Additionally, one of the main concerns about eco-labels amidst consumers has been the trade-off between the quality of the product and the environmental impacts. In fact, some experiments indicate that eco-labels or even just the colour green can reduce the perception product efficiency in general (Pancer, 2017, 160) Consumers often tend to assume that reduced environmental impact of a product lead to lower quality products. This can be particularly problematic when it comes to consumers adopting eco-labels. This raises the question about the value of eco-label certification for both producers and consumers. Can the implementation of sustainable practices be combined with changes in production processes that improve product performance? Is it possible to achieve some of these benefits without certification? Previous research about the identification practices outside of certification remains limited because such policies do not exist outside the certification system. This why it is challenging to differentiate those that are implementing sustainable practices without certification from those that use the conventional practices (Delmas & Gergaud 2021, 2-3).

The value of eco-labels in the wine industry is a particularly interesting case to study mainly because of three reasons. Firstly, the industry has had recognized confusion concerning the value of eco-labels from both consumers, winemakers, and scientists. For instance, biodynamic agriculture, which is a form of organic farming, has been met with scepticism by some members of the scientific community (Castellini, 2017, 1-2). Furthermore, there are consumers who are unwilling to pay premium price for wines that are labelled organic. This can be partially explained by the negative overall perception of the taste of organic wine in the early stages of organic wine development, when production expertise was still inadequate, and the "grand crus" of organic wine production were absent. This original negative reputation still casts a shadow over organic wines (Delmas & Gergaud 2021, 1-5).

However, at the same time there is increased public attention to issues of health and environmental sustainability, contributing to a growing consumer demand for "natural" food and drinks. This trend has also influenced the wine market, resulting in the spread of "natural wine" (Galati, Schifani, Crescimanno & Migliore 2019, 405-406.) There are studies suggesting that consumers who are aware of the environmental and social impacts of their choices in consumption are more likely to pay attention to the labels and the information they display to reduce negative environmental impacts via purchase (Galati et al 2020, 406).

Research about consumers behaviour indicates that the growing demand for food and drinks produced with environmentally friendly methods are closely linked to increased consumer awareness of environmental issues and human health and the strengthening public perception about the green products being the solution to food safety and the depletion of natural resources (Hashem 2018; Maniatis 2016). The study of the nature of green consumer behaviour is a complex field. Individual values seem to be one driver affecting the green consumerism. Particularly the values of self-interest, altruism, universalism (protection for the welfare of people and nature) indicate to beliefs of human responsibility in health and natural environment, which affect attitudes towards the preservation of the environment and healthy lifestyles. It seems that psychological criteria is deeply affecting environmentally conscious consumer behaviour (Dangelico & Volatelli, 2017- 406.)

In the recent years there has been a rapid increase (in the wealthier countries) in products obtained through organic farming methods, particularly in wine production. The market share of organic wine is still quite low in the global wine market (Barber, Taylor & Remar 2016.) It is typical that consumer intentions and actual behaviour don't match. It seems that cognitive and affective factors together with normative cues play a crucial role in decision-making and possibly prompt spontaneous and unplanned purchasing behaviour, that results in consumers acting against their own beliefs (Taghikhah, F., Voinov, A., Shukla, N. & Filatova 2021).

Social media seem to play an important role in increasing consumers' awareness of environmental issues, therefore influencing their wine purchasing behaviour (Sogari, Pucci, Aquilani & Zanni 2017, 1911.) This is seen as particularly influential amongst the millennials but also amongst other age segments. Data collected through a survey shared in Germany, United Kingdom and United States, indicated that wine consumers are generally concerned about environmental issues, social responsibility of companies and sustainably or ethically produced products (Kelley et al 2019). It is typical for wine consumers to adopt healthy lifestyles and control their diets (Higgins & Lanos 2015.)

Biodiversity and healthy soil are essential for agriculture. They have a beneficial impact to harvesting productivity, protection of crops from pests and diseases, while enabling proper circulation of nutrients. According to a study by Ecogain AB (Sjölund, Vernerback, Sundqvist & Hägglund 2021) organic and biodynamic farming methods contribute to soil and terrestrial biodiversity more efficiently compared to traditional farming methods. The alcohol industry is dependent on natural ecosystems as they enable sufficient raw material production. The ecosystems need be healthy and biodiverse to function in the long term. Traditional, small-scale

agricultural methods have provided sufficient habitat for many organisms in the past, but as the farming lands have expanded and the production has intensified it has been leading to weakening and fragmented habitat of species, which pose substantial global threat to the soil and biodiversity (Sjölund, Vernerback, Sundqvist & Hägglund 2021, p. 4-28).

According to Alko their biggest climate impact in supply chains arise from the manufacturing of the products and their packages. Along with the Finnish government Alko is implementing the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, to reduce the environmental impacts of their operations and the overuse of natural resources. Using lighter, bio-based, easily recyclable packages and packages made from recycled materials is a concrete method of operating sustainably. To support the spread of environmentally and climate-responsible practices, Alko is constantly introducing more sustainably and environmentally certified products to their selection as a part of their Green Choice label (Alko 2022e).

The Green Choice label indicates the beverage producer's commitment to sustainable development and environmental work. Currently Alko uses seven labels to indicate the reduced environmental impact: natural wines, biodynamic, carbon neutral, sustainable development certification, organic, vegan and environmentally friendly packages (Alko 2022b.) The carbon footprint of wine packages varies significantly, depending on the material, size, and weight of the product. The production of traditional glass bottles (weighing 540 grams) has the highest carbon footprint of carbon emissions per litre (675 grams of greenhouse gases) as faucet packaging produces 70 grams of emissions per produced litre. In bottled wines the most environmentally friendly form of packaging are PET-plastic bottles, which cause only 36 percent of the emissions glass bottles cause. Lighter glass bottles (weighing less than 420 grams) create 22 percent less emissions than traditional glass bottles. The rule that applies here is that the lighter and more recyclable the package is the smaller its climate impacts are (Alko 2022b).

By the year 2030 Alko's mission is to reduce the environmental impacts of beverage packages by 50 percent compared to 2020 and to increase the share of Green Choice products to 70 percent of their selection (Alko 2022d.) Taken this into account wine importers should favour green choice products in their future portfolios.

3.2 Health trends affecting wine consumption

Consumers show increasing concern about the impact their lifestyle choices have on their own health and on the wellbeing of the planet. Therefore, the role of health in consumer decision-making is growing. However, wine is a unique product that is distinct from other food products, mainly because wine consumption is closely tied to traditions, social and cultural aspects unlike other beverages or food (Deroover, Siegrist, Brain, McIntyre & Bucher 560.) Other important aspects influencing wine consumption are pairing wine with food, symbolic value, and the popularity of wine as a gift. Additionally, the perceived healthiness of wine is particularly controversial. Even though there have been many studies researching wine and the effects of alcohol on human health, it is still a topic surrounded by confusion and contradictory information (Deroover et al 2021, 561). There is no doubt about the risks of excessive alcohol consumption and the range of negative health and social outcomes that come with it (World Health Organization, 2018.)

However, wine is a bit different from other alcoholic beverages because of the presence of grape-derived phenolic compounds (Boban, Stockley, Teissedre, Restani, Fradera & Stein-Hammer 2016, 2938). Therefore, it has been suggested that moderate consumption of wine especially paired with food could possibly have positive health benefits like decreased risk for neurodegenerative diseases and colon cancer, metabolic benefits, and cardio-protective effects (Boban et al 2016, 2938). However, although many studies suggest that light to moderate wine consumption could have health benefits, the findings remain inconclusive and no recommendations can be made on a specific amount of healthy dosage (Minzer, Estruch & Casas 2020, 5045.) It is mainly about the specific health outcomes investigated that determine whether the effect of wine on health is positive or negative. Some research suggests that alcohol simply does not have any health benefits regardless of consumption volume. Alcohol consumption is a risk at all levels, but with moderate to light usage of alcohol, also the risks are minimal (Mielonen 2016).

There is a growing demand for healthier wines due to the presence of natural compounds. Pappalardo (2019) detected that consumers had growing interest in consuming resveratrol-enriched wine as they perceived it as a source for beneficial and healthy properties. This study also suggested that extrinsic, intrinsic and the socio-demographic factors of consumers (gender, age) also further dictated their willingness to consume wine that was naturally enriched with resveratrol. It seemed that from a consumer perspective there is a significant difference between natural enrichment and technological enrichment.

From a wine marketing viewpoint, it is essential to understand how the consumers relate to wine and health. This will help in establishing appropriate nutrition and health education about the consumption of wine and communication of the risks associated with it. From the wine producer's perspective, it is crucial to recognize different health aspects of wine products and how the potential benefits, risks and information about new products and technologies can be communicated. Knowing how consumers value and perceive the health aspects of wine could help in promoting innovations that meet the consumers' need for high quality, healthy and sustainable products (Deroover, et al 2021, 560.)

A published review about wine consumer behaviour by Lockshin & Corsi (2012, 2-23) discussed the distinction between widely accepted knowledge like the role of price, origin of wine, grape varieties and brand in wine choice and wine consumer segmentation versus the key areas that play a role in the future research. They concluded that consumer responses to wine and health issues is one of the areas with the most research needs. Since 2012 there have been various technological advances, the beverage market has changed and new studies have been released investigating how specific attributes of wine products affect consumer behaviour and perception (Bucher, Deroover & Stockley 2019).

The pursuit of healthiness has become more apparent as the stressfulness of modern-day work life has increased. In Europe work-related stress holds the second place on the list of work-related problems. The problems caused by stress are also driving people to disability pension. To cope with the demands of life and work it has become almost mandatory to be interested in one's own wellbeing, both physically and mentally. Partially this is because education and information have enlightened the consumers. Due to this fact the dietary habits of Finnish people have improved, smoking has decreased, and time spent on leisure time exercise activities has grown (Hiltunen 2016, 139-140.) Overall, the Finns lead substantially healthier lives than some 20 years ago (Hiltunen 2016, 139.) The consumption of alcohol has been decreasing in Finland since 2007. However, Finland still has the second highest alcohol consumption rate per capita in the Nordic countries (World Anderson, Moller & Galea 2012, 21) and obesity has also increased in a longer period.

In the beverage industry the competition is becoming more acute as the consumers are better educated and becoming increasingly fickle. A wider awareness of health and wellbeing issues is pressuring the industry to produce healthier and more sustainable products. In fact, moderation in

drinking is one of the rising consumer trends in the alcohol industry (Siddle 2021). This is particularly visible amongst the younger consumers. The hobby opportunities for young people have increased and the peer pressure that encourages to get intoxicated has decreased (Rämö 2009.)

3.3 The rise of low-alcohol and alcohol-free products

The market share of low alcohol and alcohol-free wines has been increasing lately. The increased worldwide production of alcohol-free wines reflects the global trend of healthier lifestyles and grown awareness about the benefits of drinking wine (Braynik, Silva, Baszczyński & Lehnert 2012, 493.) The group of alcoholic beverages referred to as NoLo (no-alcohol or low-alcohol) products have emerged due to public demand as a result of growing awareness.

Nowadays, the market has a broad range of terminology that refers to NoLo. The most common terms range from “no”, “free”, “zero”, “low”, “light” to “reduced”. The definitions of the terms are varying due to differences in regulations on a country level. Most used are “low-alcoholic beverages” (LAB) and “non-alcoholic beverages” (NAB) (Okaru & Lachenmeier 2022). European Union regulations dictate that beverages with an alcoholic strength by volume greater than 1,2 percentage are called alcoholic beverages, but there are no implicit EU regulations below the range of 1,2 volume (EU Regulation No. 1169/2011.) For most EU countries, the limit for non-alcoholic beverage is 0,5 percentage points. However, there is no clear justification for this particular limit.

The producers have refined their alcohol removal techniques so that alcohol can be removed without compromising the taste of wine. As the alcohol is removed it easily affects other parts of the beverage as well. However, with the help of modern technology, the parts can be accurately isolated, and they can be returned to the final product without alcohol (Alko 2022c).

Alcohol-free wine is traditionally produced by removing ethanol from wine after a complete grape fermentation via various heat altering methods such as spinning cone or vacuum distillation (Sun, Dang, Xiaobin 2020, 262). Low-alcohol wines are usually produced by controlling the ripeness of grapes and the fermentation of wine. Sometimes the grapes are collected early, when they haven't accumulated much of the sugar residue for fermentation (Alko 2022c). Based on reported research it seems that the removal of ethanol does not decrease the health benefits of red wine (Lecour,

Blackhurst & Marais 2006, 997). Membrane-based technology like the reverse osmosis enables the production of high-quality alcohol-free wines that meet the quality requirements of wineries (Sun et al 2020, 272).

The consumers' grown interest towards alcohol-free products is clearly visible in the statistics. Alko states that the sales of alcohol-free products have quadrupled since 2012 and grown 17 percentage points from 2020 to 2021. Alcohol free products are not only a substitute for sodas, but also a drink to pair foods with. One rising trend among consumers has been the adaptation of sober curios mindset. People are increasingly questioning their alcohol consumption and the role of alcohol in different social occasions. To meet with this demand in the summer of 2022 Alko established a kiosk on wheels that only sells alcohol free products. The background is Alko's desire to develop a responsible drinking culture and respond to the changing drinking habits of Finns. Last year, Alko sold more non-alcoholic drinks than cider.

Even though, NoLo alcohol products seem to provide solutions to alcohol-related health problems on a societal level, there are still ethical issues which require clarification like: deceptive marketing and advertising, underage drinking and the misconception of health effects that require appropriate regulation. The purpose of this regulation should be to ensure that the NoLo market develops and promotes public health instead of harming it. Regulation of these products might become increasingly difficult as distinction between alcohol replacements and soft drinks is becoming more blurred. In addition to the harmful effects of alcohol, the negative impacts of sugar consumption should be taken into consideration when developing holistic health policies (Okaru & Lachenmeier 2022).

4 Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the path the researcher chooses to conduct their research. It shows how the researcher formulates their problem and objective and presents their results from the data obtained throughout the study (Abu-Taieh, El Moutasim & Al Hadid 2020, 27).

Research method is a term used for the techniques, strategies, or processes utilized in the collection of data, or to provide evidence for analysis to discover new information or create deeper understanding of the topic. The main types of research methods for data collection are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research (University of Newcastle).

When drafting the project plan it became clear that qualitative interview would be the most practical approach for the data collection. The aim of the qualitative research was to confirm and deepen the understanding of the topic. This chapter will further illuminate the qualitative research method in general and why it was specifically chosen for the thesis.

4.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research can mean any form of data collection that produces narrative or non-numerical information. The goal is to gain insight on the participants' thoughts without having bias or making any judgments. This form of research focuses on the meanings and experiences of individuals or groups to analyse why and how people construct associations with other people, with things and with their environment. The goal of qualitative research is to use ethnographic (description of people and its culture) or ethnomethodology (rules the individuals follow in their everyday life) approaches to connect social theory to the essence of lived and everyday world (Bowling & Ebrahim 2005, 215).

Qualitative interview refers to a structured or unstructured methods of interviewing in which the researcher has a particular topic for the respondents, with open-ended questions that may not be in the same order to each respondent. The method is also known as in-depth interview that has a primary goal to hear what the respondents think is important about the topic and to describe it in their own words. Open-ended questions refer to questions the researcher poses but does not have an answer option for. These questions are more demanding for the participants compared to close ended questions because the participants need to come up with their own words, phrases, or

sentences to respond (Pressbooks). Open-ended questions often include questions like how, what, why, where, when and who.

Qualitative interview is particularly effective when trying to gather detailed information that help to understand social processes. Furthermore, qualitative research method can be effective when studying a topic that leaves room for subjectiveness. With qualitative research the aim is to find recurring themes in the answers.

Predicting future trends in the wine market requires certain base knowledge about the subject at hand. Therefore, qualitative research was predicted to provide more valuable data. The experts interviewed were chosen because of their extensive knowledge about the wine market. It was intentional that the participants represent Alko and an individual wine importer. My hypothesis was that the answers to my questions would bring some opposing views yet have similarities between them and therefore support the literature research. The sole purpose of the interview was not only to support the literature study, but also complement the study by bringing new visions of the future. The qualitative interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and their lengths were 31 minutes and 42 minutes.

4.2 Research design

The role of research design is to provide suitable framework for a study. An important decision in research design process is to choose the research approach as it determines how the relevant information will be obtained. It also shows how the research outcome at the end will be obtained and ensures that it is in line with the objective of the study (Abu-Taieh et al 2020, 27-28).

The research process started with specifying the research problem and conducting literature research. As the topic is broad and focuses on trend prediction, the emphasis of this thesis is on the literature research. This approach ensured that the theory is based on scientific literature, as trend prediction can be subjective and provide different outcomes from different experts, based on their background and general outlook on the industry.

The questions were formulated so that they were in line with the topics of the literature research. Main questions were divided into topics: consumer trends, megatrends, weak signals and wine

trends. Each main question was followed by two sub-questions and in total of nine questions. The focus was on formulating questions that were not leading the interviewees to a certain direction. The questions were reflected on and chosen because of their additional value to the research.

4.3 Data collection

In-depth structured interview was chosen as the method of data collection. This is a semi-structured method of interviewing that allows both the interviewer and the interviewee to explore additional points and change the direction of the interview if necessary. In-depth interviews provide an opportunity to capture substantial, descriptive data about the thinking and behaviour of people, and hence unfold complex processes (B2B International).

Because the responses are seen as subjective accounts rather than objective answers to the questions, were not required to follow the exact same sequence or wording.

In this case the research needs were to complement the literature review by expert statements. The focus was in identifying re-occurrent themes in the answers. To ensure alternate views the experts were chosen from Alko's procurement and from sales of an individual wine importing company Viinitie. The intention was to capture similarities and differences between the expert statements.

4.4 Data analysis methods

How the data is analysed depends on the purpose of the study. Positivistic analysis usually focuses on the frequency of certain types of expressions. Phenomenological analysis tries to elicit meaning from what is said or, even, left unsaid. The intention of critical dialectical analysis is to find a connection between specific features and broader topics, how present is related to the past and to identify the criticism of the prevailing ideology within the material (Quality research international 2022).

As the nature of trend research is to connect past events to current events and current events to future events, the critical dialectical analysis was seen as appropriate data analysis method. Trends are often connected to each other, so finding out how specific features connect with broader phenomena was also in line with the purpose of the thesis. The line of questioning was

designed to raise conversation about the past, present and the future, so that connections could be made, and create safe assumptions about the future

5 Data and results

The data analysis methods intention was to find re-occurrent themes in the expert's answers. This topic begins with the answers that confirmed the literature research and supported the theory of ethicality being the most impactful driver for consumer behaviour in the future. The answers that support the literature research findings are divided into three subtopics according to themes in the qualitative interview questions. Theme one was consumer trends, theme two was megatrends and weak signals, and theme three was wine trends. All themes had one main question, followed by two sub-questions. In total the qualitative interview had nine questions.

Because the qualitative research questions were designed to deepen the knowledge about the subject of wine trends, some of the findings were outside the scope of the thesis. These findings are presented in the chapter 5.4 subtopic: "findings that were outside the scope of the thesis".

And finally, the last subtopic of the data and results topic reflects on the interview and ponders the similarities and differences between expert statements. Chapter 5.5 is called "reflection on the interview".

5.1 Theme one; consumer trends

The first three questions were based on a consumer trends theme. The main question was: "which consumer trends will build popularity in the future?". Sub-questions were: "can you name any arising consumer trends?" and "what has changed in consumer behaviour in the past years?". The results indicated following:

Both participants believed, that in the future sustainability and responsibility will maintain and increase their significance as drivers for consumer behaviour. Alko's representative said that you can define sustainability in many ways, mainly including the ways humans try to adapt to climate change but it is like an umbrella term including many other trends. The consumers are increasingly interested in where the wine comes from. Natural and organic wines are already popular but in the future people will look for green label wines from Alko. This will be trending among different age groups, not only among the millennials and younger generations. Green consumer behaviour is

also spreading to smaller cities, at the moment the statistics show that bigger cities like Helsinki, Turku and Tampere are in the driver's seat with this trend.

Alko's representative stated that the consumers will be paying more attention on the packaging materials in the future. When people grasp that lighter material packages produce substantially less emissions, tetras, box wines, cans and plastic bottles become more acceptable by an average consumer. These greener packages might even become a way of getting respect from friends and peers in social gatherings. This is anticipated to gain momentum, as people are focusing more closely on the symbols of the wine labels, that indicate lower carbon footprint or compensation of emissions. The traditional glass bottles weighing 750 grams are often perceived as a sign of quality, when in fact a glass bottle weighing 330 grams is equally good in preserving or enhancing the wine quality.

The way of looking at trends as something that can solve problems is without a doubt a correct notion in the wine market in Finland. As people have started to look for sustainably farmed and organic products as the answer for the depletion of natural resources, the growing need for green label wines has built momentum not only as a trend, but as an outlook on life. The climate change has also impacted greatly in the attitude shift amongst consumers. As this is a global threat that isn't going to be solved any time soon, it is highly likely that the need for sustainably produced wines is going to grow in the future. Another vital aspect in sustainable farming is the viticultural side of wine production. The cornerstone for functioning viticulture is a healthy soil and a biodiverse ecosystem. Expanding farming lands and intensified production is weakening and fragmenting the species vital to the ecosystems. This is something organic farming provides an answer to. As mentioned, there should be encouragement for traditional farmers working outside the organic label certification system but applying organic farming methods.

As the consumers are increasingly enlightened about health issues as well, it is no surprise that low-alcohol and non-alcoholic products are changing from a niche to a solid segment. The drinking habits of Finns have been changing in the past few decades and especially amongst the younger generations. Moderate drinking and sober curiosity are manifestations of this statistical trend. Wines with lower alcohol and calories is already a rising trend, but it is expected to gain more popularity in the future as the drinking culture supports this kind of behaviour. The products have also evolved greatly in the past few years as the technology and production methods have improved tremendously. At the moment this is more evident in the non-alcoholic beer segment as the sheer number of the products has increased significantly in the past years.

The building popularity of low-alcoholic and non-alcoholic products can be clearly seen in the sale statistics and the trajectory is still pointing upwards. Alko's representative commented. How long these trends will affect the market remains inconclusive, but when considering the recent scientific findings that encourage people to drink moderately, it is hard to imagine that the Finnish drinking culture would shift back to the way it was.

The expert statements about trends that will maintain or build popularity in the future, underlined the literature study findings, about the importance of ethically produced and NoLo products in the future wine market. The main reason is not the characteristics of these products, but the increased awareness about the importance of ethicality and healthier ways of living. Even though, there were also answers outside the scope of this thesis which are presented in the chapter 5.4: "findings outside the scope of the thesis" topic.

5.2 Theme two; megatrends and weak signals

The second theme was megatrends and weak signals. The main question was: "what megatrend is likely to have the most impact on wine market in the future?". Sub-questions were: "how likely it is for megatrends to shift the power relations of wine producing countries?" and: "are there any weak signals that could lead to surprising trends?" The experts take on this theme was the following:

Both experts noted that climate change is the most impactful megatrend in the wine market. According to Viinitie's representative it has substantial impact on the supply side of the business. From a wine maker's perspective, it raises concerns, as the vineyards' capacity to produce the grape varieties they are known for is in jeopardy. For example, if the case is that the wine produced is shifting towards high alcohol volume jammier wines or if the cultivation changes so that the grapes must be picked up earlier, it will also impact the flavour profile of the wines and their balance. Is there enough irrigation for cultivation areas and is irrigation economically possible? Will the consumers accept the irrigation? Most of the times they don't accept irrigation. In general, it is because irrigation is not considered to be sustainable in agriculture and it can be a threat to the preservation of water resources.

Many producers have started to prepare for these problems. The grapes that have normally flourished in the southern parts of the world have begun to adapt to the northern parts of the world. For example, Bordeaux has accepted new grape varieties to be cultivated, some of them are

hybrid breeds said the Viinitie's representative. When looking at the last year or the year 2020, Spain surpassed France for the first time as the second biggest wine producing country in the world. Alko's representative stated that it is not about changing consumer trends, but mainly because of the extreme weather conditions that are happening more often because of climate change. When reflecting it to smaller trends it is more likely that the shifts could happen.

Alko's representative said that when travelling to the wine producing regions you can see that the wine makers are using amorphas, concrete eggs, stainless steel or oak eggs. They have started to pick parts of the trends that are suitable for their own production, even when not being organic or natural wine makers. Nowadays, one beneficial trend that many wine producers use is limiting the amount of sulphur dioxide added to wine. Many farmers still want to operate outside the certification system so they could save the yield with chemicals, should something disastrous happen. Alko's representative added that rare grape varieties and rising wine countries have been trending, and countries like Georgia, Slovenia, Croatia, and England have emerged and increased their market share.

Closely linked with ecological issues is the strengthening role of ethicality, both in organizational and individual consumerism level. Transparency in actions is vital not only for wine trade, but other industries as well. Making ethicality one of the cornerstones of organizational strategies should be high on the agenda for companies in the wine trade. The wine certifications for ethically produced wines helps the consumers to make an impact through purchasing. Social or environmental shortcomings are no longer tolerated in the wine trade. This is something that has had pressure from governmental and individual level. Using ethicality as a competitive edge in marketing, regardless of the actual motives, is something that benefits the whole industry. This topic was also side-lined in the conversation with the Alko's representative.

Viinitie's representative said that the shift of power relations can be seen especially in wine producing areas. It is also dependent on the EU's granted planting rights, that are set to prevent overproduction of wines. For example, the German Pinot Noir grapes are now ripening more thanks to climate change. As for Alsace, the region is becoming so hot that the wines are already starting to reach high alcohol levels. So, it is hard to justify why consumers would have to pay more for these wines, which are not necessarily in balance anymore. It is a question of how the rising production costs are in correlation with the retail prices of wines and with global wine market prices.

England for example is a rising wine producing country partially because of the climate change, since they have succeeded in introducing their sparkling wines alongside with champagnes thanks to good marketing and high level of producing. Alko's representative noted that: ten years ago, it would have been hard to imagine that Alko would have 19 sparkling wines from England in their selection

These findings confirmed the theoretical part that climate change is the single most influential megatrends impacting wine market now and in the future. Climate change may also shift the power relations of producing countries to some extent and countries like England might even benefit from climate change. Ethicality in wine trade was also mentioned as a trend that will drive consumer behaviour in the future. Weak signals were not presented as such, but some surprising trends were outside the scope of the thesis and they are presented in the chapter 5.4: "findings outside the scope of the thesis" topic.

5.3 Theme three; wine trends

The last theme of the interviews was more specifically about wine trends. The main question was: "what kind of criteria will consumers have when choosing wine in the future?". Sub-questions were: "how significant wine trends are in proportion to overall sales?" and "how do wine producers attract new customers in the future?". This is how the experts responded to these questions.

According to the Viintie's representative consumers often choose certain brands which they favour and that is not likely to change. It is fundamental criteria of consuming in general. The factors affecting brand preferences are likely to include responsibility and the perceived message of the product: is this producer reliable as a wine maker? It is important that the products underline the values that are essential to an individual consumer. It is not enough for the wine to be technically the best, it must also appeal to specific reference groups. The brand needs to have a mission that differentiates them from others. It is likely that green labels influence consumer decision making in the future. As mentioned, it will only grow as a phenomenon, and this is also related to the increased demand for box wines, tetras and organic wines in general Alko's representative commented.

Viinitie's representative said that the consumers are increasingly daring and willing to experiment. This can partially be due to the economic prosperity we have had in the past years, before the

downturn. The craft beer boom has changed the consumers mindset a bit, so that it is acceptable to like multiple styles of beer and this shift is also impacting the consumption of wine. Nowadays, people tend to have less prejudice, and not only towards wine categories but in other aspects of life as well.

Wine trends are extremely important from a marketing point of view said the Viinitie's representative. To maintain or build market share it is important to keep up with current trends: what is popular in different categories and is there a need for new brands? Wine marketers often convey their own trend research focusing on the current wine market. For example, if it seems that oaked Chardonnay is making a comeback, it means that marketers should increase the share of the producers that provide this sort of wines. In general wine business from the sales perspective consists of small streams so it is important to keep up with the zeitgeist. Trends might not be visible in sales statistics when looking at the total volume of sales Alko's representative noted.

Alko is also closely monitoring trends and constantly making their own trend reports. The majority of sales come from the lower price point big brand wines, and this has stayed about the same for decades. The volumes are huge. Usually, trends happen so fast that they don't materialize in the overall sales for longer periods of time. But when going to higher price points trends possibly have a bigger impact said Alko's representative.

Alko's representative stated that word of mouth seems to be an important driver impacting consumer decisions. Opinions of fellow drinkers have become an impacting factor in wine consumption with applications like wine searcher and Vivino. The wine critics still have power, and their ratings are used for marketing, but not as much as they used to, as the counterforce of regular wine drinkers' opinions build popularity.

The last theme on the qualitative interview also confirmed the theoretical frameworks findings. Consumers are anticipated to place even greater importance to their values and that they match with the products they purchase, hence ethicality will increase its importance as criteria for wine choosing. Word of mouth will remain its importance in the spreading of wine trends. What new innovations wine marketers have for attracting new customers in the future will be addressed in the next subtopic.

5.4 Findings outside the scope of the thesis

The qualitative interview questions were formulated not only to confirm the literature research findings, but to complement the thesis. Therefore, some questions were anticipated to bring alternate data to the research. These findings are addressed in this subtopic.

On the first theme the purpose was to identify what has changed in the customer behaviour in the past years and the products that might increase their popularity in the future. The answers outside the scope of the thesis regarded product groups, flavour profiles, and origin preferences.

On contrast to green label products Viinitie's representative noted that there is also demand for flashy products. Instead of creating better packages some producers are focusing to increase brand's recognizability, by introducing wines with flashier labels and unusual bottle designs. The idea is that this will catch the interest of consumers and the products could stand out from the competition. COVID pandemic increased the popularity of fine wines. There are two counterforces at play that polarize the wine market: the need for sustainable products and the rising tendency of spending more on wine. Wine trends seem to impact differently on higher price points.

When asked what has changed in the consumer behaviour in the past years, both experts agreed that when looking at the Finnish market there was a clear change back to the old-world wines. Chilean wines dominated the sales for a decade, but Europe strikes back. The classical wine regions have gained popularity during the last decade. Portugal has surpassed Chile in the wine sales in Finland. The expert from Viinitie commented that this might partially be explained because consumers have discovered that you can find equal or better price to quality ratio from Europe. Viinitie's representative stated that when Portuguese wines surpassed Chilean wines, the flavour profile actually changed a lot. The formerly most sold Chilean reds like Gato Negro Cabernet are quite fruity, but also vegetal, as for the Portuguese reds like Duas Uvas are softer and jammier.

Popular flavour profiles are going through a shift. According to Viinitie's representative it is a common misbelief that younger generations are looking for wines that are sweeter and easy to drink, when in fact they are often willing to try more challenging flavour profiles like oaked Chardonnay, which is making a comeback, alongside with lighter red wines like Pinot Noir and Gamay. Alko's representative mentioned that the shift in popular flavour profiles is common in the Finnish wine market. Trends in flavour profiles are often shifting from one side to another. In the 1980's people couldn't have enough of oaked Chardonnay and after that there was a trend called

ABC anything but Chardonnay – which resulted from people growing tired of the overly oaked full-on buttery taste. In 1990's the demand for oakless Chardonnay grew, as people wanted crispier wines, mainly because of the Australian Chardonnays. In the white wines the shift has gone from sweeter wines to dryer ones and nowadays many people are seeking sugarless white wine. Another great example is the Riesling grape variety, which was not so popular in the 1970's due to intentionally added sugar by the German producers. Riesling was perceived through low-quality wines that were produced at the time. It took some decades for Riesling to build the market share it has today, which is huge concurred the Alko's representative.

Alko's expert commented that prosecco has been substantially rising. In the start of the millennium Alko only had 5 or 6 proseccos in their selection, but now they have almost 100 different ones. Italy has surpassed Spanish Cavas in popularity because of this increased selection. Champagne sales have more than quadrupled from the beginning of the millennium. Both experts agreed that rose wines must be mentioned as a rising trend. Rose wine has become a party drink. Rose prosecco has been a huge success story, since the products were launched few years ago.

As for why, it is a combination of marketing and word of mouth. The trends come much faster to Finland nowadays. It used to take 6 months to get products listed in Alko, but nowadays it can only take 2 weeks. Some of them rise and some of them don't, that's why there is a wide selection at hands today said the Alko's representative.

On the second theme there we're answers outside the scope of the thesis, regarding the surprising trends that might take place in the future.

Both interviewees agreed that hybrid wine based- and wine-like drinks could become more popular amongst younger generations. Viinitie's representative stated that the United States is producing even functional alcohol products, like cannabis or herb infused hybrid wine products. In EU wine producing is more rigid but in the United States the regulation is more lax and there is a higher willingness to try new things. In packaging, new materials or designs like wine cans will emerge that are yet to break through. Wine-like mixtures and fresh wines that are only partially fermented could possibly become more popular in the future.

According to Alko's representative younger generations might also become increasingly interested in QR-code scanning of products if the codes would bring some additional value to the product, like

new innovative stories that could enhance the brand image. It is to be noted that some of the new trends might be technology related.

On the last theme the answers outside the scope we're regarding the new innovations wine marketers might have when attracting customers in the future and consumer trends.

Alko's representative commented that old ways of telling long stories of many generations of male producers making wine in the rolling hills and the vineyards will not work in the future. Stories need to be told short in a TikTok way, with a maximum length of 2 minutes and an appealing storyline. When trying to convert new generations into wine drinkers the stories need to be customized to digital environment. As modern-day people are tied to their phones and have so much of moving images and stimuli in their everyday lives, the wine producers need to adapt their marketing to this.

On the other hand, Viinitie's representative noted that in the future a wine producer might attract new consumers with limited editions, because rarity and peculiarity can be one incentive to buy. The collection culture is building popularity as a consumer trend. New consumers can also be attracted by wine tourism and producing new types of wines instead of your usual Cabernet Sauvignon. There might be new lines of products with different flavour profiles. Nowadays, trends are escalating way faster than before thanks to social media. This has encouraged producers to launch new lines of products to test the markets.

5.5 Reflection on the interview

When considering that the experts represented different sides of the wine market in general, the answers had surprisingly many similarities in the big picture, regarding the impacts of the climate change, the rising importance of ecological and ethical matters in consumers decision-making and the ever-shifting flavour profile preferences of Finnish consumers. When listing rising consumer trends both participants mentioned hybrid wine-like drinks that could possibly build popularity and rose wines as a rising category. It also seemed both experts had similar visions on how wine trends might impact differently in different price points. The shift in power relations also had united visions, and what was especially mentioned was the Europe's comeback, as Portuguese wines surpassed Chileans in the overall sales in Finland.

The interviewees had different visions about trends and their importance. As mentioned, the revenue of wine importers consists of small streams so staying current and preparing for the upcoming trends is crucial, as this is a highly competitive field of business. Alko is a huge

organization that wants to provide trending products for their customers, but the urgency is a bit different in general, as they have the monopoly position. However, it does not mean they don't face competition – actually they do, more than before, thanks to the rise of online sales for example.

It also seemed that Alko is more focused on the big picture as wine importers, naturally, are more focused on specific segments of products that might trend, like rare and collectable wines for example. Even though, both organizations follow trends closely, because the advantage is obvious. Keeping up with the zeitgeist is becoming increasingly difficult, because there are more trends in motions at the same time. Updating the portfolio to meet with consumer demands is a never-ending task and conducting trend analysis' is a way to maintain and increase competitive edge.

6 Key findings

The topic of this thesis – ethicality as a trend in the future wine market – is a bit overwhelming and there could have been alternate ways to try to address the issue. What I found crucial was to properly delimitate the subject areas, so that the focus would be on long term trends and issues that steer the consumer behaviour. In fact, these findings could be applied to other industries as well. Corporate responsibility has been a popular conversation topic for quite some time now. Regardless of the industry people have a strong motivation to deal with companies that incorporate responsibility and sustainability in their agenda. The qualitative research indicates that the foundations of the literature research are built solidly.

When conducting future trend research, the results are connected to the scholars' own background and even motives. As the futurist Elina Hiltunen (2017) stated, a marketing professional may interpret the same signals very differently than a futurist. Trend predictions can be difficult, and the scholar often needs to operate in uncertain waters. There are unpredictable scenarios that can change even the best predictions in an instant. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected event that has had massive global impacts on numerous industries, especially the hospitality industry. Therefore, weak signals are crucially linked to trend prediction analyses. And in the case of the COVID pandemic even weak signals could not prepare the humankind for the massive changes on a societal level.

There were vast amounts of scientific literature supporting the theory of ethicality being the most important driver for consumer behaviour in the future. In this context ethicality included eco-label products, health trends affecting the wine industry and the rise of low-alcohol and no-alcohol products. The findings of the literature review were also supported by the qualitative research findings. Because trend prediction is indicative this approach seems to be the safe choice when creating scenarios of the future wine market. Although, it has to be noted that there might be surprising trends that will thrive, even though they are not related to ethicality.

Trend as a term is often elusive and used to bring apparent scientific certainty, even though they are rarely based on any scientific research. Nowadays, the spreading of trends is much faster than in the past. This is mainly because of the digital era we live in, where information travels in an instant and trends can gain global momentum in a blink of an eye. The younger generations have a low concentration span, so to reach them the messages need to be short and on-point. It is also

increasingly difficult to predict which phenomenon is going to be a fad and which has the longevity to end up as a trend.

Nevertheless, when basing future trend predictions to megatrends like the climate change it can offer likely end results because these trends will remain for the indefinite future. When considering the ways in which humankind can battle the climate change, it should be highlighted that the evolving technology can offer smart solutions so that we could produce cleaner energy, while reducing the overuse of natural resources. Technology will also provide answers to problems the wine industry is facing. For example, genome sequencing and nanotechnology can prove to be valuable branches of research, which allow wine producers to produce quality wines in the far future, while keeping the carbon emissions as low as possible.

Wine knowledge typology is much-needed research that brings some clarity to wine consumer behaviour. It is natural that consumers have very different subjective and objective wine knowledge that steer their purchasing decisions. Extrinsic and intrinsic values are closely linked in wine marketing, and both have an important role. When looking at the sales and seeing the lower price point wines dominating for decades, one could assume that majority of the wine consumers are neophytes. This is probably true, but to truly test this theory it should be taken into cross-examination based on the rest of the segments and compare the sales inside those segments. The problem is that this data does not exist. Overall, this is a promising, yet incomplete theory, that could be important for wine marketers in the future.

In the case of the wine industry, it seems that fads often rocket sales for a short period of time. When looking at the overall sales of Alko the most sold wines have been the ones in lower price points for quite some time now. This indicates that the vast majority of wine consumers are in fact neophytes. Consumer trends might favour some flavour types for a period of time. They often change from one direction to another. In the past, sweeter white wines were popular and after that the dryer ones emerged, and at the moment there is a strong interest for completely dry (sugarless) white wines. In general, it seems that most of the trends in the Finnish wine market don't have the longevity to impact the overall sales on a noticeable scale. This raises two questions. First the distinction between trends and fads: are most of the wine trends actually fads? And how much weight should one place on wine trends when trying to generate revenue in the wine market? From a wine marketer's perspective, the answer is simple: a lot. Trends can be substantial revenue streams for individual wine importers that are riding the wave of current trends.

The actual trends like green label wines and NoLo products have the longevity to be called wine trends, but when scaling their proportions to overall sales of wines, at the moment they seem more like niche segments. However, the trajectory of their sales is firmly pointing upwards, so it is safe to say that these segments will be amongst the rising ones in the future. Behind their popularity are not the actual characteristics (intrinsic values) of wines, but mainly what they stand for. As said, people are increasingly interested in their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of our planet. This is also why wine marketers should favour these products since it can positively impact the company's public image. The other side of it is Alko's mission to substantially raise the green label products in their selection.

My personal predictions about the future trends are that people will increasingly want to influence through their consuming. A great example is the craft beer world. When Russia attacked the sovereign nation of Ukraine, the popularity of the remaining Ukrainian craft breweries products grew massively. Consumers wanted to support the innocent entrepreneurs who were victims of the heinous act. Hopefully this kind of drastic measures won't be happening in the future but supporting through consuming will be trending. Afterall, this is what green consumer behaviour is at its essence.

The wines we buy must resonate with our individual values and make us feel like we belong in our reference group. The wine marketers will probably find new ways to appeal to our inner need to belong to these groups. Segmentation will become more challenging, but at the same time the wine market will keep expanding and new sort of products will emerge, as fads mostly.

As segmentation becomes more challenging and there are expanding number of segments, niche markets could become even more lucrative in terms of revenue. For this the wine marketers need to conduct quality market analyses, trend analyses and target the upcoming segments right when they start emerging, to fill their needs. It is not surprising that some new wine estates in the industry are founded by marketing specialists that don't necessarily have prior experience from the wine industry.

6.1 Discussion

Trend as a term is not as generic as one might think. In fact, there can be a wide divergence in the definitions of a trend. Therefore, when conducting academic research, it is important to start with defining the term. In the world of wines trends are often a mixture of definitions mentioned in the first chapter. Very often it is the trend sociologist's definition that applies in the creation and spread of trends, as they spread from trend setters to mainstream. Even though, some theories of creation

and spread of trends are old they are still relevant in the modern-day world. Segmentation in the spread of trends may seem like a stretch but it is often relevant regardless of the era. People are curious by nature and social beings at the essence. Therefore, trends fascinate many of us. We also crave for respect from our peers and our social circles. We might often use trends subconsciously to fill those needs. In the wine market fads are also extremely important in the short run. As mentioned, expert reviews or trend setters' influence can have a substantial impact on the sales of an individual product for a short period of time.

Segmenting consumers based on their general wine knowledge is an interesting angle taken to examine consumer behaviour. According to this theory (wine knowledge typology) the majority of the consumers are considered as neophytes that have low subjective and objective knowledge about wines. Interestingly, when provided with the right background information about a particular wine even neophytes are willing to purchase wines from higher price points. This underlines the importance of storytelling in wine marketing. This applies to other products as well, as storytelling is increasingly important in marketing. In the segment of snobs (high subjective and low objective knowledge) it is interesting how the illusionary wine knowledge leads them to purchase wines from higher price points. This underlines the importance of hearsay and preconceived ideas steering their consumer behaviour. Word of mouth seems to have an important role in wine consumer behaviour. Overall, people seem to be afraid to purchase wines above their usual budget, unless they can be convinced that the particular product is worth the investment. The more information and the specifics (extrinsic values mostly) they have the better chance there is that they will spend more.

The study of green consumer behaviour is a complex field where means don't always meet actions. As organic is often associated with improved health benefits it is one of the reasons people have begun to pay more attention to these products. However, organic wine is also often associated with decreased quality or performance of a given product. The rise of green products has been steadily rising in the past years. In the wine market their market share is still relatively low at the moment. Experts are not always inclined to favour organic wines and some of this may be explained by their bad original reputation. Consumers with green attitudes might also act in contrast to their own interest with spontaneous purchase decisions. Surveys about green products don't always provide factual data, as people might overestimate their willingness to pay more for these products. However, with the role of social media favouring green consumer behaviour and megatrends influencing mindsets globally the eco-friendly products are still anticipated to raise their importance in the future.

To have a better market position now and in the future wine importers should follow trends closely and detect any weak signals that could lead to changes. Creating different scenarios of the future can help in shaping organizational strategies that are better equipped to face the test of time. Brainstorming sessions once or twice a month can be time-consuming and costly in the short term, but valuable in the long run. Even though the role of Alko is unclear in the far future, wine importers should be aware of their missions concerning the product selection and general goals.

The future of the wine market in Finland might look very different than now. Lately, there has been a lot of speculation about the role of Alko. The National Coalition Party is questioning Alko's position as a monopoly. According to NCP, currently only 30 percent of the alcohol consumed in Finland has been purchased from Alko. This challenges one of the foundational missions of Alko – to prevent the harmful effects of alcohol on a societal level. Recent polls indicated that 59 percent of people we're in favour of selling wines in grocery stores (PTY 2022). When the same question was made about strong alcoholic beverages (spirits?) only 29 percent we're in favour. Alko has informed that in the case of wines being released for competition and into grocery stores, Alko would no longer have the capacity to maintain its position in the market, as wines constitute a large portion of its sales. This would result in all alcohol products being released into retail stores according to Alko.

The rise of online shopping is weakening Alko's role in the market. Online alcohol shopping is a sort of a grey area in the Finnish constitution. As Finland is a member of the European Union and the whole union is built on free movement of goods, it cannot be banned in Finland. During the pandemic online alcohol shopping has built its popularity and there is no indication that this would not continue in the future like any other sort of online shopping. Even though, after the restrictions have been lifted there has been a slight decrease in the popularity of online alcohol shopping.

In October 2022 the Finnish government allocated extra resources for Finnish customs to launch a campaign with a goal to seize any shipments with unpaid taxes. According to the Finnish government Finland is losing tens of millions yearly, because of the online alcohol shopping and alcohol brought overseas. It is a questionable notion at least, as the matter is far from simple. This should be examined more closely for a longer period of time to produce statistical trend analysis.

6.2 Recommendations

For wine marketers it would be advisable to keep trend research high on their agenda. This is already the case, but in the future as there will be new types of wine products and new segments, the trends are becoming increasingly important.

Following craft beer market closely to observe the consumer attitudes is advisable. The craft beer world has gone through a revolution during the past decade, and some of the trends might also affect wine market. The innovation of the craft beer makers is admirable as it seems there is constantly new types of products being launched, with various flavour profiles. Following the trending flavour profiles could give an understanding of current trend, for example new breed of hops called New Zealand hops (Nelson Sauvignon, Motueka, Riwaka etc) bring similar characteristics to the craft brews that Sauvignon Blanc grape bring to wine (citrus, tropical fruit, gooseberry, herbal and blackcurrant leaf). The craft beer world could be included in the future trend analysis' at least on superficial level.

It should be kept in mind that Alko is substantially increasing their number of green label products in the future. This is something that is more of a requirement to operate functionally in the Finnish wine market. At least a large share of the portfolio's products should be green label products in the future.

Responsibility is used as a marketing tool. Focusing on a company's public image and appearance is crucial, especially in the digital era we live in. Favouring ethically produced wines should be on the agenda of importing companies.

The no-and low-alcohol products are on the rise. The quality of these products is constantly improving. Keeping an eye out for the upcoming products in this segment is advisable

6.3 Suggestion for future research

Trends research in general is one focus area that should have emphasis on wine market research. The articles and research I found seem to touch the topic on superficial level, but no long period statistics or cross-examination between trends and their spread and how they impact on sales

we're found. Mostly the trend research had a narrow scope and seemed to focus on consumer attitudes about different types of wine attributes, or segment of wines (organic, natural, health products).

The research about fads in the wine market was not existing. This underlines the need for trend research in general, as trends and fads can easily be viewed as the same thing. Although it is demanding to make a distinction on which portion of the sales is because of the trend or fad phenomena of a product's popularity. Therefore, long-term statistics should be considered, to examine how the sales are impacted before and after the product starts to create momentum as a trend or fad.

Consumer segmentation in the Finnish wine market is one major area of research needs. There are no statistics available of the Finnish wine sales statistics based on segments. Alko does not collect that sort of data of the purchases, and even if they could, the data would be so massive it might require big data analysing properties. Based on the overall sales of Alko it is clear that majority of the consumers are neophytes, but it is the other wine consumer segments that get less focus. Especially since trends tend to impact different wine categories and price points differently. With proper consumer segmentation it would be possible to create better marketing plans for wine importing companies.

Wine makers that implement sustainable viticulture methods but work outside the certification system should be researched more. There should be some encouragement for this type of behaviour and possibly to reconsider new certification systems.

Online wine sales should be researched now and in the future. During the pandemic times the popularity has boomed and then dived a bit. Long-term research is needed to get a better understanding of how much of overall alcohol sales will take place in virtual environment.

The NoLo products and hybrid wines need more long-term research. Especially the marketing of these products is interesting, how will they scale on wine marketing obliged restrictions. Also conducting wide scope consumer surveys could reveal more about the prospected popularity for these categories.

6.4 Reflection and learning

Writing a thesis was the biggest academic task I have encountered. For me the best approach was to take my time with it. I started in the beginning of the year 2022 and finished over 11 months later. Before I started writing I read a couple of books regarding the subject. This helped me to organize my thoughts and to come up with a proper plan. I approached the task like a puzzle, writing chapters on individual word files. Constructing my thesis this way spared me from thinking about the sheer amount of work required to complete a thesis.

As I moved along, I started to realize just how extensive the topic is. You could find endless amounts of material revolving around this topic. For me one of the hardest parts was to select the right material to extract information from. Reading books, e-books and academic articles was overwhelming at first, but I trusted my plan and started to find the right type of material. The more knowledge I obtained the clearer it was I wanted to focus on ecological, ethical and health issues, because these seemed like the most re-occurring themes in the literature. I have to say, that my background and world view affected to the path I chose, which demonstrated that the motives of the scholar influence the trend predictions they make. Yet, remaining objective while researching had the utmost importance for me. It was crucial to have properly designed delimitations. I was assisted by my thesis supervisor Jouko, especially in limiting the subject areas.

It took some time before I could vision how table of content would look like. I had already started the literature research before I could piece it together. When I was happy with the design, I had a meeting with Jouko and presented it to him. We discussed the table of content and what to focus on and what to still exclude. This gave me further clarity about the design and the focus areas. After that I continued my puzzle piecing. Making each topic and subtopic one by one, while trying to keep the text consistent.

There we're times when the thesis wasn't high on my agenda, and I allowed myself to take some time out of it. This was good for two reasons: firstly, when returning to the task I noticed that I had consciously and subconsciously solved some problems that I seemed to be stuck with at times and secondly, I didn't have to force myself to write so often. I easily get sloppy when I need to push without motivation or energy.

Towards the end my motivation grew, as I was quite pleased with my literature research. The next big problem I encountered was the qualitative research part. Luckily, I had taken Thesis-1 and Research and Innovation Methods courses. I had some knowledge about the theory of conducting

qualitative research. Reading more about it helped me clarify what I should focus on when formulating the questions and how to conduct the interview. When formulating the questions, I focused on three themes from the literature research. The expert answers gave me some confidence about the literature research in general, but as explained before trend prediction is usually subjective, therefore the focus was on the literature research. Some of the answers were outside my scope, but this was anticipated, and the answers complemented the work nicely.

When I had conducted the interviews, I contacted Haaga-Helia library to get further guidance. I booked one hour session with Anna Veijalainen. This proved to be extremely helpful for me, as she clarified how I should construct the qualitative research section and what is important when writing the data and results part. I also got tips on how to write an introduction that has all the required elements. This meeting gave me valuable information on how to construct the last pieces to the puzzle.

Overall, I learned a lot during this process. I became better at time management, which will be an advantage in the work-life. I learned patience as it took a lot of work before I was happy with the thesis. At times I was frustrated, but I learned that this too was a part of the process. Reading through a lot of material and choosing the most relevant sources was hard but improved my concentration and ability to plan ahead and partly see the puzzle before it was finished.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Qualitative interview questions

Interview

Consumer trends

1. What consumer trends are anticipated to maintain or build popularity in the future?
2. Can you name any arising consumer trends?
3. What has changed in the consumer behaviour in the past years

Megatrends and weak signals

4. What megatrend is likely to have the most impact on the wine market in the future?
5. How likely it is for megatrends to shift the power relations of wine producing countries in the future?
6. Are there any weak signals that could lead to surprising trends?

Wine trends

7. What criteria will consumers have when choosing wines in the future?
8. How significant trends are in proportion to overall sales?
9. How do wine producers attract new customers in the future?