The purpose of this study is to relate the ratings given by wine consumers and wine experts with the structural characteristics of wines. Celebrated expert-critics have rated wines on a 1-100 points scale (Robert Parker, Wine Enthusiast, Wine Spectator, James Suckling) or a 1-120 points scale (Jancis Robinson). These scores have trained consumer to associate high-scoring wines with expert-preferred wines, implying high quality and taste.

Wine consumers develop their idea of quality by means of several other additional cues, too. These include branding, packaging, pricing, product descriptions, etc. It is worthwhile to establish if there is a correlation between expert and consumer rating of different kinds of wines. The technical qualities of wine such as its physical-chemical composition (tannin, acid, sugar, alcohol, body, etc.) might potentially predict expert reviews, consumer reviews, or both. Despite significant theoretical and practical implications of unearthing such relationships if they exist, the extant literature lacks scholarly investigations in this direction. In this research, attempt is also made to understand how product labels influence tastes and preferences.

The expert ratings are available in the public domain, in the fom of published reports. No human subjects involved.

The chemical analysis of wine will be done by a qualified technician, in a laboratory setting. No human subjects involved.

IRB approval is requested for the consumer wine tasting component of the study. The procedural steps for this are as follows:

1(a). Tasting of 6 kinds of 100-points wines, with false labels created by researchers shown to participants. This will ensure consumers are not familiar with the labels and the corresponding wines, skewing their answers

1(b). Participants will also taste 2 “bulk/low quality/high production wines”.

This will allow us to compare their reviews of the bulk wines and the 100-points wines.

2. Tasting of the same 100-points and bulk wines with their real labels showing.

3. A sub group of participants will be shown several critic reviews for the 100-points wines and will be asked questions regarding how likely they would purchase the wine given that description.

Results will be compared to understand how the addition of the label and reading expert reviews influence their consumption and purchase preferences.

The questionnaire administered to the participants will ask demographic information, wine education level, and typical wine purchases in a month. As participants taste each wine they will be asked to complete a simplified tasting grid, in which they will rate the presence of each structural component from low to high. They will also be asked their preference of the wine, how much they think it costs, and the likelihood they would purchase that wine again. Participants will also be asked several open-ended questions, in attempt to gain a deeper understanding of their interactions with the different wine samples. These questions would include their description of the wine, what they enjoyed and did not enjoy about each wine, etc.

**Ensuring Informed Consent**

First, ID document will be checked to establish if the participant has reached the legal minimum age to drink alcoholic beverages. The objectives of the study will be disclosed to the participants and their consent will be sought. They will be asked to produce a certificate from a qualified medical practitioner stating that drinking up to half bottle (375 ml, 12.7 oz) of wine with 12.5% alcohol would not cause them considerable harm. They will be specifically informed in writing about the potential consequences of consuming alcoholic beverages, according to the Alcoholic Beverage Labeling Act (ABLA). Each participant will sign on a waiver, after reading the warning message as per ABLA.

In order to ensure that no participant is intoxicated beyond a moderate level, the study will be carried out in phases, spanning across multiple days. Only wines sold in legally licensed retail shops will be used in this study. Someone with a recognized Bartending / ServSafe License will supervise the process of serving wine to the participants. The study will be conducted in a neat and clean environment.

If any participant is observed to show signs of impairment or other maladaptive behaviors, they will be removed from the rest of the study. The researcher will arrange for such participants a suitable transportation (taxi or uber) to their designated home addresses in the city. Participants’ address information and consent to drop them will also be collected prior to the study.