

Internationalization of Italian wine products in China: The role of digital platforms in a service ecosystem

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Abstract

This paper analyzes how digital platforms impact the internationalization process of wine firms in China – a growing yet challenging wine market. By applying a service ecosystems' approach, we developed a theoretical model that considers the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of the wineries' internationalization. To understand the interactions between the main actors of the ecosystem, we carried out a qualitative study on Italian firms from Veneto region that produce Valpolicella variety. We collected 18 semi-structured interviews with key informants that operate in the three levels of the system: wineries, institutions, and Chinese digital players. Findings suggest that digital platforms can accelerate wine companies' internationalization and consumer education process. However, traditional intermediaries have not been completely replaced. Indeed, firms' interactions with all the actors of the ecosystems' levels are crucial in reaching a competitive advantage.

Keywords: *China; service ecosystems; wine*

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