

PR 522 FINAL PAPER: **Social Drinkers**

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Part I: Situation Analysis

ZOMOZ is a Mezcal brand created by five passionate first and second-generation Mexicans. Marlene, Miguel, Eloy, Guillermo and Diego. Who, through Zomoz, tell their story, that of their country and its people. Currently, it's concluding its branding and packaging phase and is scheduled to launch in Los Angeles, February 2022. The brand story speaks to the LatinX community, specifically Mexicans in California and their story as immigrants who come to the US searching for, what ZOMOZ calls, the "New American Dream."

The alcohol industry has seen a significant increase in its demand since the beginning of the pandemic. Furthermore, there's been a boom on Tequila and agave-based spirits and Mezcal has become the new hot spirit. According to the International Wines and Spirits Record (IWSR), Mezcal posted the most significant gain among all spirits in the past three years. The Mezcal market grew 40% worldwide in 2020 and together with Tequila, it could overtake rum in 2022 (by volume). Furthermore, the mezcal market is estimated to be valued at over \$1B by 2025 with a 20% annual growth in the following years. Since Zomoz is a new brand, COVID-19 had no impact on it. Nevertheless, it aims to position itself as a leading brand in the American market by 2025.

Zomoz Mezcal is made in Oaxaca, Mexico. Every part of Zomoz process is 100% sustainable, organic and artisanal, with the sole intention of presenting to the world a product with the quality that characterizes Mexican spirits. Mezcal, by nature, is a strong, smoky drink that usually contains 43-53% alcohol. Zomoz, on the other hand, is 40% alcohol and less smoky compared to others due to its double distillation process.

The research goal for this project is to analyze American "social drinkers" opinions, level of knowledge and interest regarding Mezcal. This will provide the team with factual information,

which will be delivered to the client afterward, with the sole intention that the brand creates an adequate campaign moving forward.

A social drinker is an individual who embraces variety in their selection of alcoholic beverages and are not driven by brands but requires triggers, such as social events, to drink.

Part II: Critical Assessment

Qualitative Discussion Guide

For this part of our research method, we first collaborated to construct insightful questions that addressed our primary research goals. This included introductory questions about our topic area, transition questions, and specific, key information questions to analyze the main themes. In total, we had 19 questions, with 15 of these being key questions with an additional nine sub-questions for supporting information. As a group, we finalized a date and time on the weekend that would suit ourselves and our targeted focus group. We used convenient sampling, so it was easy to recruit individuals for the interview process; we each recruited three individuals from our friends and family, totaling 12 attendees, which we split into two equal focus groups of six people. Our attendees ranged from 21-29, which parallels our targeted age range for social drinkers and included 75% White Americans and 1 Mexican American and 2 Asian Indians to ensure diversity with our findings. Our focus groups took place on zoom and were recorded throughout the duration if we needed to refer to either of the interviews for additional notes. We also designated two separate key leaders for each of the focus groups as well as a moderator, notetaker and recorder, which we were able to rotate around between the two interviews. In addition, two individuals took a particular interest to the topic area and brand, so we were able to apply snowball sampling to aid other key areas of the branding process, such as choosing the bottle's exterior.

Quantitative Survey

Qualtrics was a useful platform for gathering our key questions and reaching a larger audience. It was a helpful platform and enabled us to visualize our findings graphically and draw on useful evaluations and comparisons between the two datasets. In total we had 17 questions on our

survey and two open-ended questions, which allowed respondents to be more specific with their reasonings and to allow us to identify key themes. Our main strategy to reach the most respondents was sharing our survey on our social media platforms as this is also a platform the majority of our target audience (21-29) uses. All members of our group shared it through their Instagram page and one person also shared it through their Facebook page. In total, the survey reached approximately 793 people and we received 96 respondents over 14 days. We launched the survey on November 23 and closed it on December 7 as we felt we had received a good amount of responses to start analysing and evaluating our data.

Part III: Results Summary

The total number of respondents from the qualitative research focus groups are 12. The attendees were the ages between 21-29 and included 75% White Americans, 1 Mexican American and 2 Asian Indians. Our quantitative research survey has a total of 96 respondents and the response rate is 12%. Of all the respondents, about 59 identified as white, five are Black, 10 are Asian, 12 identified as other, and four preferred not to identify. 10 of the respondents are part of the LatinX community and 80 are not part of it. There were 72 respondents who are between the ages of 21-29, 13 between 30-49, and four are 50 years old or older.

Our qualitative research resulted from two focus groups that were asked the same questions. The most meaningful qualitative findings among the respondents are related to what they look for in alcohol. Many of them from both the focus groups agreed that hard liquor is for drinking at a club or a restaurant/bar, which was assumed to be said. Another popular majority opinion was that Mezcal is better when mixed in a cocktail. This is not surprising as Mezcal has a particularly strong flavor. Good quality alcohol with a fair price was the most popular option when buying a bottle of alcohol, but flavor and price was the most looked at when ordering it in a cocktail at a club or restaurant. This was expected due to the respondents being mostly young adults who watch their spending.

The most interesting and somewhat surprising finding is that the focus group respondents would more likely try Mezcal if recommended to them by a friend or bartender. With influencers and celebrities being a strong influence in today's society, it would be logical that products would have more business when promoted by a popular public image. Therefore, it is interesting how a significantly larger amount of people would trust someone in their circle or a bartender who knows their alcohol better than a popular stranger. This changes the campaign toward target audiences more by focusing less on influencers and more on social circles and events.

The quantitative survey results are somewhat similar to the qualitative research results. Most people care more about flavor than price when it comes to buying alcohol. Most of them would also somewhat be likely to try new brands of alcohol, which gives some flexibility for branding and marketing strategies. There were also slightly more people who have not tried Mezcal than people who have from the research. More people prefer fruity, sweet, and sour flavors in a cocktail, which gives a better idea of what type of cocktail menu we can create for people to enjoy.

Many respondents think people would want to try Mezcal mainly to branch out to a "new" alcohol and try an alcohol that can give as much fun as Tequila gives. Popular unsurprising answers to why someone would not want to try Mezcal were:

- Not being fond of smokey flavors.
- Not knowing what Mezcal is.
- Not caring to try it since there is Tequila.

However, one surprisingly common answer was that people did not know the difference between Mezcal and Tequila, so we should communicate how they are different and why people should try it. The same results as the qualitative research include: people would be more likely to try a new alcohol or drink if a friend recommended it, and a bartender was the runner up, more people prefer to drink Mezcal in a cocktail and at a restaurant/bar.

A few actions could have been done to benefit our research more. These include more qualitative interviews, sending out the survey directly to more people, and including a wider variety of ages in our research. More people means more data that benefits our research more. Our results seem

promising for now, but the next phase of research should focus in depth on the alcohol industry, what campaigns are working or not working for other competitors, and interviewing a wider variety of people mainly based on interests and age. We can also do research on the state of the economy, what is a good price range according to the economy and general

Part IV: Learning Reflection

In anticipation of the launch of a new mezcal brand, our team conducted qualitative and quantitative research to inform key messaging strategies for the launch of the campaign. The target audience that we focused on was social drinkers - people who prefer to enjoy alcoholic beverages in social settings such as at a bar or with friends. In the two focus groups, we learned that while some people enjoy Mezcal straight or over ice, most are more attracted to the idea of Mezcal if it is in a cocktail at a bar or restaurant. We also learned that people might be more interested in mezcal if it was recommended to them by someone. After the focus groups, we further tested the insights we collected in a qualitative survey.

Results from 96 respondents provided us with poignant information about our target audience. For starters, most survey participants expressed interest in trying a new brand of Mezcal - good news for a new mezcal brand. Participants overwhelmingly confirmed the insights collected from the focus group. Survey responses indicated that social drinkers, aged 21-29, are more willing to try Mezcal in a cocktail at a bar or restaurant. Furthermore, survey responses indicated that brand recommendations from friends and bartenders are the most well-received by social drinkers while recommendations from social media influencers are the least welcome. We also collected insightful data about preferred flavors in cocktails and noticed that while the smoky flavor was a positive aspect of Mezcal for some, it was an aversion for many others. Perhaps the most shocking insight from the survey was that many people are not aware of the difference between Mezcal and Tequila.

As someone who loves data and research, the project was an intellectually stimulating success! I am so grateful to my teammates and professors at the Annenberg School for the opportunity to practice consumer insight collection in a real-world brand communications scenario.

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