

From Home To Bar: The Influence Of Context on Spirits Consumption

Allegra Nannetti

Dissertation written under the supervision of João Pedro Niza Jacinto
Braga

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how consumption context (public vs. private) and social presence influence spirits consumption in Italy. The study focuses on the effects on anticipated consumption quantity, purchase intentions, perceived quality, value-for-money perceptions, and self-presentation concerns. By addressing a gap in the literature on premium spirits, it clarifies how situational and social factors shape drinking patterns among young consumers.

A quantitative experimental design was implemented through an online survey of Italian consumers aged 18-44. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three scenarios: drinking at a bar with friends, drinking at home alone, or drinking at home with friends. The survey measured behavioral intentions and product evaluations. Data from a rebalanced sample of 215 participants were analyzed using ANOVA, correlation tests, and manipulation checks.

Results show that bar settings with friends lead to the highest anticipated consumption, stronger preference for premium spirits, and higher perceived quality and value-for-money. At home, the presence of friends increased expected consumption compared to solitary drinking but did not significantly enhance perceived quality or value. Public visibility proved more influential than social presence alone in driving status-oriented consumption.

The study confirms that drinking context is a critical determinant of consumer behavior. Public environments amplify self-presentation motives, encouraging higher consumption and premium choices, while private settings foster moderation and price sensitivity.

Keywords: Spirits Consumption, Consumption Context, Public vs. Private Drinking, Social Presence, Premium Choice, Perceived Quality, Value for Money, Self-Presentation

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Author: Allegra Nannetti

RESUMO

Esta dissertação analisa como o contexto de consumo (público vs. privado) e a presença de outras pessoas influenciam o consumo de destilados na Itália. O estudo centra-se na quantidade de bebidas prevista, intenções de compra de produtos premium, percepção de qualidade, relação qualidade-preço e preocupações com autoapresentação.

Foi adotado um desenho experimental quantitativo através de um inquérito com consumidores italianos entre 18 e 44 anos. Os participantes foram aleatoriamente atribuídos a três cenários: beber num bar com amigos, em casa sozinho ou em casa com amigos. O questionário avaliou intenções de consumo e percepções de produto. Os dados de uma amostra reequilibrada de 215 participantes foram analisados com ANOVA, testes de correlação e verificações de manipulação.

Os resultados mostram que o bar com amigos gera maior consumo previsto, maior preferência por destilados premium e percepções mais altas de qualidade e valor. Em casa, a presença de amigos aumentou ligeiramente o consumo em relação ao solitário, mas sem impacto relevante em qualidade ou valor. A visibilidade pública mostrou-se mais determinante do que a simples presença social para escolhas orientadas ao status.

Conclui-se que o contexto de consumo é um fator essencial do comportamento do consumidor. Ambientes públicos reforçam motivos de autoapresentação, promovendo maior consumo e escolhas premium, enquanto contextos privados favorecem moderação e sensibilidade ao preço.

Palavras-chave: Destilados; Contexto de Consumo; Consumo Público vs. Privado; Presença Social; Escolha Premium; Percepção de Qualidade; Relação Qualidade-Preço; Autoapresentação.

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Autora: Allegra Nannetti

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INTRODUCTION

Consumption of alcoholic beverages is influenced by a complex set of cultural, social, and situational factors. In recent years, the global spirits world has evolved significantly, driven by trends such as premiumization, moderate drinking, new experiential drinking occasions (IWSR, 2023). Consumers increasingly associate spirits not only with quality and taste but also with symbolic and social connotation, making the spirits market as a privileged category through which to examine changes in the pattern of alcohol consumption trends.

A key determinant of alcohol consumption is the context of drinking. In Italy, around 46% of spirits consumption occasions take place during aperitivo time, reflecting the strong cultural role of social drinking outside the home (Nomisma, 2024). Since the pandemic, out-of-home consumption (bars, restaurants, clubs) has recovered strongly, even surpassing 2019 levels. Nevertheless, at-home drinking, often with small groups of friends, remains an important and stable habit. These aspects confirm that the drinking context significantly influences the quantity and the perceived value of spirits: public settings such as bars promote experimentation and premium choices, while private settings often drive more moderate consumption.

Given this background, this thesis will explore how context influences consumer behavior in the spirits segment, with a particular focus on anticipated consumption, purchase intentions, value-for-money perceptions, perceived quality, and self-presentation concerns. Spirits were chosen as the category of reference because they represent both the challenges of declining traditional drinking patterns, and the opportunities linked to premium growth and innovation. Most importantly, there is a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between context and consumption patterns in the spirits' segment.

The thesis is structured as follows. A literature review is presented on consumption context, social presence, and symbolic consumption, which outlines the theoretical foundations and the key gaps in the research explored. The next section details the research methodology, outlining the business context, the sample, data collection, and measures used in the analyses. The following section provides the empirical results; first using univariate and bivariate analyses of the three scenarios (bar, home alone, home with friends), then statistical tests to assess differences between groups of participants. The final chapter is a discussion of the main findings, with contributions to theory, implications for managers, and suggestions for further research.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Context of Consumption

1.1.1 *Types of Consumption Contexts (Private vs Public)*

A fundamental distinction used to categorize consumption contexts is to distinguish between private vs public contexts. A private consumption context usually consists of consuming products in isolation or at home, away from other people. Conversely, a public consumption context occurs in the presence of other people or within shared spaces. The interpersonal dynamics and social constructs also differ greatly between these two types of contexts. Alcohol use, in particular, has traditionally been viewed as a social act in many cultures (Heath, 1987), underlining the significance of public context. However, drinking alcohol often happens in a private context (e.g., a quiet night at home), which typically includes no audience or immediate social feedback or comparison. The situational context (e.g., home versus bar) and the existence or lack of audience, create different situational contexts and social-psychological pressures that potentially implicate drinking behavior.

1.1.2 *Influence of Context on Consumption Patterns*

Numerous studies have demonstrated that the environment in which people drink has a significant impact on people's drinking habits, in particular by the reasons behind their choices, not just by what and how much they drink, but also the justifications for their decisions.

One of the most obvious examples of contextual effects is the perceived suitability of particular beverages in various circumstances. According to Klein and Pittman (1990), people tend to make associations between certain drinks and particular situations. For instance, beer is often associated with informal gatherings, while champagne with formal events (Klein & Pittman, 1990). These cultural expectations create consumption norms that specify the kind and quantity of alcohol to be consumed in a particular circumstance.

Moreover, research suggests that people tend to adopt different consumption depending on whether they are drinking in public or private contexts. For example, Brierley-Jones et al. (2014) qualitatively studied drinkers from a middle-class background, looking at their drinking patterns of consumption in a public and private context. They observed that "home drinking" is usually considered moderate and habitual consumption (for instance, drinking a few glasses

of wine throughout a week as part of life at home), while “social drinking” in public spaces usually involves larger quantities of alcohol concentrated in specific occasions, such as weekends, parties or dinners out (Brierley-Jones et al., 2014).

Priorities for consumers can also change according to context. Calvo-Porrall and Levy-Mangin (2019) studied beer drinkers in two contexts: at home and in public. They found that at home, cost and familiarity mattered most, while in public, brand image and perceived quality mattered (Calvo-Porrall & Levy-Mangin, 2019). This suggests that consumers change their decision-making criteria according to the context-specific needs and expectations. Social environments like bars and parties can strongly influence alcohol consumption. Generally, people drink more in public places than while alone. This phenomenon is called social facilitation, and it generally occurs with alcohol and food consumption. For example, de Castro (1991) reported that people eat more food in the presence of others, with portion sizes increasing proportionally to the group sizes (de Castro, 1991). However, there has also been research conducted on social facilitation with alcohol consumption, finding individuals tend to drink quantities at a faster rate in social environments.

Moreover, context can affect not just behavior, but participants' expectations and participant's emotional reactions as well. Wall et al. (2000) demonstrated that those who imagined themselves in a bar scenario had more positive expectancies about drinking, predicting stimulation and sociability enhancement from drinking, than those in a neutral bar or nonsocial context (Wall, Thrussell, & Lalonde, 2000). These context-dependent expectations may further reinforce drinking behavior in public spaces.

Motivations for drinking are also shaped by context. Ruiz et al. (2024) found that people's motivations for drinking in social contexts, report enhancement and social drinking motives, such as bonding, celebrating, or group conformity. On the other hand, solitary drinkers are more likely to report coping motives, where alcohol is used as way to manage negative emotions such as stress or anxiety (Ruiz, Bernabeu, & Lopez, 2024). These findings suggest that drinking behavior is not only a characteristic of the individual but is dynamically shaped by the immediate social environment.

In contrast, private settings typically lack these impression-management pressures. People at home either alone or with a few good friends, do not care about the representations of their

decisions. This can result in different priorities, such as how affordable the drinking choices are, how casual it is to drink, or routine preferences.

1.2 Social Presence and Interpersonal Influence

1.2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Social Presence

Understanding the impact of context is fundamental to recognize how social presence shapes consumption behavior, specifically related to alcohol consumption. The concept of social presence, or the presence of others, can change an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Over time, many theories have been developed to explain the processes in which social presence influences behavior, explaining the difference between private and public consumption choices.

One foundational theory in this field, is Zajonc's (1965) Social Facilitation Theory, according to which the mere presence of others causes arousal. Arousal is likely to positively influence the performance of easy or well-learned behaviors but negatively influence performance of complex or new tasks. In the case of consumption, social facilitation suggests that certain behaviors such as drinking, which may be habitual for many individuals, could be facilitated in public settings where others are present. For instance, within a social setting like a bar, a person may consume more alcohol or feel free to make bolder product choices due to having others to observe their choices (Zajonc, 1965).

In addition to this, Social Impact Theory (Latané, 1981) provides a more refined understanding of interpersonal influence as well. The theory proposes that the amount of influence an individual is subject to, is determined by three factors: strength (the importance of the influencing group), immediacy (the distance physically or psychologically) and the number of people. All three of these factors describe how individual behavior is influenced in consumption contexts that also involve the consumption of alcohol. For example, a consumer is more likely to change their drinking behavior when surrounded by close friends (high strength and immediacy) within a venue where many individuals are present (high number) (Latané & Wolf, 1981).

To further develop the field, Argo, Dahl and Manchanda (2005) explored the influence of mere social presence in a retail environment. Their findings suggested that consumers could experience altered behaviors when consuming a product in the presence of others, without direct interaction. When the consumer's actions are visible to others, self-awareness and impression

management conspired for behaviors that were more socially normative within the public consumption context, such as the choice of premium products or the selection of larger quantities in public. This supports the idea that public consumption, is more than just the demand characteristics of the public setting, but also psychologically trigger for altered behavior (Argo, Dahl, & Manchanda, 2005).

Overall, these theoretical perspectives reveal that social presence is not limited to direct peer pressure or group conformity. Rather, the influence of social presence operates in more subtle, often unconscious ways, to affect how consumers perceive their self and decision-making choices across contexts.

1.2.2 Mechanisms of Interpersonal Influence in Consumption Settings

Social presence affects consumer behavior through a series of psychological mechanism reflecting how people react to the expectations and behavior of others. Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) distinguish three types of interpersonal influence: Compliance, Identification, Internalization.

Compliance is changing one's behavior because of either explicit or implicit social pressures and is often motivated to minimize conflict or gain approval. Looking in the context of alcohol consumption individuals may accept a drink or consume more than they would typically would, simply to follow or conform to social expectations or to avoid standing out.

Identification refers to adopting behaviors to create or maintain a relationship with a social group. For example, a consumer in a group may choose to have premium or branded alcoholic beverages not necessarily because that is their preference, but because it represents belonging and mutual values expectancies with peers.

Internalization is the most profound level of influence. At this level, the individual adheres to the group's norms as their own standards. Specifically, individuals consume certain products and drink in certain ways because they believe it is valuable or simply right, not only to fit in.

1.2.3 Impact of Social Presence on Alcohol Consumption

Empirical research has shown consistently that social presence is crucial to the amount of alcohol consumed. In public contexts consumers tend to consume more alcohol than in public contexts. The increase in alcohol consumption in public settings has been related to higher

observability, peer effects, and the salience of social norms. When people are in public, they may feel as if they are being observed thereby increasing their motivation to be perceived as socially competent or fun, ultimately increasing the quantity of alcohol consumed.

Familiarity of peers is yet another consideration for consumption quantity and motivation for drinking. As an example, drinking with trusted friends versus drinking with strangers can affect both the amount drunk and the motivation for drinking. When people are with trusted friends, people are more relaxed and more likely to drink for fun or enhancement. However, when drinking with stranger, or ambiguous social situations, people generally drink more due to social acceptance or reducing anxiety. De Castro (1994) noted that social contexts, especially those involving eating or drinking, notably increase the quantity consumed.

These effects are often explained by the fact that social gatherings typically last longer, provide multiple shared cues to drink (such as rounds or toasts), and reduce self-monitoring. For instance, De Castro (1990) observed that people tend to match their food and beverage intake to that of their peers during social occasions, suggesting that environmental cues and group dynamics actively sustain higher levels of consumption. In a similar related study, Wall, McKee, and Hinson (2000) demonstrated that drinkers have different alcohol outcome expectancies, in part, based on context: participants imagining themselves in a bar context had higher expectancies of stimulation and social enhancement than if they imagined themselves consuming alcohol in private. This demonstrates how context does not just influence behavior, but also mental frameworks and expectations.

1.3 Symbolic Consumption and Premium Product Choice

The use of premium alcoholic products is often motivated less by intrinsic taste than by the symbolic function of signaling social status and identity (Han, Nunes, and Drèze, 2010). This behavior reflects what Veblen (1899) described as conspicuous consumption, where individuals are willing to acquire expensive goods as a means to display their relative wealth and social status. There is empirical evidence that supports this perspective when it comes to alcohol consumption. For example, Han, Nunes, and Drèze (2010) demonstrate that when consumers want their status to be acknowledged by others, they will attempt to buy luxury brands, even if these brands do not have a superior quality. Applied to alcohol consumption, this means that selecting a premium liquor in public settings may serve primarily as a social signal rather than as a response to taste.

Therefore, drinking high-quality products like champagne or aged whiskey would indicate class. Berger and Ward (2010) further demonstrate that consumers use specific product cues, such as brand prominence and price, to send subtle signals of identity and distinction. In this sense, symbolic consumption is a strategic act, designed to increase esteem or align with aspirational social norms. This dynamic becomes especially salient in public contexts like bars or parties, where consumption is highly visible and where social comparison and self-presentation motives are most pronounced.

1.4 Product Evaluation: Perceived Quality and Value for Money

1.4.1 Perceived Quality vs. Perceived Value: Conceptual Foundations

Consumers make a distinction between perceived quality and perceived value, when evaluating alcoholic products. Perceived quality refers to the judgment of a product's excellence or superiority based on intrinsic qualities such as ingredients, taste and craftsmanship (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991).

On the other hand, perceived value is the overall assessment of utility based on the trade-off between what is gained (benefits) and what is loss (costs) (Zeithaml, 1988). Some customers may think that a premium whiskey is not worth the high price, even though it may be smooth and rich.

Zeithaml's Means-End Model (1988) illustrates how consumers associate product attributes with their personal values. For instance, the origin and taste of a premium wine can lead to prestige or enjoyment, satisfying values like self-enhancement or pleasure. Price, branding, and packaging are important extrinsic indications for quality in alcohol markets where direct tasting is not always possible (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). However, while these indicators affect perceived quality, perceived value also includes sacrifice, cost, effort, or time, which might lower high-quality ratings if the product is seen as too expensive (Zeithaml, 1988). Therefore, evaluating how perceived quality and value interact is essential to understand product evaluation in alcohol consumption.

1.4.2 Factors Affecting Alcohol Quality Perception

Consumers rely on intrinsic cues (like flavor, scent, and alcohol content) and extrinsic cues (like brand name, price and packaging) when making evaluations about alcohol. Research has shown that when consumers don't have first-hand experience with the product, extrinsic cues

are often more important than intrinsic. For example, price functions as a strong signal: low prices may imply mass-market status or inferiority, while higher prices are commonly associated with higher quality (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). Similarly, a well-known brand or a wine label adorned with awards or ratings might improve the perception of quality.

Another important consideration is packaging: a research study concerning beer found that packaging materials (e.g., glass bottle versus can) and overall design style have a large influence on quality evaluations (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). High level presentation components, such as elegant fonts, bottles, or logos, suggests exclusivity and craftsmanship. Labels that include the descriptors "craft," or "artisanal," serve as authenticity signals that further enhance impressions of quality and care in production. Craft beer is often perceived as superior to industrial beer due to taste complexity or the story behind production (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991).

In conclusion, consumers assess alcohol products using a variety of cues, which include price, branding, packaging, authenticity, and environment.

1.4.3 Perception of Value for Money in Public vs. Private Consumption Contexts

Perceptions of value for money are influenced by the context. Based on recent studies, consumers' evaluation of value was heavily affected by the context of the consumption situation (public versus private). A 2019 study by Calvo-Porràl and Levy, compared beer consumption at home versus in hospitality venues and found systematic differences in consumer behavior. Consumers that drink beer at home give priority to value for money, whereas those drinking in public places (bars, restaurants) give more weight to perceived quality (Calvo-Porràl & Levy-Mangin, 2019). What they found is that when drinking at home (private context), individuals tended to emphasize value-for-money, focusing on price and quantity, they “demand value for money.” In public settings such as bars or restaurants, however, the same consumers placed greater weight on quality, brand, and the overall experience, effectively seeking premium products and variety rather than economy (Calvo-Porràl & Levy-Mangin, 2019).

Moreover, social presence increases sensory experiences and leads to the perception that drinks are more luxurious or pleasurable in public spaces (Bègue, Bushman, Zerhouni, Subra, & Ourabah, 2013). Furthermore, brands have greater signaling power in public. A prestigious wine or designer spirit not only enhances taste perception but also conveys status to others. However, this dynamic changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, though, as many customers

started purchasing high-end alcohol to drink at home as an attempt to replicate the bar experience. This marked a brief rebalancing of value priorities (Euromonitor International, 2021).

Generally speaking, private contexts privilege price-conscious consumption and public contexts support greater features and social signaling. Marketers acknowledge this by offering products for different contexts and situations, with value packs for home use, and premium representations for on-premises occasions.

1.5 Identified Gaps in the Literature

1.5.1 Premium Spirits in Context

Most research on contextual alcohol use has examined general consumption or categories like beer and wine. Premium distilled spirits, such as craft gin and top-shelf whiskey, have not received as much attention by marketing literature. There has been a lot of reporting in the alcoholic beverage industry on premiumization in spirits, but there has been a lack of academic work on the why and when people choose premium options. It remains unclear whether the "value at home, quality in bars" framework originally observed in beer (Shukla, 2010), also applies to premium liquors, or whether ritual, connoisseurship, or scarcity matter in terms of how people choose premium liquors. Understanding how context shapes the desire for premium spirits is an underexplored area requiring empirical attention (Calvo-Porrall & Levy-Mangin, 2019; Velasco et al., 2013).

1.5.2 Social presence and premium choice

According to theory, social visibility may lead consumer to opt for premium or conspicuous drinks, although causal evidence of this is limited (Zajonc, 1965; Shukla, 2010). Very few experimental research studies have manipulated social presence to directly test whether visibility influences premium drink choices. Existing research has been focusing mainly on the decision whether to drink rather than which drink to choose, as a tactic of impression management (Ruiz et al., 2024). It therefore remains an open question how different forms of social presence and visibility shape premium drink selection, and to what extent public contexts amplify these behaviors (Staub et al., 2022; Velasco et al., 2013).

1.5.3 Consumption Context and Perceived Value

Research exploring the effect of contextual variables on perceived value-for-money versus value-for-quality perceptions in consumption of alcohol is limited, in particular for premium spirits (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds et al., 1991). It is uncertain whether there is an increased perceived quality from contextual cues in bars (e.g. presentation, bar atmosphere) for spirits as there is for beer (Plata et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is a lack of research exploring whether consumers perceive premium spirits as providing better value for social gatherings than for solitary consumption and the extent this affects willingness to pay.

1.6 Research Question and Hypothesis

1.6.1 Research Question

The focus of the research is understanding behavioral patterns related to spirits consumption across different contexts. Initially, more than 4 research questions were considered. At the end there was a process of refinement that led to the selection of a unique research question. This choice allows for a more rigorous and targeted analysis within the scope of the study. In particular, the main research question is:

How does the consumption context (public vs. private) and the presence of others influence consumers' anticipated spirits consumption, purchase intentions, and product evaluations?

This question wants:

- To examine whether drinking in a public vs. private setting affects the expected quantity of spirits consumed.
- To determine the influence of social presence on preferences for premium vs. basic spirits.
- To evaluate the effects of context and social presence on perceived quality and value-for-money evaluations.
- To ascertain whether social motivations, such as self-presentation concerns, mediate these consumption decisions.

1.6.2 Hypothesis

The hypotheses guiding this study focus on the role of context and social presence in shaping alcohol consumption behaviors and product evaluations.

The first hypothesis proposes that those in a public context (e.g. busy bar) will report higher anticipated consumption and more preference for premium spirits than those in a private context (e.g. drinking at home). Moreover, within private contexts, those with other people present (e.g. home with friends) will be higher in consumption and in preference for premium drinks than alone at home. These effects are predicted to be mediated by social presence either through public or private context encouraging self-presentation concerns that result in more status facilitating behaviors.

The second hypothesis focuses on perceived quality, expecting that public contexts will find premium products rated higher than private contexts, where branding, packaging and some presentations are more prominent and socially relevant. Moreover, the presence of others is expected to amplify these perceptions, since social visibility reinforces associations with status, sophistication, and group norms, potentially enhancing both perceived quality and value for money.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section explains the research methodology employed to investigate the influence of consumption context on anticipated alcohol consumption, premium drink choice, and perceived value, with a focus on spirits. The methodology is developed to ensure methodological rigor and coherence with the objectives of the study.

It includes a description of the business context, participants, variables used, procedure of the study and research design. Transparency of methods is meant to provide a good foundation for understanding the findings and information in this study.

This research gives a contribution to the growing body of literature on contextual consumption and offers valuable insights for both academic and industry audiences interested concerned with consumer behavior in the alcoholic beverages sector.

2.1 Business Context

This section examines the business context of Italy's spirits industry, starting off with a general overview of its size and composition, followed by the most prominent companies in the sector and the prevailing new trends, and concluding with its clientele. This contextual information gives the starting point to understand consumer behavior in subsequent empirical research.

2.1.1 *Market Overview and Structure*

The Italian spirits market is composed of two main product categories. The first is the distilled spirits category, which includes gin, whisky, vodka, brandy, rum, and the traditional grappa. The second one are the liqueurs, which includes amari, aperitifs, sambuca and limoncello. In particular, liqueurs represent the largest share of retail sales, accounting for about 55% (€660 million) in 2021, compared to distilled spirits making up the remaining 45% (€540 million) (Federvini, 2022).

Distribution is organized in on-trade channels, including restaurants, bars, clubs, more characteristic for Italy due to a shared culture of aperitivo and sociability drinking, and off-trade channels, including retails and off-trade channels. In particular, on-trade consumption creates half of the value created by spirits market (Federvini, 2022), while e-commerce has been evolving very rapidly but still represents less than 5% of total sales (Statista, 2024).

In terms of overall size, the Italian spirits market was valued at €2,85 billion in 2023, ranking fourth in Europe, with projections of €3 billion by 2028 (Statista, 2023). While the overall value of the market has remained steady, consumption volumes are expected to decrease slightly (-0,7% annually) as a result of demographic changes and shifts in drinking habits, which will be partially offset by a change of tastes towards premium products (Fehlen & Lafaye, 2022). Per capita spending was €30,3 in 2023, with gradual increases to €32,4 by 2028 (Statista, 2023). The industry also has its global scope, with exports amounting to €1.6 billion in 2021, doubling within the past five years (Federvini, 2022).

2.1.2 Main Players

The Italian spirits market is focused on some major groups, yet complemented by a range of regional and niche producers. The multinationals include Diageo, Pernod Ricard, Bacardi-Martini, and Moët Hennessy, with all of them having an Italian subsidiary producing international brands like Johnnie Walker, Absolut, Havana Club, and Hennessy. Among them, Martini & Rossi, a brand owned by Bacardi, is one of the largest producers in the nation with revenues of more than €570 million in 2022 (Beverfood, 2022).

Added to these foreign giants are some domestic groups which have become national as well as international brands. Campari Group is clearly the strongest, with overseas sales of €2,7 billion in 2022, 17% of which belonged to the home market (Campari Group, 2023). Its enormous stable of brands includes icons such as Aperol, Campari, Cynar, Averna, and Cinzano. Other players are Branca International, owner of Fernet-Branca; Gruppo Montenegro, producer of Amaro Montenegro and Vecchia Romagna; and Illva Saronno Holding, world-class Disaronno and Tia Maria manufacturer (Beverfood, 2022). Other well-known Italian brands are Molinari, whose Sambuca is extremely popular, Caffo, whose Vecchio Amaro del Capo is popular, Stock Spirits, and Luxardo.

Apart from these larger-scale producers, the Italian sector is also very diversified with many family-owned distilleries and small-scale manufacturers. These businesses are built towards domestic specialties such as grappa, amari, and craft gin that give the sector its cultural diversity and richness. Some of the most notable among them are Nonino, Poli, Pallini, and Lucano, and more and more new craft gin distilleries capturing the attention of young consumers and maintaining the trend towards premium and domestic products (Fehlen & Lafaye, 2022).

2.1.3 Main Trends

There are several key trends that affect the Italian spirits' market.

First, premiumization. For consumers in general now quality has taken precedence over quantity, with over 70% indicating product quality as the reason for their purchase (Deloitte & Ipsos, 2021). This trend has led to the demand for premium gin, aged whisky, and craft liquors, with gin even selling more in volume than whisky and vodka in 2022 (Fehlen & Lafaye, 2022).

Secondly, e-commerce and digitalization are on the rise. In fact, online sales of alcoholic beverages grew by 200% during Covid-19 (Statista, 2020; IWSR, 2022) and producers have subsequently invested in their digital platforms. For example, Campari, and Moët Hennessy collaborated to procure Tannico, Italy's largest online alcohol consumer, demonstrating the strategic nature of digital selling (Campari Group, 2023).

Thirdly, cocktail culture is reshaping consumption patterns, especially among younger generations. In place of consuming spirits neat, GenZ and Millennials are drinking cocktails more and more, and beloved Italian classics such as the Aperol Spritz and Negroni are now available in every corner of the world, while gin cocktails have explicitly influenced for recent growth in the industry (Fehlen & Lafaye, 2022).

At the same time, there is a growing trend for low-alcohol and even alcohol-free choices, reflecting broader lifestyle trends and offering choices that will accommodate moderation without sacrificing social rituals (Fehlen & Lafaye, 2022).

Lastly, sustainability has also been a growing trend in the consumer behavior. Many millennials actively seek out eco-responsibility and local sourcing, and therefore both producers from Italy and abroad have become more sustainable and highlighted natural ingredients in their marketing (Deloitte & Ipsos, 2021).

2.1.4 Customer Base

Italian spirits consumers group vary widely, but their behavior has some distinctive aspects. The generational differences are significant, with older consumers tending to standard digestif drinks like amari and grappa consumed after meals, and millennials and gen z preferring cocktails, experiences, and trendy bar settings. Young adults also led the way during the

pandemic, by driving an increase in online alcohol purchases, underlining their openness to digital channels (Ipsos, 2021; Statista, 2020).

The differences are also geographical. In the northern cities, like Milan, Turin, and Venice, aperitivo culture is dominant and fosters the consumption of low-ABV cocktails. In southern regions the preferences tend towards domestic liqueurs, such as limoncello and sambuca, indicating historical and local traditions for beverages like those (Fehlen & Lafaye, 2022).

When the consumption context is taken into consideration, the post-work early-evening aperitivo ritual and the after-dinner digestif remain the most important situations for the consumption of spirits. Italians consume spirits in general in moderation, and they spend around €30 a year per capita (Statista, 2023). This moderation is in accordance with Mediterranean drinking culture, with conviviality being the key over excess.

Finally, the psychographic Italian consumer profile also reflects a balance between innovation and tradition. While authenticity and heritage are still extremely valued, there is increasingly a desire to experiment, and most consumers are attracted by new tastes, innovative packaging, or handcrafted production. Storytelling, heritage, and sustainability become increasingly significant drivers of the purchasing decision, so that the Italian customer segment is both traditionalist in cultural terms and receptive to innovative global trends (Fehlen & Lafaye, 2022).

2.2 Participants of the Study

2.2.1 Target Population

The target population of this research is made of Italians between 18 and 44 years old, which includes Gen Z (18-27 years old) and Millennials (28-44 years old). The reason behind the choice to focus on this specific age range has been done for various reasons.

Firstly, this age range has a high importance in the alcoholic beverage industry, as its consumers are among the most active social drinkers and most likely to experiment new products (e.g., premium spirits, craft cocktails). Secondly for the susceptibility to contextual and social influences. Indeed, several studies (Moore & McElroy, 2012) have shown that Gen Z and Millennials are more likely than previous generations to change their behavior due to peer pressure, perceived social image, and contextual cues, all of which are directly relevant to this

study. Finally, from a methodological perspective, limiting the sample of the study will allow the research objectives to be consistent.

The geographical area was limited to Italy for cultural and practical reasons. Italy is particularly interesting because it offers a hybrid between traditional consumption systems (e.g. drinking wine at meals) and possibilities to explore modern consumption styles (e.g. cocktails, aperitivo culture, nightlife, etc..). Moreover, when a research is conducted in one single culture, there is higher level of consistency, making it easier to interpret research findings without having to control for broader cross-cultural influences. In fact, by narrowing the geographic scope to a single nation, the sample is more representative and accurate in terms of gender, age and other variables. In order to filter out participants who were not included in the target population, a preliminary question at the end of the questionnaire was asked.

2.2.2 *Rebalancing Process*

As a frame of reference, in order to outline the stratification scheme, it has been taken from the ISTAT¹ (2025) the number of registered residents in Italy as of January 1, 2025. Particularly, it has been filtered the age ranges 18-24, 25-34, 35-44 and divided it by gender with the aim to calculate the percentage distribution of males and females in this category. The scope of this approach was to ensure the analysis of the most representative and balanced sample possible. The tables below show the total Italian population, both in absolute numbers and percentages, within the age ranges under study, divided by gender.

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	1.988.124	2.996.362	3.448.376	8.432.862
Male	2.178.133	3.259.128	3.510.311	8.947.572
Total	4.166.257	6.255.490	6.958.687	17.380.434

Table 2-1: Italy population by age and sex - absolute numbers

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	11%	17%	20%	49%
Male	13%	19%	20%	51%
Total	24%	36%	40%	100%

Table 2-2: Italy population by age and sex - percentages

In conclusion, the target population consists of 24% in the age range 18-24, 36% in the age range 25-34 and 40% in the age range 35-44.

¹ ISTAT <https://demo.istat.it/app/?i=POS&l=it>

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	1.988.124	2.996.362	3.448.376	8.432.862
Male	2.178.133	3.259.128	3.510.311	8.947.572
Total	4.166.257	6.255.490	6.958.687	17.380.434

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	35	38	59	132
Male	20	35	54	109
Total	55	73	113	241

Table 2-3: Population vs Sample - absolute numbers

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	11%	17%	20%	49%
Male	13%	19%	20%	51%
Total	24%	36%	40%	100%

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	15%	16%	24%	55%
Male	8%	15%	22%	45%
Total	23%	30%	47%	100%

Table 2-4: Population vs Sample - percentages

Based on the data presented above, the current sample does not perfectly reflect the population distribution of Italian females and males. In particular, females were oversampled (55% females compared to 49% males). Hence, to adjust the sampling imbalance, a re-balancing step was conducted. Specifically, because the oversampling of females was concentrated in the 18-24 and 35-44 age groups, some females were taken out of the sample randomly: 8 females from the 18-24 group and 18 females from the 35-44 group. Overall, the rebalancing step led to a sample that was more balanced in gender.

In summary, starting from 241 valid responses (*Paragraph 2.5 Data Audit*), the final sample consists of 215 balanced responses, distributed as follows:

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	1.988.124	2.996.362	3.448.376	8.432.862
Male	2.178.133	3.259.128	3.510.311	8.947.572
Total	4.166.257	6.255.490	6.958.687	17.380.434

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	27	38	41	106
Male	20	35	54	109
Total	47	73	95	215

Table 2-5: Population vs Sample distribution after the rebalancing process - absolute numbers

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	11,44%	17,24%	19,84%	48,52%
Male	12,53%	18,75%	20,20%	51,48%
Total	23,97%	35,99%	40,04%	100,00%

	18-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Female	12,56%	17,67%	19,07%	49,30%
Male	9,30%	16,28%	25,12%	50,70%
Total	21,86%	33,95%	44,19%	100,00%

Table 2-6: Population vs Sample distribution after the rebalancing process - percentages

This rebalancing process allowed to achieve a nearly perfect representation, with no differences between females and males, and no variations exceeding 4% within any age group.

2.2.3 Sample Description

Gender

The sample is composed of 49,30% of females and 50,70% of males. These results are well representative of the gender distribution of the target population, which is composed of 51,48%

of males and 48,52% of females.² This level of representativeness was achieved, thanks to the rebalancing process previously executed.

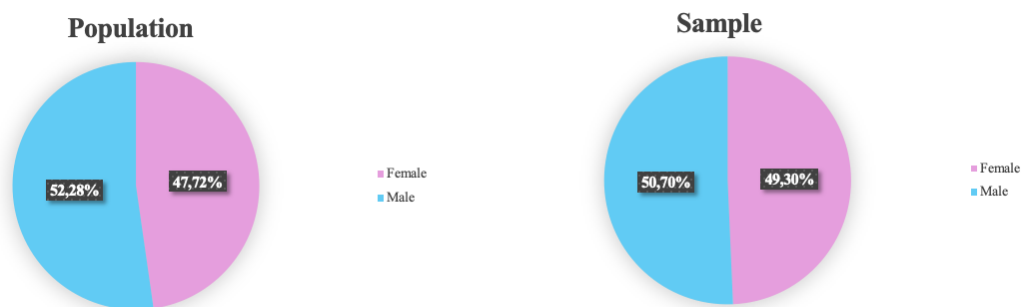


Figure 2-1: Gender Distributions – Population vs Sample

Age Groups

The ages between 18 and 44 were divided into three groups: 18-24, 25-34, and 35-44, for simplicity. By looking at the pie charts below, the sample distribution broadly reflects the population distribution³, with only minor deviations. In particular, the age group 18-24 presents a slight underrepresentation. The 25-34 age group, instead, has a well aligned distribution, while the 35-44 age group was the only group with considerable overrepresentation with a representation of 44,19% in the sample compared to 40,04% in population. This overrepresentation is probably due to the channels used to spread the survey, such as professional platforms or organizational mailing lists, that perhaps reached a higher number of respondents in this age group. While there do seem to be variations, none of them are greater than the 4% area meaning that the sample can be considered representative of the population.

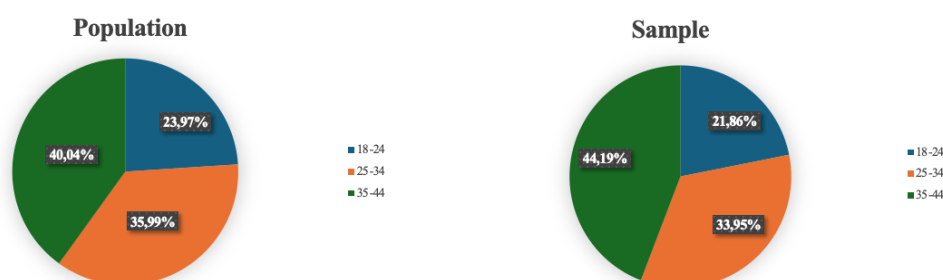


Figure 2-2: Age Groups Distributions – Population vs Sample

² ISTAT <https://demo.istat.it/app/?i=POS&l=it>

³ ISTAT <https://demo.istat.it/app/?i=POS&l=it>

Educational Level

For what concerns the education, a comparison of the population and sample's statistics within the considered age group, highlights differences between the two data sets. Specifically, there is an 8% oversampling of respondents with a bachelor's or master's Degree compared those with only a High School Diploma⁴. This overrepresentation is mainly because the network through which the survey was distributed, consisted mostly of people with at least an undergraduate degree.

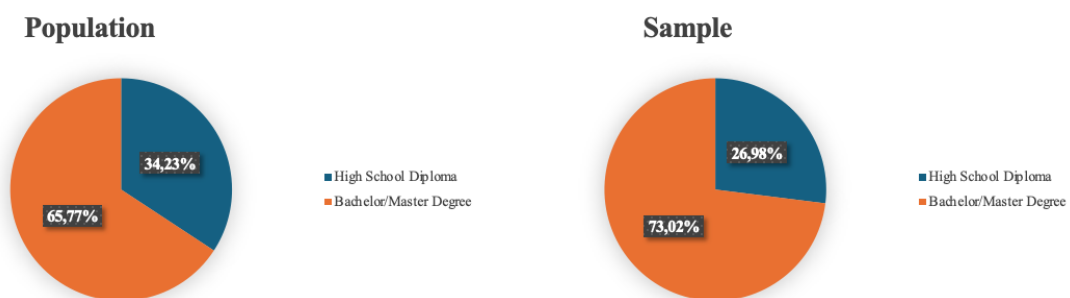


Figure 2-3: Educational Level Distributions – Population vs Sample

Occupation

Regarding occupation (within the considered age group), the sample distribution is well representative of the target population with no variations exceeding 2%⁵.

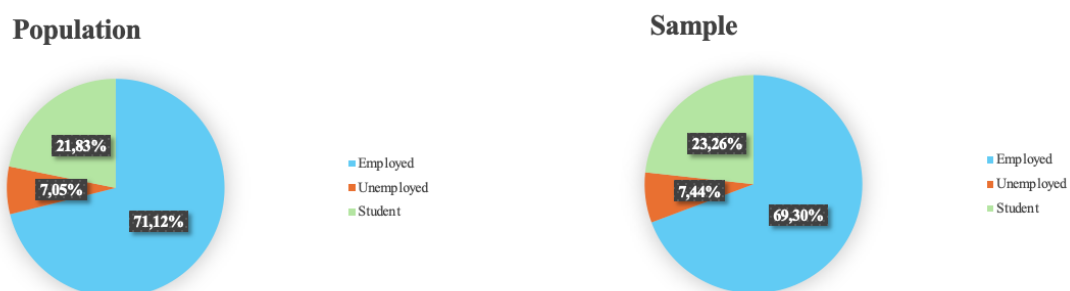


Figure 2-4: Occupation Distribution – Population vs Sample

⁴ Istat http://dati-censimentopopolazione.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DICA_GRADOISTR1#

⁵ https://esploradati.istat.it/databrowser/#/it/dw/categories/IT1,Z0500LAB,1.0/LAB_OFFER/DCCV_POPCOND1/IT1,532_930_DF_DCCV_POPCOND1_1,1.0

Salary Level

Regarding gross annual salary levels, the sample distribution does not seem to be representative, within the considered age group in relation to the Italian population⁶. In particular there is an overrepresentation of middle- and high-income ranges. On the other hand, the lowest income bracket (<20.000 €) is significantly underrepresented. This highlights a clear sample discrepancy that will be taken in consideration in the final limitations section.

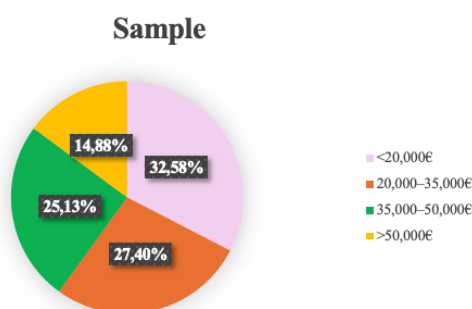


Figure 2-5: Gross Annual Salary Groups Distribution – Sample

Region

Looking at the regions of origin, the 20 Italian regions were divided into three groups, North, Centre, and South (including islands) of Italy, in order to proceed with a smoother analysis. It is notable that there is a discrepancy in the distributions, in particular an underrepresentation of the North of Italy and an overrepresentation of the Centre of Italy⁷. This misrepresentation will be taken into consideration in the final limitations.



Figure 2-6: Region Groups Distributions – Population vs Sample

⁶https://esploradati.istat.it/databrowser/#/it/dw/categories/IT1,Z0500LAB,1.0/LAB_EMPLWAGE/LAB_EMPL_LABCOSTENTPA/DCSC_COSTLAVULAOROS_1/DCSC_COSTLAVULAOROS_1_PREVBASES/IT1,154_373_DF_DCSC_COSTLAVULAOROS_1_1,1.0

⁷ <https://demo.istat.it/app/?i=POS>

Overall, the sample can be considered broadly representative of the target population. The rebalancing process ensured a strong representativeness in gender and age ranges, with all variations remaining within acceptable margins (below 4% for most variables). However, there are some discrepancies, in particular in income levels and region of origin that should be acknowledged and are addressed in the limitations section.

2.3 Variables and Measures Used

For the execution of this research, variables were classified according to their role within the conceptual framework. In particular, the independent variable represents the factor manipulated to observe its effects, the dependent variables capture the expected outcomes of this manipulation; while mediating and control variables are introduced to clarify underlying mechanisms and to account for individual differences.

The first independent variable is the consumption context, which can be either public (e.g., at a bar) or private (e.g., drinking at home alone). The context represents an important social and psychological component in consumer behavior decision making in drinking behavior. One of the key mediators in this is social presence, which is the perceived or actual presence of others, when consuming alcohol. Social presence can activate self-presentation concerns, since people often engage in behavior moderated by the presence of other people (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Specifically, the desire to look sophisticated or successful may lead individuals to make choices for higher premium options or increase consumption of expensive alcohol in socially relevant contexts (Griskevicius et al., 2007). On the other hand, in the absence of others, decisions may be driven more by personal taste, comfort, or price sensitivity. In order to measure context and the social presence, participants were randomly assigned to imagine themselves in one of three alcohol consumption scenarios, which varied by the presence of others and the context. These conditions served as the manipulation of social presence (drinking alone vs. with friends) and context (private home vs. public bar). Further details about the experiment will be explained in the next paragraph.

After reading their assigned scenario, participants answered a series of questions to measure key dependent variables related to their anticipated alcohol consumption behavior and perceptions in that situation. Each dependent variable was operationalized with a single self-report item (no multi-item indices), as detailed below:

- **Anticipated Consumption Quantity.** This was measured by asking participants: “In this scenario, how many drinks would you expect to consume?”. Participants provided an open-ended numerical response indicating the number of alcoholic drinks they would likely have in the described situation.
- **Purchase Intentions.** Participants’ inclination to choose a premium alcoholic beverage was measured with the statement: “I am more likely to choose a premium (top-shelf) drink over a basic house drink in this scenario.” Responses were given on a 1–10 Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 10 = Strongly agree).
- **Perceived Quality of the Drink.** The judgment of a product’s excellence or superiority based on intrinsic qualities was assessed with the statement: “Based on the environment and how the drink is experienced, I would expect the drink to feel like a high-quality choice.” Using a 1 (Strongly disagree) to 10 (Strongly agree) scale, this measure reflects the participant’s perception of quality of the drink they would have, given the scenario’s context (with higher scores denoting a higher perceived quality of the drink).
- **Value for Money.** This construct was measured by the statement: “In this setting, I would choose a drink or bottle that offers good value, even if it costs more, if the overall experience (taste, presentation, setting) feels rewarding.” Participants rated their agreement on a 1–10 scale. This item measures whether the price paid is perceived as fair given the quality of the drink (with higher scores indicating a greater emphasis on experiential value for money).
- **Self - Presentation Concerns.** To capture concerns for how one’s drink choice might be viewed by others, the following statement was included: “In this situation, I might consider how my drink choice reflects on me, even if others are not physically present.” Participants responded on a 1–10 agreement scale. Higher scores on this item indicate greater self-presentational concern, meaning that the participant is more mindful of the image conveyed by his drink selection.

In addition to the primary dependent measures, the study collected several individual difference variables to serve as control variables. These measures were included to account for pre-existing attitudes and behaviors that might influence alcohol consumption decisions, thereby helping to isolate the effect of the experimental manipulation. Key control measures were:

- **Personal Attitudes and Traits:** Examples include: “I usually worry about making a good impression”, “A product is more valuable to me if it has some ‘exclusive appeal’”, “I

prefer drinking with friends over drinking alone”, “I believe that the price of a drink is a good indicator of its quality”, and “I am willing to pay more for a high-quality, premium alcoholic beverage”. Each of these was rated from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 10 (Strongly agree).

- **Drinking Habits and Spending:** Frequency of consumption was measured in ordinal categories (e.g., “Never/Rarely,” “1-2 times a month,” “1-2 times a week,” etc.), and spending was captured with open-ended questions (e.g., average amount spent per week on alcoholic beverages, typical amount spent on a drink in a bar, and the maximum amount they would pay for a bottle of vodka or gin in a venue vs. for home consumption).
- **Psychographic Variables:** “I consider myself an open-minded person”, “I often seek new experiences and sensations”, “I prefer to follow my instincts rather than overthink decisions”, “I enjoy being spontaneous and not always planning everything”, and “I value social connections and spending time with others”. Each of these was measured on the same 1-10 Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 10 = Strongly agree). These items capture dispositional tendencies that could influence both general drinking motivations and responses to the scenarios.
- **Demographic Variables:** Finally, standard demographic information was collected, mainly through multiple choice answers. They includes gender (male, female, prefer not to say), age (open-ended, grouped for analysis into 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44), education (high school diploma, bachelor’s/master’s degree), gross annual income (<€20,000; €20,000-€35,000; €35,000-€50,000; >€50,000), occupation (student, employed, retired, unemployed), and region of origin (20 Italian regions, grouped for analysis into North, Centre, and South).

2.4 Research Design and Data Collection

This study adopted a quantitative research approach, using an experimental between-subject design to better understand how the consumption context influences alcohol-related behaviors and perceptions. The choice of a quantitative method enabled a standardized collection of comparable data from a large number of respondents. Specifically, the experiment design manipulated two contextual factors, drinking context (public vs. private setting) and social presence (drinking with others vs. drinking alone), in a factorial manner. To maintain simplicity and focus on realistic scenarios, the combination of a public context with no social presence (i.e. a “bar alone” scenario) was not included. Therefore, the experiment ended to be a three

group between subject design, making the analysis simpler. Choosing a between-subjects design (or independent group) means that each person was only exposed to one condition and couldn't subsequently exhibit demand bias. This method also reduced demand characteristics, as participants cannot directly compare multiple conditions and discern the experimental hypothesis. Random assignment of respondents to conditions was implemented by Qualtrics to control for individual differences between groups and improve internal validity.

The experiment was developed through a quantitative online questionnaire, composed of 31 questions which can be consulted in “*Annex 1: Survey*”, that included qualitative and quantitative variables, with nominal, ordinal and scale measurements.

The survey was structured in four sections: an initial experimental manipulation with a between subject design, a section on general attitudes and alcohol consumption patterns, a section on psychographic traits, and a final section recording sociodemographic information. Only the first section varied between participants, while the remaining ones were identical for all participants, providing a consistent background on habits, attitudes, personality-related traits, and demographic characteristics to act as control variables and contextual information for the analysis. Most of the questions were taken from past research, while scenarios were self-developed.

First, participants were randomly assigned to one of the following three scenario scenarios: (A) drinking at a bar with friends (public context, social presence), (B) drinking at home alone (private context, no social presence), or (C) drinking at home with friends (private context, social presence). Each participant was presented with a brief description of the scenario and was asked to imagine themselves in that situation. Afterwards four questions aimed to measure each relationship between the four dependent variables (anticipated consumption quantity, purchase intentions, value for money, perceived quality) and the context. Consequently, a question regarding self-presentation concerns was asked to verify how the presence of other people activate this status.

Later on, two manipulation check items were included to verify that participants correctly perceived the level of social presence and the public versus private nature of the scenario they were assigned. In particular, participants answered a True/False statement: “While imagining the situation, I felt as if other people might be observing my choice.” This item checks the sense of social presence in the scenario. Participants were expected to answer “True” for the Bar and

Home with friends' scenarios, while "False" for the Home alone scenario. Moreover, participants responded True/False to: "The situation seemed more public than private." This question wants to check the publicness of the context. Participants were expected to rate the bar scenario as public ("True"), while the Home scenarios as private ("False").

Manipulation checks confirmed that the experimental scenarios successfully induced the intended perceptions of social presence and publicness. For the 'feeling observed' item, participants in the bar (100%) and home-with-friends (97%) conditions were significantly more likely to report feeling observed compared to those at home alone (4%), $\chi^2(2, N=224) = 203,06$, $p < 0,001$. Similarly, for the 'public vs. private' item, almost all participants in the bar condition (99%) perceived the situation as public, whereas those in the home alone (1%) and home-with-friends (4%) conditions predominantly perceived it as private, $\chi^2(2, N=224) = 202,09$, $p < 0,001$. These results indicate that the manipulations were effective in creating the intended differences across scenarios. For greater robustness, participants who failed the manipulation checks were excluded from the subsequent analyses, ensuring that only those who perceived the scenarios as intended were retained in the final sample.

Scenario_experiment * manip1					Scenario_experiment * manip2				
Crosstab					Crosstab				
Count		manip1		Total	Count		manip2		Total
		True	False				True	False	
Scenario_experiment	A	71	0	71	Scenario_experiment	A	70	1	71
	B	3	79	82		B	1	81	82
	C	69	2	71		C	3	68	71
Total		143	81	224	Total		74	150	224
Chi-Square Tests					Chi-Square Tests				
		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)			Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		203,060 ^a	2	<,001	Pearson Chi-Square		202,090 ^a	2	<,001
Likelihood Ratio		249,184	2	<,001	Likelihood Ratio		238,057	2	<,001
Linear-by-Linear Association		,121	1	,727	Linear-by-Linear Association		142,263	1	<,001
N of Valid Cases		224			N of Valid Cases		224		
a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 25,67.					a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 23,46.				

Table 2-7: Manipulation Check 1 and 2 - Chi Square Test

After this section, a series attitudinal, physiographical and demographical questions were collected.

The survey link was disseminated through my Italian network by social media channels and university mailing lists. A pre-screening filter was applied so that only Italian participants, aged 18-44 years old, and consumers of alcohol could proceed to the questionnaire. This allows to be aligned with the study's focus on Millennials and Gen Z drinking behavior. All respondents

have provided consent to use their data anonymously and has completed the survey voluntarily. Employing an online survey allowed for an efficient data gathering process and likely encouraged in minimizing social desirability through anonymity.

2.5 Data Audit

A formal data audit has been conducted to enable a good quality of the study and a smoother process.

First of all, Qualtrics software was set up to only accept whole numbers on open-ended questions requiring numeric input (e.g., expected consumption or spending), which would automatically reject all other characters, types, or data values (i.e., non-numeric or even decimal entries.). This setting made data cleaning much more efficiently and ensured compatibility with quantitative analyses.

Second, manual corrections were not required for scaling questions, as the range of the Likert scales were predetermined, from 1 to 10. This choice avoided any type of entry errors and helped maintain the integrity of the rating data.

Third, all questions were set as mandatory in order to minimize missing data values. This contributed to having all participants complete the survey and significantly improved the dataset's reliability for further analysis.

Finally, after the data collection, a process of data cleaning was executed. Specifically, the questionnaire collected 315 responses, out of which 46 were removed because they were incomplete. Among the remaining 269, the responses of those who answered "No" to the preliminary question "Are you 18-44 years old, Italian and do you usually drink? (4 responses)" were also removed. For robustness the 5 respondents who have answered "Prefer not to say" to the question "What is your gender?" were also removed.

Participants who failed both manipulation check questions "While imagining the situation, I felt that other people could observe my choice" and "The situation felt more public than private", were excluded from the analysis (9 respondents).

Additionally, straight liners were removed by calculating the variance of responses to consecutive Likert-scale items (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 10 = strongly agree). All

respondents showing zero variance were classified as straight liners (10 respondents). Finally, a chi-square test of independence was conducted between the demographic variables (gender, region of origin, salary, age range, occupation) and the assigned experimental scenario. All tests registered p-values higher than 0,05, meaning that there is not a significant association between demographics and scenario allocation. These results can be consulted in “*Annex 2: Independence Test*” and suggest consistency and balance across the sub-samples in the three experimental conditions.

At the end of the data audit, the total number of valid responses were 241. Consequently, a data rebalancing process was executed (*Paragraph 2.2.2 Rebalancing Process*), leading to 215 final responses.

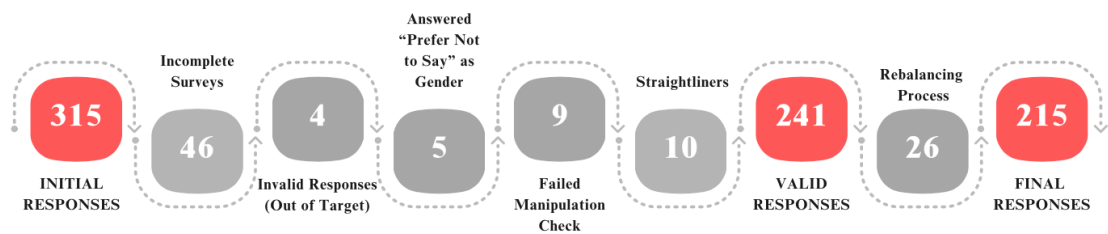


Figure 2-7: Data Cleaning Phases

3. DATA ANALYSIS

This section provides a descriptive overview of the key dependent variables of the research, for each consumption scenario (A: a fancy crowded bar with some friends, B: home alone, C: home with friends) of the experiment. More specifically, anticipated consumption quantity, purchase intentions, value for money, perceived quality and self-presentation concerns will be analyzed.

Firstly, the analysis is performed through univariate descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, distribution...) for each variable of interest. The aim is to provide a preliminary verification of whether the observed patterns are consistent with the theoretical expectations.

Secondly, bivariate analyses are conducted to test the effect of the consumption context (mediated by social presence) on the main dependent variables. Finally, a comparative summary across scenarios evaluates these findings according to the research Hypothesis. The objective is to verify whether there are statistically significant differences between the consumption contexts (bar with others, home alone, home with others) and each dependent variable.

3.1 Preliminary Outliers Check

A preliminary outliers check was conducted for all discrete quantitative variables. Only the extreme values were removed, therefore those clearly deviating from the overall distribution. The variables in which extreme outliers were detected are:

Q7 How much do you typically spend per week on alcoholic beverages (spirits, wine, beer)? (8 extreme outliers)

Q8 Specifically, how much do you spend on average per week on the category of spirits? (7 extreme outliers)

Q9 How much do you spend on average for a drink (e.g., gin and tonic, spritz, negroni) consumed in a bar? (1 extreme outlier)

Q10 What is the maximum amount you would be willing to spend for a bottle of vodka or gin in a venue? (3 extreme outliers)

Q12 For how many years have you been regularly consuming alcoholic beverages? (3 extreme outliers)

To avoid deleting entire respondent rows and compromising subsequent analyses, extreme values were replaced with system missing values, allowing SPSS to exclude them only from analyses involving the specific variable while preserving all other data for the same respondent. All box plot graphs can be consulted in

Annex 3: Extreme Outliers Check.

3.2 Anticipated Consumption Quantity

For each scenario randomly assigned, Q1 asked participants “*In this scenario, how many drinks would you expect to consume*”? This question wants to measure the anticipated consumption quantity, the expected number of drinks consumed in a specific context.

SCENARIO A: Fancy crowded bar with friends

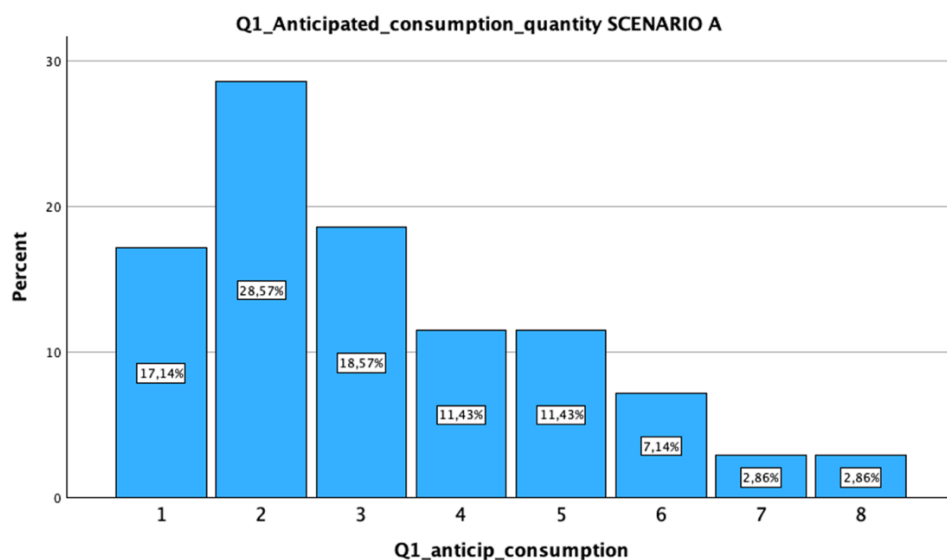


Figure 3-1: Anticipated Consumption Quantity (Scenario A) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	70
	Missing	0
Mean		3,19
Median		3,00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		1,836

Table 3-1: Anticipated Consumption Quantity (Scenario A) – Statistics

In Scenario A, fancy crowded bar with friends, the statistics demonstrate that the mean of expected drinking quantity is 3,19 drinks, with a median of 3 and a mode of 2, suggesting that the majority of respondents are tending toward a moderate amount of drinking. The standard

deviation suggests more variability in responses (1,836), with values reported from 1 to 8 drinks. The frequency distribution demonstrates that 2 drinks are the most popular choice (28,57%), followed by 1 drink (17,14%) and 3 drinks (18,57%). Higher numbers of consumption of 6 to 8 drinks are less frequent as they represent the lowest proportion of the sample.

From these findings, we can conclude that while the context of a bar with friends encourages moderate consumption for the majority of the sample, a small, but not inconsequential, portion of respondents are willing to drink at more heavy levels in this context; potentially because of the social-fancy atmosphere associated with this scenario. This process is consistent with the theoretical expectation that public contexts are contexts that encourage greater alcohol consumption compared to private contexts.

For the purpose of obtaining detailed insights about the sample, subsequent analysis was conducted for demographic, behavioral, and psychographic variables.

Independent Samples Test_SCENARIO A										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
Q1_anticip_consumption	Equal variances assumed	1,828	,181	3,014	68	,002	,004	1,260	,418	,426 2,094
	Equal variances not assumed			3,074	67,738	,002	,003	1,260	,410	,442 2,078

Table 3-2: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Gender (Scenario A) - Independent Sample T Test

Group Statistics				
	Q14_gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1_anticip_consumption	Male	39	3,74	1,860
	Female	31	2,48	1,568

Table 3-3: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Gender (Scenario A) - Statistics

By crossing the selected variable with the demographic ones, it emerged that only the gender resulted to be significant. In particular, an independent-samples t-test was conducted in order to compare anticipated consumption by gender. The results indicate there is a significant difference, $p=0,004$, with men that are willing to consume a higher number of drinks than women for this context. Indeed, men's mean is 3,74 drinks, while women's is 2,48 drinks. Since the p-value is less than the 0,05 threshold, it is possible conclude that the difference is statistically significant, and that gender has an influence in anticipated alcohol consumption within this public social context.

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1_anticip_consumption * consumption_freq_gen	Between Groups (Combined)		101,065	2	50,532	25,742	<,001
	Within Groups		131,521	67	1,963		
	Total		232,586	69			

Table 3-4: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario A) - ANOVA

Subsequently, a behavioral analysis was conducted. In particular, the association between anticipated consumption and general frequency of spirit consumption was analyzed through a One-Way ANOVA, due to the nature of the variables (quantitative discrete and qualitative ordinal). Please note that, as both two extreme cases of spirits' consumption frequency (never/rarely and everyday), reported only 2 responses per case, it was decided to merge respectively:

- “Never/Rarely” with “1-2 times a month”
- “Everyday” with “3-5 times a week”

The results show that it is possible to reject the null Hypothesis of the F-test ($p < 0,05$), meaning that there is a statistically significant positive effect of drinking frequency on anticipated consumption.

Q1_anticip_consumption consumption_freq_gen	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Rarely/1-2 times a month	1,61	18	,778
1-2 times a week	3,14	36	1,515
3-5 times a week/everyday	5,06	16	1,652
Total	3,19	70	1,836

Table 3-5: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario A) – Mean Table

The mean table show a clear positive trend: respondents with a higher frequency of spirits consumption report higher anticipated consumption, with the lowest mean for “Rarely/1-2 times a month” (3,14) and the highest for “3-5 times a week/everyday” (5,06).

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * consumption_freq_gen	,659	,435

Table 3-6: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario A) – Eta

The Eta Index reports a score of 0,659, which is well above the critical threshold (0,3): given low p-value, the relationship is statistically significant and strong.

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1_anticip_consumption * cons_freq_out	Between Groups (Combined)	115,147	2	57,574	32,847	<,001
	Within Groups	117,438	67	1,753		
	Total	232,586	69			

Table 3-7: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency Out (Scenario A) - ANOVA

Q1_anticip_consumption cons_freq_out	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Rarely/1-2 times a month	1,57	21	,598
1-2 times a week	3,27	33	1,506
3-5 times a week/everyday	5,13	16	1,586
Total	3,19	70	1,836

Table 3-8: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency Out (Scenario A) – Mean Table

The same analysis was performed between anticipated consumption and frequency of out-of-home spirits consumption. Here as well the extreme cases of never/rarely and everyday were merged with the next or previous case, as per the previous analysis. In this case as well the relationship is positive and statistically significant. Therefore, participants who often consume spirits out of home reports a higher anticipated drinking in the selected experimental scenario. By looking at the table of means, indeed, it is possible to note an increasing trend.

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * cons_freq_out	,704	,495

Table 3-9: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency Out (Scenario A) – Eta

The Eta Index (0,704) is slightly higher than the general consumption scenario (0,659), indicating an even stronger association.

		Correlations				
		Q1_anticip_co nsumption	Q7_av_spen_g eneral	Q8_av_spend_ spirits	Q9_av_spend_ drink_bar	Q11_wtp_bottl e_home
Q1_anticip_consumption	Pearson Correlation	1	,603**	,688**	,320**	,306*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	,007	,011
	N	70	63	65	69	68
Q7_av_spen_general	Pearson Correlation	,603**	1	,879**	,416**	,187
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	,146
	N	63	63	63	62	62
Q8_av_spend_spirits	Pearson Correlation	,688**	,879**	1	,425**	,336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	,007
	N	65	63	65	64	64
Q9_av_spend_drink_bar	Pearson Correlation	,320**	,416**	,425**	1	,302*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007	<,001	<,001		,013
	N	69	62	64	69	67
Q11_wtp_bottle_home	Pearson Correlation	,306*	,187	,336**	,302*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,011	,146	,007	,013	
	N	68	62	64	67	68

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-10: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Spend Behaviors (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

Furthermore, anticipated consumption has significant positive correlations with several spending-related variables. Given the nature of the variables (quantitative), a correlation analysis has been performed. What emerged is that the expected consumption in this scenario, is strongly correlated with the weekly average spending on spirits ($r=0,688$, $p<0,001$) and alcoholics generically ($r=0,603$, $p<0,001$), meaning that individuals who usually spend more on alcohol, in particular on spirits, logically expect to consume a greater amount of drink in a crowded bar scenario.

A weaker but still significant correlation emerges with average spending per drink at bars and with willingness to pay for a bottle of spirit at home. This suggests that higher anticipated consumption in social contexts is linked in spending behaviors in both public and private contexts.

Correlations		Q1_anticip_co nsumption	Q3_6_fun	Q3_8_relax
Q1_anticip_consumption	Pearson Correlation	1	,365**	,374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,002	,001
	N	70	70	70
Q3_6_fun	Pearson Correlation	,365**	1	,426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002		<,001
	N	70	70	70
Q3_8_relax	Pearson Correlation	,374**	,426**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	<,001	
	N	70	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-11: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Fun/Relax (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

Finally, a correlation analysis was conducted between anticipated consumption and the psychographic reasons behind alcohol consumption, in order to examine which traits can be associated with the quantity of alcohol respondents expect to consume in this scenario.

The only significant results are two positive correlations with anticipated consumption quantity. The first is with Q3_6: I drink because it makes social occasions more fun ($r=0,365$ $p<0,05$). The second is with Q3_8: Drinking alcohol helps me relax ($r=0,374$ $p<0,05$). These results mean that respondents who drink to have more fun and relax, report a higher anticipated consumption quantity.

SCENARIO B: Home Alone

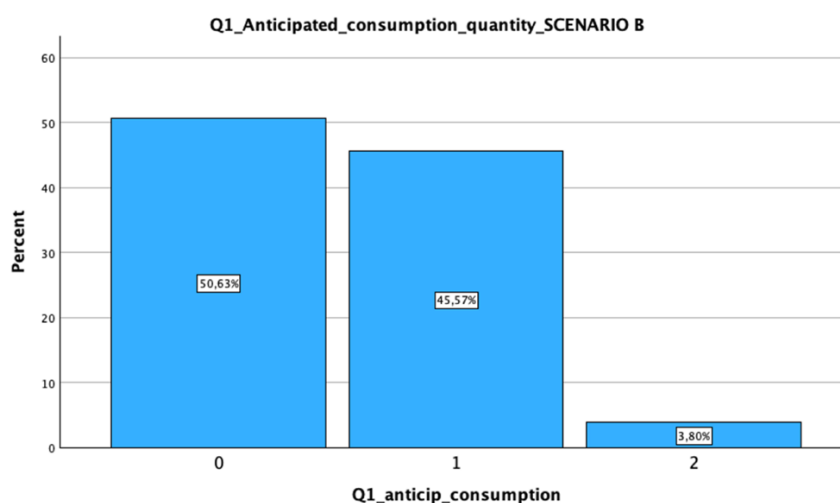


Figure 3-2: Anticipated Consumption Quantity (Scenario B) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	79
	Missing	0
Mean		,53
Median		,00
Mode		0
Std. Deviation		,574

Table 3-12: Anticipated Consumption Quantity (Scenario B) – Statistics

Shifting to a private context, in Scenario B (home alone), the mean of anticipated consumption was 0,53 drinks, with both median and mode equal to 0. This means that most of the sample was likely to not drink in this situation. Having a look at the distributions, over half of the respondents (50,63%) reported 0 drinks, while 45,57% would choose to consume only one drink. Only a very small portion of the sample (3,80%) reported two drinks. The low value of standard deviation of 0,574 reflects that there is a clear tendency towards minimal drinking in this solitary context, with no substantial variations.

Subsequently, a demographic, behavioral, and psychographic analysis was conducted to gain further insights of the sample.

Looking at the demographic variables, only region of origin presented statistically significant results with anticipated consumption in the selected scenario.

ANOVA Table						
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Q1_anticip_consumption * North Centre South	Between Groups (Combined)		2,831	2	1,416	6,711
	Within Groups		22,840	76	,301	
	Total		25,671	78		
						Sig.
						,012

Table 3-13: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * North-Centre-South (Scenario B) - ANOVA

In particular, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference in anticipated consumption across the three regions, North, Centre, South of Italy, with a $p=0,012$, below the threshold of 0,05.

Report			
Q1_anticip_consumption			
North Centre South	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
North	,33	18	,485
Centre	,74	35	,611
South	,38	26	,496
Total	,53	79	,574

Table 3-14: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * North-Centre-South (Scenario B) – Mean Table

A focus on the table of means shows that participants from the Centre presented the highest anticipated consumption, with a mean of 0,74 drinks.

Measures of Association

	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * North Centre South	,332	,110

Table 3-15: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * North-Centre-South (Scenario B) – Eta

The Eta of 0,332 ($< 0,3$) suggests a strong dependence in mean, indicating that regional factors strongly influence drinking intentions when consuming alcohol at home alone. A possible interpretation is that during meals, people from the center of Italy are more likely to drink spirits when alone. However, further research should be done to confirm these explanations.

ANOVA Table

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q4_consumpt_freq_general	Between Groups (Combined)	4,267	3	1,422	4,984	,003
	Within Groups	21,404	75	,285		
	Total	25,671	78			

Table 3-16: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario B) – ANOVA

Measures of Association

	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q4_consumpt_freq_general	,408	,166

Table 3-17: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario B) – Eta

The analysis then moved to the behavioral variables. Firstly, the association between anticipated consumption and general frequency of spirit consumption was analyzed through a One-Way ANOVA. In particular, the findings highlight a statistically significant effect ($p=0,003$), with an Eta value of 0,408, indicating a strong dependence in the mean.

Q4_consumpt_freq_general	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Never/Rarely	,20	5	,447
1-2 times a month	,30	27	,465
1-2 times a week	,64	39	,584
3-5 times a week	1,00	8	,535
Total	,53	79	,574

Table 3-18: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario B) – Mean Table

Indeed, by examining the table of means, it is possible to observe a positive trend, in which the highest anticipated consumption is reported for those that drink 3-5 times a week, followed by

those drinking 1-2 times a week. On the other hand, respondents who rarely or never drink reported the lowest anticipated consumption.

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q5_consumpt_freq_home	Between Groups (Combined)		13,763	3	4,588	28,897	<,001
	Within Groups		11,907	75	,159		
	Total		25,671	78			

Table 3-19: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency Home (Scenario B) - ANOVA

Secondly, the same analysis was conducted but associating anticipated consumption and frequency of spirit consumption at home.

The results show an even stronger effect compared to the general frequency measure, with the ANOVA revealing a highly significant result ($p < 0,001$) and an Eta value of 0,732, indicating a very strong dependence in the mean.

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q5_consumpt_freq_home	,732	,536

Table 3-20: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario B) – Eta

These results indicate that, within the home alone scenario, participants who drink spirits more frequently at home tend to anticipate higher consumption in the same situation. This suggests that habitual drinking patterns in a given context strongly influence expectations for that context.

Finally, by examining psychographic variables, no significant results emerged.

SCENARIO C: Home with Friends

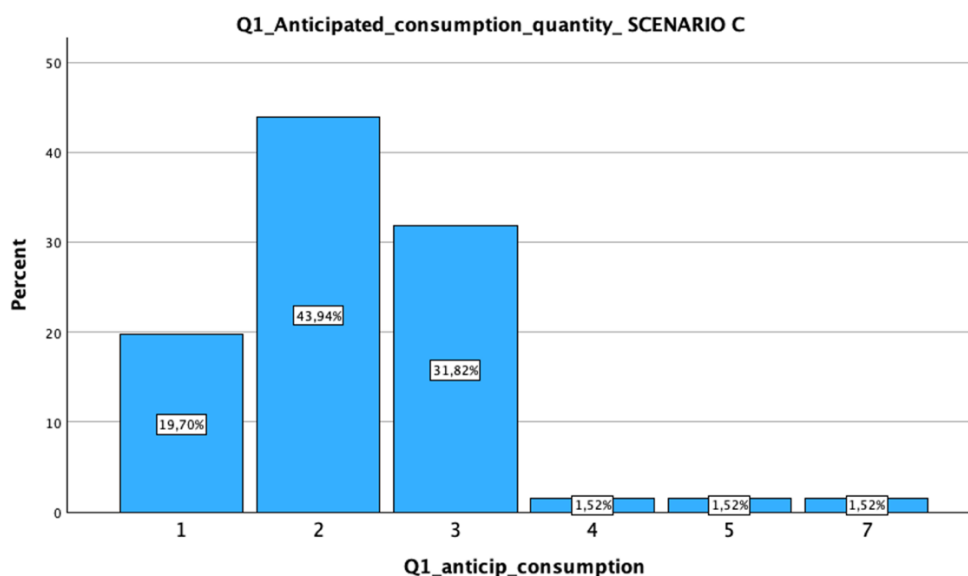


Figure 3-3: Anticipated Consumption Quantity (Scenario C) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	66
	Missing	0
Mean		2,27
Median		2,00
Mode		2
Std. Deviation		1,016

Table 3-21: Anticipated Consumption Quantity (Scenario C) - Statistics

Still in a private context but in the presence of other people, in scenario C (home with friends), the mean of anticipated consumption rises up to 2,27 drinks, with a median and a mode of 2. With a focus on the percentages, it is possible to note that the most frequent choice is two drinks (43,94%), followed by three drinks (31,82%) and one drink (19,70%). There is only a minor segment that would consume higher number of drinks (4-7). The standard deviation of 1,016 is indicative of a moderate variability, suggesting a broader range of anticipated consumption compared to Scenario B.

Followingly, a focus on demographic, behavioral, and psychographic variables has been done in order to better analyze the sample.

Looking at demographic variables, no significant findings emerged.

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q4_consumpt_freq_general	Between Groups (Combined)	19,117	4	4,779	6,077	<,001
	Within Groups	47,974	61	,786		
	Total	67,091	65			

Table 3-22: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario C) - ANOVA

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q6_consumpt_freq_out	Between Groups (Combined)	16,012	3	5,337	6,478	<,001
	Within Groups	51,079	62	,824		
	Total	67,091	65			

Table 3-23: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency Out (Scenario C) - ANOVA

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q4_consumpt_freq_general	,534	,285

Table 3-24: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency General (Scenario C) - Eta

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * Q6_consumpt_freq_out	,489	,239

Table 3-25: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Consumption Frequency Out (Scenario C) - Eta

Regarding behavioral variables, an ANOVA analysis was conducted by associating anticipated consumption in the selected scenario, with frequency of consumption variables. The results show a statistically significant relationship both with the general frequency of spirits consumption ($p < 0,001$) and with the frequency of out-of-home consumption ($p < 0,001$). In both cases, the trend indicates that higher drinking frequency is associated with higher anticipated consumption in this context.

The Eta values indicate a moderate-to-strong association between anticipated consumption and the general frequency of spirits consumption (0,534) as well as with the frequency of out-of-home consumption (0,489). Both coefficients suggest that anticipated consumption in a “home with friends” context is meaningfully related to overall drinking habits and to how often respondents drink outside.

On the other hand, the statistical significance relationship with frequency of home consumption of spirits, wasn't met, suggesting that the expected quantity consumed at home with friends is not strongly linked to how often they usually drink at home. This may be interpreted as anticipated consumption in this context could be driven more by general drinking habits or out-of-home drinking patterns, rather than by home-specific drinking routines.

Correlations			
		Q1_anticip_co nsumption	Q3_2_exclusiv e_appeal
Q1_anticip_consumption	Pearson Correlation	1	-,396**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	66	66
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	-,396**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	66	66

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-26: Anticipated Consumption Quantity * Exclusive Appeal (Scenario C) – Table of Correlations

Finally, a correlation analysis was conducted between anticipated consumption and the psychographic variables, to identify which personal attitudes are linked to the quantity of alcohol respondents expect to consume in this scenario. A significant negative correlation emerged with Q3_2: *I attribute more value to a product if it has an exclusive or connoisseur appeal* ($r=-0,396$, $p<0,001$). This suggests that respondents who place higher value on exclusivity report a lower anticipated consumption quantity in a “home with friends”.

Comparative Considerations Across Scenarios

In Scenario A, crowded bar with friends, respondents reported the highest anticipated consumption. This setting is not only public but also socially stimulating, and the results show that consumption is strongly influenced by gender and by both general and out-of-home drinking habits. Moreover, there is a strong association between spending behavior and anticipated alcohol consumption. Indeed, the social nature of the context appears to encourage participants to drink more.

In Scenario C, home with friends, anticipated consumption was lower than in the bar scenario but still significant. Here, social presence still stimulates drinking, with significant links to generic and out-of-home drinking habits, although drinking at home frequency does not appear to play a crucial role. This means that social interactions, even in a private setting, elevates drinking intentions compared to solitary contexts.

In Scenario B, home alone, anticipated consumption dropped sharply. In this solitary setting, consumption is mainly driven by habitual home drinking patterns and, to a lesser extent, by regional differences. The absence of social stimulation appears to greatly limit drinking intentions.

However, it is crucial to verify whether such differences across scenarios are statistically significant and to formally test the hypothesis. For these purposes, a one-way ANOVAs was conducted, given the nature of the variables: qualitative independent variable for the three scenarios and quantitative dependent variable for anticipated consumption quantity.

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1_anticip_consumption * Scenario_experiment	Between Groups (Combined)		272,606	2	136,303	88,817	<,001
	Within Groups		325,348	212	1,535		
	Total		597,953	214			

Table 3-27: Anticipated Consumption Quantity – Comparison Across Scenarios (ANOVA)

The one-way ANOVA revealed a highly significant effect of scenario on anticipated consumption quantity. The p-value $< 0,001$ confirms that the differences observed across the three experimental conditions are statistically significant, therefore the context significantly influences the number of drinks participants expect to consume in the assigned scenario.

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q1_anticip_consumption * Scenario_experiment	,675	,456

Table 3-28: Anticipated Consumption Quantity – Comparison Across Scenarios (Eta)

The measures of association show an Eta of 0,675 showing a very strong dependence in mean. This means that context strongly influences drinking intentions.

Report			
Q1_anticip_consumption			
Scenario_experiment	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
A	3,19	70	1,836
B	,53	79	,574
C	2,27	66	1,016
Total	1,93	215	1,672

Table 3-29: Anticipated Consumption Quantity – Comparison Across Scenarios (Table of Means)

Moreover, the table of means clarifies the direction of these effects. Participants in the bar scenario (Mean = 3,19) reported the highest anticipated consumption, followed by the home-

with-friends scenario (Mean= 2,27). The lowest consumption was reported in the home-alone condition (Mean= 0,53).

Post Hoc Tests

Homogeneous Subsets

Q1_anticip_consumption				
Tukey B ^{a,b}				
Scenario_experiment	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
B	79	,53		
C	66		2,27	
A	70			3,19

Table 3-30: Anticipated Consumption Quantity – Post Hoc Tests

Finally, post-hoc tests using the Tukey procedure confirmed that anticipated consumption differed significantly across all scenarios.

These findings support Hypothesis 1, showing that context, plays a crucial role in driving expected spirits consumption, as well as the presence of other people. Looking at the differences among the means there is a clear upward trend in anticipated consumption, from being at home alone, to being at home with friends, and finally to being in a crowded bar. In summary, it is not only the type of context (public vs. private) but also the degree of social interaction that drives consumption behavior.

3.3 Purchase Intentions

For each scenario randomly assigned, Q2_1 asked participants to rate the level of agreement, on a scale from 1 to 10, the following statement: “I am more likely to choose a premium (top-shelf) drink over a basic one in this scenario”. This question is a way to directly measure the willingness to choose premium drinks instead of a standard option in each context.

SCENARIO A: Fancy crowded bar with friends

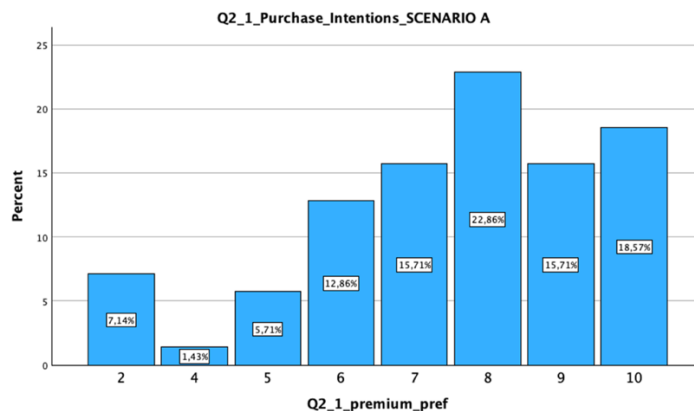


Figure 3-4: Purchase Intentions (Scenario A) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	70
	Missing	0
Mean		7,46
Median		8,00
Mode		8
Std. Deviation		2,158

Table 3-31: Purchase Intentions (Scenario A) - Statistics

In Scenario A, the statistics show a mean of purchase intention for premium drinks of 7,46 and a median and a mode of 8. The distribution presents a positive skew to higher scores, with 22,86% selecting 8 and 18,57% selecting the highest score of 10. Lower ratings are less frequent, with scores below 5 accounting for a small portion of responses. The standard deviation (2,158) suggests medium variability in responses, but the overall pattern demonstrates a high probability of selection of premium products in this context.

For the purpose of obtaining detailed insights about the sample, subsequent analysis was conducted for demographic, behavioral, and psychographic variables.

On a demographic point of view, it wasn't observed any reliable gender or age difference in premium choice tendency: the inclination to choose for premium spirits was uniform across demographics in this context.

		Correlations				
		Q2_1_purchas e_intentions	Q3_1_good_i mpression	Q3_2_exclusiv e_appeal	Q3_4_price_q uality_indicato r	Q3_5_wtp_pre mium_alcohol
Q2_1_purchase_inten s	Pearson Correlation	1	,340**	,676**	,391**	,786**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,340**	1	,538**	,504**	,397**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,676**	,538**	1	,493**	,676**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_4_price_quality_indica tor	Pearson Correlation	,391**	,504**	,493**	1	,435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alco hol	Pearson Correlation	,786**	,397**	,676**	,435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	70	70	70	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-32: Purchase Intentions * Behavioral/Attitudinal (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

To better understand the main drivers of purchase intentions towards premium options in this context, a correlation analysis was conducted between the dependent variable (purchase intentions) and a set of behavioral and attitudinal variables. The aim was to identify which personal values, perceptions, and tendencies are most strongly associated with the likelihood of selecting premium options in this setting.

From the results, what emerged is that respondents who attribute greater value to products with an exclusive appeal (Q3_2) tend to report significantly higher purchase intentions ($r = 0,676$, $p < 0,001$). Likewise, those who are willing to pay more for a high-quality, premium alcoholic beverage (Q3_5) show the highest positive correlation with purchase intentions ($r = 0,786$, $p < 0,001$), meaning that premium-conscious consumers prefer to buy high end options in public contexts.

Additionally, participants who believe that price is a good indicator of quality (Q3_4) also report moderately higher purchase intentions ($r = 0,391$, $p < 0,001$), indicating that quality perception based on price plays a role in driving purchase behavior in public contexts. Finally, a smaller yet significant correlation was observed for those who worry about making a good impression (Q3_1; $r = 0,340$, $p = 0,004$), suggesting that self-presentation concerns may increase the likelihood of purchasing premium choices in a public context.

Overall, the pattern suggests that in a public, purchase intentions towards high-end spirits are most strongly influenced by premium orientation and exclusivity appeal, while price-quality beliefs and self-image considerations also contribute.

Correlations		Q2_1_purchas e_intentions	Q7_av_spen_g eneral
Q2_1_purchase_intention s	Pearson Correlation	1	-,331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,008
	N	70	63
Q7_av_spen_general	Pearson Correlation	-,331**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,008	
	N	63	63

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-33: Purchase Intentions * avg spending general (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

A correlation analysis with spending behaviors was conducted. The results revealed a negative but significant relationship with the average weekly spending on alcoholics ($r=-0,331$, $p=0,008$). This suggests that those who already spend more on alcohol each week tend to show slightly lower purchase intentions in this specific premium bar setting. One plausible explanation could be that heavier spenders may be more selective or sensitive to price in higher-end venues, since heavier spenders may be more accustomed to accessing alcohol in larger quantities or at a lower cost elsewhere. Alternatively, lighter spenders may consider the premium bar experience more as a special occasion, making them more willing to make a purchasing commitment, even at higher prices.

Correlations		Q2_1_purchas e_intentions	Q13_1_open_ mind	Q13_2_new_e xp	Q13_4_spona neous	Q13_5_sociab le
Q2_1_purchase_intention s	Pearson Correlation	1	,367**	,297*	,266*	,242*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,002	,013	,026	,043
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q13_1_open_mind	Pearson Correlation	,367**	1	,622**	,105	,699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002		<,001	,387	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q13_2_new_exp	Pearson Correlation	,297*	,622**	1	,215	,474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,013	<,001		,074	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q13_4_spontaneous	Pearson Correlation	,266*	,105	,215	1	,248*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	,387	,074		,038
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q13_5_sociable	Pearson Correlation	,242*	,699**	,474**	,248*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,043	<,001	<,001	,038	
	N	70	70	70	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-34: Purchase Intentions * Psychographics (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

From a psychographic perspective, purchase intentions in a public scenario are significantly associated with several traits.

The strongest relationship was found for those who indicated they were open-minded, (Q13_1; $r=0,367$, $p=0,002$), suggesting that this trait aligns with a greater willingness to purchase alcoholic beverages in a bar setting. A positive relationship was also found with those who often seek new experiences/sensations, (Q13_2; $r=0,297$, $p=0,013$) indicating that novelty seeking individuals may be more likely to purchase in the bar context. Being spontaneous (Q13_4; $r=0,266$, $p=0,026$) and valuing social connection (Q13_5; $r=0,242$, $p=0,043$), were also associated with greater purchase intentions, emphasizing that social and impulsive traits contribute to consumer behavior in public crowded settings. Overall, it could be interpreted that purchase intentions in scenario A are positively related to traits associated with openness, novelty seeking, sociability, and spontaneity suggesting that public social contexts are more attractive to those individuals who have extroverted and/or experience-focused personality traits.

SCENARIO B: Home Alone

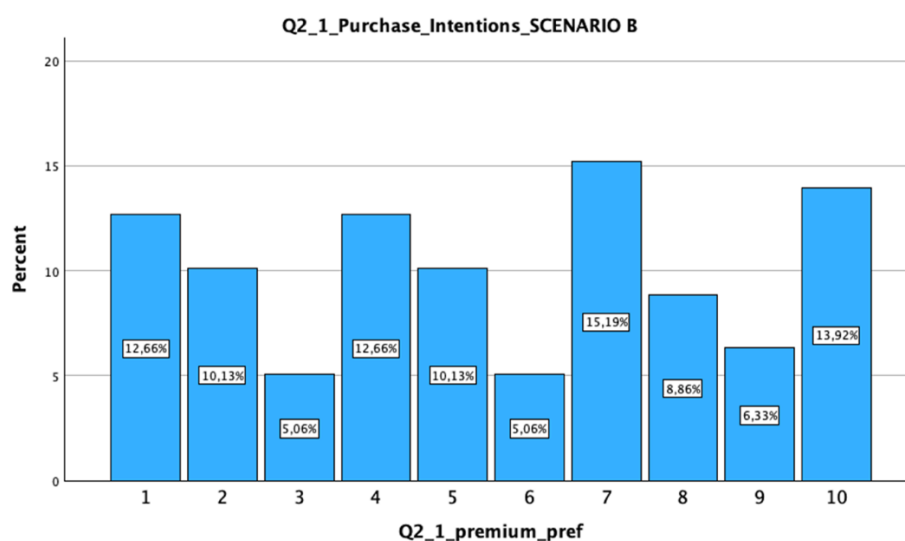


Figure 3-5: Purchase Intentions (Scenario B) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	79
	Missing	0
Mean		5,53
Median		5,00
Mode		7
Std. Deviation		3,008

Table 3-35: Purchase Intentions (Scenario B) - Statistics

In the private context of drinking at home alone (Scenario B), the mean purchase intention drops to 5,53; the median remains at 5, and mode at 7. The distribution is much wider, with

relatively even percentages across low, mid, and high scores, suggesting mixed preferences. This trend is confirmed by a standard deviation value of 3,008. Extreme ratings of 1 (12,66%) and 10 (13,92%) are also common between participants, highlighting a polarization in which, some participants show no interest in premium drinks when alone, while others, prefer premium drinks regardless of social context.

Consistent with Scenario A, no significant demographic results emerged in Scenario B.

		Correlations						
		Q2_1_purchas e_intentions	Q3_1_good_i mpression	Q3_2_exclusiv e_appeal	Q3_4_price_q uality_indicato r	Q3_5_wtp_pre mium_alcohol	Q3_6_fun	Q11_wtp_bottl e_home
Q2_1_purchase_intentions	Pearson Correlation	1	,296**	,392**	,246*	,335**	,373**	,230*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,008	<,001	,029	,003	<,001	,042
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,296**	1	,592**	,184	,067	,357**	,065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,008		<,001	,105	,558	,001	,569
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,392**	,592**	1	,329**	,262*	,247*	,119
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		,003	,020	,028	,296
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Pearson Correlation	,246*	,184	,329**	1	,502**	-,015	,256*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,029	,105	,003		<,001	,895	,023
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol	Pearson Correlation	,335**	,067	,262*	,502**	1	,184	,287*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,003	,558	,020	<,001		,104	,010
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_6_fun	Pearson Correlation	,373**	,357**	,247*	-,015	,184	1	,077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,001	,028	,895	,104		,497
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q11_wtp_bottle_home	Pearson Correlation	,230*	,065	,119	,256*	,287*	,077	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,042	,569	,296	,023	,010	,497	
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-36: Purchase Intentions * Behaviorals (Scenario B) – Table of Correlations

From a behavioral and attitudinal perspective, in Scenario B, purchase intentions are positively associated with several behavioral traits. The strongest correlation is the one with respondents who attribute greater value to products with exclusive appeal (Q3_2; $r=0,392$, $p<0,001$). This means that participants who believed that premium spirits have an exclusive appeal tended to maintain higher premium intentions at home alone.

A moderate, significant relationship is also found with making a good impression (Q3_1; $r=0,296$, $p=0,008$) and fun in social gatherings (Q3_6; $r=0,373$, $p<0,001$), suggesting that even in this scenario, social-image reasons and enjoyment influence premium preferences, although less strongly than in more public settings.

There is also a smaller but significant correlation with price as a quality indicator (Q3_4; $r=0,246$, $p=0,029$), willingness to pay more for premium alcohol (Q3_5; $r=0,335$, $p=0,003$), and maximum willingness to pay for a bottle at home (Q11; $r=0,230$, $p=0,042$). These results

indicate that price-quality perceptions and premium orientation still play a role in shaping intentions, even in this scenario.

Overall, in Scenario B, purchase intentions result to be driven by a mix of exclusivity, social-image motives, enjoyment, and premium value orientation, rather than by price itself.

		Correlations		
		Q2_1_purchas e_intentions	Q13_2_new_e xp	Q13_5_sociab le
Q2_1_purchase_inten s	Pearson Correlation	1	,243*	,294**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,031	,009
	N	79	79	79
Q13_2_new_exp	Pearson Correlation	,243*	1	,333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,031		,003
	N	79	79	79
Q13_5_sociable	Pearson Correlation	,294**	,333**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,009	,003	
	N	79	79	79

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-37: Purchase Intentions * Psychographics (Scenario B) – Table of Correlations

On a psychographic point of view, purchase intentions demonstrate positive correlations with two traits: openness to new experiences (Q13_2; $r=0,243$, $p=0,031$) and sociability (Q13_5; $r=0,294$, $p=0,009$). These results indicate that individuals who enjoy exploring new experiences and value social connections are more likely to express higher premium preferences in this type of context.

The relationship is stronger for sociability, suggesting that the willingness to connect and interact with others may be particularly relevant in driving intentions, even when the setting is less explicitly public than in other scenarios. Openness to new experiences, while slightly less correlated, still plays a meaningful role, highlighting the appeal of novelty and variety in influencing consumer behavior.

SCENARIO C: Home with Friends

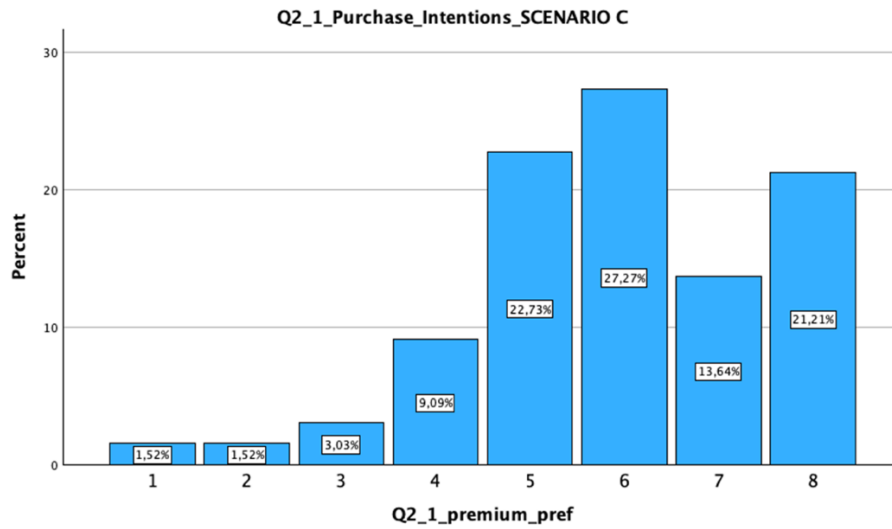


Figure 3-6: Purchase Intentions (Scenario C) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	66
	Missing	0
Mean		5,92
Median		6,00
Mode		6
Std. Deviation		1,582

Table 3-38: Purchase Intentions (Scenario C) - Statistics

Scenario C, the private context with friends, presents the mean intention to purchase increased to 5,92, with both median and mode of 6. Most respondents cluster around mid-high scores, with 27,27% that choose 6 and 22,73% that select 5. Very low scores (1-3) are infrequent, indicating that even in a private setting, the presence others increase the willingness to select premium drinks rather than doing this alone. The standard deviation of 1,582 is smaller than scenario B indicating more consistency in the responses for scenario C.

Looking at the demographic and psychographic variables, no significant differences were found by correlating them with purchase intentions. This means that valuable insights should be found at a behavioral level.

		Correlations				
		Q2_1_purchas e_intentions	Q3_2_exclusiv e_appeal	Q3_4_price_q uality_indicato r	Q3_5_wtp_pre mium_alcohol	Q11_wtp_bottl e_home
Q2_1_purchase_intention s	Pearson Correlation	1	,269*	,430**	,588**	,347**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,029	<,001	<,001	,004
	N	66	66	66	66	66
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,269*	1	,227	,444**	-,027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,029		,066	<,001	,832
	N	66	66	66	66	66
Q3_4_price_quality_indica tor	Pearson Correlation	,430**	,227	1	,431**	,212
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,066		<,001	,088
	N	66	66	66	66	66
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alco hol	Pearson Correlation	,588**	,444**	,431**	1	,342**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		,005
	N	66	66	66	66	66
Q11_wtp_bottle_home	Pearson Correlation	,347**	-,027	,212	,342**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	,832	,088	,005	
	N	66	66	66	66	66

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-39: Purchase Intentions * Behavioral (Scenario C) – Table of Correlations

From a behavioral standpoint, in Scenario C, purchase intentions are significantly and positively associated with exclusive appeal (Q3_2; $r=0,269$, $p=0,029$), perception of price as an indicator of quality (Q3_4; $r=0,430$, $p<0,001$), willingness to pay more for premium alcoholic beverages (Q3_5; $r=0,588$, $p<0,001$), and willingness to pay for a bottle to consume at home (Q11; $r=0,347$, $p=0,004$).

The strongest correlation emerges with willingness to pay for premium products, meaning that at home with friends, higher purchase intentions are closely related to a tendency to care more about perceived quality. The significant relationship with price-quality perception reinforces the idea that in this setting, consumers tend to associate higher price with better quality.

The correlation with exclusive appeal indicates that even in private environments, exclusivity remains an attractive factor influencing intentions, while the positive relationship with willingness to pay for a bottle to consume at home highlights the importance of product accessibility and at-home consumption occasions.

Overall, Scenario C's behavioral drivers suggest that premium orientation, quality perception, and exclusivity are central to motivating purchase intentions, even when consumption occurs in a more intimate social setting.

Comparative Considerations Across Scenarios

In Scenario A, crowded bar with friends, respondents reported the highest premium purchase intentions. This public and socially visible context not only amplifies self-presentation concerns, but also encourages more prestigious purchase intentions. Premium intentions in this scenario are strongly linked to exclusivity appeal and willingness to pay for premium alcohol, consistent with the idea that social visibility drives more prestigious selections.

In Scenario C, home with friends, premium purchase intentions were lower than in the bar scenario but still higher than when drinking alone. Even in a private context, the presence of friends appears to enhance more premium-oriented choices, as a way to make the gathering feel special.

In Scenario B, home alone, premium purchase intentions were the lowest. With a lack of social presence, respondents tended to focus more on personal preferences, value for money, or habitual choices, reducing the appeal of premium choices.

However, it is crucial to verify whether such differences across scenarios are statistically significant and to formally test the hypothesis. For these purposes, a one-way ANOVA was conducted, given the nature of the variables: qualitative independent variable for the three scenarios and quantitative dependent variable for purchase intentions.

The one-way ANOVA revealed a highly significant effect of scenario on purchase intentions. The p -value $< 0,001$ confirms that the differences observed across the three experimental conditions are statistically significant, therefore the context significantly influences the likelihood to select a premium option in the assigned scenario.

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q2_1_purchase_intentions * Scenario_experiment	Between Groups (Combined)		149,592	2	74,796	13,329	<,001
	Within Groups		1189,664	212	5,612		
	Total		1339,256	214			

Table 3-40: Purchase Intentions – Comparison Across Scenarios (ANOVA)

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_1_purchase_intentions * Scenario_experiment	,334	,112

Table 3-41: Purchase Intentions – Comparison Across Scenarios (Eta)

The measures of association show an Eta of 0,334, therefore a strong dependence in mean. This also suggests that context strongly influences purchase intentions.

Report			
Q2_1_purchase_intentions			
Scenario_experiment	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
A	7,46	70	2,158
B	5,53	79	3,008
C	5,92	66	1,582
Total	6,28	215	2,502

Table 3-42: Purchase Intentions – Comparison Across Scenarios (Table of Means)

Moreover, by looking at the table of means, respondents in the bar scenario reported the highest premium purchase intentions (Mean= 7,46), followed by the home-with-friends scenario (Mean= 5,92). The lowest premium purchase intentions were observed in the home-alone condition (Mean= 5,53). These differences show a positive trend across the three scenarios, confirming that context, and particularly the visibility of consumption in public contexts, substantially increases the likelihood of selecting premium alcohol options. This indicates that the public setting is the key driver of premium alcohol preferences and the mediating effect of the presence of other people is weaker. At home people care less about premium quality.

Post Hoc Tests

Homogeneous Subsets

Q2_1_purchase_intentions			
Tukey B ^{a,b}			
Scenario_experiment	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
B	79	5,53	
C	66	5,92	
A	70		7,46

Table 3-43: Purchase Intentions – Post Hoc Tests

Finally, Post-hoc Tukey tests confirmed that purchase intentions were significantly higher in the bar scenario compared to both home conditions, while no significant difference emerged between home alone and home with friends' context.

Overall, these findings support Hypothesis 1, showing that the visibility of consumption in public contexts, substantially increases the likelihood of selecting premium alcohol options. However, the mediating effect of peer pressure does not lead to a substantial difference within the home scenarios.

3.4 Value For Money

For each scenario randomly assigned, the aim of Q2_2 was to rate the level of agreement, on a scale from 1 to 10, the following statement: “In this setting, I would choose a drink/bottle that I feel offers good value, even if it costs more, if the overall experience (taste, presentation, setting) feels rewarding”. This question aims to investigate the perceptions over the price paid, and, in particular, if it is justified by the quality or the overall drinking experience offered.

SCENARIO A: Fancy crowded bar with friends

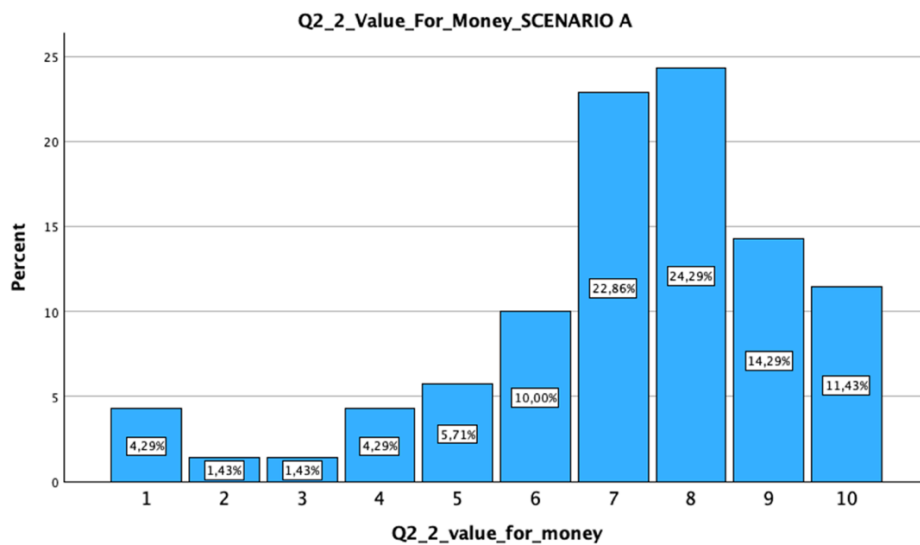


Figure 3-7: Value For Money (Scenario A) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	70
	Missing	0
Mean		7,14
Median		7,50
Mode		8
Std. Deviation		2,176

Table 3-44: Value For Money (Scenario A) - Statistics

In this scenario (fancy bar with friends), the results exhibit a positive skewness towards higher ratings, with peaks at 8 (24,29%) and 7 (22,86%), followed by 10 (11,43%). The mean score is 7,14, the median is 7,5 and the mode is 8, suggesting a strong value for money in this context. The standard deviation is 2,18, which indicates that the spread of scores is generally lower, meaning most ratings are consistently in the higher range. Thus, the general atmosphere and opportunity for socialization create a certain premise of value associated.

Looking at demographic variables, such as gender, age, occupation etc, no significant differences were observed.

Correlations			
		Q2_2_value_for_money	Q7_av_spen_general
Q2_2_value_for_money	Pearson Correlation	1	-,360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004
	N	70	63
Q7_av_spen_general	Pearson Correlation	-,360**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	
	N	63	63

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-45: Value For Money * Avg Spending General (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

Consequently, a specific focus was placed on cross-checking the value-for-money perception with all spending-related measures (Q7-Q11), with the aim to investigate if there is a connection between spending habits and how respondents assessed value for money in this type of context. In particular, a significant negative correlation emerged with weekly average spending on alcoholic beverages ($r=-0,360$, $p=0,004$). The negative correlation suggests that higher spending does not automatically translate into higher perceived value for money. Those who spend less may concentrate their budget on fewer, higher-quality products, while heavier spenders may distribute expenses across products of varying quality.

Correlations							
		Q2_2_value_for_money	Q3_1_good_impression	Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Q3_3_social_drinking	Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol
Q2_2_value_for_money	Pearson Correlation	1	,395**	,660**	,300*	,460**	,733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	,012	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,395**	1	,538**	-,016	,504**	,397**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	,895	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,660**	,538**	1	,177	,493**	,676**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		,143	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_3_social_drinking	Pearson Correlation	,300*	-,016	,177	1	,187	,377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,012	,895	,143		,121	,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Pearson Correlation	,460**	,504**	,493**	,187	1	,435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	,121		<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol	Pearson Correlation	,733**	,397**	,676**	,377**	,435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	,001	<,001	
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3-46: Value For Money * Behavioral (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

Then, other behavioral variables were analyzed. What emerged is that the strongest relationship is with the willingness to pay a higher price for premium alcoholic beverages, implying that

those respondents who spend more money on high-quality products perceive much more value in the drinking experience. Exclusive appeal (Q3_2) was the second most important factor. This result can be interpreted as the perceived uniqueness of a product significantly enhances its value. Subsequently, moderate correlations can be observed with the belief that price is a good indicator of quality (Q3_4) and with the concern for making a good impression (Q3_1), demonstrating the relevance of prestige and self-image in shaping value perceptions. On the opposite, the preference for social drinking (Q3_3) showed a weaker correlation, implying that in this premium bar setting, perceptions of value are driven more by aspirational and symbolic factors than by the mere social aspect of drinking.

On a psychographic standpoint, no significant associations were found.

SCENARIO B: Home Alone

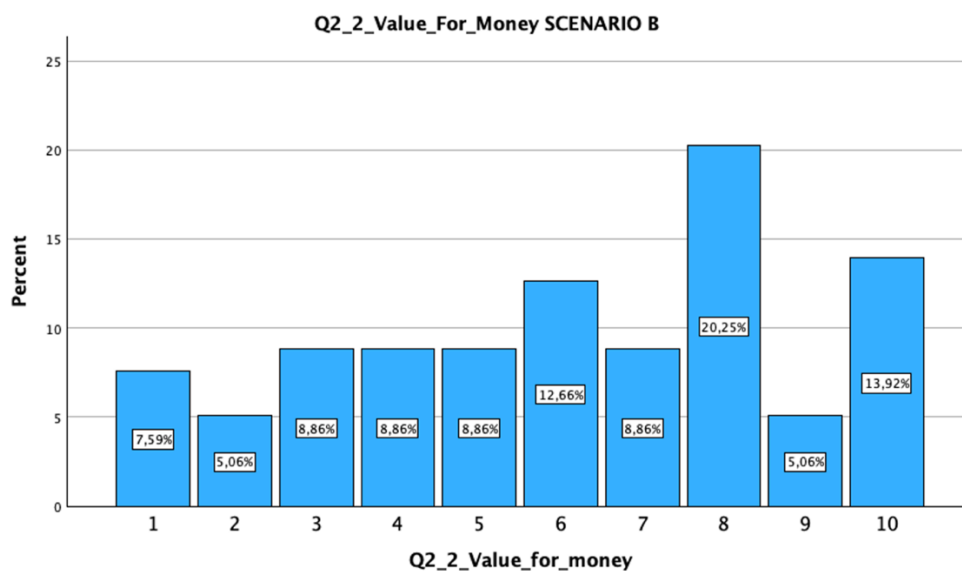


Figure 3-8: Value For Money (Scenario B) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	79
	Missing	0
Mean		6,09
Median		6,00
Mode		8
Std. Deviation		2,760

Table 3-47: Value For Money (Scenario B) - Statistics

In this case, ratings are relatively more uniformly distributed, where there are notably peaks at 8 (20,25%) and 10 (13,92%), and higher values in the lower range (1-4). The mean is 6,09, median is 6, and mode is 8. The standard deviation is 2,76, however higher than Scenario A,

suggesting a larger and more varied level of perception across individuals. These findings suggest that, without social and atmospheric elements, people are less consistent in deciding whether it is worth paying more for a drink or just sticking to the regular price.

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q2_2_value_for_money * Q17_salary	Between Groups (Combined)	73,624	3	24,541	3,534	,019
	Within Groups	520,756	75	6,943		
	Total	594,380	78			

Table 3-48: Value For Money * Salary (Scenario B) – ANOVA

Looking at the demographic variables, the only one that presented statistically significant results was salary.

In particular, a one-way ANOVA was conducted, that revealed a significant difference in value for money across the four ranges of salary, <€20.000, €20.000-€35.000, €35.000-€50.000 and > €50.000, with a $p=0,019$, below the threshold of 0,05.

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_2_value_for_money * Q17_salary	,352	,124

Table 3-49: Value For Money * Salary (Scenario B) – Eta

In addition, the Eta Index of 0,352, indicates that the relationship is statistically significant and strong.

Report			
Q2_2_value_for_money			
Q17_salary	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
<20.000€	6,16	32	2,930
€20.000-€35.000	7,10	20	2,245
€35.000-€50.000	4,53	19	2,389
>€50.000	7,00	8	2,828
Total	6,09	79	2,760

Table 3-50: Value For Money * Salary (Scenario B) – Mean Table

By looking at the table of means, it is possible to observe that participants who earns €20,000-€35,000 reported the highest perceived value for money, followed by those who earns over €50,000, while the €35,000-€50,000 group showed the lowest score. This pattern may reflect different price-quality sensitivities. In particular, lower-mid income respondents might value

rewarding experiences more when they justify the price, high earners may maintain a positive perception regardless of cost, whereas the mid-high group could have higher expectations, lowering their value assessment in a home-alone context.

Correlations				
		Q2_2_value_for_money	Q10_wtp_bottle_bar	Q11_wtp_bottle_home
Q2_2_value_for_money	Pearson Correlation	1	,289**	,351**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,010	,002
	N	79	79	78
Q10_wtp_bottle_bar	Pearson Correlation	,289**	1	,567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,010		<,001
	N	79	79	78
Q11_wtp_bottle_home	Pearson Correlation	,351**	,567**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	<,001	
	N	78	78	78

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-51: Value For Money * WTP (Scenario B) – Table of Correlations

In order to explore whether spending habits were associated with the perceived value for money in the home alone scenario, the correlations between value for money and a set of spending-related variables (Q7-Q11) were examined. The results show that none of these relationships reached statistical significance (all p -values $> 0,05$), except for Q10_wtp_bottle_bar and Q11_wtp_bottle_home.

First, value for money shows a positive correlation with the maximum willingness to pay for a bottle of a spirit in a bar (Q10) ($r = 0,289$, $p = 0,010$), suggesting that individuals willing to spend more in a bar setting also tend to perceive higher value for money when drinking at home.

Second, there is also another significant correlation with maximum willingness to pay for a bottle of spirit at home (Q11) ($r = 0,352$, $p = 0,002$). This indicates that participants who are generally open to paying more for a bottle at home, are also more likely to perceive higher value in the home alone scenario.

Overall, the results indicate that in the home alone context, the perception of value for money tends to be higher among those willing to pay more for a bottle of spirit, both in a bar and at home. This suggests that individuals who assign a higher value to the product are more likely to perceive their spending as justified and worthwhile, even in a private setting.

		Correlations			
		Q2_2_value_for_money	Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol
Q2_2_value_for_money	Pearson Correlation	1	,290**	,314**	,374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,009	,005	<,001
	N	79	79	79	79
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,290**	1	,329**	,262*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,009		,003	,020
	N	79	79	79	79
Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Pearson Correlation	,314**	,329**	1	,502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,005	,003		<,001
	N	79	79	79	79
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol	Pearson Correlation	,374**	,262*	,502**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,020	<,001	
	N	79	79	79	79

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-52: Value For Money * Behavioral (Scenario B) – Table of Correlations

A further analysis explored other interesting behavioral factors. Among the significant ones, value for money (Q2_2) resulted to be positively and significantly correlated with three of them. First, it is associated with exclusive appeal, suggesting that individuals who place greater value on exclusivity also tend to perceive higher value for money. Second, there is a positive correlation with the price-quality indicator, indicating that respondents who believe higher prices reflect better quality are more likely to assess value for money positively. Finally, value for money shows the strongest relationship with willingness to pay more for premium alcohol ($r=0,374$), implying that those inclined to invest in premium beverages are also those who perceive their purchase as offering good value.

In the home alone context, this pattern may indicate that individuals who value exclusivity and associate higher prices with better quality still perceive strong value for money when purchasing premium beverages, even without the social visibility of public settings. This suggests that their appreciation is driven more by intrinsic enjoyment and personal standards of quality than by external recognition.

		Q2_2_value_for_money	Q13_2_new_experience	Q13_5_sociable
Q2_2_value_for_money	Pearson Correlation	1	,281*	,240*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,012	,033
	N	79	79	79
Q13_2_new_experience	Pearson Correlation	,281*	1	,333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,012		,003
	N	79	79	79
Q13_5_sociable	Pearson Correlation	,240*	,333**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,033	,003	
	N	79	79	79

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-53: Value For Money * new experiences/sociable (Scenario B) – Table of Correlations

For the psychographic factors, value for money shows positive associations with both openness to new experiences and sociability. This suggests that individuals who enjoy trying new things and those who are more socially oriented tend to perceive greater value for money in the home-alone drinking scenario, possibly because their broader connection with different experiences shapes a more favorable assessment of the product's worth.

SCENARIO C: Home with Others

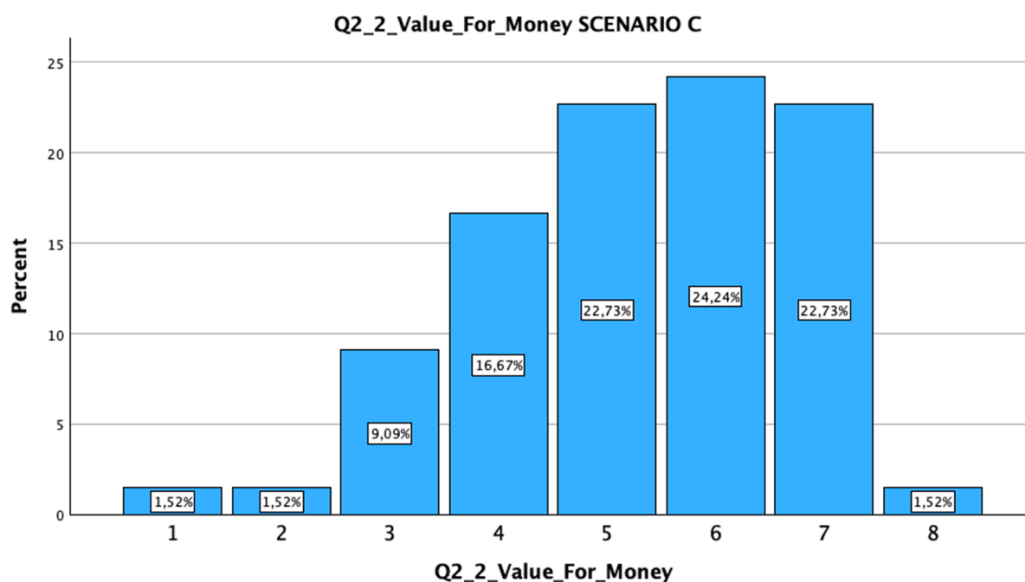


Figure 3-9: Value For Money (Scenario C) – Bar Chart of Frequencies (Percentages)

N	Valid	66
	Missing	0
Mean		5,29
Median		5,00
Mode		6
Std. Deviation		1,465

Table 3-54: Value For Money (Scenario C) - Statistics

In this situation, participants again clustered in the mid-high range, with 6 (24,24%), 5 (22,73%), and 7 (22,73%) being the most common rating numbers. The mean is 5,29, the median is 5 and the mode is 6. Additionally, the standard deviation of 1,47 is the lowest of all the scenarios which indicates that the respondents' rating is very similar. Nonetheless, the consistently lower scores do indicate that, although social presence exists, private contexts lack some premium cues (presentation, and service) that might drive higher perceived value.

Looking at the demographic, no interesting results came out, while some emerged by focusing on spending behaviors.

Correlations			
		Q2_2_value_for_money	Q11_wtp_bottle_home
Q2_2_value_for_money	Pearson Correlation	1	,326**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,007
	N	66	66
Q11_wtp_bottle_home	Pearson Correlation	,326**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007	
	N	66	66

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-55: Value For Money * WTP_bottle_home (Scenario C) – Table of Correlations

A correlation analysis revealed that value for money is moderately and significantly associated with willingness to pay for a bottle of spirit at home ($r=0,326$, $p<0,01$). The social nature of the context reinforces this view, because shared costs and the enjoyment of the occasion can make higher spending feel justified and worthwhile.

Correlations				
		Q2_2_value_for_money	Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol
Q2_2_value_for_money	Pearson Correlation	1	,508**	,461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001
	N	66	66	66
Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Pearson Correlation	,508**	1	,431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001
	N	66	66	66
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol	Pearson Correlation	,461**	,431**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	
	N	66	66	66

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-56: Value For Money * price-quality/wtp_premium_alcohol (Scenario C) – Table of Correlations

On a psychographic standpoint, in the home with friends' scenario, value for money is closely associated with the belief that higher prices signal better quality and with a greater willingness to pay for premium alcohol. This indicates that, even in a private setting, those who associate price with quality and are open to premium options, tend to perceive their purchases as more valuable.

Comparative Considerations Across Scenarios

In Scenario A (fancy bar with friends), ratings are highest and most consistent, showing that a premium atmosphere and social presence lead most people, to justify paying a higher price. Psychographic traits like seeing price as a quality cue or valuing exclusivity further enhance this effect.

Scenario B illustrated lower average values overall, as well as high variability, showing disagreement amongst respondents when both social and public dimensions are removed. In this type of situation, value judgments depend on personal habits and income: those willing to pay for premium products or who believe in the price–quality link still rate value highly, while cost-conscious individuals see less justification.

Scenario C illustrated the lowest mean, but the most agreement, and suggests that there is a level of agreement to moderate value offered by private settings, however less than the bar setting. Psychographic traits, like sociability, still have an influence, but without a “premium” venue the impact of such traits or of exclusive products is limited.

However, it is crucial to verify whether such differences across scenarios are statistically significant and to formally test the hypothesis. For these purposes, a one-way ANOVAs was

conducted, given the nature of the variables: qualitative independent variable for the three scenarios and quantitative dependent variable for value for money.

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q2_2_value_for_money * Scenario_experiment	Between Groups (Combined)	118,077	2	59,038	11,802	<,001
	Within Groups	1060,481	212	5,002		
	Total	1178,558	214			

Table 3-57: Value For Money – Comparison Across Scenarios (ANOVA)

The one-way ANOVA revealed a highly significant effect of scenario on value for money. The p-value < 0,001 confirms that the differences observed across the three experimental conditions are statistically significant, therefore the context significantly influences the perception over the price paid in the assigned scenario.

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_2_value_for_money * Scenario_experiment	,317	,100

Table 3-58: Value For Money – Comparison Across Scenarios (Eta)

The measures of association show an Eta of 0,317, therefore a strong dependence in mean. This also suggests that context strongly influences value for money perceptions.

Report			
Q2_2_value_for_money Scenario_experiment	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
A	7,14	70	2,176
B	6,09	79	2,760
C	5,29	66	1,465
Total	6,19	215	2,347

Table 3-59: Value For Money – Comparison Across Scenarios (Table of Means)

Furthermore, the table of means shows that participants in the bar scenario reported the highest perceptions of value for money (Mean=7,14), followed by those in the home-alone scenario (Mean=6,09). The lowest value-for-money ratings were observed in the home-with-friends condition (Mean=5,29). This pattern highlights that participants perceive the combination of a premium atmosphere and public visibility as justifying higher prices, while solitary contexts still allow for moderate value perceptions based on personal evaluation. Surprisingly, the presence of friends in a private setting lowered average value-for-money ratings compared to being alone, indicating that social presence in private contexts does not necessarily enhance the perceived justification of higher costs.

Homogeneous Subsets

Q2_2_value_for_money			
Tukey B ^{a,b}			
Scenario_experiment	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
C	66	5,29	
B	79	6,09	
A	70		7,14

Table 3-60: Value For Money – Post Hoc Tests

Finally, Post-hoc Tukey tests showed that no significant difference was found between home alone and home with friends.

Overall, these findings partially confirm Hypothesis 2. Indeed, premium products were perceived as providing higher value for money in public settings, where branding, presentation, and social visibility are most salient. However, the lack of difference between the private scenarios suggests that social presence alone is insufficient to justify value perceptions, meaning that the amplification effect is driven primarily by the public context rather than by the mere presence of others.

3.5 Perceived Quality

This section examines how perceived quality is affected by the three different contexts. In particular, it refers to how good, premium or well-crafted a drink is perceived to be by respondents in each scenario. The question that explores this variable is Q2_3 that asked participants to rate on a scale from 1 to 10, the following statement: “*Based on the context and how the drink is experienced, I would expect the drink to feel like a high-quality choice.*”

SCENARIO A: Fancy crowded bar with friends

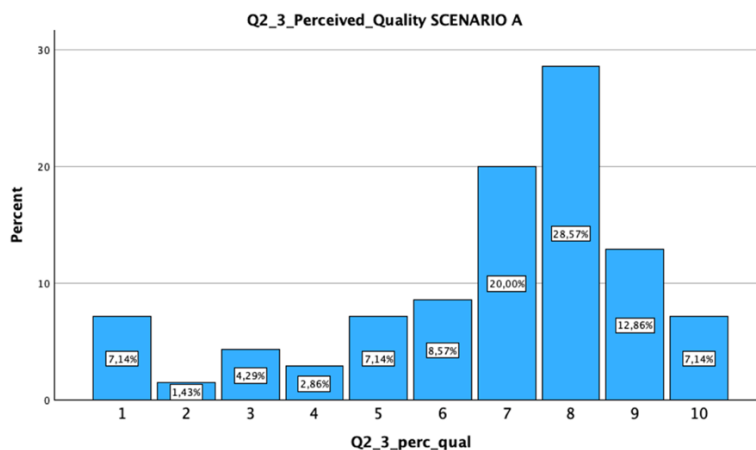


Figure 3-10: Perceived Quality (Scenario A) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	70
	Missing	0
Mean		6,77
Median		7,00
Mode		8
Std. Deviation		2,391

Table 3-61: Perceived Quality (Scenario A) - Statistics

In this case, respondents rated the quality of the drink above average with most of the ratings clustered around 7 and 8. Overall, a mean value of 6,77 and median of 7, represent a positive perception of quality, as well as a low standard deviation of 2,39 represents a relatively consistent level of answers. The mode of 8 indicates that many respondents perceive quality to be towards high-quality and premium, like in many social bar environments.

On a demographic and psychographic point of view, there aren't any statistical differences within the selected variable, therefore valuable insights should be found among the behavioral characteristics of the respondents.

		Correlations				
		Q2_3_perceived_quality	Q3_1_good_impression	Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol
Q2_3_perceived_quality	Pearson Correlation	1	,540**	,480**	,457**	,560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,540**	1	,538**	,504**	,397**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,480**	,538**	1	,493**	,676**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Pearson Correlation	,457**	,504**	,493**	1	,435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol	Pearson Correlation	,560**	,397**	,676**	,435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	70	70	70	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-62: Perceived Quality * Behavioral (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

A correlation analysis was conducted associating perceived quality with some behavioral variables (Q3_1-Q3_8). The significant findings reveal that individuals who are more concerned about making a good impression tend to evaluate drinks as higher quality, suggesting that quality perceptions are partly shaped by self-presentation needs in social settings. A similar effect emerges for those who value exclusivity, as the perception of uniqueness and status-enhancing attributes, reinforces the idea that premium are superior. Perceived quality is also positively associated with the belief that price signals quality, showing that extrinsic cues

strongly shape evaluations. Finally, willingness to pay more for premium alcohol is closely linked with higher quality perceptions, highlighting that these evaluations translate directly into concrete purchase intentions. Taken together, these findings support Hypothesis 2, indicating that in public contexts branding, exclusivity, and price are socially meaningful cues that enhance perceived quality and reinforce its role in driving consumer behavior.

SCENARIO B: Home Alone

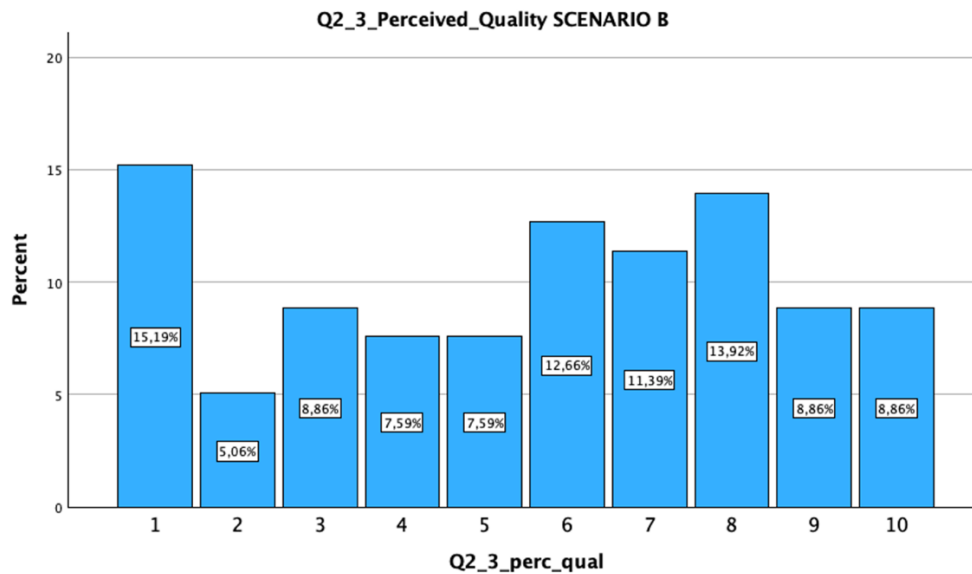


Figure 3-11: Perceived Quality (Scenario B) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	79
	Missing	0
Mean		5,56
Median		6,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		2,930

Table 3-63: Perceived Quality (Scenario B) - Statistics

When drinking at home alone, the perceived quality drops to 5,56, which is the lowest mean of the three cases. The standard deviation is the highest (2,93) which indicates a good degree of variability in the responses, meaning there was not a high level of agreement between the respondents. However, the mode of 1 indicates that a substantial minority reported extremely low-quality perceptions in this context, while other respondents perceived higher quality.

As in scenario A, no significant demographic differences emerged in scenario B.

		Correlations					
		Q2_3_perceiv ed_quality	Q3_1_good_i mpression	Q3_2_exclusiv e_appeal	Q3_3_social_d rinking	Q3_4_price_q uality_indicato r	Q3_5_wtp_pre mium_alcohol
Q2_3_perceived_quality	Pearson Correlation	1	,216	,347**	,235*	,460**	,269*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,056	,002	,037	<,001	,016
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,216	1	,592**	,206	,184	,067
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,056		<,001	,069	,105	,558
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,347**	,592**	1	,086	,329**	,262*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	<,001		,452	,003	,020
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_3_social_drinking	Pearson Correlation	,235*	,206	,086	1	,196	,255*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,037	,069	,452		,083	,023
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Pearson Correlation	,460**	,184	,329**	,196	1	,502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,105	,003	,083		<,001
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol	Pearson Correlation	,269*	,067	,262*	,255*	,502**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,016	,558	,020	,023	<,001	
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-64: Perceived Quality * Behavioral (Scenario B) – Table of Correlations

However, perceived quality resulted to be statistically significantly when associated with several behavioral variables. Specifically, there is a positive and significant correlation with exclusive appeal ($r=0,347$, $p=0,002$), with the perception that price is an indicator of quality ($r=0,460$, $p<0,001$), and with willingness to pay for premium alcoholic beverages ($r=0,269$, $p=0,016$). A weaker but still significant correlation also emerges with the preference for social drinking ($r=0,235$, $p=0,037$).

The direction of the associations confirms that even in a private context such as drinking at home alone, perceived quality tends to increase among individuals who places value to exclusivity and to price as a signal of quality, as well as those who are more willing to choose premium products. This suggests that internalized beliefs about branding and pricing cues remain influential regardless of the absence of social exposure. The positive association with social drinking, although weaker, suggests that individuals who generally value convivial consumption, still have this mindset even in solitary contexts, leading them to attribute slightly higher quality to the product despite the absence of a social dimension.

Taken together, these results show that while the public dimension amplifies perceptions of quality, private settings do not erase them entirely. Instead, personal dispositions, particularly those related to exclusivity, price-quality beliefs, and willingness to pay, continue to shape how consumers assess premium alcoholic beverages.

SCENARIO C: Home with Friends

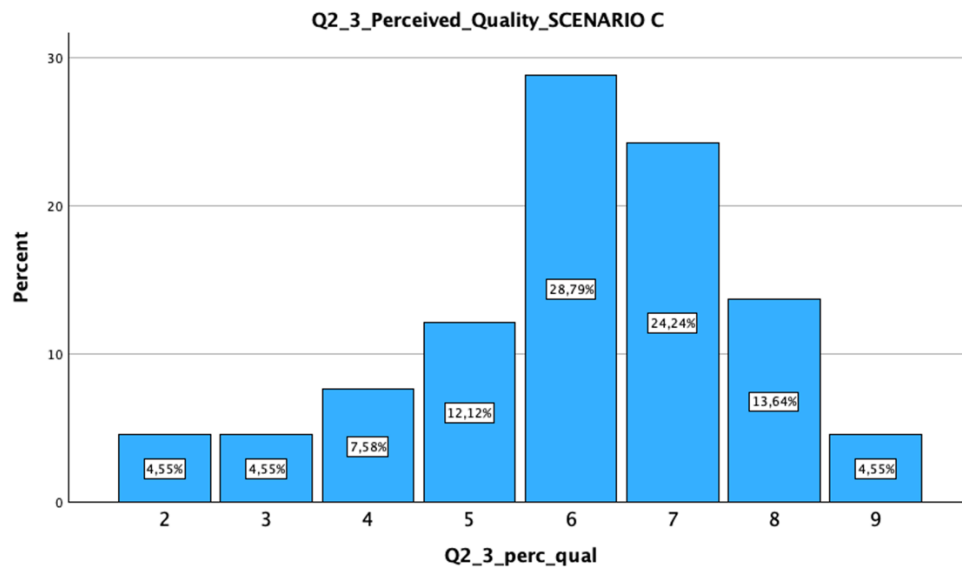


Figure 3-12: Perceived Quality (Scenario C) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	66
	Missing	0
Mean		6,06
Median		6,00
Mode		6
Std. Deviation		1,672

Table 3-65: Perceived Quality (Scenario C) - Statistics

Scenario C has a mean perceived quality score of 6,06, with a median and mode score of 6, suggesting participants had slightly positive perceptions of quality. The standard deviation of 1,67, indicates relatively little spread across the scores, providing evidence of consensus among respondents about quality.

To gain further insights into how demographic, behavioral and psychographic characteristics influence perceived quality, deeper analysis was performed. Among the behavioral characteristics, no significant results were observed.

		Correlations			
		Q2_3_perceiv ed_quality	Q3_1_good_i mpression	Q3_4_price_q uality_indicato r	Q3_5_wtp_pre mium_alcohol
Q2_3_perceived_quality	Pearson Correlation	1	,274*	,313*	,299*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,026	,010	,015
	N	66	66	66	66
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,274*	1	,060	,259*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026		,635	,036
	N	66	66	66	66
Q3_4_price_quality_indicator	Pearson Correlation	,313*	,060	1	,431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,010	,635		<,001
	N	66	66	66	66
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alcohol	Pearson Correlation	,299*	,259*	,431**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,015	,036	<,001	
	N	66	66	66	66

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-66: Perceived Quality * Behavioral (Scenario C) – Table of Correlations

Looking at general behavioral characteristics, the results of the correlation analysis performed, show that perceived quality is significantly associated with three variables: concerns to make good impression, importance of price as a quality indicator, and willingness to pay higher prices for premium alcohol. Specifically, the correlation with good impression is positive and statistically significant ($r=0,274$, $p=0,026$), indicating that are worried to make a good impression on others, they also tended to rate the perceived quality higher. Similarly, a positive association emerges with the price-quality indicator ($r = 0,313$, $p=0,010$), suggesting that in this social setting, individuals were more likely to link perceived quality with the idea that higher prices signal superior quality. Finally, willingness to pay for premium alcohol is also positively correlated ($r=0,299$, $p=0,015$), suggesting that participants who value quality in this context are also more inclined to spend more toward premium options.

		Correlations				
		Q2_3_perceiv ed_quality	Q7_av_spen_g eneral	Q8_av_spend_ spirits	Q10_wtp_bottl e_bar	Q12_years_alc ohol_cons
Q2_3_perceived_quality	Pearson Correlation	1	,369**	,433**	,331**	,267*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,003	<,001	,007	,031
	N	66	62	64	66	65
Q7_av_spen_general	Pearson Correlation	,369**	1	,897**	,571**	,110
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,003		<,001	<,001	,400
	N	62	62	62	62	61
Q8_av_spend_spirits	Pearson Correlation	,433**	,897**	1	,589**	,138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	,282
	N	64	62	64	64	63
Q10_wtp_bottle_bar	Pearson Correlation	,331**	,571**	,589**	1	,059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007	<,001	<,001		,640
	N	66	62	64	66	65
Q12_years_alcohol_cons	Pearson Correlation	,267*	,110	,138	,059	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,031	,400	,282	,640	
	N	65	61	63	65	65

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-67: Perceived Quality * Spending Behaviors (Scenario C) – Table of Correlations

By analyzing spending behaviors within the selected variable, a correlation analysis shows that perceived quality is positively associated with weekly expenditure on alcoholic beverages in general ($r=0,369$, $p=0,003$) and more strongly with weekly expenditure on spirits ($r=0,433$, $p<0,001$). A positive relationship also emerges with willingness to pay for a bottle of spirit in a bar ($r=0,331$, $p=0,007$), suggesting that higher quality perception is linked to greater expenditure in generic alcoholic beverages and more specifically on spirits. Interestingly, the number of years consuming alcohol shows a weaker but significant correlation with perceived quality ($r = 0,267$, $p=0,031$), indicating that experience in drinking habits may play a role in shaping quality perceptions, though less strongly than spending intensity. Overall, these results underline how some spending behaviors, particularly in the spirits category, are closely tied to how quality is perceived.

Comparative Considerations Across Scenarios

In Scenario A (Fancy Bar), the only premium public context, the mean perceived quality score was the highest, among individuals sensitive to social image and price as a signal of quality, confirming that a premium context amplifies self-presentation motives. Scenario C (Home with Friends), has lower mean score than Scenario A. This context showed more consistent, moderate ratings, as companionship ensured a positive experience, though spontaneity reduced perceived quality, while sociable individuals rated it higher. In Scenario B (Home Alone), the mean score was the lowest, as expected because of the lack of sociality. Here, quality depended more on personal values: those who appreciate exclusivity and are willing to pay for premium spirits still perceived high quality, while others rated it much lower, creating polarized responses.

However, it is crucial to verify whether such differences across scenarios are statistically significant and to formally test the hypothesis. For these purposes, a one-way ANOVAs was conducted, given the nature of the variables: qualitative independent variable for the three scenarios and quantitative dependent variable for perceived quality.

ANOVA Table						
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Q2_3_perceived_quality * Scenario_experiment	Between Groups	(Combined)	54,945	2	27,473	4,676
	Within Groups		1245,594	212	5,875	
	Total		1300,540	214		

Table 3-68: Perceived Quality – Comparison Across Scenarios (ANOVA)

The one-way ANOVA revealed a highly significant effect of scenario on perceived quality. The p-value < 0,010 confirms that the differences observed across the three experimental conditions are statistically significant, therefore the context significantly influences the perceived quality in the assigned scenario.

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_3_perceived_quality * Scenario_experiment	,206	,042

Table 3-69: Perceived Quality – Comparison Across Scenarios (Eta)

The measures of association show an Eta of 0,216, therefore a weak dependence in mean. This means that while the scenario explains some of the variance in perceived quality, the effect is weaker compared to other dependent variables.

Report			
Q2_3_perceived_quality			
Scenario_experiment	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
A	6,77	70	2,391
B	5,56	79	2,930
C	6,06	66	1,672
Total	6,11	215	2,465

Table 3-70: Perceived Quality – Comparison Across Scenarios (Table of Means)

The table of means indicates what has been shown before: participants in the bar scenario reported the highest perceived quality (Mean=6,77), followed by those in the home-with-friends scenario (Mean=6,06), while the lowest ratings were observed in the home-alone scenario (Mean=5,56).

Post Hoc Tests

Homogeneous Subsets

Q2_3_perceived_quality			
Tukey B ^{a,b}			
Scenario_experiment	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
B	79	5,56	
C	66	6,06	6,06
A	70		6,77

Table 3-71: Perceived Quality – Post Hoc Tests

Post-hoc tests using the Tukey procedure revealed that perceived quality was significantly higher in the bar scenario compared to the home-alone condition, while the home-with-friends scenario did not differ significantly from the home-alone condition.

Overall, these findings indicate that the public context is the main driver of higher quality perceptions, partially confirming Hypothesis 2. Indeed, branding, packaging, and presentation cues are more salient and socially meaningful in public settings, leading consumers to perceive premium spirits as superior in quality. However, the lack of significant difference between the two private scenarios suggests that social presence alone is not sufficient to elevate quality perceptions, reinforcing that it is public visibility that amplifies these evaluations.

3.6 Self-Presentation Concerns

Self-presentation concerns refer to the extent to which individuals are concerned on how their choices reveals their image to others. For premium drinks, this variable assesses whether people are aware of how their choice might communicate impressions such as sophistication or wealth. Although this variable is not dependent but rather a psychological mechanism activated by social presence, self-presentation concerns help explain why context influences perceived quality, purchase intentions, and consumption of spirits.

The associated question (Q2_4) asked respondents to rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, the following statement: *“In this situation, I might consider how my drink choice reflects on my image.”*

SCENARIO A: Fancy crowded bar with friends

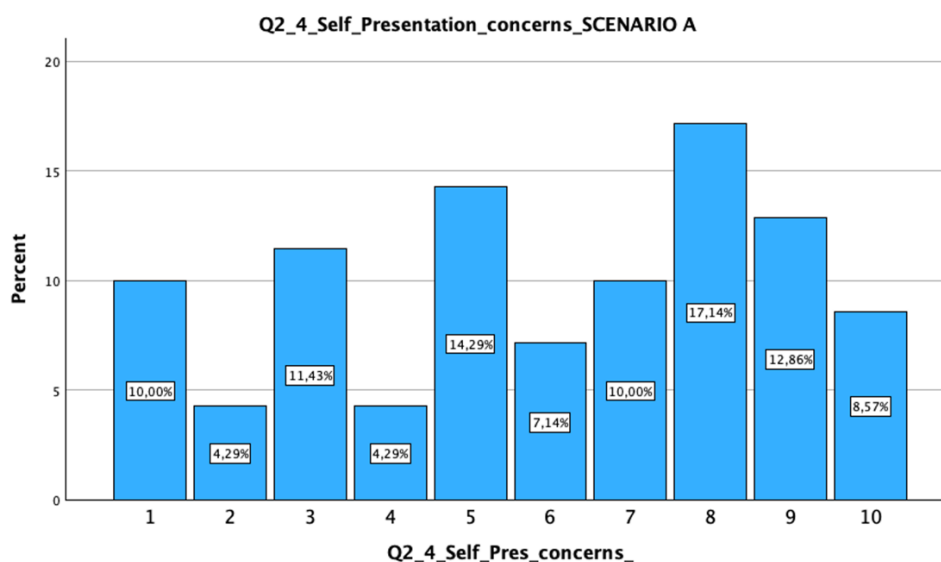


Figure 3-13: Self-Presentation Concerns (Scenario A) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	70
	Missing	0
Mean		5,93
Median		6,00
Mode		8
Std. Deviation		2,820

Table 3-72: Self-Presentation Concerns (Scenario A) - Statistics

In the public setting of a fancy bar, the mean score for self-presentation concerns of the sample is 5,93, with a median of 6, a mode of 8, and a relatively high standard deviation (2,82), which indicates a high variability in responses. The distribution has a concentration in the mid-to-high range, with peaks at scores 5, 8, and 9, indicating that many respondents in this setting are moderately to highly aware of how their drink choice might impact their image.

From the demographic analysis of self-presentation concerns, some interesting patterns emerge.

Report			
Q2_4_self_presentation_concerns			
Age_Ranges	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
18-24	5,13	15	2,973
25-34	5,23	22	2,562
35-44	6,76	33	2,762
Total	5,93	70	2,820

Table 3-73: Self Presentation Concerns * Age Groups (Scenario A) – Table of Means

Looking at age, the mean scores show a positive trend: younger respondents (18-24) report a mean of 5,13, while those aged 35-44 reach 6,76.

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q2_4_self_presentation_c concerns * Age_Ranges	Between Groups (Combined)		42,985	2	21,493	2,848	,065
	Within Groups		505,658	67	7,547		
	Total		548,643	69			

Table 3-74: Self Presentation Concerns * Age Groups (Scenario A) – ANOVA

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns * Age_Ranges	,280	,078

Table 3-75: Self Presentation Concerns * Age Groups (Scenario A) – Eta

The ANOVA test registers a p-value of 0,065, which is not significant at the 5% level but becomes relevant at the 10% threshold. This suggests that with age, individuals place higher

importance on how their drink choice reflects on their image, likely due to higher social status and greater sensitivity to external judgment.

Report			
Q2_4_self_presentation_concerns			
Q17_salary	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
<20.000€	4,94	17	2,727
€20.000–€35.000	5,42	19	3,115
€35.000–€50.000	6,22	18	2,439
>€50.000	7,25	16	2,620
Total	5,93	70	2,820

Table 3-76: Self Presentation Concerns * Salary (Scenario A) – Table of Means

A similar trend is observed across income groups: respondents earning below €20,000 report a mean of 4,94, while those earning above €50,000 reach 7,25.

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns * Q17_salary	Between Groups (Combined)	50,959	3	16,986	2,253	,090
	Within Groups	497,684	66	7,541		
	Total	548,643	69			

Table 3-77: Self Presentation Concerns * Salary (Scenario A) – ANOVA

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns * Q17_salary	,305	,093

Table 3-78: Self Presentation Concerns * Salary (Scenario A) – Eta

Again, the ANOVA indicates significance at the 10% level ($p=0,09$), with a moderate but not strong association ($Eta=0,305$). This implies that higher economic availability is associated with stronger self-presentation concerns in a public context.

		Correlations				
		Q2_4_self_pre sentation_conc erns	Q3_1_good_i mpression	Q3_2_exclusiv e_appeal	Q3_4_price_q uality_indicato r	Q3_5_wtp_pre mium_alcohol
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns	Pearson Correlation	1	,833**	,494**	,540**	,254*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001	,034
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,833**	1	,538**	,504**	,397**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,494**	,538**	1	,493**	,676**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_4_price_quality_indica tor	Pearson Correlation	,540**	,504**	,493**	1	,435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Q3_5_wtp_premium_alco hol	Pearson Correlation	,254*	,397**	,676**	,435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,034	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	70	70	70	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-79: Self-Presentation Concerns * Behavioral (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

Consequently, behavioral drivers of consumption were examined. From the correlation analysis emerge that the selected variable is highly correlated with the desire to make a good impression ($r=0,833$, $p<0,001$), showing that individuals who care about how they are perceived are also strongly concerned with how their drink choices reflect on their image in public. Moderate but significant correlations are also observed with exclusive appeal ($r=0,494$, $p<0,001$) and price as a quality indicator ($r=0,540$, $p<0,001$), suggesting that people who are caring to self-presentation tend to associate premium attributes with exclusivity and price.

Finally, a weaker but significant correlation emerges with the willingness to pay for premium alcohol ($r=0,254$, $p=0,034$), suggesting that individuals with stronger self-presentation concerns are slightly more inclined to spend extra money for premium products, as a way to reinforce the image they want to project.

Overall, these findings confirm that self-presentation concerns act as a key behavioral mechanism affecting social context to both perceptions (quality, exclusivity) and willingness to pay for more expensive products.

		Correlations	
		Q2_4_self_pre sentation_conc erns	Q9_av_spend_ drink_bar
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns	Pearson Correlation	1	,323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,007
	N	70	69
Q9_av_spend_drink_bar	Pearson Correlation	,323**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007	
	N	69	69

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-80: Self-Presentation Concerns * Avg_Spending_Bar (Scenario A) – Table of Correlations

Looking at spending behaviors, only the average spending per drink at bars is statistically significantly associated with self-presentation concerns, at the 1% statistical level ($p=0,007$). The correlation is positive ($r=0,323$), meaning that individuals who are more concerned with how their drink choice reflects on their image also tend to spend more on drinks in public contexts. Given the statistical significance of the test, we can conclude that there is a weak yet significant positive association: the higher the self-presentation concerns, the higher the average spending per drink.

SCENARIO B: HOME ALONE

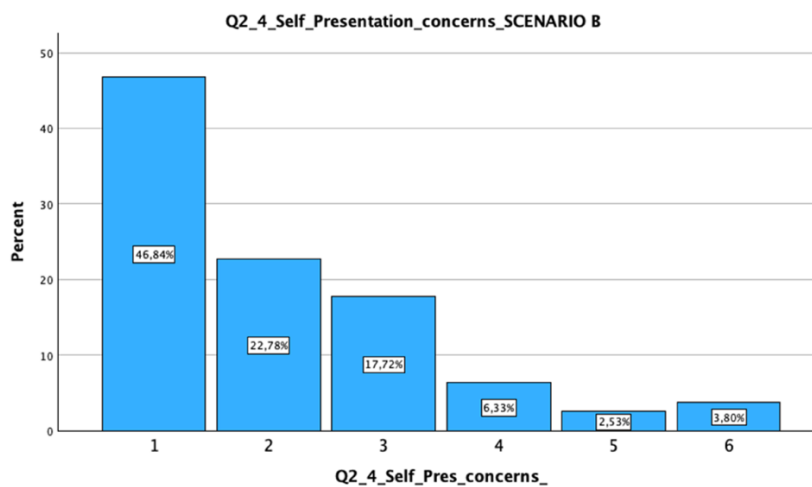


Figure 3-14: Self-Presentation Concerns (Scenario B) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	79
	Missing	0
Mean		2,06
Median		2,00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		1,324

Table 3-81: Self-Presentation Concerns (Scenario B) - Statistics

When respondents imagined themselves at home alone, they exhibited substantially lower self-presentation concerns, with a mean of 2,06, median 2, mode 1, and a low standard deviation (1,324). Almost half (46,84%) selected the minimum value of 1, indicating minimal to no concern for image in this private context. This scenario represents the lowest self-presentation awareness, due to the absence of other people.

At the demographic and psychographic level, no significant results came out. However, in the home alone scenario, self-presentation concerns do not disappear completely but remain weakly connected to some behavioral factors.

Correlations				
		Q2_4_self_pre sentation_conc erns	Q3_1_good_i mpression	Q3_2_exclusiv e_appeal
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns	Pearson Correlation	1	,246*	,370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,029	<,001
	N	79	79	79
Q3_1_good_impression	Pearson Correlation	,246*	1	,592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,029		<,001
	N	79	79	79
Q3_2_exclusive_appeal	Pearson Correlation	,370**	,592**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	
	N	79	79	79

*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-82: Self-Presentation Concerns * Behavioral (Scenario B) – Table of Correlations

A small link is found with the desire to make a good impression ($r=0,246$, $p=0,029$) and a stronger one with exclusive appeal ($r=0,370$, $p<0,001$). This means that even in private, people still show some concern for how their choices reflect on themselves. In this case, exclusivity and refinement matter as a way of self-affirmation, showing that alcohol can carry symbolic value beyond social situations.

SCENARIO C: HOME WITH FRIENDS

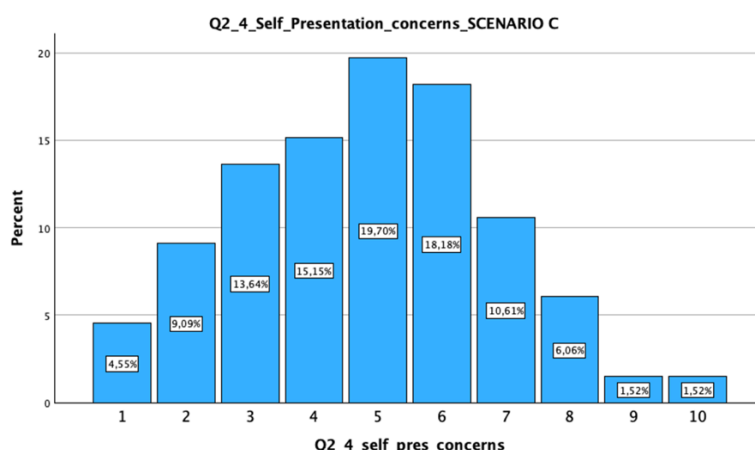


Figure 3-15: Self-Presentation Concerns (Scenario C) – Bar Chart of Frequences (Percentages)

N	Valid	66
	Missing	0
Mean		4,83
Median		5,00
Mode		5
Std. Deviation		2,012

Table 3-83: Self-Presentation Concerns (Scenario C) - Statistics

This scenario reported a mean score for self-presentation concern of 4,83, with a median of 5, a mode of 5, and a standard deviation of 2,012. The distribution is centered around mid-range values, with 19,70% of respondents choosing 5 and 18,18% choosing 6, and very high scores (9 and 10) are minimal. These results suggest that being with other people still triggers some

concerns to the image conveyed by the choice of drink, but less than a public setting of a fancy bar.

Report			
Q2_4_self_presentation_concerns			
Q17_salary	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
<20.000€	4,71	21	1,678
€20.000–€35.000	4,35	20	2,007
€35.000–€50.000	4,41	17	1,873
>€50.000	7,25	8	1,669
Total	4,83	66	2,012

Table 3-84: Self Presentation Concerns * Salary (Scenario C) – Table of Means

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns * Q17_salary	Between Groups (Combined)	54,713	3	18,238	5,424	,002
	Within Groups	208,453	62	3,362		
	Total	263,167	65			

Table 3-85: Self Presentation Concerns * Salary (Scenario C) – ANOVA

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns * Q17_salary	,456	,208

Table 3-86: Self Presentation Concerns * Salary (Scenario C) – Eta

On a demographic perspective, in this home with friends' scenario, the ANOVA results show that self-presentation concerns significantly differ across income groups ($p=0,002$). As in the bar scenario (A), higher salaries are associated with stronger self-presentation concerns. In particular, respondents earning above €50,000 reported the highest mean score (7,25), while lower-income groups stayed around 4-4,7. This suggests that individuals with greater financial resources are more careful to the social meaning of their drink choices, even in a private setting with friends, using consumption as a way to signal refinement and status.

Correlations			
		Q2_4_self_pre sentation_conc erns	Q3_1_good_i mpression
Q2_4_self_presentation_c oncerns	Pearson Correlation	1	,652**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	66	66
Q3_1_good_i mpression	Pearson Correlation	,652**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	66	66

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-87: Self-Presentation Concerns * Good Impression (Scenario C) – Table of Correlations

At the behavioral level, results show a strong positive correlation between self-presentation concerns and the desire to make a good impression ($r=0,652$, $p<0,001$). This suggests that, when with friends, individuals who care about their social image are consistently more motivated by impression-management needs.

On a psychographic side, no significant results emerged.

Comparative Considerations Across Scenarios

By comparing the three scenarios, a clear pattern emerges. In Scenario A (Fancy Bar), self-presentation concerns were the highest, with mid-to-high distributions and strong variability, showing that a public and premium context maximizes attention to image. Demographically, higher income and older respondents displayed stronger concerns. At a behavior point of view, concerns were strongly tied to impression management and moderately linked to exclusivity, price, and willingness to pay. On a psychographic standpoint, significant associations confirm that public settings activate symbolic drivers of consumption.

In Scenario C (Home with Friends), mean scores were moderate, centered around 5–6. The presence of others maintained some concern, though lower than in public. Demographically, income played a strong role, with high earners reporting much higher scores. Behaviorally, concerns strongly correlated with the desire to make a good impression, confirming impression management even in private groups. Psychographic links were not significant here.

In Scenario B (Home Alone), scores were the lowest, with almost half selecting the minimum value. No demographic effects emerged, while behaviorally, weak but significant links to exclusivity and impression management persisted, suggesting self-presentation motives holds even in solitude. Psychographic effects were absent. However, it is crucial to verify whether such differences across scenarios are statistically significant and to formally test the hypothesis. For these purposes, a one-way ANOVA was conducted, given the nature of the variables: qualitative independent variable for the three scenarios and quantitative dependent variable for self-presentation concerns.

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q2_4_self_presentation_concerns * Scenario_experiment	Between Groups (Combined)	596,139	2	298,070	66,622	<,001
	Within Groups	948,493	212	4,474		
	Total	1544,633	214			

Table 3-88: Self-Presentation Concerns – Comparison Across Scenarios (ANOVA)

The one-way ANOVA revealed a highly significant effect of scenario on self-presentation concerns. The p-value $< 0,001$ confirms that the differences observed across the three experimental conditions are statistically significant, therefore the context significantly influences the self-presentation concerns in the assigned scenario.

Measures of Association		
	Eta	Eta Squared
Q2_4_self_presentation_concerns * Scenario_experiment	,621	,386

Table 3-89: Self-Presentation Concerns – Comparison Across Scenarios (Eta)

The measures of association show an Eta of 0,621, therefore a strong dependence in mean. This also suggests that context strongly influences self-presentation concerns.

Report			
Q2_4_self_presentation_concerns			
Scenario_experiment	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
A	5,93	70	2,820
B	2,06	79	1,324
C	4,83	66	2,012
Total	4,17	215	2,687

Table 3-90: Self-Presentation Concerns – Comparison Across Scenarios (Table of Means)

Moreover, the table of means shows a clear trend across the three scenarios. Participants in the bar scenario reported the highest self-presentation concerns (Mean= 5,93), reflecting the strong status concerns in public. In the home-with-friends scenario, concerns were still high (Mean= 4,83), indicating that while the private setting reduces external visibility, the presence of others still triggers impression-management concerns. Finally, the lowest scores were recorded in the home-alone condition (Mean = 2,06), as expected. These results confirms that the type of context (public vs. private), but especially the degree of social presence systematically influence self-presentation concerns.

Post Hoc Tests**Homogeneous Subsets**

Q2_4_self_presentation_concerns				
Tukey B ^{a,b}				
Scenario_experiment	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
B	79	2,06		
C	66		4,83	
A	70			5,93

Table 3-91: Self-Presentation Concerns – Post Hoc Tests

Finally, post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey test confirmed that all three groups significantly differ in self-presentation concerns.

Overall, these findings provide strong support for Hypothesis 1, suggesting that the context, mediated by social presence is a key driver of impression-management motives, which in turn influence symbolic consumption and premium product choices.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Summary of the Results

The results clearly demonstrate that drinking context has a major influence on consumer behavior toward premium spirits. In a public social context like the bar scenario, participants registered the highest anticipated consumption quantity and the strongest likelihood of choosing a premium spirit. On the other hand, in a solitary private context like the home-alone scenario, anticipated consumption decreased sharply, and premium preference intention was the lowest, with many respondents reporting they would not drink at all. In a social private context, such as the home-with-friends scenario, these measures fell in the middle, confirming that while social presence increases drinking relative to solitude, public visibility remains the main driver for both higher quantity and premium preferences.

For what concerns purchase intentions, post-hoc tests confirmed that consuming a drink in a bar significantly increases the inclination to choose premium options compared to private contexts. Interestingly, no significant differences were found between the home-with-friends group the home-alone group, despite a slightly higher mean. This suggests that the presence of other people in a private context do not trigger the same status-signaling motives that are activated in more visible public settings, where there aren't only friends and acquaintances, but also strangers that might feel people judged.

Context also influenced perceived quality and value-for-money, but these effects were more nuanced. Selecting a premium option was rated as highest perceived quality in the bar, lowest at home alone, with the home-with-friends condition only slightly higher than being at home alone. Post-hoc tests showed that only the difference between bar and home-alone was statistically significant, meaning that public context, rather than social presence alone, drives higher quality evaluations. Similarly, value-for-money perceptions were strongest in the bar scenario, moderate when drinking alone, and lowest when drinking with friends at home. Post-hoc tests showed no significant difference between the two private scenarios, indicating that social presence in private contexts does not necessarily increases the justification of higher prices.

Finally, self-presentation concerns resulted to be a powerful mediating mechanism. These concerns correlated strongly with premium choice and exclusivity perceptions, reinforcing the

idea that impression management explains why public contexts drive greater consumption and premiumization.

Overall, the first hypothesis is verified. Indeed, the type of context and the presence of other people, significantly increased anticipated consumption quantity. However, for premium purchase intentions are mainly driven by the context alone. The second hypothesis instead is partially confirmed: while public contexts clearly elevate quality and value perceptions, social presence at home does not consistently amplify these effects.

In conclusion, the study confirms that public versus private contexts activate distinct consumer mindsets. Public visibility stimulates higher consumption, premium choices, and more favorable evaluations, while private settings increase moderation and more cautious value judgments.

4.2 Theoretical Contribution

This research contributes to the current literature by demonstrating how context and social visibility moderate premium consumption behavior in spirits industry. First, the results reinforce symbolic consumption and status-signaling theories. The results demonstrated that consumers were likely to choose a premium spirit and perceive it as higher quality when consumption was visible in public. This confirms that status concerns are not fixed traits but context-dependent, activated mainly when an audience is present (Veblen, 1899; Shukla, 2010; Giacalone et al., 2015). The findings merge symbolic consumption with market trends such as premiumization (IWSR, 2023), showing that consumers choose premium options when social signaling is possible, not uniformly across all occasions.

Second, the study refines social influence theory. Results align with Social Impact Theory (Latané, 1981) by demonstrating that public settings with many people observing, amplify self-presentation and indulgence, while private contexts minimize them. The home-with-friends context added complexity: while social presence in a private setting slightly increased consumption, it did not significantly increase perceived quality or value-for-money compared to being alone. This shows that not all social contexts create the same influence, audience type and visibility, in line with reference group and identity signaling theories (White & Dahl, 2007).

Third, the study extends context-dependent preference theories (Belk, 1975) by showing that perceived quality and value-for-money change according to the context, but especially in public

than in private contexts. In bars, premium drinks were seen as higher quality and worth the price due to experiential cues, while at home value judgments were more cautious. Self-presentation concerns statistically mediated these perceptions, suggesting that impression management explains why public visibility, rather than mere presence of others, inflates quality and value perceptions (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

All together, these insights define context not as background but as a critical moderator of consumer decision-making for premium goods (Nomisma, 2024).

4.3 Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, this study highlights the importance of context segmentation in spirits marketing. Consumers' behavior is very different in bars versus at home. For this reason, appropriate strategies must vary across on-trade and off-trade channels. Specifically, in on-trade settings (bars, restaurants, clubs), where individuals are primed to indulge and show off, a premium brand should focus on visibility, exclusivity, and experience. The strategies include partnerships with trendy locations, signature cocktails, bartender advocacy, and enhanced presentation (a unique glassware, garnishes, storytelling). As consumers justify a premium price only when they feel it is worth it, marketers can sustain strong margins while reinforcing brand prestige (Nomisma, 2024; IWSR, 2023).

On the other hand, in off-trade contexts (i.e. home consumption), consumers focus more on personal taste, value, and authenticity. In this case, communication should focus on intrinsic product qualities (craftsmanship, flavor, heritage) and the idea of “treating yourself” rather than social status. Given that value-for-money perceptions resulted weaker at home, marketers should be able to justify premium pricing positioning with educational content, awards, or packaging that adds tangible value (e.g., gift packs, cocktail kits). For occasional or solitary consumers, smaller formats or ready-to-drink options can lower barriers to consumption, while for premium offerings, marketers should frame their products as valuable for enhancing hospitality to friends. Furthermore, the research suggests that simply having people at home does not significantly elevate the perceived value of premium spirits, therefore, marketing should think less about status signaling when it comes to purchases of premium brands and more about enjoyably shared experiences (e.g., after-dinner whiskey rituals, cocktail kits for hosting).

Innovation and promotion should also reflect context differences. In public, aspirational branding, event sponsorships, and social media campaigns tied to nightlife experiences can amplify status signaling. At home, brands need to recreate a sense of the experience of the bar, in other words, provide content that actively promotes the bar's character and charisma, like tutorials on cocktail making to enhance the sense of ritual and quality in the home environment.

In sum, a one-size-fits-all strategy is not recommended. Managers should position premium spirits as status-enhancing experiences in public while framing them as personal rewards or convivial quality moments in private. This dual approach allows brands to fully leverage the premiumization trend across both consumption contexts.

4.4 Research Limitations

As previously seen, this study's findings broadly supported the hypotheses, especially concerning the role that public versus private contexts played in predicting anticipated consumption, premium intentions, and activating self-presentation concerns. Not all of the findings perfectly verified the predictions, however. For example, value-for-money perceptions did not significantly rise in the home-with-friends setting as compared to home-alone, challenging the assumption that any type of social presence would likely bolster perceived value. This implies that visibility in public context, and not social presence, might be the underlying cause of premium justification, pointing to the potential refinement of Hypothesis 2.

These inconsistencies invite alternative theoretical explanations. One possibility is that close friends as an audience do not activate status-signaling motivations to the same extent as strangers in public settings, consistent with reference group theory (White & Dahl, 2007). Another alternative explanation is that judgments of value-for-money may themselves be dependent on experiential aspects (e.g., ambience, service, ritual) more than social presence per se. This places the prospect of integrating conceptual frameworks of experiential consumption into models of symbolic consumption.

From a research question standpoint, while this study answered how context impacts anticipated consumption, premium choice, and perceived quality, it only partially answered how social presence affects value perceptions. The weaker effect in private social contexts highlights the difficulty of distinguishing the role of public visibility from that of social presence. Moving

forward, research could design experiments to make distinctions between public, private, and social context more carefully; for example, with friends at home vs. strangers at home (a dinner party where some guests were acquaintances and others were close friends).

Methodologically, a number of improvements can be made. The use of hypothetical scenarios reduces external validity; future studies should use field experiments or observational methods conducted in real drinking situations. Moreover, excluding participants who failed the manipulation check may have artificially strengthened the observed effects, since manipulation checks are ideally intended to assess the strength of the manipulation rather than serve as an exclusion criterion. Finally, there are sampling limitations to consider: the reported overrepresentation of middle- and high-income respondents, and the overrepresentation of respondents from Central Italy, limits generalizability.

These limitations also generate new questions. How do different types of social audiences (friends vs. acquaintances vs. strangers) shape symbolic consumption? Does the premiumization trend generalize across product categories, or is it particularly pronounced for spirits given their strong symbolic associations? Is it the context rather than the mere presence of others that activates self-presentation concerns? Answering these questions could improve both theoretical frameworks and practical tactics.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the influence of drinking context (public versus private) with social presence (or not) on consumer behaviors and evaluation toward premium spirits. Specifically, the study explored anticipated consumption, purchase intentions, perceived quality, value-for-money perceptions, and self-presentation concerns. By focusing on spirits, which is at the heart of recent trends in premiumization, this research contributes both theoretical and practical academic marketing insights.

The findings provide strong evidence to support the influence of context in shaping consumer behavior. Public settings such as bars consistently drove higher anticipated consumption, stronger premium purchase intentions, and more favorable evaluations of quality and value, confirming the theoretical expectation that a public context amplifies drink consumption. Additionally, the social presence at home, however, only partially influenced the outcomes: while drinking with friends modestly increased consumption compared to solitude, it did not significantly enhance quality or value-for-money perceptions. This partially verified Hypothesis 2, meaning that public visibility, rather than social presence itself, is the main driver of premium justifications.

These results contribute to answering the research question by showing that context of consumption is a strong moderator of consumer choice and evaluation, with public visibility serving as a motivator for status signaling and impression management. The theoretical model which integrates symbolic consumption, social influence, and context-dependent preferences was broadly supported, although revisions are needed to better distinguish types of social audiences and degrees of visibility.

For the academic community, this research opens several open spaces for further investigation. Future work should distinguish publicness more from social presence, use field experiments that assess behavior in real-life samples, and determine if similar dynamics are found in other types of alcohol or luxury products. This work could help explain why and when consumers trade up to premium products and bring clarity on how symbolic motives interact with experiential and hedonic evaluations.

To conclude, this thesis has shown that context is not just a background factor but a critical factor that drives premium spirits consumption.

6. APPENDIX

6.1 Annex 1: Survey

Q0 Are you Italian, do you drink alcohol, and are you between 18 and 44 years old?

SECTION 1: Three Scenarios Experiment

Imagine the following scenario (each respondent will randomly receive one of the three scenarios)

A) It's Friday night and you're in a trendy, crowded bar in the city with a group of close friends. The place is packed, the music is loud, people are dressed elegantly, dancing and chatting. As you approach the counter to order, you notice that both friends and strangers can see your choice. The menu offers various spirits-based drinks (such as gin and tonic, vodka lemon, negroni, etc.), and you're about to decide which one to order.

B) It's a quiet evening and you're at home alone. After a busy day, you want to relax a little. The environment is silent and familiar; maybe you're watching something on TV or listening to music. You have no plans or people around. You're considering whether to drink a spirit, such as gin, vodka, or rum, from what you have available, simply to unwind, without having to think about what others might think.

C) You're hosting an informal evening at your place with a few close friends. It could be a dinner, a party, or simply an occasion to spend time together. You've prepared some snacks, there's background music, and the atmosphere is warm and welcoming. Various bottles of spirits (such as gin, vodka, rum, and whisky) are available, and guests help themselves freely in a relaxed, friendly setting.

Answer the following questions about the scenario just described.

Q1 In this scenario, how many drinks would you expect to consume? (Ajzen, 1991)

- Response format: Open-ended

Please, indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly disagree, 10 = Strongly agree)

Q2_ I am more likely to choose a premium (top-shelf) drink over a basic one in this scenario (Dodds et al., 1991).

Q2_2 In this setting, I would choose a drink/bottle that I feel offers good value, even if it costs more, if the overall experience (taste, presentation, setting) feels rewarding. (Adapted from Sweeney & Soutar, 2001)

Q2_3 Based on the context and how the drink is experienced, I would expect the drink to feel like a high-quality choice. (*Adapted from Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991*)

Q2_4 In this situation, I might consider how my drink choice reflects on my image. (Adapted from Watson & Friend, 1969; Leary & Kowalski, 1990)

Manipulation check questions

Q2_5 While imaging the situation, I had the feeling of feeling observed by other people While imagining the situation, I felt as if other people might be observing my choice.

- True
- False

Q2_6 The situation seemed more public than private.

- True
- False

SECTION 2: GENERAL ATTITUDES

Now you will be presented with some general statements related to your personal attitudes and preferences, outside of the scenario you just imagined.. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 10 = Strongly Agree):

Q3_1 I usually worry about making a good impression (Scheier & Carver, 1985)

Q3_2 A product is more valuable to me if it has some exclusive appeal (Eastman et al., 1999)

Q3_3 I prefer drinking with friends over drinking alone (Gonzalez & Skewes, 2013)

Q3_4 I believe that the price of a drink is a good indicator of its quality (Lichtenstein et al., 1993)

Q3_5 I am willing to pay more for a high-quality, premium alcoholic beverage (Lichtenstein et al., 1993)

Q3_6 I drink because it makes social gatherings more fun (Cooper, 1994)

Q3_7 I drink to be sociable when I'm with others (Cooper, 1994)

Q3_8 Drinking alcohol helps me relax (Kushner et al., 1994)

Q4 How often do you consume spirits in general?

- Never/Rarely;
- 1–2 times a month;
- 1–2 times a week;
- 3-5 times a week
- Every day

Q5 How often do you consume spirits at home?

- Never/Rarely;
- 1–2 times a month;
- 1–2 times a week;
- 3-5 times a week
- Every day

Q6 How often do you consume spirits out-of-home?

- Never/Rarely;
- 1–2 times a month;
- 1–2 times a week;
- 3-5 times a week
- Every day

Q7 How much do you typically spend per week on alcoholic beverages (spirits, wine, beer)?

- Response format: Open-ended

Q8 Specifically, how much do you spend on average per week on the category of spirits?

- Response format: Open-ended

Q9 How much do you spend on average for a drink (e.g., gin and tonic, spritz, negroni) consumed in a bar?

- Response format: Open-ended

Q10 What is the maximum amount you would be willing to spend for a bottle of vodka or gin in a venue?

- Response format: Open-ended

Q11 What is the maximum amount you would be willing to spend for a bottle of vodka or gin to be consumed at home (e.g., by purchasing it in a supermarket or on an e-commerce platform)?

- Response format: Open-ended

Q12 For how many years have you been regularly consuming alcoholic beverages?

- Response format: Open-ended

SECTION 3: PSYCHOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 10 = Strongly Agree):

Q13_1 I consider myself an open-minded person

Q13_2 I often seek new experiences and sensations

Q13_3 I prefer to follow my instincts rather than overthink decisions

Q13_4 I enjoy being spontaneous and not always planning everything

Q13_5 I value social connections and spending time with others

SECTION 4: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Q14 What is your gender?

- Male

- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q15 How old are you?

- Response format: Open-ended

Q16 What is your highest level of education?

- High school diploma
- Bachelor's and/or Master's degree

Q17 What is your annual gross income?

- < €20,000
- €20,000–€35,000
- €35,000–€50,000
- €50,000

Q18 What is your current occupation?

- Student
- Employed
- Retired
- Unemployed

Q19 Indicate your region of origin

- Response format: Multiple choice (20 Italian regions)

6.2 Annex 2: Independence Test

Independence test between scenario and control variables check. The Pearson Chi- Square is higher than the threshold of 0,05, therefore the independence is verified.

Scenario_experiment * Q17_salary

Crosstab

Count

		Q17_salary				
		<20.000€	€20.000– €35.000	€35.000– €50.000	>€50.000	Total
Scenario_experiment	A	17	19	18	16	70
	B	32	20	19	8	79
	C	21	20	17	8	66
Total		70	59	54	32	215

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7,931 ^a	6	,243
Likelihood Ratio	7,712	6	,260
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,638	1	,104
N of Valid Cases	215		

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9,82.

Table 6-1: Independence Test – Salary

Scenario_experiment * Age_Ranges

Crosstab

Count

		Age_Ranges			
		18–24	25–34	35–44	Total
Scenario_experiment	A	15	22	33	70
	B	22	21	36	79
	C	10	30	26	66
Total		47	73	95	215

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7,143 ^a	4	,129
Likelihood Ratio	7,071	4	,132
Linear-by-Linear Association	,015	1	,904
N of Valid Cases	215		

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14,43.

Table 6-2: Independence Test – Age Groups

Scenario_experiment * North Centre South**Crosstab**

Count

		North Centre South			Total
		North	Centre	South	
Scenario_experiment	A	22	20	28	70
	B	18	35	26	79
	C	21	24	21	66
Total		61	79	75	215

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,671 ^a	4	,323
Likelihood Ratio	4,729	4	,316
Linear-by-Linear Association	,384	1	,536
N of Valid Cases	215		

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18,73.

Table 6-3: Independence Test – Region

Scenario_experiment * Q18_occupation Crosstabulation

Count

		Q18_occupation			Total
		Student	Employed	Unemployed	
Scenario_experiment	A	14	51	5	70
	B	23	50	6	79
	C	13	48	5	66
Total		50	149	16	215

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,508 ^a	4	,643
Likelihood Ratio	2,465	4	,651
Linear-by-Linear Association	,006	1	,937
N of Valid Cases	215		

a. 1 cells (11,1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4,91.

Table 6-4: Independence Test – Occupation

6.3 Annex 3: Extreme Outliers Check

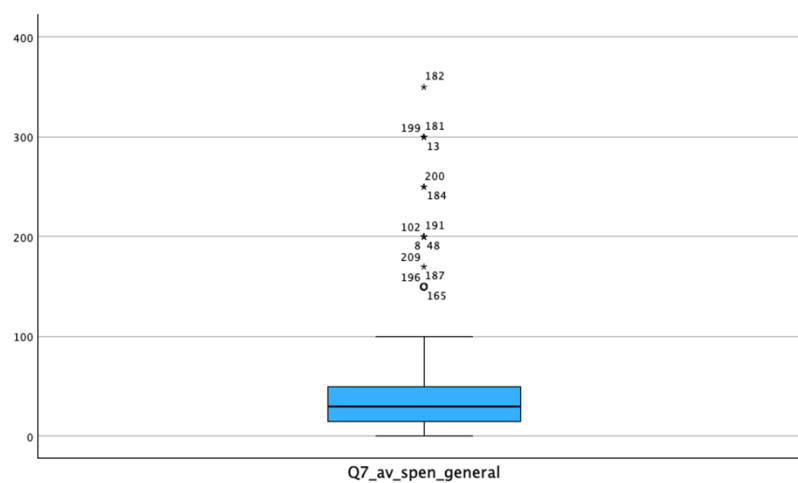


Table 6-5: Extreme Outliers Check – Weekly General Average Spending in Alcohol

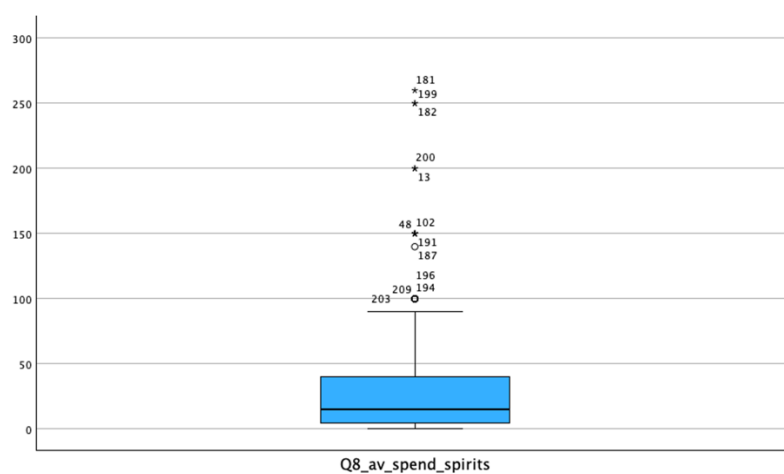


Table 6-6: Extreme Outliers Check – Weekly Average Spending in Spirits

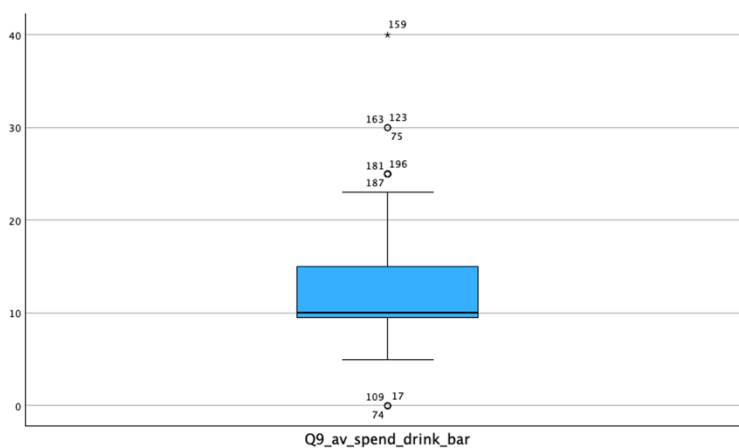


Table 6-7: Extreme Outliers Check – Average Spending for a Drink in a Bar

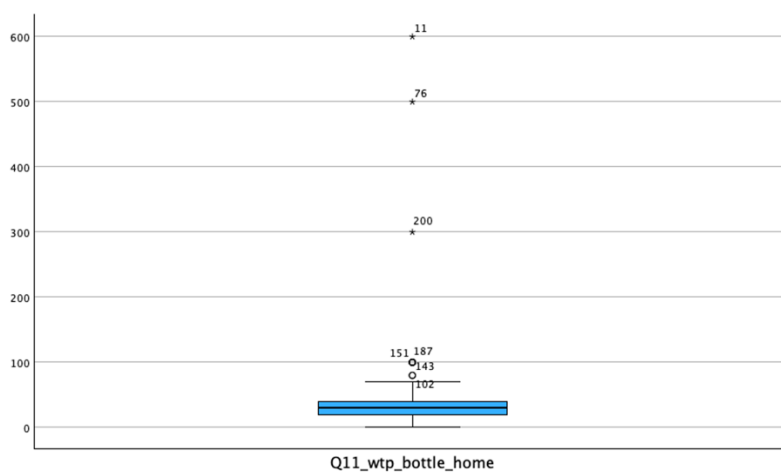


Table 6-8: Extreme Outliers Check – WTP for a Bottle of a Spirit at Home

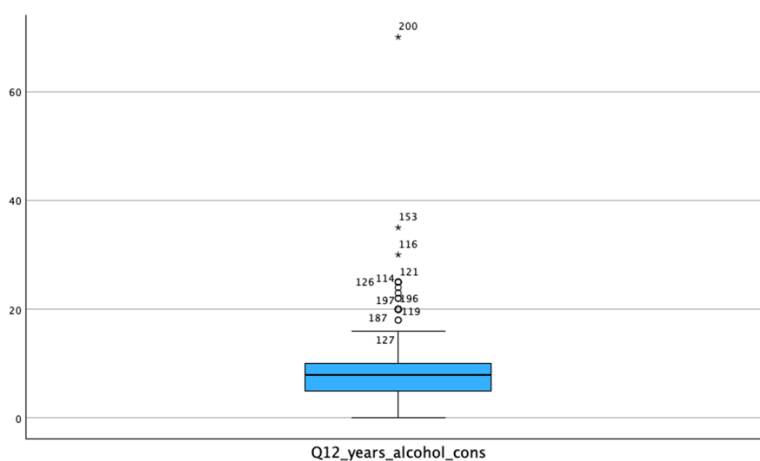


Table 6-9: Extreme Outliers Check – Years Since Alcohol Consumption

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