

Concept Paper

Rethinking Luxury for Segmentation and Brand Strategy: The Semiotic Square and Identity Prism Model for Fine Wines

Federica Galli, Carl A. Boger, Jr. and D. Christopher Taylor*

University of Houston, 4800 Calhoun Rd, Houston TX 77004, USA; federica.galli@gmail.com (F.G.); cboger@uh.edu (C.A.B., Jr.)

* Correspondence: dctaylor@uh.edu; Tel.: +1-713-743-0952

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Abstract: Positioning a fine wine is a complex marketing operation which tends to focus on product characteristics and tends to ignore the consumer–brand relationship. As for other luxury products, fine wine consumers are a heterogeneous group which can be broken down into clearly distinctive and often antithetical subgroups. This conceptual paper proposes a different approach to defining fine wine consumers and the brand–consumer interaction. The Aristotle-inspired semiotic square model and Kapferer’s brand identity prism were coupled to identify not only fine wine consumer groups but also with which brand characteristics they mainly interact. While the semiotic square model identifies 6 distinct groups of fine wine consumers—enthusiasts, experts, connoisseurs, drinker, novice, event goers—the brand identity prism recognizes 6 constructs—physique (material), personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. Pairing the consumer’s semiotic square and the brand’s identity prism could help brands to bridge the gap between the actual consumer subgroups and the ideal target consumers to better understand their customer base, to correctly position their brand, and to create an inclusive marketing strategy. This article is the first to apply the semiotic square/brand identity prism model within the context of the fine wine industry, as most positioning literature tends to focus on involvement or on the label itself.

Keywords: marketing; fine wine; brand strategy; semiotic square; brand identity prism

1. Introduction

An understanding of fine wine consumers is elusive as well as complex since they tend to be heterogeneous in their thought processes and values toward fine wines [1–6]. Bernard Arnault, founder–CEO of the Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy Group (LVMH) group, with more than 60 brands, summarizes these heterogeneous groups as “The ordinary of extraordinary people and the extraordinary of ordinary people” with different expected brand values and pursuits [7]. A troubling realization for fine wine marketers is that positioning a fine wine is no longer solely in their control [8–11]. Positioning a fine wine is complex [12] and tends to focus on its rarity, price, history, region, process, physical aspects of aesthetics, and varietal characteristics, which are all product-focused and historically significant. The consumer’s rationale for consuming a fine wine, such as their contextual consumption patterns, emotional feelings toward the aesthetics, hedonistic and social (status) benefits [13], tend to be ignored since they are difficult to predict, control, and measure [14,15].

We propose a different approach to defining fine wine consumers by using the semiotic square [16] to identify consumer groups while also using the identity prism to position a fine wine brand by its values and brand meanings [17]. The luxury fashion industry, especially in Europe, uses the semiotic

square and identity prism to position their luxury brands, and also attempt to balance traditional and lifestyle fashions into a heterogeneous consumer world [18,19]. This approach has not been incorporated within the context of the fine wine industry as most positioning literature tends to focus on involvement [20] or on the label itself [21].

2. Semiotic Square

According to [22], a Lithuanian linguist and semiotician, the semiotic square is based on Aristotle's logical square of opposition that argues the following:

"The square is a map of logical possibilities. As such, it can be used as a heuristic device, and in fact attempting to fill it stimulates the imagination. The puzzle pieces, especially the neutral term, seldom fall conveniently into place . . . playing with the possibilities of the square is authorized since the theory of the square allows us to see all thinking as a game, with the logical relationships as the rules and concepts current in a given language and culture as the pieces." [23]

The semiotic square requires us to think about fine wine consumers not as a coherent group but rather as groups of opposites that must be defined and managed within their own cultural contexts, beliefs, and values [24]. This approach forces marketers to think beyond their ideal consumer groups and identify others that have been largely ignored. This contrary perspective requires marketers to examine the range of possibilities in terms of examining the different brand values and motivations of these consumer groups and create a brand strategy that responds to them [25].

We hypothesized six distinct groups of fine wine consumers based on the semiotic square model (Figure 1). Enthusiasts love to drink fine wines, be seen as social influencers, and tell others about the wines they consume. They focus on the hedonistic pleasures and prestige of drinking fine wines while ignoring the traditional matrices of evaluating a fine wine. Experts are people who understand fine wines in terms of their historical, varietal, physical aesthetics and process nuances. They speak authoritatively about fine wines in technical terms much like a commentator analyzing the technical program of an ice skater. Their desire is to be seen as renowned experts, which brings them prestige. Novices understand that fine wines have traditional matrices that has been adopted over the centuries of wine production and consumption. They lack the knowledge to define fine wines by these traditional matrices, hence lacking the confidence to suggest fine wines to others. This lack of knowledge causes them to be more hesitant about selecting fine wines and reliant on experts for their fine wine selection and for making recommendations to others. Drinkers enjoy fine wines for their personal consumption and do not care about sharing their choices with others. They seek personal hedonistic pleasures when consuming fine wines and are willing to select their own fine wines because they want to select wines that they enjoy.

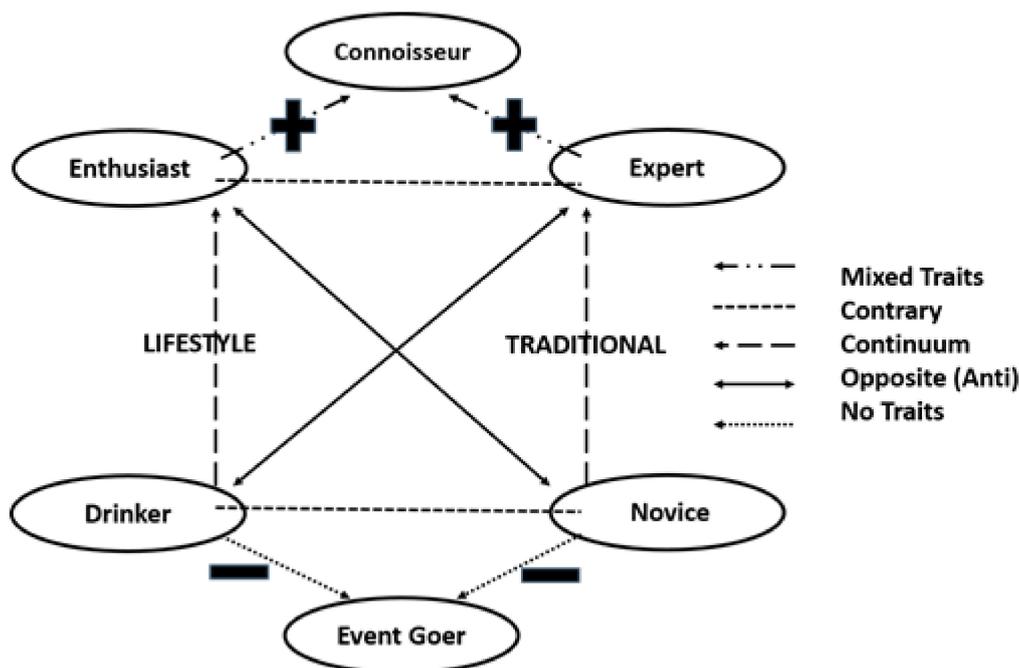


Figure 1. Semiotic Square Model for fine wine consumers.

The semiotic square suggests that we can define these four groups by how they can be compared to the other groups. A group can be either contrary, opposite, or a continuum against the other groups. Enthusiasts possess a contrary viewpoint compared to experts. They both are seen as being influential, passionate about fine wines, and receive prestige from consuming fine wines in public, but the core difference is that one focuses on their expertise while the other focuses on hedonistic pleasures. Novices are the opposite of enthusiasts, because novices understand that fine wines have a set of matrices for their evaluation but personally lack the expertise and confidence to suggest a fine wine to others. Enthusiasts do not care about the traditional matrices of defining wines and have the confidence to promote wines that they enjoy. Drinkers share the same enthusiasm for fine wines as enthusiasts, but drinkers see it as a personal experience while enthusiasts want to promote it to others. A continuum exists between drinkers and enthusiasts ranging from how much they express their love for wines to others.

The connoisseurs and event goers are the last two groups of fine wine consumers. Connoisseurs have traits of both enthusiasts and experts. Connoisseurs are able to discuss a fine wine authoritatively by its traditional matrices but feel that a person should consume fine wines that they enjoy despite what experts might say about the quality. They are more likely to consume unbranded fine wines that can be purchased in wholesale clubs because they see them as excellent fine wines, having excellent value and enjoy their taste. They would enthusiastically promote unbranded fine wines to others because they have the confidence to promote them and want others to discover these jewels and to measure them beyond the traditional matrices. They may argue that the traditional matrices tend to promote wines of the past and go against the perspective that the consumption of fine wines ultimately rests with the taste of the individual consumer.

Event goers lack even the basic enthusiasm of drinkers or knowledge of novices. Their consumption of fine wines is based on an event rather than the enjoyment or expertise of consuming a fine wine. For example, during the holidays, weddings, or celebrations, event goers consume fine wines because of the circumstance rather than the desire to consume fine wine. Few people would fail to toast a bride and groom at their wedding, even if they would prefer not to drink a fine wine. When these event goers need to purchase fine wines for an event, they would generally seek out assistance when selecting a fine wine. Their consumption and purchase of fine

wines is based on the social norms and expectations of an event. The semiotic square suggests that when a marketing strategy is developed for a fine wine brand, the brand values of each group need to be considered when creating an overall brand strategy [24].

3. Fine Wine Identity Prism

A fine wine brand must establish its own unique, coherent brand identity that includes how a consumer should interpret, interact, and reflect the brand into their own self-identity [26–29]. Creating a unique brand identity of a fine wine brand is similar to a great artist creating art in their own style. Do we talk about those who are able to copy a great artist such as Picasso or Rembrandt, or do we discuss and honor how they impacted the art world through their interpretation of art through their unique style? To achieve brand coherence, a fine wine brand must stay true to its identity so it can remain recognizable among other brands [30,31]. When the creator is at the helm, he/she is the benchmark, the source of disruptive creations (superlative positioning) that reflects their style and taste. It is critical that a fine wine brand identity, which is expressed as brand meanings and values, is codified into the DNA of the brand to ensure that a fine wine can survive well beyond the life of its creator [32,33].

A fine wine brand must resist the urge of coddling the consumer by reacting to their whims by continually modifying their brand position, such as by democratizing their brand [34–36]. An example of this is when a fine wine wants to attract a broader consumer market by creating lower-quality brands under the same Château. At what point will fine wine consumers resist consuming these fine wines because the Château has damaged its luxury brand image? The concept of the democratization of luxury brands causes brands to lose their luxurious luster and ultimately reduces the demand for these brands. On the other hand, wineries may reserve a certain amount of their vineyard for their ultra-fine wines, which have a limited production. Another current strategy is the selling of fine wines through wholesale clubs at lower price points by being branded under the store's signature brands, which actually prevent these fine wines from losing their brand luster [37]. In other words, the wineries hide the fact that they are offering a *masstige* (masses + prestige) brand [38], which secretly democratizes their brand.

The identifiable characteristics of a fine wine cannot be appended but rather mature from the brand's roots, its heritage, and other characteristics that give it its unique authority and legitimacy in a specific territory of values and benefits [39,40]. These characteristics are the "DNA" of a brand. A fine wine must be recognized beyond its label, logo, and name, but also by its style, intangible characteristics, communication, and point of difference (superlative position). What do people say about the brand when not talking about the product (measurable physical aesthetics)?

The brand identity of a fine wine needs to reassure and seduce consumers by the unique dreams (experiential positioning) that it creates [41]. A fine wine brand needs to create a world in which consumers desire to immerse themselves by communicating, purchasing, displaying, and consuming, and thus build their self-efficacy, which is difficult to do [42]. The notion of creating a unique identity is critical in a world in which there are shelves of fine wines which are typically poor at conveying a sales message, with the exception of a rating system [43]. The traditional matrices of positioning a fine wine brand lack the relational aspects between the brand and consumer, ignore the brand characteristics that consumers deem important to them, and do not recognize how a consumer incorporates the fine wine brand into their own self-concept [44].

Kapferer [45] defines a brand identity prism that communicates the meanings and values of the brand while also reflecting the expected meanings and values toward the brand by the actual or mythical luxury consumer (Figure 2). The six aspects of the Kapferer's brand identity prism include (1) the physique (material), (2) personality, (3) culture, (4) relationship, (5) reflection, and (6) self-image (Figure 2). These six aspects are divided over two dimensions of the constructed source (created image of the brand) versus the constructed receiver (how the brand expects the actual or mystical consumer to be reflected in the brand); and the externalization (outward expression of the brand identity in terms

of its physical qualities, how it interacts with the consumer, and the ideal type of consumer) versus the internationalization (brand personality, DNA and values of the brand, and how the brand will impact the consumer's self-concept).

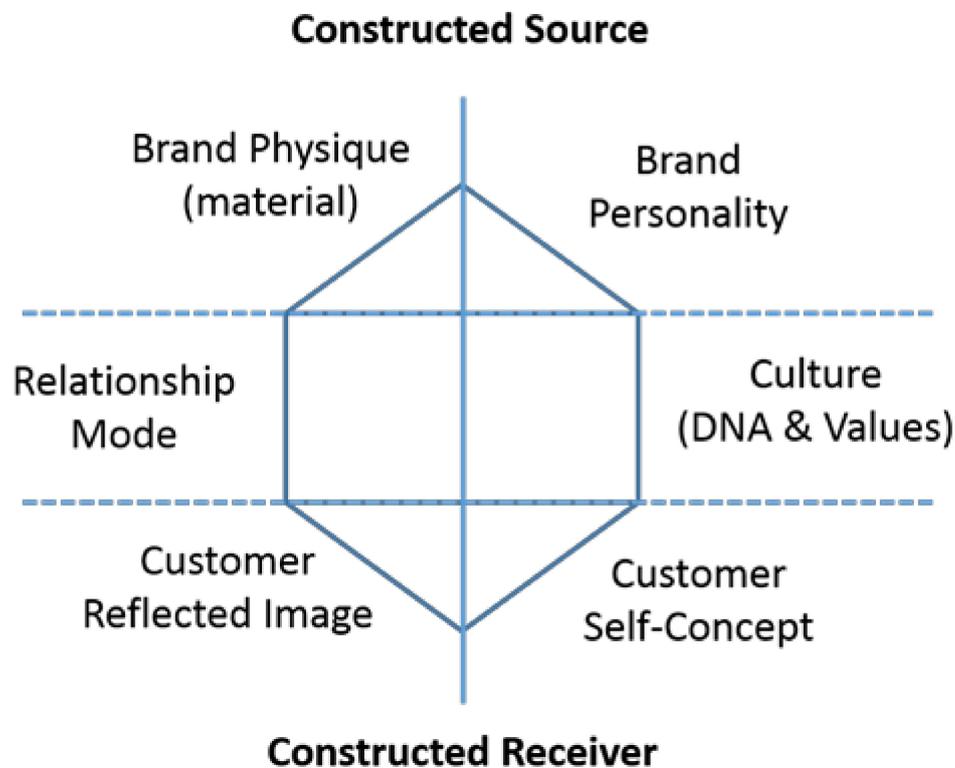


Figure 2. Identify Prism Model for a fine wine brand.

The physique aspect represents a set of the brand's unique physical features (measurable, tangible aesthetics) that are evoked in the mind of the consumer when they hear the name of a fine wine. Han et al. [46] argue that the physical quality is one of the most important factors when purchasing a luxury product. The quality must be at a superior level [47]. Donthu and Yoo [48] found that cross-national consumers vary regarding the demand for quality value, which is based on quality expectations of individual versus collective consumers.

The physical features need to be superlative compared to other products within the same product class in terms of quality. The physical aspects of a fine wine including its color, taste, sight, smell, sound (the popping of a cork), and touch (feel of the bottle or cork or the mouth feel of a fine wine) are all critical aspects used for evaluation. Price still holds the most value in the evaluation process [49]. Despite the notion that fine wines can typically be aged, all wines are perishable and degrade over time. The anticipation of a fine wine maturing is a part of the allure of consuming fine wines as well as the planning and concern about when they will lose their superior quality.

The physical quality level of fine wines goes beyond the physical characteristics of the wine itself. The labeling and packaging of a fine wine indicates the internal quality and consistency of a fine wine [50,51]. The label communicates the producer, origin of production and packaging (e.g., France, Italy, Australia, etc.), unique processing (aging, fining, etc.), varietal, and even the color/texture of the packaging provides a cue to the quality of the wine (Champagne wrapped in gold foil or in a wooden box may indicate a superior product). The label creates physical expectations of the wine because it communicates the first cues of its physical qualities. Even the year that the wine was bottled indicates a level of quality, because some years are known for exceptional vintages because of the extraordinary physical characteristics of the wine due to the conditions of the climate, soil, harvest, or a combination of these factors.

Many packaging experts argue that the use of screw caps rather than cork enhances the physical quality of a fine wine [52]; however, many fine wine consumers view this as a reduction in authenticity and physical quality [52]. The science of maintaining the health of a cork enhances the living and breathing aspects of a fine wine, which provides its human characteristics and emphasizes its rarity as well as its physical qualities that must be monitored and maintained [53–56]. Flawless diamonds can be produced in a laboratory but lack the authenticity aspect of being a “natural” product, so when diamonds are rated, experts search for the “natural flaws”, which man-made diamonds will lack [57]. Many refer to these flawless (perfect) man-made diamonds as costume jewelry and will never classify them as diamonds even though they have a greater luster than actual diamonds.

This diamond example demonstrates the importance of creating a brand by using all six aspects of the identity prism rather than just focusing on one aspect, such as the physical aspect, because consumers value a fine wine well beyond its physical qualities [57]. The positioning of a fine wine brand on its physical qualities is also dependent on the thinking of the brand leadership [58–60]. One type of leadership may argue that the twist cap stopper is progressive and improves the quality of the fine wine, while the other argues that a fine wine must only use corks for their authenticity, enhanced rarity, and the continued legacy of historical fine wine making practices. The leadership of a fine wine brand will also be expressed in the brand personality [61–63].

The brand personality expresses an anthropomorphic vision of the brand, which is particularly important when positioning a fine wine, which typically stems from a person. The fine wine brand is in many cases a reflection of a person’s personality, which in many cases represents the founder(s), spokesperson(s) or advocate(s). Many luxury researchers argue that there is a significant difference in the brand personality between the “old” and “new” world luxury brands, including fine wines, in terms of their personality [57]. For example, Dom Perignon brand’s personality reflects the creator, Dom Perignon [64]. The mystical (actually real) character of the “creator” being a monk, living in a monastery, and perfecting the Champagne process reflects the monk’s personality who was seeking to perfect a wine that was suitable for a particular region of France. The brand personality is a reflection of its creator, which brings life to the brand. For new-world fine wines, which lack an extensive history regarding their creator, the brand personality is in cases the reflection of a spokesperson, unique stories about the founder(s), or how the wine was created [57]. The brand personality of a new-world wine focuses on story-telling rather than historical significance because of its short history.

A luxury brand relationship with the consumer is frequently the most important role within the process of human transactions and exchanges [65–67]. The question becomes what the relationship will be between a fine wine brand and consumer: is it a private experience (saved for the most sensual) [66–69] or a personal experience [70,71], exclusive [72–75] for a select few (sold only at the most exclusive restaurants, retail outlets or clubs), or consumed for a special occasion [76]? A fine wine brand must determine what type of relationship they want with the consumer. The consumption of Dom Perignon is reserved for special occasions, and so the relationship of the brand suggests that it is for celebratory events while other fine wines position themselves as a wine for every-day consumption or for collecting. A fine wine brand may see it as critical that their brand is only offered at the most exclusive clubs and resorts to portray the idea that their brand is for the aristocratic consumer. The thought of their fine wine brand being distributed in wholesale clubs is heresy because it focuses on the meritocratic consumer [76–79].

Tynan et al. [13] suggests that the relationship between the brand and consumers lasts forever and not just at the point of exchange [13,80]. The creation of a strong and enduring bond between a brand and consumer is based on an ongoing effort to engage consumers through interactions, shared values, experiential contents and rewards [81]. The stronger the relationship between a fine wine brand and consumers, the stronger the advocacy of consumers towards the brand, which creates loyal brand enthusiasts [82–84]. When consumers associate a fine wine brand with their private or public moments, they crave the consumption of the fine wine when those moments arise [68,69]. A fine wine brand must decide how they want to position the relationship between the brand and consumers. The relationship

must be viewed as being coherent as well as long-lasting. The ideal or actual relationship may vary, but a fine wine brand needs to create the image of the relationship that they want to instill in the minds of consumers.

Social media and lifestyle changes have influenced the focus of control of the relationship between a fine wine brand and its consumers [85]. Online communities and influencers (celebrities, bloggers, and critics) have dramatically increased the importance of developing an online relationship strategy that incorporates all of these external online influencers or at least an awareness and response strategy [86,87]. If social media influencers are encouraging consumers to have a different relationship with the brand than originally developed by the brand, what will be the brand's reaction? Will a fine wine brand incorporate this new relationship into their relational strategy or simply ignore it or even condemn it? The power of social media can cause the loss of millions of dollars of sales by not understanding how social media impacts the brand's relationship between themselves and the consumer [88–90].

Consumers' lifestyles also impact the relationship between them and a fine wine brand [91–93]. Consumers expect luxury goods, including fine wines, to respond to their individual needs and desires. Consumers expect that a fine wine brand should be offered where they shop, and this may include being sold at wholesale clubs, which have entered into the fine wine market. Consumers of fine wine may never disclose that they purchased a fine wine from a wholesale club because it may reduce the imagery of the fine wine but will cheerfully consume the wine in public. In some cases, a hidden relationship exists between a fine wine brand and consumers because the brand keeps hidden the fact that the fine wine they are purchasing and consuming is from their chateau [94].

This is the result of wholesale clubs creating their own fine wine signature brands from the best wine regions of the world and Chateaus; however, you are not told which Chateau the wine is from on the front of the bottle, but this will be listed on the back of the bottle or in the marketing materials if needed [95]. A buyer of a wholesale club encourages her consumers, who enjoy their store-brand wines, to pour them into a decanter before serving and throw away the bottles. This allows their consumers to socially express their sophistication by serving fine wines from the best wine regions and chateaus of the world; however, they must accept the fact that they will not know which Chateau the wine comes from, but will receive excellent value. How important are wholesale clubs in the marketing and distribution of fine wines? Last year, Costco sold over a billion dollars of wines, which makes them one of the largest wine retailers in the world [96].

The culture of a fine wine represents its DNA and values and in many cases creates the foundation for a fine wine to be superlative [57,97–99]. The culture is initially created by the creator or founder, who insists on certain values in the creation and consumption of a fine wine, which is codified in the DNA of the brand. In many cases, the values and DNA of a fine wine brand are reflective of the founder(s) own employees and consumers. A fine wine brand leader desires to maintain the authenticity of the brand's roots by still storing the wine in oak barrels from trees found only in France [100] and using only organic pesticides that have been used for generations to grow grapes [101]. The leadership resists the modern movement of producing their fine wine in stainless steel tanks with oak flavoring. They also resist using cheaper and more effective modern pesticides because of the value they place on growing grapes by using traditional and organic practices, even though these modern methods tend to produce high-quality and more consistent wines. Consumers who seek natural or organic products are drawn to brands with the same concern for authentic, organically-grown products and the environment, while employees may also seek to work for a type of company who shares their values, including wineries [102,103].

The culture is often a reflection of the locality where it was created [45,57,104]. The vines of a fine wine can be transplanted into another region of the world with similar environmental conditions, but the fine wine loses the authenticity and cultural values of being produced in its natural setting, which is a reflection of the local culture. Many of the luxury products in the world have a locality significance: Champagne from France, watches from Switzerland, diamonds from South Africa, or furs

from Russia. The argument that Champagne can only be produced in France has been argued for decades because of its local significance, despite the fact that the process and quality can be exported, even if the locality cannot. Another locality trait is how to measure the quality of a luxury product; many of the quality measurement matrices of fine wines were created where the product was initially created, hence Champagne is measured by the quality aspects developed by the original creators from France [105].

The customer-reflected image is a reflected image of the ideal or actual consumer that represents a brand [47]. What are the personal characteristics and traits of the consumer they want to portray consuming the brand? The reflected image may never actually show the consumer but rather create an image of a consumer's imagination. In many cases, a luxury car company shows a car driving down a winding road in the mountains far away from the day-to-day dreariness of life in the hopes that the consumer will place themselves behind the wheel of the car [72]. For the fine wine world, this could be reflected by showing a glass of a fine wine on a table located on a yacht while cruising down the Mediterranean Sea. This suggests that their targeted wine consumer is sophisticated, beautiful, wealthy and someone who enjoys life and enjoys their leisure time. The reality of the actual consumers might be totally different from the illusion created by the brand, but they are drawn towards the brand that creates a personal image that consumers either aspire to, represent, or want to engage with. This reflected image of a real or hypothetical consumer establishes the values, standards, and norms of a social group of a fine wine brand.

The final aspect of brand identity is how the brand influences a consumer's self-concept, which is defined by the brand [17,105]. There are two aspects of influencing a consumer's self-concept: (1) internally and (2) externally. Internally, a brand makes consumers feel differently about themselves (i.e., sophisticated, wealthy, glamorous, sensual), and externally, a brand makes consumer think about how others see them (status, belonging) when consuming a fine wine. Tynan et al. [13] argue that many sources of internal and external self-concepts overlap because consumers attempt to meet both their personal (internal) self-concept needs while also aspiring to meet group norms (external). A luxury consumer may consume a fine wine because of their social group, and this makes them feel sophisticated and glamorous. The positioning of a consumer's self-concept is critical to creating a strong emotional bond between a consumer and a fine wine brand. Understanding the duality of luxury (a desire for pleasure (internal desires) and status (external desires)) when positioning a brand in terms of a consumer's self-concept allows a fine wine brand to describe how the consumption of their brand enhances a consumer's internal and external self-concept, which creates a strong emotional connection with the brand.

4. Semiotic Square and Identity Prism Model

The reality of how a consumer actually perceives, consumes, and values a fine wine brand, which often represents a multitude of consumer subgroups, may be very different to how the brand portrays their consumers. The use of the semiotic square and identity prism models assists in identifying the different consumer groups and working out how to best position a brand. By combining these models, a new model is created that allows marketers to identify consumer groups and their values toward the brand (Figure 3). This model allows a fine wine brand to identify the different consumer groups and the individual values of each group, and compare these values against the brand values, which allows the brand to create a marketing strategy for each consumer group.

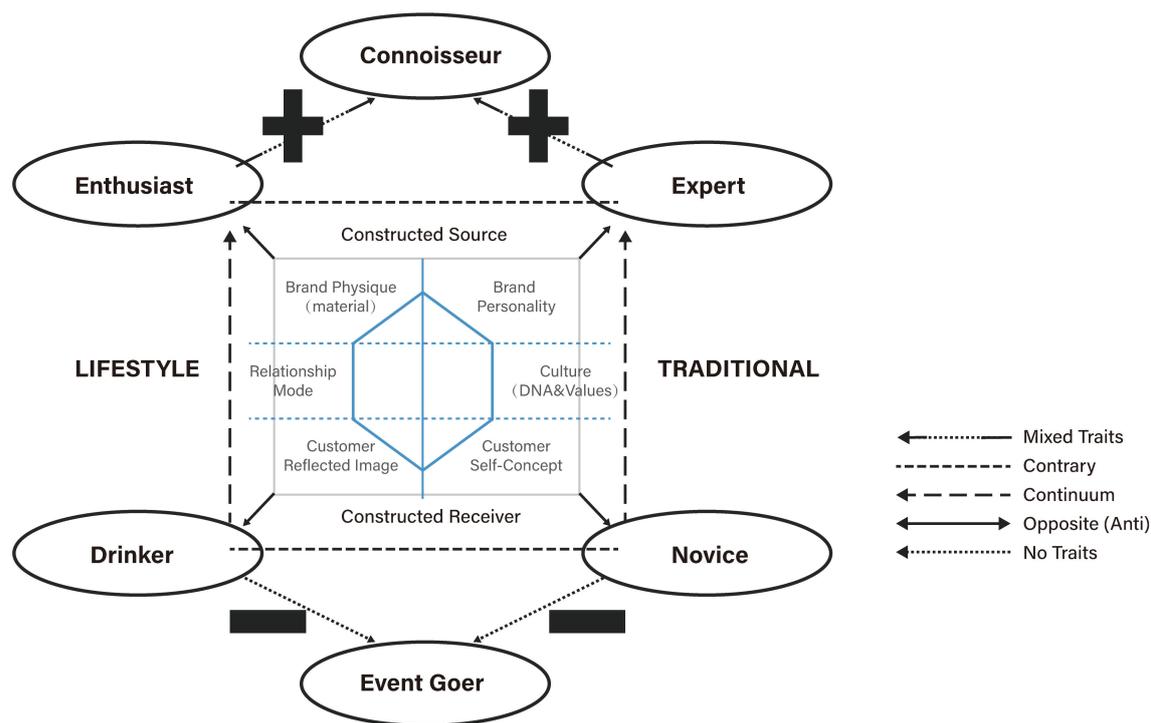


Figure 3. Semiotic Square and Identity Prism model for Fine Wines.

Event goers desire to purchase fine wines for a special event but have no emotional attachment to a brand. This may represent a marketing opportunity for a fine wine brand to create a relationship with luxury hotels to use their brand at high-level events (promotional discounts to the hotel that are passed along to the event goers to encourage them to use their products) with the understanding that their brand must be clearly displayed at the event and marketed in the event brochure. This will provide incentives to event goers to use a fine wine brand because it demonstrates their sophistication in selecting a fine wine while also promoting the fine wine to the attendees as well as positively reflecting on the luxury hotel. The marketing of a fine wine at special events signals the quality of the wines as well as their exclusivity by being marketed at only prestigious events. The wine selection at most special events in five-star hotels tends to represent second or third-tier wines. Sophisticated wine consumers tend to scoff at wines served at special events in luxury hotels and would typically avoid drinking or purchasing these wines outside of the event.

We also argue that using our approach could avoid embarrassing moments; for example, Jay-Z’s feud with the House of Louis Roederer regarding the Cristal Champagne line. It must be noted that the uproar was from the characterization of the reporter; however, the managing director of Cristal, Frederic Rouzaud, truly did not understand the possible uproar with the hip-hop community. Jay-Z was quoted as saying, “It has come to my attention that the managing director of Cristal, Frederic Rouzaud, views the ‘hip-hop’ culture as ‘unwelcome attention’ . . . I view his comments as racist and will no longer support any of his products through any of my various brands including the 40/40 Club nor in my personal life.”

Cristal, which Roederer House considers its “jewel”, began to be mentioned by many hip-hop devotees following an onslaught of mentions in hip-hop songs starting in the 1990s. The rapper’s boycott did not stop there, but he also purchased a rival champagne company, called Armand de Brignac Champagne, which produces the “Ace of Spades” Champagne. Many event organizers who have prominent African-American attendees are shying away from serving Cristal Champagne, and so the impact goes well beyond the hip-hop community. By not understanding that Jay-Z consumed

Cristal as a lifestyle consumer and was passionate about the Cristal Champagne brand while also being influential and an iconic figure to a large number of African–Americans and hip-hop music supporters, the company missed an opportunity to be seen as a fine wine brand for all successful cultures including hip-hop music fans.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the semiotic square identifies six distinct groups of fine wine consumers: (1) connoisseurs, (2) enthusiasts, (3) experts, (4) drinkers, (5) experts, and (6) and event goers. This technique requires marketers to examine their consumers not as a coherent group but rather as diverse groups with different values and expectations. The concept of examining opposites requires marketers to explore not only their ideal markets but also the markets that are not consistent with their brand. An effective brand management strategy for each consumer group is essential to exploit market potential and to avoid embarrassing moments. Each fine wine marketing team needs to use the semiotic square to identify their own consumer groups. Our consumer groups are hypothetical, and marketers using them without exploring their own groups would be unrealistic and could lead to poor conclusions and marketing schemes. A fine wine brand must accept the fact that their brand needs to be superlative to the other brands, which also indicates that different consumer groups are drawn to the uniqueness of the brand.

The current positioning of a fine wine brand is primarily focused on the physical characteristics of the aesthetics using historical evaluative matrices, without acknowledging the fact that a fine wine brand can have a very strong emotional bond with their consumers in terms of the relationship with them and how it impacts their self-concept. The identity prism requires that a fine wine brand develops a brand position that focuses on the following six aspects to avoid a myopic positioning perspective: (1) brand physique, (2) brand personality, (3) relationship mode, (4) culture (DNA & values), (5) customer-reflected image, and (6) customer self-concept. By merging the semiotic and prism models into a single model, marketers can compare the brand values held by the brand itself against its consumer groups to create a more effective marketing and positioning strategy.

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