

Wine consumption in Ukraine: trends, socio-economic aspects, and public perception

Volodymyr Kucherenko¹, Olha Uspalenko², Mariia Omelchenko³

¹ The Ukrainian Corporation for Viticulture and Wine Production Industry “Ukrvinprom”, Kyiv, Ukraine

² Ukrainian Wine Institute, Kyiv, Ukraine

³ National University of Food Technologies, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract. This article explores the contemporary culture of wine consumption in Ukraine through the lens of social, economic, and cultural transformations triggered by European integration, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the full-scale war since 2022. The analysis is based on data from a nationwide sociological survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in collaboration with the WHO. The study traces the shifting perception of wine as a marker of social affiliation and personal choice, highlighting the rise in responsible consumption and a general decline in alcohol intake. Special attention is paid to the social determinants of wine consumption, such as education level, income, and age differences. The authors interpret youth wine consumption as a tool of cultural identification aligned with global trends. The conclusions outline prospects for shaping a new wine ethic in Ukraine, grounded in principles of mindfulness, social responsibility, and cultural integration.

1. Introduction

In contemporary Ukrainian society, wine plays a multifaceted, complex, and controversial role. It has a long-standing history as a part of national culture — from Trypillian amphorae to consecrated chalices in temples, from Cossack feasts to diplomatic banquets. Amidst dynamic social change, economic turbulence, European integration, and ongoing war, the culture of wine consumption in Ukraine is undergoing notable transformation.

Wine is becoming a marker of change — in consciousness, traditions, and behavior — with a conscious and responsible consumption model emerging, where deliberate choices replace randomness. Simultaneously, public health concerns and shifts in the social and domestic context of wine use are gaining relevance. This evolving model blends historical heritage with contemporary challenges and forms a new wine ethic — the ethic of the future.

The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of wine consumption patterns in Ukraine, taking into account socio-economic, demographic, and cultural factors. Special attention is given to recent empirical data gathered from a nationwide sociological survey, serving as

a source of scientific novelty. The study also seeks to interpret behavioral changes in the context of the ongoing war since 2022 and to outline potential trajectories for the development of wine culture in Ukraine.

2. Materials and Methods

The research is based on quantitative data collected during a nationwide survey of the adult population of Ukraine conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), financially and technically supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), in December 2023 [1]. The survey used the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) method among adults aged 18 and over. A randomly generated sample of mobile phone numbers was used, yielding a final sample of 2,015 respondents. Residents in temporarily occupied territories without access to Ukrainian mobile networks were not surveyed.

For the purposes of this study, WHO and KIIS adapted the Standardized European Alcohol Survey questionnaire, preserving its structure and including several additional questions. All questions referred to a 12-month reference period. The data were weighted based on the gender and age structure of Ukraine's permanent population according

to the State Statistics Service as of January 1, 2021. The sample included respondents from all regions of Ukraine, stratified by age, gender, education, income level, and place of residence. Statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modeling.

To provide broader analytical context, official statistics, previous national and international studies, and reviews of the winemaking industry were also utilized. Theoretical frameworks were drawn from sociology of consumption, health economics, and cultural anthropology.

3. Results and discussion

Globally, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, wine consumption increased by one billion bottles every five years, reaching around 33 billion bottles annually [2]. Since then, annual consumption has declined by 5%, as shown in Figure 1. Wine is consumed in 200 countries worldwide, but 75% of global wine consumption is concentrated in 20 major countries. The top consumers include the U.S., France, Italy, Germany, and the U.K. Per capita, Portugal leads, although it ranks 10th in total consumption. Ukraine consumes about 1.1 million hectoliters annually, averaging 3 liters per capita. According to the World Health Organization, wine accounts for only 8% of alcohol consumption in terms of pure alcohol, compared to 50% for spirits and 35% for beer [3].

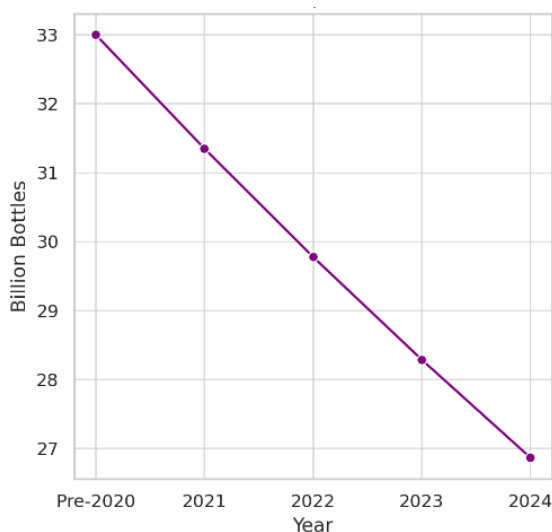


Figure 1. Global wine consumption (billion bottles).

Survey data reveal that 56.1% of Ukrainian alcohol consumers prefer wine, making it one of the three most popular alcoholic beverages alongside beer (50.5%) and spirits (49.6%) (Fig. 2). Wine is consumed on average 19 days per year, with an average portion size of 284 ml per occasion, indicating a generally moderate consumption pattern compared to other types of alcohol [4].

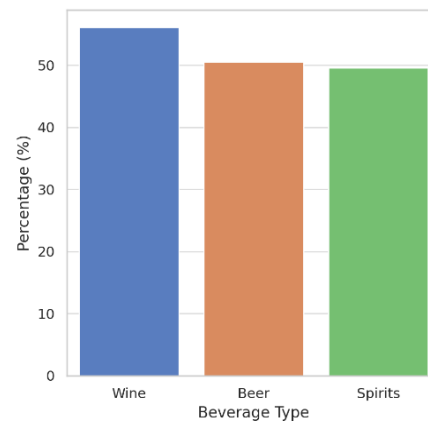


Figure 2. Alcohol preferences in Ukraine.

Social determinants play a key role in shaping consumption models. For instance, 65.6% of wine consumers have higher education, and 67.6% have above-average income. This suggests that wine is associated not only with aesthetic or sensory enjoyment but also with cultural or intellectual social affiliation [5]. From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital, wine emerges as a marker of "cultural legitimacy" used for self-positioning within social hierarchies.

Young adults aged 18–29 show the highest overall level of alcohol consumption (86.3%). This age group is particularly inclined to explore new formats — organic, non-alcoholic, or lesser-known wine varieties. Their preferences are driven not only by health concerns but also by a desire to experiment and shape a unique consumer identity. In this context, youth wine consumption can be viewed as a tool for identity formation, aligning with global trends of individualization and personalization [6].

Since the full-scale war began in 2022, social practices have changed significantly. 21.5% of respondents reported decreased alcohol consumption, 6.8% reported quitting altogether, and only 5.5% reported increased consumption. This indicates a national trend toward restraint, driven by moral-ethical considerations (e.g., avoiding frivolity in hard times) and economic constraints. The data also support the hypothesis of stress-induced reevaluation of life priorities, where alcohol consumption is replaced by other forms of emotional adaptation.

Public perception of alcohol is also evolving. 75.2% of respondents disagree with viewing alcohol as an ordinary consumer product. This shift in public opinion may be attributed to information campaigns, the development of civil society, and increased media literacy. Moreover, 71.3% support additional restrictions on alcohol sales during wartime, indicating a collective readiness for responsibility and enhanced regulatory control (Fig. 3).

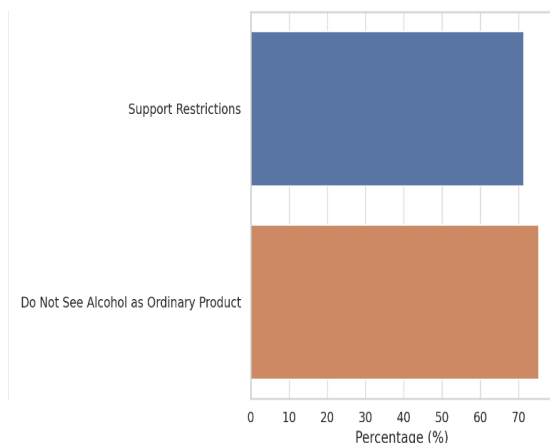


Figure 3. Public attitudes towards alcohol during war.

Consumption contexts have also shifted: 71.3% of respondents consume alcohol primarily at home or in private settings, while only 14.1% do so in public. This reflects social transformation — fewer social events, limited mobility, and a preference for safety. However, this domestic consumption pattern may increase private drinking culture, with its unique risks and limited social accountability.

Sales channels matter too. Supermarkets dominate wine purchases (79.2%), indicating a standardized behavior model. At the same time, the roles of specialty stores and online trade are growing, especially with urbanization and digital service development. These sectors hold potential for qualitative growth, including eco-education, tasting events, and wine tourism.

Lastly, 23.5% of wine consumers reported negative social or health consequences, highlighting the need to integrate responsible drinking education into prevention programs, public initiatives, and educational efforts [7]. A promising direction is the development of an "alcohol culture» - not as prohibition but as a system of norms, limitations, and educational practices to reduce risks and enhance the quality of the drinking experience.

Current trends in wine consumption include the growing popularity of rosé wines (up 39% in 15 years), sparkling wines (up 15–20%), varietal wines (especially Sauvignon Blanc), "green" wines (organic, biodynamic), and non-alcoholic wines. Packaging is evolving too, with greater use of recyclable materials, AI applications, virtual winery tours, and wine tourism.

4. Conclusions

The current state of wine consumption in Ukraine represents a complex intersection of tradition, modernization, and adaptation to crisis conditions. On one hand, wine remains a symbol of cultural heritage, social status, and personal style. On the other hand, the war and economic instability have necessitated a rethinking of drinking behavior. The findings point to the formation of a new cultural paradigm rooted in responsible consumption, critical attitudes toward alcohol as an everyday commodity, and support for government

regulation. Social determinants such as education, income, age, and regional background increasingly shape consumption strategies and perceptions. Thus, in Ukraine, wine is no longer just a beverage — it is a marker of cultural maturity, a field for public policy, and a space for social dialogue. In these coordinates, the future of wine culture appears both as a challenge and an opportunity for ethical choice and cultural renewal.

5. References

1. World Health Organization. Technical document. pp. 1-4 (2024).
2. L. Agnoli, S. Charters. Food Quality and Preference. Vol. 98. 104489 (2022).
3. E. Giacosa. Production and Management of Beverages. Vol. 1. pp. 361-380 (2019).
4. M. C. Rodríguez-Donate, M. E. Romero-Rodriguez, V. J. Cano-Fernandez, G. Guirao-Perez. Wine Economics and Policy. Vol. 8. pp. 69-80 (2019).
5. R. Lunardo, D. A. Jaud, A. M. Carsi. Food Quality and Preference. Vol. 88. 104107 (2021).
6. A. Castellini, A. Samoggia. Wine Economics and Policy. Vol. 7. pp. 128-139 (2018).
7. S. Abreu, M. L. Martins, C. Morais. Advances in Botanical Research. Vol. 113, pp. 235-266 (2025).LT De Luca, Propulsion physics (EDP Sciences, Les Ulis, 2009)