



FRENCH GENERATION Z AND THEIR WINE CLOSURE PREFERENCES



Author
Nora Poulard

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Author

Nora Poulard

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Coach

Sabine Kuiper

Preface

This research examines the wine closure preferences of French Generation Z, those born between 1996 and 2010, a demographic crucial for the evolving consumer market. The study focuses on their choice between traditional cork and modern screw cap closures in the wine industry, reflecting the intersection of tradition, sustainability, and modernity.

In this thesis, I explore a subject that not only resonates with my personal interests but also holds significant importance for the French wine industry. My fascination with the nuanced and rich world of wine, combined with a keen desire to contribute meaningfully to the industry, motivated my choice of this study.

Understanding the preferences and tendencies of the next generation of wine buyers – particularly French Generation Z – is crucial for winemakers aiming to stay relevant and successful in a rapidly evolving market. By delving into their preferences for wine closures, a seemingly small yet culturally and commercially significant aspect of wine, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the minds of these young consumers.

It is my hope that the findings of this thesis will not only offer a deeper understanding of Generation Z's preferences but also assist French winemakers in tailoring their products and marketing strategies to engage with this upcoming generation more effectively.

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Summary

The document titled "French Generation Z and their wine closure preferences" is a research proposal by Nora Poulard, a bachelor's degree student in International Agribusiness. The study was conducted under the guidance of coach Sabine Kuiper. The research focuses on the preferences of French Generation Z consumers (born between 1996 and 2010) regarding wine closures, specifically between cork and screw cap closures. This demographic is known as the "technology-native" generation and are characterized by their environmental consciousness.

The research question is the following : What are the factors that influence French Generation Z consumers' preferences between cork or screw-cap wine closures?

The study aims to understand the factors influencing Generation Z's preferences for wine closures, considering aspects like traditional French wine consumption culture, sustainability, perceived wine quality, and price. The methodology involves a quantitative approach using a survey, with subsequent data analysis through descriptive analysis.

The research concludes that the primary factors influencing French Generation Z's preferences are cultural attachment to cork and price considerations, while perceptions of wine quality and sustainability awareness show less influence.

Given the strong preference for cork, winemakers should consider this when targeting Generation Z. However, there's room for education regarding the sustainability and quality aspects of screw caps, which might influence future preferences.

This thesis provides insights for the French wine industry. It highlights the need to understand the evolving preferences of younger consumers, balancing tradition with modern sustainability concerns. As Generation Z becomes a more significant market segment, these findings will be crucial for the industry's adaptation and growth.

1 Introduction

The French economy depends heavily on the wine industry. In rural areas with little economic activity, it represents the second-largest net trade surplus (Ugaglia et al., 2019). Historically, France has been the world leader in wine production, ranking first in terms of value. French wines are well-known and have a long history. However, since the 1970s, both wine production and consumption have been steadily declining in France (Ugaglia et al., 2019). To be competitive, French producers must meet customer expectations (Ugaglia et al., 2019). Therefore to balance this declining consumption, wine marketing nowadays in France needs to consider many factors when promoting the product to stay competitive. The packaging is one of them, which includes different components (Brence & Ozolina, 2019). This research will focus on the closure one and the factors that influence Generation Z's preferences between a cork closure or a screw cap one.

1.1 Generation Z

Generation Z, often referred to as Gen Z, is the most recent generational classification, referring to individuals born between 1996 and 2010 (*What Is Gen Z?*, 2023). This cohort follows the Millennials (1981-1996), also known as Gen Y, as well as the Gen X (1965-1980) and the Baby Boomers (1946-1964). To be clear, Gen Z includes people who are between 13 and 27 years old in 2023.

Beyond their birth years, Gen Z can be defined as the "technology-native" generation, having grown up in an environment saturated with new technologies, including smartphones, the internet, television, and, notably, social media (Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

Moreover, Gen Z is also defined as a generation that raises awareness about climate change and who is trying to make sustainable choices (Schwartz et al., 2022).

According to (Peltier, 2022) Gen Z represents 12% of the French population.

1.2 Generation Z and its wine consumption

In France Gen Z accounts for only 7% of the overall wine consumer demographic. Nevertheless, this generation significantly influences wine consumption trends, constituting 49% of the wine consumed in bars and cafés. Furthermore, a substantial 53% of Gen Z individuals purchase wine through e-commerce channels, while 55% are inclined to consider wines bearing an organic label (Bachelard, 2022). When it comes to their wine choices, it appears that Gen Z displays a balanced preference for wine types, as they consume red, white, and rosé wines in relatively equal proportions.

In France, it is legally permissible to consume wine from the age of 18. With that said, from now on during this research when discussing Gen Z and their wine consumption, refers specifically to individuals aged 18 to 26 within the Gen Z demographic, as this represents the segment of the generation legally allowed to drink wine.

1.3 The role of the wine closure

Different stoppers can be used at the end of the bottling, it's important to understand the role of the stopper no matter which one it is. The stopper is used to "protect the wine against oxidation and to avoid spillage throughout the life of the wine in the bottle" (Gerbod & Herbert, 2020).

Oxidation is a phenomenon that occurs when the wine is in contact with the air, if a tiny exchange occurs it can be beneficial for the wine by transforming its aromas. On the other hand, if this exchange becomes too long the wine can develop unpleasant tastes for the consumer or even transform the ethanol into acetic acid, which in other words transforms the wine into vinegar (Gerbod & Herbert, 2020).

The oxidation reactions involving polyphenols in wine are complex and play a significant role in determining the quality taste and aroma characteristics of the wine. Polyphenols are compounds found in grapes that are important for the color, flavor, and texture of the wine. They include compounds such as tannins, anthocyanins, and flavonoids. Oxidation reactions can have positive or negative effects on wine depending on the amount of oxygen added. Moderate and controlled oxygen additions can lead to the production of higher-quality wine by improving aromas and flavors, reducing bitterness and astringency, and stabilizing color. However, too little, or too much oxygen can lead to the development of undesirable aromas, color instability, and overall loss of wine quality. It is important to note that to achieve optimal wine quality, oxygen additions must be properly managed at all stages of winemaking, including fermentation, aging, and storage. Modern techniques such as micro-oxygenation and the use of new or aged barrels can be used to control oxygen levels and influence the organoleptic characteristics of the wine (Deshaies et al., 2020).

This is why the choice of the stopper is crucial during the bottling, depending on the stopper the wine will undergo a different oxidation.

1.4 Cork closure

Cork stoppers have been used for wine closure for more than three centuries. The inventor of the cork stopper was Dom Pérignon (1638-1715), since then the cork kept evolving to better adapt to the wine bottling needs (Crouvisier-Urien et al., 2019). It proves to be very practical during the bottling of wines, firstly its elasticity allows a simpler bottling with fewer risks, secondly, its sealing makes it a very effective stopper while not affecting the organoleptic qualities of wines (Monteiro De Araújo Silva, 2011). The cork stopper is a preferred stopper for winemakers for many reasons. Indeed, the passage of oxygen from the air into the bottle during aging is a key factor for its evolution. In certain cases, this passage of oxygen during aging represents a great part of the quality of the wine and its organoleptic qualities. The cork stopper is still the most used by winegrowers today, indeed it will allow the exchanges between the external oxygen and the wine (Chanut et al., 2021). Moreover, the use of cork is justified for many criteria, it resists fire and water, does not disintegrate over time, and has many insulating properties (Vinatis, n.d.). This interest in the cork stopper is translated through the figures of production in France, the bottles bottled with cork stoppers represent

around 70 % of the market share (Trévoux, 2022). However, the cork's only risk is to contain some molecules (trichloroanisoles), specific to the cork material, which can impact the wine's organoleptic characteristic while giving it a "cork" taste. To avoid this taste consider a default in the wine industry, many new stoppers were born in the last decade such as plastic ones, glass ones, and screw caps (Karbowski et al., 2019).

1.5 Screw cap closure

In France, only 30% of the wine bottles are closed with a screw cap, and this figure is even lower in some countries such as Spain (10%) or Italy (19%) (Statista, 2023). On the other hand, the use of screw caps is almost a monopoly in some countries such as New Zealand or Australia (The Australian Wine Research Institute, 2022). In 2018, 30% of wine bottles produced from around the world were capped with screw caps. In 2012 in Europe, the market share of screw caps was 26% and rose to 29.6% in 2016 (Meiningers wine business international, 2018).

1.6 Closure sustainability

The ongoing debate surrounding the sustainability of wine closures, particularly cork and screw caps, is a complex and continuously evolving discussion. Each option has its distinct advantages and drawbacks from an environmental standpoint, and the choice between them can be influenced by a multitude of factors, including consumer perceptions and preferences. Cork, derived from cork oak trees, is celebrated for its biodegradability, as it naturally breaks down over time. This attribute can be seen as advantageous when considering the environmental impact of discarded corks, particularly if they end up in landfills. However, some questions still arise from the management of the cork oak forest. Such as a disparity between the individuals involved in the industrial transformation of cork and those directly involved with the landscape in terms of how they perceive the health of the ecosystem (Sørensen et al., 2023).

On the other hand, screw caps are predominantly crafted from aluminum, a highly recyclable material. Aluminum can be recycled infinitely without a significant loss in quality, a characteristic that resonates with environmentally conscious consumers who place a premium on recyclability (Barrett, 2023).

Cork and screw caps are indeed very different from each other. Cork has been the preferred closure for winemakers for over three centuries. However, in my opinion, the screw cap is on the edge of becoming more and more popular in the French wine market. As of today, the behavior of Gen Z consumers toward wine closures is unknown. However, those born between 1996 and 2010, known as the technological generation and eco-conscious, are crucial for the future of the wine industry in France, given the declining wine consumption since 1970. Understanding their preferences and consumption patterns when purchasing wine is vital for industry players to align their offerings with the demands of this generation, who will be the future consumers.

These elements allow me to formulate the following questions:

What are the factors that influence French Generation Z consumers' preferences between cork or screw-cap wine closures?

The sub-questions that emerge from this question are the following:

1. How does the traditional French wine consumption culture influence the preference between cork and screw cap closures for Gen Z?
2. Do sustainability reasons impact the wine closure preferences of French Gen Z consumers?
3. How do French Gen Z consumers perceive differences in wine quality between cork and screw cap closures, and how does this perception influence their preferences?
4. To what extent does price play a role in Gen Z consumers' wine closure preferences?

2 Research Methodology

This research aims to investigate the decision-making factors influencing the preferences for wine closure among Gen Z consumers in France. The primary objective is to identify and describe the various drivers behind the choices between corks and screw caps, considering factors such as the tradition of using cork in French wine culture, consumption purpose, sustainability awareness, wine quality perception, and price. The research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a survey methodology. After data collection, a descriptive analysis and the use of SPSS, will be employed to address sub-questions and provide meaningful insights into the main research question. The study's comprehensive approach includes mapping survey questions to corresponding sub-questions, ensuring a thorough exploration of the factors influencing Gen Z's wine closure preferences in France.

2.1 Objective

- Identify decision-making factors that influence the preferences for wine closure for Gen Z in France

The main goal of this research is to identify and describe the various factors that drive French Gen Z consumers' preferences between corks and screw caps. This involves a multifaceted analysis of the drivers behind consumer decision-making processes. I will research different factors which I'm going to relate to the sub-questions.

The factors are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Factors chosen to research the sub-questions

FACTORS	SUB-QUESTION RELATED
TRADITION OF USING CORK IN THE FRENCH WINE CULTURE	SUB QUESTION N°1
CONSUMPTION PURPOSE	SUB QUESTION N°1
SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS	SUB QUESTION N°2
WINE QUALITY PERCEPTION	SUB QUESTION N°3
PRICE	SUB QUESTION N°4

2.2 Data collection strategy

To conduct this research effectively, a survey will be employed as a primary means of data collection. The utilization of surveys allows for the collection of quantitative data, providing a nuanced understanding of the underlying behaviors that shape the preferences of Gen Z individuals regarding wine closures. By employing a quantitative approach, this research aims to delve beyond numerical metrics and delve into the decision-making processes that

influence the choices between cork and screw cap closures among the French Gen Z demographic. (See Appendix A)

This research methodology aims to establish an appropriate sample size for conducting a survey targeting Gen Z individuals in France concerning their wine consumption habits. To achieve this, we will calculate the sample size, taking into account different margin of error values to ensure the reliability and statistical relevance of the survey results (Van Bennekom, 2018).

The complete calculation was conducted using assistance from the Van Bennekom (2018) reference.

- Population Size (N): The estimated number of Gen Z people allowed to drink wine in France. (people born between 1996 and 2005), **7,867,725**. Table 2 shows the data used for this calculation (*Naissances Et Taux De Natalité | Insee, n.d.*).

Table 2
Data for the calculation of population Size

2005	806 822
2004	799 361
2003	793 044
2002	792 745
2001	803 234
2000	807 405
1999	775 796
1998	767 906
1997	757 384
1996	764 028
TOTAL	7 867 725

(*Naissances Et Taux De Natalité | Insee, n.d.*)

- Confidence Level (C): A confidence level of 95% (0.95) is chosen, representing the degree of confidence we have that the sample will accurately reflect the entire population.

- Margin of Error (E): We will consider the margin of error values to be 7% (0.07), reflecting the level of precision desired in the survey results.

- Estimated Proportion (p): Based on available data, it is assumed that 7% of wine consumers in France are Gen Z. This proportion is expressed as a decimal, which is 0.07.

Sample Size Calculation

The sample size is determined using the following formula:

$$n = Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p) \div E^2$$

Where:

-(n) = Required sample size.

-(Z) = Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (1.96 for a 95% confidence level).

-(p) = Estimated proportion of the population (in decimal form).

-(E) = Margin of error (in decimal form).

Calculation Results

When considering a 7% margin of error, the calculated sample size is approximately 196 respondents. This larger sample size accounts for the increased margin of error while still providing meaningful insights into the target population.

The calculated sample size of 196 is essential for ensuring the reliability and statistical relevance of the survey findings.

This survey can be distributed through different meanings which are social media, professional, and personal contacts.

Regarding social media, my plan involves utilizing the following platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Instagram and Facebook will be useful in reaching a target that aligns with the characteristics of my survey respondents. Meanwhile, LinkedIn will serve the dual purpose of reaching a relevant and professional audience, wine-related. I'm optimistic that on this platform, individuals will share my survey with others, thereby expanding my reach to a broader audience.

As for my professional contacts, the idea is to distribute this survey to my previous employers in France and request them to further share it among their employees or customers.

In the case of personal contacts, I'm going to share my survey with friends and family. Given that I belong to the Gen Z demographic, the majority of my personal relationships also belong to the same generation.

To be sure to have an accurate representation of Gen Z from all over France I'll make sure to distribute this survey throughout my expanded network all over France that I was able to build during my studies. Also, I would be able to distribute my survey throughout different wine schools in France located in different parts to be sure to have respondents from all over the country.

For this research the survey is going to be distributed in French as it is the first spoken language of the respondents. To distribute this survey, I'll use the tool Google Forms.

Table 3 provides the distribution channels and the expected number of respondents.

Table 3**Survey participation expectations regarding the distribution channels**

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS	EXPECTED N° OF RESPONDENTS
Social Media	100
Personal contacts	50
Professional contact	50

To assess the reliability and validity of each respondent regarding my research question, 3 questions will be asked at the beginning of the survey.

- How old are you?
- Are you French?
- Did you buy wine for yourself or someone else this past year?

2.3 Data treatment

After collecting the data from the survey, I mainly used a descriptive analysis, a type of data research known to describe, illustrate, or usefully summarize data points to identify patterns that emerged from the data collection, in this case, the answers to the survey. These treatment strategies helped me to answer the sub-questions and ultimately address the main question of this research.

Table 4 presents a mapping of the survey questions and their corresponding sub-questions.

Table 4**Sub-questions and the related survey questions**

SURVEY QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS
Survey questions : 2,3,4,5,6,17	1. How does the traditional French wine consumption culture influence the preference between cork and screw cap closures for Gen Z?
7,8,9,17	2. Do sustainability reasons impact the wine closure preferences of French Gen Z consumers?
10,11,12,13,17	3. How do French Gen Z consumers perceive differences in wine quality between cork and screw cap closures, and how does this perception influence their preferences?
14,15,16,17	4. To what extent does price play a role in Gen Z consumers' wine closure preferences?

Question 1 (demographical question) was an independent variable that was subjected to statistical analysis to determine its effect on the survey questions. Question 18 allows the respondents to add anything on the subject that might be useful to this research. (See Appendix A

3 Results

This chapter will elucidate the survey findings, which will be visually conveyed through graphs and tables. The outcomes will be categorized according to each sub-question.

The survey spanned two weeks, garnering 200 responses; however, only 189 responses met the criteria for usefulness. To be useful, respondents had to be French and have made a wine purchase within the last year. Consequently, the results presented will exclusively highlight the insights provided by these pertinent respondents. In order to be sure that only answers from people considered as part of the Gen Z were gathered a first question with their year of birth was asked.

Therefore before the specific questions, the survey had four general ones to make sure they were relevant and to get a glimpse of the respondents' demographics.

Figure 1

Year of birth distribution of the respondents

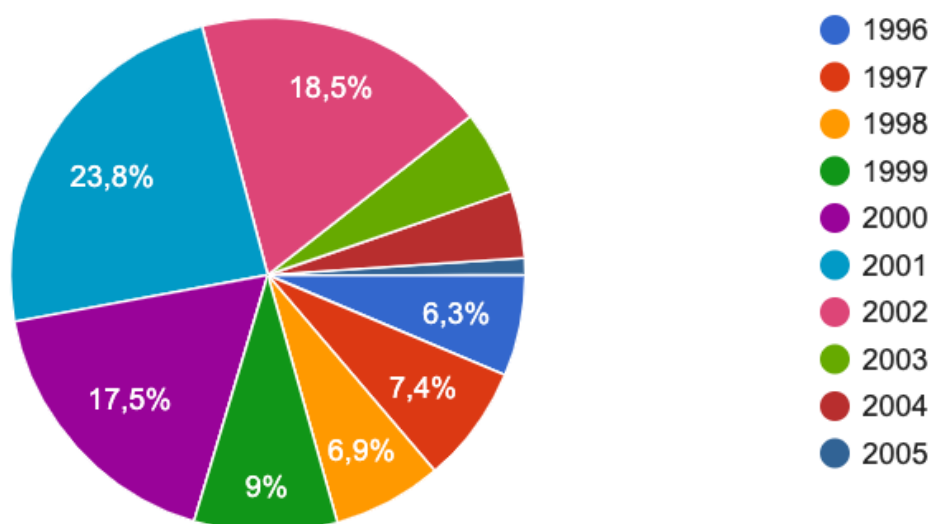


Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their year of birth. The following Table 5 is a breakdown correlating each year with its respective percentage.

Table 5

Distribution of the number of respondents for each year of birth

1997	7,4% (14)
1998	6,9% (13)
1999	9% (17)
2000	17,5% (33)
2001	23,8% (45)
2002:	18,5% (35)

2003	5,3% (10)
2004	4,2% (8)
2005	1,1% (2)

Figure 2

Gender distribution of the respondents

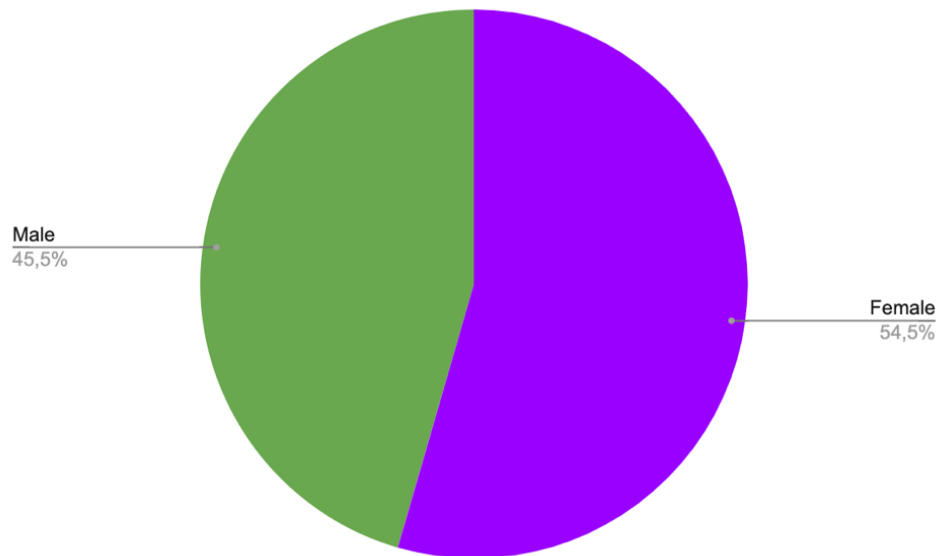


Figure 2 provides a graph about the distribution of gender of my respondents. 86 of the respondents were male and 103 were female, 0 answered “Non-binary” and 0 answered, “Prefer not to say”.

3.1 Sub question 1

Questions 2 through 6 collected data for my first sub-question : How does the traditional French wine consumption culture influence the preference between cork and screw cap closures for Gen Z?

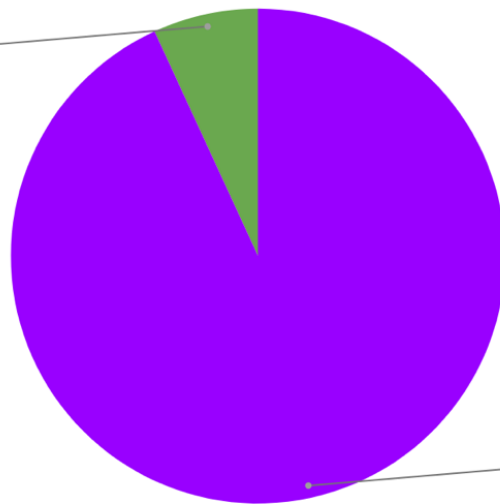
Figure 3

Answers for the survey question 2

Is cork associated with French wine culture?

No

6,9%



Yes

93,1%

The respondents were asked if they associated cork with the French wine culture, 93,1% responded "Yes" to this question.

Figure 4

Answers for the survey question 3

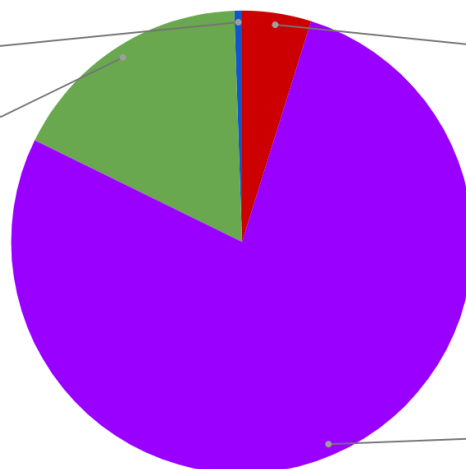
I prefer to purchase wine with a cork because it is an integral part of the consumption experience (noise, smell...)

Disagree

0,5%

Somewhat a...

17,2%



Agree

4,8%

Strongly agree

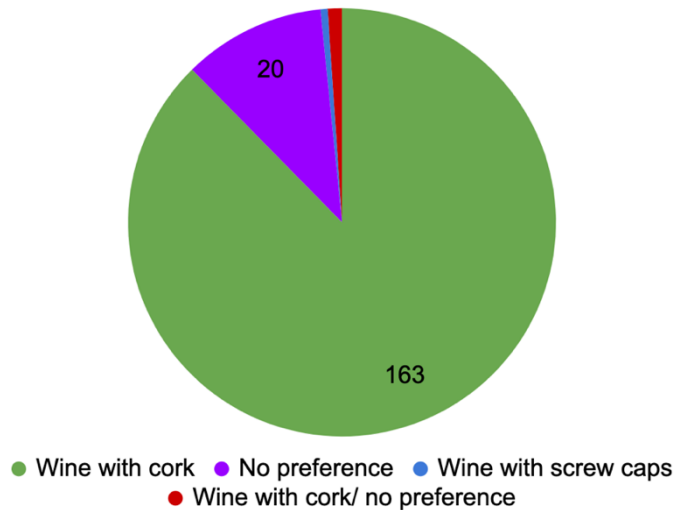
77,4%

The third question asked the respondents if they considered that cork is seen as an integral and important part of the consumption experience, to which 77,4% answered “Strongly Agree”, 4,8% answered “Agree”, 17,2% answered “Somewhat agree” and only 0,5% disagreed.

Figure 5

Answers for the survey question 4

For an event that I consider important I prefer

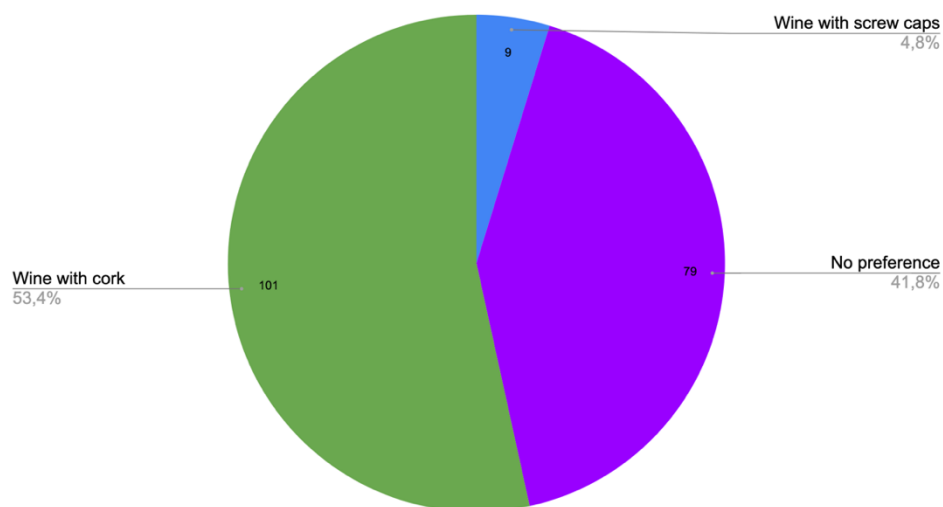


The next question was regarding their preferences of the closure regarding the type of event/reasons for consumption. For an event that they consider important, 163 respondents answered that they prefer a wine with a cork closure, and 20 of them said they have no preferences, only one person prefers a screw cap.

Figure 6

Answers for the survey question 5

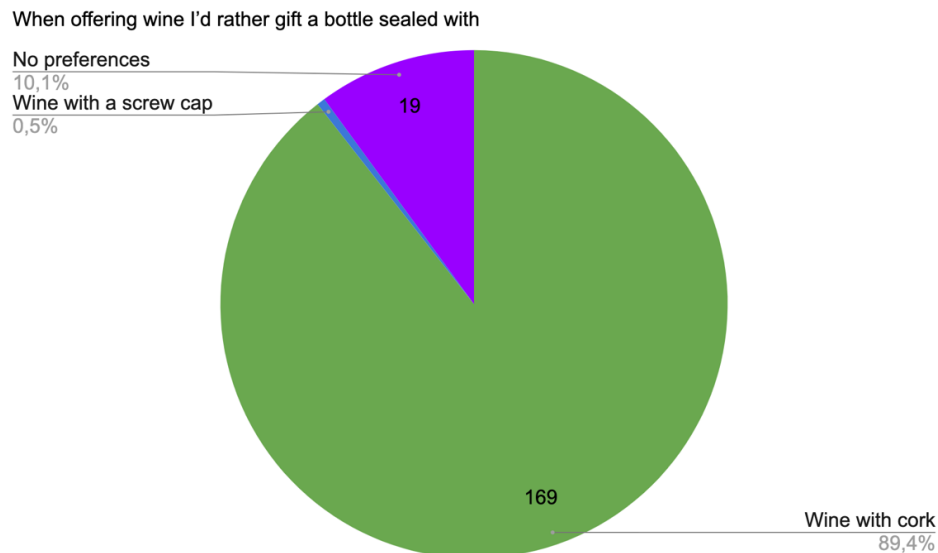
For a daily event, (dinner, picnic, aperitif...) I prefer



For an event that the respondents consider as daily, 101 said they prefer a wine with cork, 9 said a wine with a screw cap and 79 said they have no preferences.

Figure 7

Answers for the survey question 6



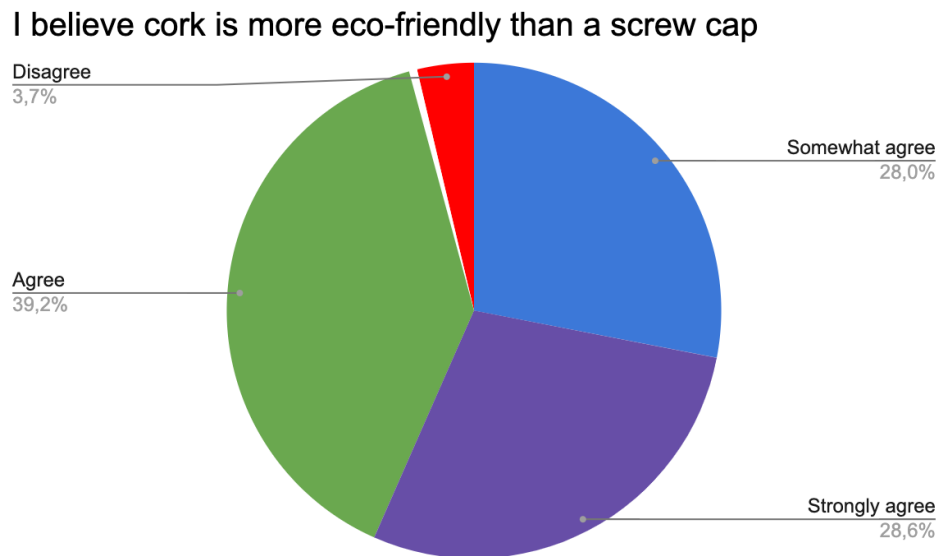
The last survey question related to the first sub-question was one related to when the respondents offer wine and their preferences of closure. Asked their preferences of wine closure when offering a wine, 169 of the respondents said they prefer a wine sealed with a cork, 19 said they have no preferences and one person said to prefer the wine with a screw cap.

3.2 Sub question 2

The next three following questions, 7 to 9, were asked to collect data for the second sub-question related to the factor of sustainability awareness : Do sustainability reasons impact the wine closure preferences of French Gen Z consumers?

Figure 8

Answers for the survey question 7

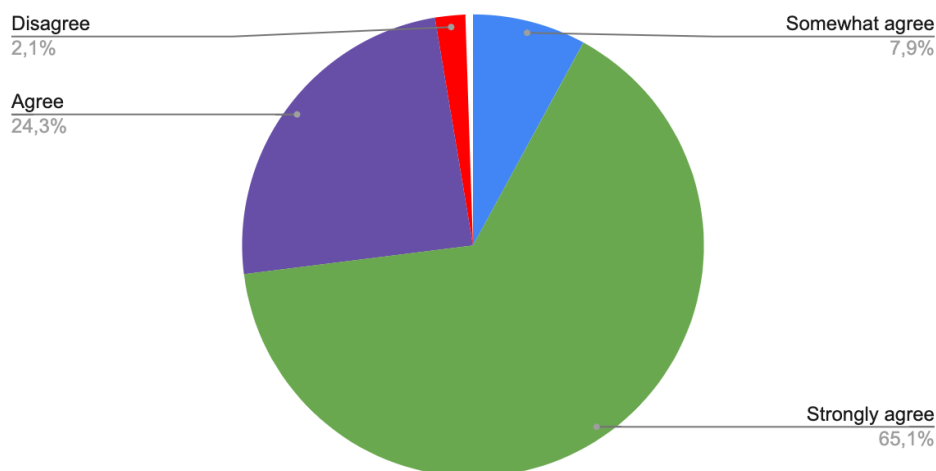


When asked if the respondents believe that cork is more eco-friendly than screw caps the answers strongly differs. Indeed, about 30% of the respondents strongly agree about 40% agree and about 30% of them somewhat agree. On the other hand only 3,7% of them disagree. Only one person responded that “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree” at the same time.

Figure 9

Answers for the survey question 8

If the cork is more eco-friendly than a screw cap, I'd rather buy wine with a cork

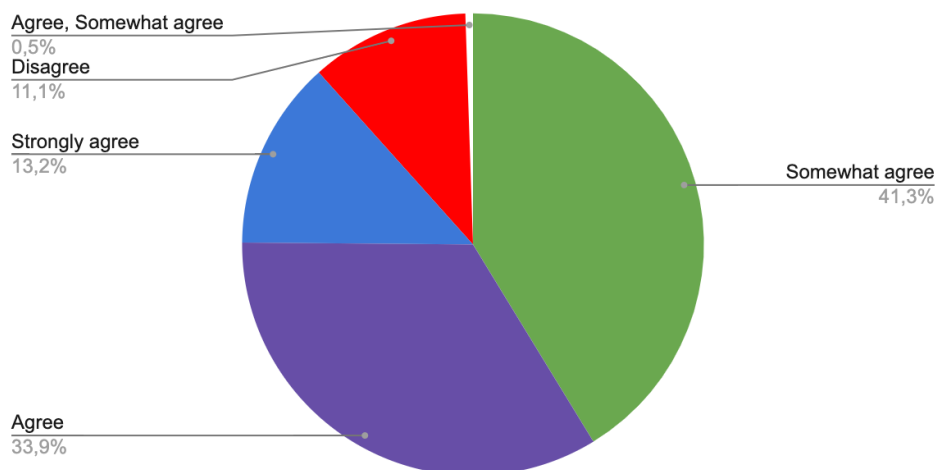


With the supposition that cork is more eco-friendly than screw caps, almost 90% of the respondents answered, "Strongly agree" and "Agree" that they would rather buy wine with a cork. One person responded both "Strongly agree" and "Agree". 7,9% answered "Somewhat agree" and 2,1% chose "Disagree".

Figure 10

Answers for the survey question 9

If a screw cap is more eco-friendly than cork, I'd rather buy wine with a screw cap



When the question was asked the other way around with the supposition that screw cap is more eco-friendly than cork, the most answered was "Somewhat agree" with 41,3%. 13,2% of the respondents answered, "Strongly agree" and 33,9% chose "Agree". One person answered to choose both "Agree" and "Somewhat Agree". 11,1% went for "Disagree".

3.3 Sub question 3

Data for the sub-question 3 were collected through the survey questions 10 to 13. The sub question 3 was related to the factor Wine quality perception : How do French Gen Z consumers perceive differences in wine quality between cork and screw cap closures, and how does this perception influence their preferences?

Figure 11

Answers for the survey question 10

Wine with cork is of better quality than wine if the screw cap

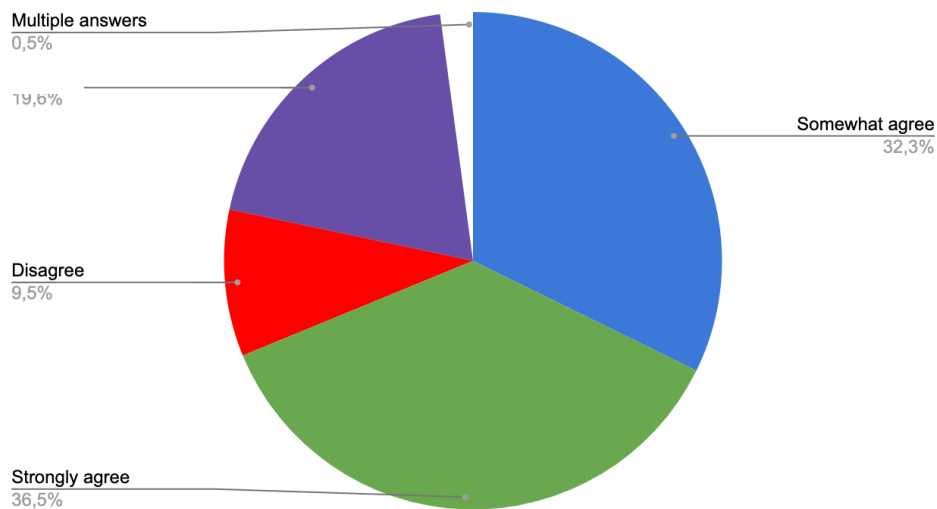


Figure 12

Answers for the survey question 11

Wine tastes better when sealed with a cork than with a screw cap

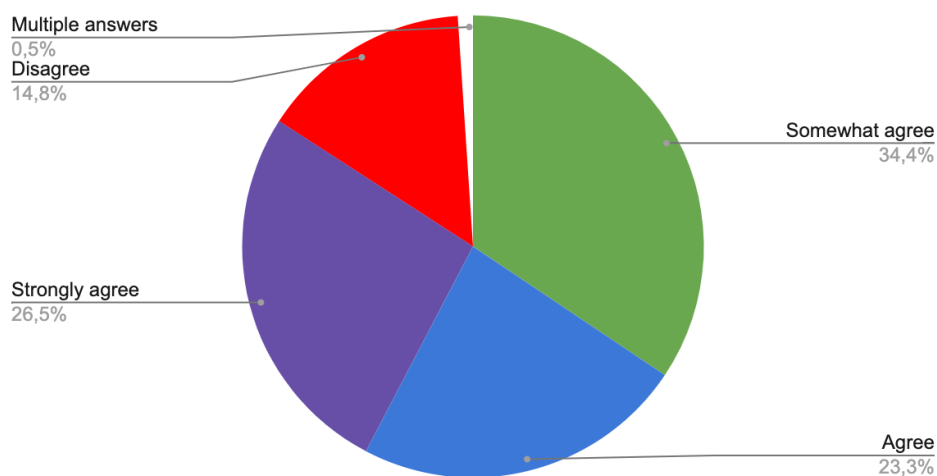


Figure 13

Answers for the survey question 12

Wine is better preserved with a cork than with a screw cap

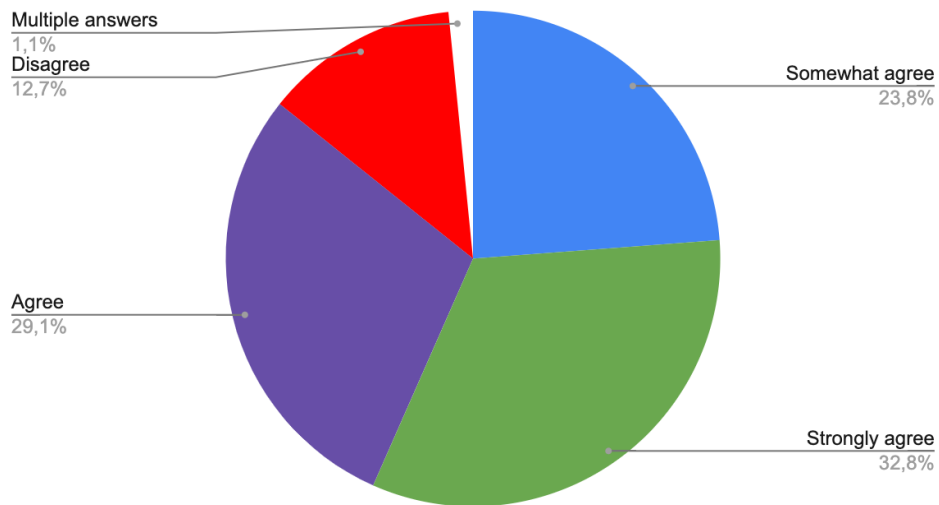
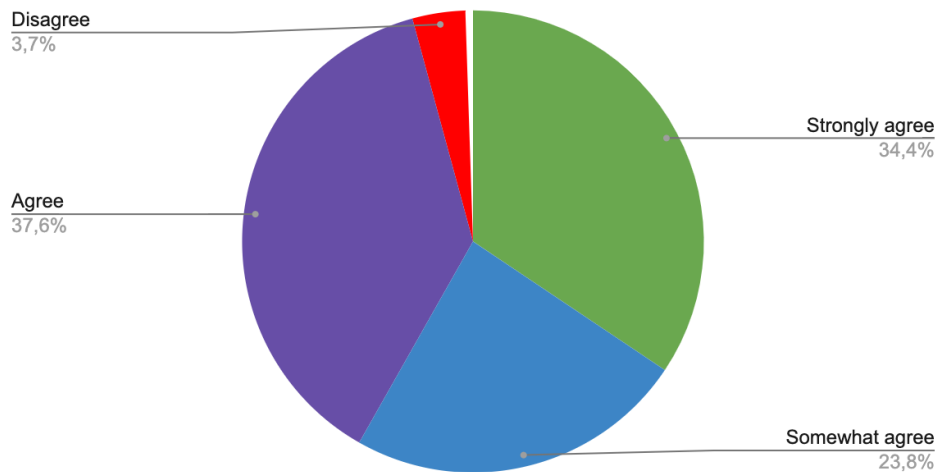


Figure 14

Answers for the survey question 13

Wine sealed with a cork or with a screw cap can have the same quality level



Figures 11 to 14 showcase the answers related to questions concerning wine quality perceptions. All four questions exhibit similar patterns, with none of them yielding significant answers. Additionally, for each question, between 1 and 4 people provided multiple answers.

3.4 Sub question 4

The last three questions (14,15,16) collected data for my sub-question 4, related to the factor "Price" : To what extent does price play a role in Gen Z consumers' wine closure preferences?

Table 6

Answers for the survey question 14

<i>Between two bottles of the same wine, one sealed with a cork priced €15 and one sealed with a screw cap priced €10, which one are you most likely to buy?</i>		
The one with the cork	The one with the screw cap	Answered both
126	58	5

For the same wine in two different bottles, one with a cork at 15€ and the other one with a screw cap at 10€, 126 respondents chose the one with a cork and 58 chose the one with a screw cap.

Table 7

Answers for the survey question 15

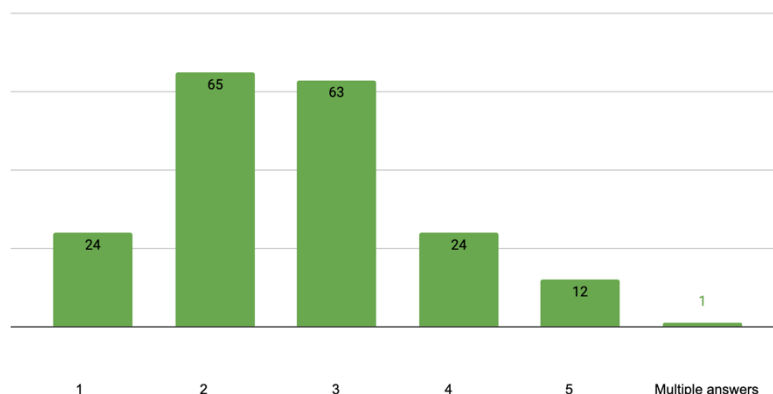
<i>What is the maximum additional amount you would be willing to pay for a bottle sealed with a cork compared to the identical bottle sealed with a screw cap?</i>					
2€	5€	7€	10€	I will always choose the one with a cork	Multiple answers
25	28	20	30	60	26

When respondents were asked how much more they would be willing to pay for a bottle sealed with a cork, 60 chose "I would always choose the one with a cork," and 26 opted for multiple choices, a notably higher figure compared to the other questions. Subsequently, the number of respondents for each specific amount varied between 20 and 30.

Figure 15

Answers to the survey question 16

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "Not important at all" and 5 means "Very important" how much do you value the price of the bottle as compared to its types of closure?



The majority of respondents answered "Slightly important" and "Neutral" when queried about whether price was more important than the type of wine closure when making a wine purchase.

3.5 Question 17

The question 17 was there to classify the criteria from most important to least important when it comes to choosing between the two type of wine closure.

Figure 16

Answers to survey question 17

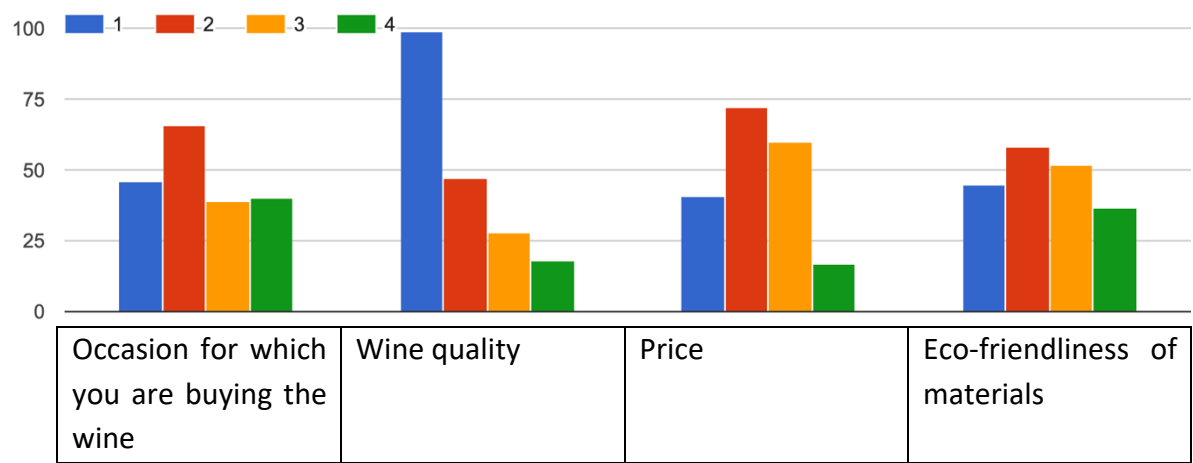


Table 7 gives the classification given by the respondents between the 4 factors.

Table 7

Factor classification

1	2	3	4
Wine quality	Price	Price	Occasion for which you are buying the wine

4 Discussion

In this chapter, the methodology used, as well as the results obtained through it, will be discussed. The main objective of this research was to explore the preferences of French Generation Z regarding wine closures, specifically cork or screw caps. To collect data, a survey was distributed to conduct quantitative research.

This chapter will begin by discussing the methodology to better understand how the results can be interpreted. Subsequently, the results will be examined in relation to each of the four sub-questions.

4.1 Discussion of methodology

The survey successfully collected responses from 200 participants, surpassing the required number of 196 for a relevant data collection and discussion. However, the construction of the survey could have been improved to ensure the relevance of each respondent and facilitate the discussion of results further. Specifically, the first question concerning the birth year could have included a broader range of years beyond just those corresponding to Generation Z, preventing individuals older or younger than the specified range from providing inaccurate responses. Currently, there is no mechanism to verify that individuals born before the defined Gen Z period did not select a different birth year. Additionally, the survey allowed respondents to choose multiple answers for each question, contrary to the intended design, although this issue was more pronounced in question 15.

Finally, after distributing the survey, approximately 20 respondents expressed difficulty in understanding and, consequently, answering question 17. I attribute this challenge to the initial formulation of the survey in English, with subsequent translation into French, which might have influenced the clarity of the question.

Despite these considerations, relevant results were still derived from the survey questions corresponding to each sub-question. The Following chapters will discuss these findings.

4.2 Discussion of the results for the sub-question 1

The results for the sub-question one are provided with the discussion of the results for the survey question 2 through 6. The objective of the sub-question is to find out if the factor of tradition of using cork in the French wine culture plays a role in the preferences of the French Gen Z. The survey results provide valuable insights into the respondents' perceptions and preferences regarding wine closures, particularly focusing on the association of cork with French wine culture.

For the survey question 2 a significant majority of respondents (93.1%) expressed a strong association between cork and French wine culture. This finding highlights the deep-rooted connection between cork and the traditional elements of French wine, indicating a strong cultural influence and recognition of cork as an integral part of the French wine experience.

When questioned about whether cork is perceived as an integral and important part of the consumption experience, a substantial proportion (77.4%) strongly agreed, emphasizing the perceived significance of cork in enhancing the overall enjoyment and value of consuming wine. The minimal dissent, with only 0.5% expressing disagreement, further underscores the overwhelmingly positive sentiment towards cork in the context of the wine consumption experience.

In terms of preferences related to the type of closure for specific events or reasons for consumption, notable patterns emerged. For important events, a vast majority (163 respondents) expressed a preference for wine with a cork closure, reinforcing the symbolic importance attributed to cork during special occasions. Conversely, preferences for screw caps were minimal, indicating a clear inclination towards traditional closures for significant events. For daily consumption events, the preference for cork remained strong, with 101 respondents favoring cork-sealed wine. While a smaller proportion expressed a preference for screw caps (9 respondents), the majority (79 respondents) reported having no specific preferences, suggesting a more flexible attitude towards closure types during routine consumption.

When respondents were asked about their preferences for wine closure when offering wine, a majority (169 respondents) expressed a preference for wine sealed with cork. This aligns with the cultural significance associated with cork, extending to the act of offering wine. Again, the preference for screw caps was minimal, emphasizing the enduring popularity and acceptance of cork closures in social settings.

4.3 Discussion of the results for the sub-question 2

The results for the sub-question two are provided with the discussion of the results for the survey question 7 to 9. The objective of the sub-question is to find out if the factor of sustainable awareness plays a role in the preferences of the French Gen Z.

The survey results reveal a varied perception among respondents regarding the eco-friendliness of cork compared to screw caps. About 30% strongly agree, 40% agree, and 30% somewhat agree that cork is more eco-friendly than screw caps. The low disagreement rate of 3.7% suggests a prevailing positive sentiment towards cork's environmental attributes.

With the assumption that cork is more eco-friendly than screw caps, nearly 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree that they would prefer to buy wine with a cork closure. This significant consensus reflects the influence of eco-friendliness perceptions on consumer preferences. The minimal disagreement of 2.1% indicates a strong correlation between positive perceptions of cork's environmental impact and the inclination to choose cork-sealed wine.

Conversely, when presented with the supposition that screw caps are more eco-friendly than cork, respondents displayed a different pattern. The majority, 41.3%, somewhat agree, while 33.9% agree and 13.2% strongly agree. This suggests a more divided perception regarding the eco-friendliness of screw caps, with a significant portion leaning towards agreement.

Additionally, 11.1% disagreed with the notion that screw caps are more environmentally friendly.

The results reflect a generally positive perception of cork's eco-friendliness among respondents, influencing their preferences in purchasing decisions. The majority would choose wine with cork if it were considered more environmentally friendly. However, the scenario shifts when considering the eco-friendliness of screw caps. While a significant portion still expressed a willingness to choose screw caps, a notable percentage remained neutral or disagreed, indicating a more nuanced and divided stance on the environmental impact of different closures.

4.4 Discussion of the results for the sub-question 3

The results for the sub-question three are provided with the discussion of the results for the survey question 10 to 13. The objective of the sub-question is to find out if the factor of wine quality perception plays a role in the preferences of the French Gen Z.

For question 10, which addresses the belief that wine with a cork is of better quality than wine with a screw cap, responses were distributed across the spectrum. While a substantial percentage (36.5%) strongly agreed, and a significant proportion agreed (19.6%), a considerable number somewhat agreed (32.3%). Dissent was present, with 9.5% expressing disagreement. This mixed response indicates a lack of uniformity in perceptions of quality based on the closure type.

Question 11, exploring whether wine tastes better when sealed with a cork than with a screw cap, exhibited a similar pattern. Strong agreement (26.5%) and agreement (23.3%) were evident, but a considerable percentage somewhat agreed (34.4%). A notable 14.8% expressed disagreement. This suggests that taste preferences, like perceived quality, are diverse and not uniformly influenced by the type of closure.

Questions 12 and 13, focusing on the preservation of wine and the potential equality in quality levels between cork-sealed and screw-cap-sealed wines, respectively, followed comparable patterns. Strong agreement and agreement were present, but so were somewhat agree responses, indicating a lack of strong consensus. Dissenting views, ranging from 3.7% to 12.7%, indicated a degree of variability in opinions on these aspects.

The results for the four questions collectively suggest that perceptions of wine quality, taste, and preservation in relation to cork and screw caps are multifaceted and lack a clear consensus among the French Gen Z respondents. The absence of significant answers in all four questions implies that, for this sample, the factor of wine quality perception may not be a decisive influence in the preference for cork or screw-cap closures.

The contrast between the results of questions 10 to 13, and question 17, where respondents prioritize wine quality as a key decision factor, is noteworthy. While respondents emphasize wine quality in their decision-making, the survey question reveals a nuanced and varied perspective on how closure type influences them in terms of wine quality perception.

4.5 Discussion of the results for the sub-question 4

The results for the sub-question one are provided with the discussion of the results for the survey question 14,15 and 16. The objective of the sub-question is to find out if the factor of price plays a role in the preferences of the French Gen Z.

The survey results shed light on the complex interplay between pricing and closure preferences among the respondents, providing insights into their decision-making process when faced with the choice of a wine bottle sealed with a cork or a screw cap.

In the scenario where the same wine is offered in two different bottles—one with a cork priced at 15€ and the other with a screw cap priced at 10€—a clear majority of respondents (126) opted for the bottle with a cork, even though it was priced higher. This suggests that a significant portion of the surveyed individuals places a higher value on the traditional cork closure, willing to pay more only to have the bottle sealed with a cork.

When asked how much more they would be willing to pay for a bottle sealed with a cork, a substantial number (60 respondents) expressed a consistent preference, stating that they would always choose the one with a cork. Additionally, 26 respondents opted for multiple choices, indicating a nuanced perspective on the value assigned to cork closures. The variability in the specific amounts respondents were willing to pay (ranging between 20 and 30 for each amount) highlights the diversity in their valuation of cork-sealed bottles.

On the scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important, respondents were asked to rate the importance of price compared to the type of closure when making a wine purchase. The majority of respondents indicated that price was either "Slightly important" or "Neutral," suggesting that while price is a consideration, it may not be the overriding factor in their decision-making. This finding aligns with the willingness to pay a premium for a cork-sealed bottle, indicating a nuanced balance between the perceived value of closure type and the consideration of price.

The results highlight a complex decision-making process among respondents, where a substantial preference for cork closures is evident, even at a higher price point. The willingness to pay a premium for cork, combined with the nuanced responses regarding the value assigned price during the decision-making process, suggests that factors beyond cost play a significant role in the choices made by the surveyed individuals.

5 Conclusions & recommendations

This research was conducted for wine-makers in France with the aim of aiding them in understanding the preferences of French Gen Z regarding cork and screw cap closures, as well as the main factors influencing those preferences. The study explores four distinct factors through a survey which was distributed to French Gen Z person.

The main question for these research was :

What are the factors that influence French Generation Z consumers' preferences between cork or screw-cap wine closures?

In order to answer this question, four sub-questions were researched.

1. How does the traditional French wine consumption culture influence the preference between cork and screw cap closures for Gen Z?
2. Do sustainability reasons impact the wine closure preferences of French Gen Z consumers?
3. How do French Gen Z consumers perceive differences in wine quality between cork and screw cap closures, and how does this perception influence their preferences?
4. To what extent does price play a role in Gen Z consumers' wine closure preferences?

This chapter will now present a conclusion of the results and recommendations.

5.1 Conclusions

How does the traditional French wine consumption culture influence the preference between cork and screw cap closures for Gen Z?

Exploring the role of tradition in French Generation Z's wine preferences reveals a profound cultural connection to cork. The survey underscores an overwhelming association between cork and French wine culture, signifying its deep-rooted integration into the fabric of tradition. This recognition positions cork not merely as a closure but as a symbol of cultural identity within the realm of French wine. Perceived as integral to the consumption experience by a substantial majority, cork enjoys unanimous positive sentiment, with minimal dissent. Examining preferences for specific events shows a strong inclination toward cork for both important occasions and daily consumption, emphasizing its enduring appeal. Even though for daily events screw caps seems to have more chance to be accepted by Gen Z. In social settings, offering wine sealed with cork remains the preferred choice for a substantial majority. In

essence, the sub-question unveils a narrative where cork transcends its functional role, embodying a cultural symbol deeply ingrained in French wine traditions for Generation Z.

Do sustainability reasons impact the wine closure preferences of French Gen Z consumers?

The investigation into the role of sustainable awareness in French Generation Z's preferences uncovers a nuanced landscape. Survey results highlight a positive perception of cork's eco-friendliness compared to screw caps. However, the scenario shifts when considering screw caps' eco-friendliness, revealing a divided perspective. This nuanced stance indicates a complex interplay of environmental considerations among respondents. In summary, while cork's eco-friendly image strongly influences choices, the diversity of opinions regarding screw caps underscores the need for a nuanced approach in catering to sustainable preferences within French Gen Z's wine consumption.

How do French Gen Z consumers perceive differences in wine quality between cork and screw cap closures, and how does this perception influence their preferences?

The exploration into whether wine quality perception influences French Gen Z's preferences exposes a varied landscape. Beliefs about cork's superiority in term of wine quality showcase of strong agreement. Taste preferences follow the same pattern. Examining wine preservation and quality equality between cork and screw caps reveals a lack of consensus. Varied responses highlight the multifaceted nature of opinions on these aspects. Overall, the results imply that perceptions of wine quality, taste, and preservation lack a clear consensus among French Gen Z. Despite prioritizing wine quality in decision-making, the nuanced perspectives on closure types suggest a complex interplay that goes beyond a straightforward correlation with quality perception.

To what extent does price play a role in Gen Z consumers' wine closure preferences?

Unveiling the dynamics between price and closure preferences among French Gen Z, the survey showcases a fascinating interplay in their decision-making process when faced with the choice of cork or screw cap. Majority favored the pricier cork-sealed bottle, emphasizing the intrinsic value they place on the traditional closure. When probed about their willingness to pay more for a cork-sealed bottle, a substantial number consistently leaned towards cork. The results suggest that while price is a consideration, it doesn't outweigh their inclination for cork. This aligns with their demonstrated readiness to pay a premium for the traditional closure, highlighting a nuanced balance between perceived value and price considerations. In essence, the results uncover a complex decision-making landscape among respondents. Their strong preference for cork, even at a higher cost, and the nuanced considerations regarding price indicate that factors beyond mere cost play a pivotal role in shaping their choices, offering a glimpse into the intricate tapestry of preferences within this demographic.

What are the factors that influence French Generation Z consumers' preferences between cork or screw-cap wine closures?

The most crucial factors influencing the preferences of French Gen Z in this study are culture, which inclines them towards purchasing wines sealed with cork, and price, as they may not hesitate to invest in a more expensive wine with a cork closure. While the perception of overall wine quality leans towards favoring cork-sealed wines, it may not be as influential as culture and price due to a lack of knowledge, as revealed in the responses to the final survey question (Question 18). In terms of sustainability, there appears to be a general inclination to believe that cork is better than screw caps, yet this factor seems to be the least influential, possibly due to a lack of comprehensive knowledge among respondents.

5.2 Recommendations

To encourage Gen Z wine buyers to adopt screw cap closures, I would recommend an educational initiative targeting Gen Z through social media or other platforms. Providing comprehensive information about the impact of both cork and screw cap closures on wine could be beneficial. Despite Gen Z's strong cultural attachment to cork and their willingness to pay more for wines sealed with cork, the factors of wine quality perception and sustainability awareness appear less defined. I believe that with proper education, Gen Z may become more inclined to purchase wines sealed with screw caps, as understanding the nuances of these closures could potentially shift their preferences.

Further research could involve the implementation of a social experiment or a study that closely aligns with the preferences and decision-making processes of the Gen Z demographic. This approach aims to provide a more immersive and contextually rich understanding of their habits.

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Appendice

Appendix A - Survey (English version)

1/ *You are*

- *Male*
- *Female*
- *Non-binary*
- *Prefer not to say*

2/ *Is cork associated with French wine culture?*

- *Yes*
- *No*

3/ *I prefer to purchase wine with a cork because it is an integral part of the consumption experience (noise, smell...)*

- *Strongly agree*
- *Agree*
- *Somewhat agree*
- *Disagree*

4/ *For an event that I consider important I prefer*

- *Wine sealed with a cork*
- *Wine sealed with a screw cap*
- *No preference*

5/ *For a daily event, (dinner, picnic, aperitif...) I prefer*

- *Wine sealed with a cork*
- *Wine sealed with a screw cap*
- *No preference*

6/ *When offering wine I'd rather gift a bottle sealed with*

- *A cork*
- *A screw cap*
- *No preference*

7/ *I believe cork is more eco-friendly than a screw cap*

- *Strongly agree*
- *Agree*
- *Somewhat agree*
- *Disagree*

8/ If the cork is more eco-friendly than a screw cap, I'd rather buy wine with a cork

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Somewhat agree*
- Disagree*

9/ If a screw cap is more eco-friendly than cork, I'd rather buy wine with a screw cap

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Somewhat agree*
- Disagree*

10/ Wine with cork is of better quality than wine if the screw cap

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Somewhat agree*
- Disagree*

11/ Wine tastes better when sealed with a cork than with a screw cap

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Somewhat agree*
- Disagree*

12/ Wine is better preserved with a cork than with a screw cap

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Somewhat agree*
- Disagree*

13/ Wine sealed with a cork or with a screw cap can have the same quality level

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Somewhat agree*
- Disagree*

14/ Between two bottles of the same wine, one sealed with a cork priced €15 and one sealed with a screw cap priced €10, which one are you most likely to buy?

- The one with the cork*

- *The one with the screw cap*

15/ What is the maximum additional amount you would be willing to pay for a bottle sealed with a cork compared to the identical bottle sealed with a screw cap?

- *€2*
- *€5*
- *€7*
- *€10*
- *I would always choose the one sealed with a cork*

16/ On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "Not important at all" and 5 means "Very important" how much do you value the price of the bottle as compared to its types of closure?

- *Not Important at All*
- *Slightly Important*
- *Neutral*
- *Important*
- *Very important*

17/ Please rank the criteria from most important (1) to least important (4) when making your choice between cork and screw cap closures.

- *Occasion for which you are buying the wine*
- *Wine quality*
- *Price*
- *Eco-friendliness of materials*

18/ If you have any comments regarding this topic, please write it below

Appendix B – Survey (French version)

1/ Vous êtes

- Un homme
- Une femme
- Non-binaire
- Je préfère ne pas répondre

2/ Associez-vous le bouchon en liège à la culture du vin Français ?

- Oui
- Non

3/ Je préfère acheter du vin avec un bouchon en liège car c'est une partie intégrante de l'expérience de consommation (bruit, odeur...)

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

4/ Pour un événement que je considère important, je préfère

- Du vin avec un bouchon en liège
- Du vin avec une capsule à vis
- Peu m'importe

5/ Pour un événement que je considère comme quotidien (dîner, pique-nique, apéritif...), je préfère

- Du vin avec un bouchon en liège
- Du vin avec une capsule à vis
- Peu m'importe

6/ Pour offrir, je préfère

- Du vin avec un bouchon en liège
- Du vin avec une capsule à vis
- Peu m'importe

7/ Je pense que le bouchon en liège est plus respectueux de l'environnement que la capsule à vis

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

8/ Si le bouchon en liège est plus respectueux de l'environnement que la capsule à vis, je préfère acheter du vin avec un bouchon en liège

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

9/ Si la capsule à vis est plus respectueuse de l'environnement que le bouchon en liège, je préfère acheter du vin avec une capsule à vis

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

10/ Les vins avec un bouchon en liège sont de meilleure qualité que les vins avec une capsule à vis

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

11/ Le goût du vin avec un bouchon en liège est meilleur que celui avec une capsule à vis

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

12/ Le vin avec un bouchon en liège se préserve mieux que celui avec une capsule à vis

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

13/ Un vin avec un bouchon en liège et un vin avec une capsule à vis peuvent avoir le même niveau de qualité

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Pas vraiment d'accord
- Pas d'accord

14/ Entre deux bouteilles du même vin, une avec un bouchon en liège à 15 € et l'autre avec une capsule à vis à 10 €, laquelle préférez-vous acheter ?

- Celle avec le bouchon
- Celle avec le bouchon à vis

15/ Choisiriez-vous une bouteille avec une capsule à vis si celle avec un bouchon en liège est plus chère de :

- 2 €
- 5 €
- 7 €
- 10 €
- Je choisirais toujours celle avec un bouchon en liège

16/ Sur une échelle de 1 à 5, où 1 signifie "Pas du tout important" et 5 signifie "Très important", à quel point pensez-vous que le prix est plus important que le type de bouchon ?

- Pas du tout important
- Peu important
- Neutre
- Important
- Très important

17/ Veuillez classer les critères de la manière suivante, en commençant par le plus important (1) et en allant vers le moins important (4), lors de votre choix entre le bouchon en liège ou la capsule à vis.

- Occasion d'achat
- Qualité du vin
- Prix
- Respect de l'environnement des matériaux

18/ Si vous avez des commentaires sur ce sujet, veuillez les écrire ci-dessous.

