Introduction on the Market of *Tsipouro,* a Greek Traditional Liquor, Precursor of Ouzo

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Tsipouro is a not well-known traditional pomace brandy, being produced mainly in continental Greece. It is a strong distilled spirit with 40–45% alcohol by volume, being produced by distilling the residue of wine press, named *pomace*. The present paper focuses on the consumption behaviour of clients of Tsipouradika restaurants, taking into account several social, economic and personal characteristics, which affect the behaviour of each customer. In total, 1000 questionnaires were collected, by which 680 were considered as valid, taking into account the criterion of completed answers. The application of both, Factor and Tobit analysis regarding Tsipouro consumption, presents a quite analytical consumer profile of the product. Although Tsipouro is a traditional alcoholic drink for Greece, and especially in Thessaly, it is proven that there are distinct and quite differentiated consumer behaviours.

Key Words: consumer behaviour, traditional drink, theory of planned behaviour, alcohol

INTRODUCTION

Tsipouro is a not well-known traditional pomace brandy, being produced mainly in continental Greece. It is a strong distilled spirit with 40–45% alcohol by volume, being produced by distilling the residue of wine press, named *pomace*. There are two types of the product; pure Tsipouro and anise-flavoured one. There are various aspects regarding the emergence of the product. The one which prevails refers

to the outcome of distilling attempts of Greek Orthodox monks at *Agion Oros,* situated at the mountain Athos in Macedonian Greece, where monasteries were founded during the Byzantine Empire era (Soufleros and Bertrand 1987).

[176] Traditionally, Tsipouro is being served as an aperitif before lunch. Perhaps the most interesting issue of Tsipouro consumption is the fact that serving is accompanied with small dishes, called *meze,* usually adjusted to foodstuff being produced locally. For instance, at seaside resorts the majority of meze is seafood, while in the mainland nuts or meat products are served as meze. Mainly in continental Greece there are special places, called *Tsipouradika,* where Tsipouro is being served. In these places clients order Tsipouro, but it is the chef's responsibility to choose the meze, which will be served with the drink. By every order a different meze is served, motivating the clients in this way to order more drinks and taste more foodstuffs. The majority of these specialised restaurants are placed in the region of Thessaly, central Greece, where the largest quantities of Tsipouro are consumed. Tsipouro is served in small bottles containing 25ml of the product (see http://www.seaop.gr).

Due to the fact that there were no previous research attempts focused on the consumer behaviour, it is a challenge to assess the consumer behaviour of the Tsipouro consumption. The most interesting issue of this product is achieving added value for both, the alcoholic drink and the foodstuff, which accompanies it, creating a niche on the market and through this, having an impact to expand. In Section 2, a literature review of studies dealing with the consumer behaviour of traditional drinks is conducted. Section 3 presents the proposed methodology for analysing the consumer behaviour of Tsipouro in Greece and provides an overview of the model variables. In Section 4, the results of the proposed methodology are highlighted. Finally, Section 5 summarizes and concludes, including some insights for the further market penetration of the Tsipouro drink.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As already mentioned, there is no significant number of previous works on the issue of traditional drinks in general. The main charac-

teristic of all these publications is the strong chemical orientation of them, attempting to identify structural differences in both, processing and composition issues. The first reference to Tsipouro was in 1987, characterising it as a *precursor of Ouzo* (Soufleros and Bertrand 1987). Later on, Apostolopoulou et al. (2005) in their research, focusing on the concentration of principal volatile constituents in traditional Greek distillates, identified structural differences between Ouzo and Tsipouro. The main difference between them, regarding security issues, is that the former is traditionally mainly produced on an industrial level, while the latter has recently been produced to a large scale. This is the reason why the results of food security issues have been published only for Ouzo and not for Tsipouro (Efstratiadis and Arvanittoyannis 2000). Recently a list of *traditional anissed-flavoured spirit drinks* being produced and consumed in the Mediterranean area was published. Referring to the Greeks spirits, i. e. to Ouzo, Tsipouro is mentioned, providing useful information regarding the distillation process as well as the differences between Ouzo and Tsipouro production process (Anli and Bayram 2010). There are some studies, examining alcohol consumption from the consumer behaviour point of view, which refer to Europe. The most recent study on this issue was published in 2000, concluding that there has been a significant shift over the last fifty years from *long-standing local and regional traditions* towards a *growing acceptance of a wider choice* (Smith and Solgaard 2000). Focusing on Southern Europe, another study provides the same conclusions, verifying reduction of wine consumption to up to 42.3%, reduction of spirits to up to 4.7% and increase of beer consumption to up to 36.6% (Gual and Colom 1997). Referring to the Greek market, wine prevails among alcoholic drinks as an accompanying kind of drink for meals (Tzimitra-Kalogianni et al. 1999). Despite the fact that all these findings are quite interesting and useful, their reference period can be characterised as *old,* justifying the need for a further research on this topic. On the contrary, there is a series of publications on the traditional food consumption issue. Indicatively, the familiarity and the importance of food naturalness have a positive influence on the consumption of traditional foodstuffs. Opposing

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outcomes show parameters like convenience and health issues. Finally, the weight control issue has an ambiguous influence (Pieniak et al. 2009). Examining this issue from a sociological and anthropological point of view, it has been proven that new constrains shape
[178] the modern consumer behaviour. These are, inter alia, the biotechnology industry, food experts, retailing capital and regulation agencies, providing both, a positive as well as negative motivation for the traditional food consumption (Fonte 2002). Focusing on the traditional Mediterranean diet, there is evidence that this dietary pattern is inversely associated with Body Mass Index (BMI) and obesity, signifying in this way the importance of consuming traditional Mediterranean foodstuff.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There are several theories attempting to explain and predict the consumer behaviour. Having in mind that alcohol consumption can be characterized as a risky behaviour, it is more appropriate to apply theories that focus on the subjective and objective evaluation procedures that the consumers use to assess their final consumption choice. There are three such theories; Decision theory, or Subjective Expected Utility Theory (SEU) (Beyth-Maron et al. 1993; Edwards 1954; Furby and Beyth-Marom 1992; Yates 1992), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein 1973; 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen 1988; 1991). The Decision Theory accepts the consumer's choice as an outcome of a cognitive process where there is a holistic identification of all the possible options, assessment of their positive and negative impacts, under the precondition that this evaluation procedure is a fully rational one. Research based on this theoretical approach was conducted by Bauman and Bryan (1980) and Bauman et al. (1985). Findings showed a small correlation between SEU and the hard liquor consumption, justifying this by a large sample size, which consisted of 1,400 young adolescents who participated in this research. The main criticism of this theoretical approach is focused on the excessive rationality characterizing the theory, which excludes other parameters influencing the final purchasing choice.

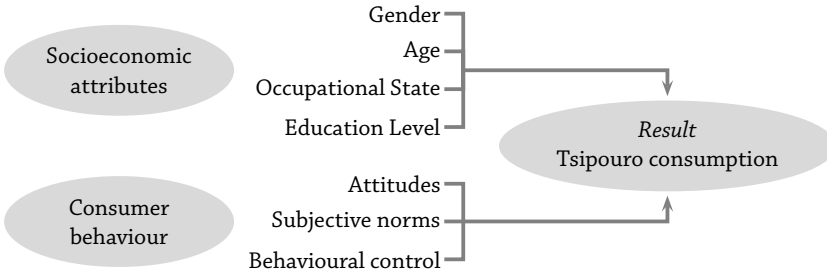

FIGURE 1 Conceptual model of Tsipouro consumers behaviour

The TRA is based also on a rational cost-benefit evaluation, though, incorporating though the *Subjective Norms* attribute. This new input consists of normative beliefs, and social approval or disapproval of specific consumption trends. The fact that both, Attitudes and Subjective Norms, shape the intention for a specific consumption action before the consumer behaviour, is quite interesting too. Applying this theory to alcohol consumption attributes, proved to correspond significantly well to data relevant to consumer behaviours (Schlegel, Crawford, and Sanborn, 1977; O'Callaghan et al. 1997). Finally, the TPB is the evolution of the TRA, adding the evaluation of the *Perceived Behavioural Control* attribute as a new approach, which consists of both, direct and indirect influences on behaviour.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present paper focuses on the consumer behaviour of clients of Tsipouradika restaurants, taking into account several social, economic and personal characteristics, which affect the behaviour of each customer. The data used in the present research is gathered with a structured questionnaire, which was given to the costumers of Tsipouradika in the period 1 May 2013–31 May 2013. 1,000 questionnaires in total were collected, 680 of which were considered valid taking into account the criterion of completed answers. Basing on the questionnaire and trying to capture the consumer behaviour of clients, a functional relationship between two types of independent variables and a dependent variable was formed. The conceptual model of the present paper is depicted in figure 1.

The measurement of the effect of socioeconomic attributes and consumer behaviour is achieved through regression analysis, in which the dependent variable is the amount of Tsipouro bottles that a visitor consumes on each of his visits. The dependent variable is
[180] limited to up to 10 bottles, as consumption beyond this is considered as extreme value and alcoholic behaviour. Since the nature of the dependent value is censored, the application of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression may lead to censorship bias (Tobin 1958). Taking this into account, the present study will rely on the Tobit analysis method in order to analyze the relationship among the quantity of Tsipouro (TQ) that each visitor consumes and his socio-economic characteristics. The independent variables are split into two categories and are the following.

The first category of variables captures the socioeconomic status of consumers. The variables that form this category are described below.

1 *Gender*. The *gender* variable is a dummy variable, taking the value 1 if the consumer is female and 0 if the consumer is male.
2 *Age*. The *age* variable is an ordinal variable, depicting the age of correspondents.
3 *Occupation*. Visitors are categorized in three categories according to their occupational state. Visitors of the first category are unemployed, visitors of the second category are employed and visitors of the last category are either studying or are under occupational state. Taking the first category as a reference, two dummy variables are constructed:
    - *Docc*1: The variable takes the value 1 if the visitor is employed and the value 0 if else.
    - *docc*2: The variable takes the value 1 if the visitor is either studying or is under other occupational state, and 0 if else.
4 *Education*. The *education* variable depicts the educational level of each consumer. It's a Dummy variable taking the value 0 if the person has obtained a university degree and the value 1 for lower educational levels.

TABLE 1 Questionnaire

1	*Demographic characteristics*					
1.1	Age					
1.2	Sex				Male	Female
1.3	Monthly income		< 1.000€	1.000–1.500€	> 1.500€	
1.4	Occupational Status	Employed	Retired	Unemployed	Other	
1.5	Educational level					
		Illiterate	Primary school grad.	High school grad.	University grad.	
2	How many Tsipouro bottles do you usually consume?					
3	*Attitude*					
3.1	Visiting Tsipouradika to drink Tsipouro is good for health	1	2	3	4	5
3.2	My social environment believes that is a good habit to visit Tsipouradika for pleasure	1	2	3	4	5
3.3	Visiting Tsipouradika to drink Tsipouro is dangerous	1	2	3	4	5
3.4	My social environment believes that visiting Tsipouradika strengthens social relations	1	2	3	4	5
3.5	My social environment would be more satisfied if I would visit Tsipouradika more often	1	2	3	4	5
4	*Subjective norms*					
4.1	Visiting Tsipouradika to drink Tsipouro is a useful habit	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	Visiting Tsipouradika to drink Tsipouro is a pleasant habit	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	Visiting Tsipouradika to drink Tsipouro is a good habit	1	2	3	4	5
5	*Perceived behavioural control*					
5.1	It is not easy not to accept an invitation to visit Tsipouradika	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	There is social pressure to visit Tsipouradika	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	Drinking Tsipouro is a way to overcome financial and personal problems	1	2	3	4	5

The second category of variables is formed by the answers of the consumers to the structured questionnaire that was given to them. These questions are aimed at outlining attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control of the Tsipouro consumption, following the concept of the TPB methodology. Interviewees were asked to evaluate several aspects of their drinking habits on a 5-point ranking scale, ranging from 1 to 5: 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree.' Consumers were asked to evaluate

as Attitudes (ATT): *whether* or not visiting Tsipouradika is good for health; whether it is dangerous; if the social environment, family and friends, consider going to such places for pleasure a good habit; if they agree to visit them more often; and if they believe that visiting Tsipouradika strengthens social relations. Regarding *Subjective Norms* (SN), they were asked: if visiting Tsipouradika is a good habit; if it is pleasant, and if it is useful. Finally, regarding *Perceived Behavioural Control* (PBC), they were asked: if there is social pressure leading to more visits to such places; if they think that it is easy to refuse an invitation for visiting Tsipouradika; and if they agree that drinking Tsipouro is a way to forget or overcome financial, family, and other problems.

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In order to maintain balance among the number of variables describing the socioeconomic status of Tsipouro consumers, a data reduction methodology will be applied to the variables of the second category. The methodology applied for this, is a Factor Analysis. The outcome is the reduction of the number of variables, which are classified into a limited number of unobserved factors, while maintaining a maximum of the information in the original data. The methodology that is adopted in order to extract these factors, is a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with the Varimax rotation.

FINDINGS

Before the application of the factor analysis, it is essential that the consistency of the answers is checked. The reliability test showed a Chronbach's value of 0.716. Taking into account that the critical value of the Chronbachs coefficient is 0.7, this data is considered as a reliable and rendered as suitable for the application of the factor analysis (Norusis 2005). The results of principal components analysis are presented in table 2. The PCA returned three latent variables. The first refers to consumers who are visiting Tsipouradika and consider it as a quite positive habit. They also believe that their social environment accepts this way of entertainment as a positive one and reinforces them to increase the frequency of their visits. The second group of consumers considers Tsipouro consumption as a good, pleasant and useful habit, without taking the opinion of their social environment into consideration. Finally, consumers of the

TABLE 2 Results of principal components analysis

Components	Factors		
	1	2	3
ATT2	0.757		
ATT1	0.608		
ATT4	0.547		
ATT3	0.511		
ATT5	0.457		
SN1		0.793	
SN3		0.639	
SN2		0.484	
PBC2			0.707
PBC1			0.609
PBC3			0.602
Values	2.065	1.976	1.514
% of variance	18.773	17.966	13.762

third group – although visiting Tsipouradika – do not like visiting them, but they cannot overcome the social pressure of their friends to join. These consumers cannot refuse an invitation for going out to drink Tsipouro. Also the fact that they do not believe that drinking Tsipouro is a way to overcome their personal of economic problems is quite important, signifying the lack of alcoholic behaviour. The scores of the three latent variables are entered into the regression as three independent variables. As mentioned above, the analysis will rely on the Tobit regression, since the dependent variable (TQ) is censored to the right. The Tobit model represents the potential (expected) value of the dependent variable TQ as a latent variable, $\widehat{TQ}$, which can only be partially observed within the sensible range of Tsipouro quantity consumption, which ranges from 0 and 10 bottles, as follows (Tobin 1958):

$$\widehat{TQ}_i = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } \widehat{TQ}_i \geq 10 \\ \widehat{OM}_j, & \text{if } \widehat{TQ}_i < 10 \end{cases}. \qquad (1)$$

Taking the variables entered into the regression into account, the specification of the Tobit model is as follows:

TABLE 3 Results of the Tobit Regression

Coefficient	Est.	Std. err.	t	$P > t$
$\beta_1 gender$	−1.160	0.153	−7.580	0.000
$\beta_2 age$	0.022	0.012	1.770	0.078
$\beta_3 docc1$	−0.211	0.235	−0.890	0.371
$\beta_4 docc2$	−0.473	0.263	−1.800	0.073
$\beta_5 education$	0.420	0.163	2.580	0.009
$\beta_6 fac1$	0.115	0.075	1.540	0.125
$\beta_7 fac2$	0.443	0.076	5.810	0.001
$\beta_8 fac3$	0.378	0.076	5.010	0.001
β_0	3.382	0.439	7.700	0.001
σ	1.957	0.054		

NOTES LR Test χ^2 (8): 139.19.

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$$\widehat{\mathrm{TQ}}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 gender_1 + \beta_2 age_2 + \beta_3 docc1_i + \beta_4 docc2_i + \beta_5 education_i + \beta_6 fac1_i + \beta_7 fac2_i + \beta_8 fac3_i, \quad (2)$$

where $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$, TQ is the total number bottles of Tsipouro ordered per person, *gender, age, docc*1, *docc*2, and *education* are independent variables of the 1st category, *fac*1, *fac*2, and *fac*3 are independent variables of the 2nd category, β_0 is the constant term, and β_i are the regression coefficients under estimation $i = 1, \ldots 8$.

The results of the Tobit regression are presented in table 3. The value of the Likelihood Ratio Test (139.19) exceeds the critical value of the χ^2 distribution. Thus, the null hypothesis claiming that model's variables have no effect on the dependent variable, is rejected at a significant level of (< .01). On the other hand, the value (6.995) of the Hosmer and Lemeshow test and the lack of statistical significance of the estimation render the rejection of the null hypothesis claiming that there are no significant differences between the estimated and observed values of the dependent variable. The results of both tests confirm the relatively good fit of the model to the survey data (Norusis 2005).

The estimation of the regression coefficient of *gender* variable has a negative sign and is statistically significant at the (< 0.01) level. This means that men are drinking more, compared to women, some-

thing that is quite common in Greece. The estimation of the *age* regression coefficients provides negative signs for all age categories. The estimation of the *age* coefficient is statistically significant at the (< .1) level and has a positive sign. This is another positive outcome, proving that young consumers drink less, compared with elderly people. [185]

The estimated signs of the coefficients of the two variables depicting the occupational status are both negative. Nevertheless, statistical significance is only found at the estimation of the *docc*2, which is statistically significant at the (< .1) level. This is another interesting issue, signifying that there is no differentiated consumer behaviour between employed and unemployed consumers. University students tend to drink more, compared to other consumers; a consumer behaviour, which is a topic being researched especially in the US and other northern European countries, with similar results (Collins, Witkiewitz, and Larimer 2011).

The estimation of *education* variable's coefficient is positive and statistically significant at (< .01) level. This signifies that university graduates drink less.

The estimation of the coefficients of the three latent variables of the second category is positive, but statistically differs. Moreover, the estimation of the coefficients of *fac*2 and *fac*3 is statistically significant at the (< .01) level, while the estimation of the *fac*1 variable lacks statistical significance. These findings are very interesting, because it is proven that there is an impact for increased Tsipouro consumption from consumers choosing to visit Tsipouradika on their own, considering this way of entertainment as a positive one, and surprisingly from consumers who visit Tsipouradika because they cannot overcome social pressure, and obviously cannot overcome pressure to drink. Apparently this group of consumers consists of weak personalities who cannot form an independent social and consumer behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The application of both Factor and Tobit analysis regarding Tsipouro consumption presents a quite analytical consumer profile of the

product. Although Tsipouro is a traditional alcoholic drink for Greece, and especially for Thessaly, it is proven that there are distinct and quite differentiated consumer behaviours. This differentiation is based on psychological characteristics of consumers, as well as
[186] increased social pressure to visit Tsipouradika for amusement. It is proven that Tsipouro usage is widely embedded into the cultural behaviour of the majority of adult consumers in the area of this research. The social aspect of Tsipouro consumption is proven to be quite important in terms of promoting social communication. This research highlights parameters which would benefit from future research; on better understanding of how exactly Tsipouro is being used by different social and consumer groups. While there is a significant difference between men and women regarding consumption, it would be useful for future marketing strategies to further identify the motives leading to these different consumer behaviours between the two sexes.

A similar research in Italy, trying to identify perception of wine and consumption situations in traditionally wine producing regions proved that there are distinct uses of alcoholic products. There are also different consumer profiles between young and elderly people, as well as men and women (Agnoli, Begalli, and Capitello 2011).

Attempting to identify the role of wine in the UK society, it is evident that the wine consumption expresses quite sophisticated situation specific behaviours. The age parameter cannot alone signify a wine-related behaviour. There are also other criteria for purchasing wine either for self-consumption or for a gift (Ritchie 2007).

Having in mind the negative economic environment Greek consumers are experiencing after the year 2010, it is very important that there is no excess of alcoholism, with young and educated people drinking less compared with elderly and less educated consumers. Another important issue, gained with this research, is the increasing health consciousness of consumers (especially the young ones). In general, visiting Tsipouradika for pleasure is a widely accepted socialising alternative for the area, without leading to alcoholism. According to this, the following topics for shaping a holistic marketing strategy have emerged: dynamics of different consumer groups,

competitive advantage of consumption locations, added value of the use of a traditional product, and pleasure perception. It is evident that there is a considerable impact of the product, because it can be promoted not only as a Greek traditional liquor, but also as an amusement alternative followed by strong traditional socialising concept. [187]

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