



Affective commitment recipes for wine clubs: Value goes beyond the vine[☆]

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1. Introduction

Accessing a variety of products and services from the comfort of home through a subscription model that incorporates a fee in exchange for a regular delivery is an emerging and increasingly prominent dimension of the retail sector (Bray et al., 2021). Wine clubs originated in the United States as a curated consumer-oriented sales method that allows members to develop a deeper relationship with particular wineries through recurring visits and tailored offerings. Direct to customer (DtC) sales for American wine clubs exceeded \$4 billion in 2021 (Wine Vines Analytics, 2022) and represents approximately 5 % of US wine sales (Thach 2021). DtC sales decrease the need for costly intermediaries; as such, wine clubs have been a vital channel for wineries to remain competitive and profitable while also building stronger relationships with customers. Although, the subscription model is not an infallible sales channel, and the performance of wine clubs and other subscription services is heavily affected by both internal and external factors.

Recent economic turmoil has severely impacted demand for hedonic goods and discretionary purchases worldwide in addition to its specific impact on wine clubs. With inflation decreasing purchasing power, many middle-class consumers are either pushed out of the market for hedonic goods like wine altogether or are forced to decrease their patronage temporarily (Soudi & Bouallala, 2020). Although this may not greatly impact table wines with lower prices like Barefoot, the nation's leading table wine (Statista, 2021), wine clubs that generally offer higher-end, expensive wines are suffering and losing consumers to cheaper wines (Oldman, 2022). While there have been substantial hikes in the price of wine over time, it still has not increased proportionally with the rising costs experienced by wineries and wine clubs (Veseth, 2022), from commodity chains and labor to interest rates. Challenges to

customer retention affect the wine industry as well as other hedonic industries impacted by socioeconomic fluctuations. However, ample opportunity exists in the industry for growth and the success of firms is dependent on their ability to connect with consumers (Carpenter & Humphreys, 2019).

Wine sales are a function of various demographic and social factors including age, gender, and income among other influences (Barber, 2006). Additionally, subscription services create a consumption paradigm that gives consumers recurring opportunities to cancel their membership. The primary interest of this paper lies in identifying the aspects of perceived value for wine clubs that engender affective commitment and differentiate distinct consumer groups. Interest in wine among younger generations has significantly decreased, which may have more to do with marketing than taste (Ganesan-Lim et al., 2008; Sousa et al., 2008; Sharma et al., 2012). Targeting younger customers could provide marketers in the industry with an opportunity for growth and a chance to carve out a competitive advantage in a crowded market.

The past several decades have seen the continued success and proliferation of ecommerce, which now occupies a much larger part of the consumption experience than in past eras of consumption. E-commerce quickly adapted to support the needs and demands of consumers during the nascent days of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, digital sales was considered the best and most profitable channel for marketing wine in the US (Williamson & Bhadury, 2014; SVP, 2021). As with many industries, the COVID-19 pandemic forced much of the wine industry to focus its marketing efforts in online sales and away from physical transactions (New York Times, 2020).

This paper seeks to explain the relationship between perceived value in the context of subscription wine clubs and affective commitment. The components of perceived value variously motivate customers to join clubs with similar others who share their attitudes and perceptions.

[☆] The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Subscription hedonic services might sustain and expand their market share by capturing the elements of perceived value that lead to affective commitment for specific target markets and demographics. Additionally, online wine clubs now reach more customers than traditional tasting rooms (McMillan, 2022), which presents an opportunity for companies to attract new customers with varying demographics and psychographics.

There are hundreds of sophisticated and competitive wine clubs in the US, including those directly associated with wineries and online clubs that represent wines from various producers and regions. Within the consumer behavior literature, there is a paucity of research on wine clubs and value offerings that might inform purchase intent, word of mouth, and member loyalty. Affective commitment is required for wine clubs to reap the benefits of consumer loyalty and is often dependent on perceived value. Although previous research has explored value co-creation for wine in the context of e-commerce (Festa, Cuomo, & Met-allo, 2019), this study focuses on aspects of perceived value and how they relate to affective commitment. Our research questions are as follows: (1) What types of value should wine clubs offer to attract and retain new customers? and (2) Do younger consumers value wine club offerings differently than mature consumers, and if so, which of the four types of value (quality, price, social, and emotional) generate differential commitment between groups?

2. Theory and propositions

2.1. Relationship marketing theory and hedonic purchasing

Relationship marketing, defined as purposeful marketing-related interactions that foster loyalty towards a brand, is an important aspect of hedonic and experiential purchases such as wine (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Vincent & Webster, 2013). Derived from social exchange theory, relationship marketing theory posits that when consumers receive firm-generated benefits, they develop trust and commitment as forms of reciprocity (Palmatier et al., 2007). Gremler et al. (2020) identify confidence, perceived value, and social benefits as the central antecedents of relationship quality through a meta-analysis of relationship marketing. Firms can utilize personal communications, touchpoints, and location-based messaging to foster social exchanges and produce social benefits. Providers can employ relationship marketing to engage wine club members who visit facilities and socialize while enjoying their consumption experience.

For wine purchasing, Newton, Nowak, and Kelkar (2018) find that wine club members value product quality, fair pricing, and ample assortment and variety. Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon (2002) delineate intuitive versus analytic shopping tasks and identify four types of shopping: experiential online, experiential catalog, goal-directed online, and goal-directed catalog. Interestingly, Mathwick and colleagues argue that active value (time/money/effort) is higher for goal-oriented online shopping tasks while reactive value (entertainment/enjoyment/appeal) is higher for experiential shopping tasks.

Flavián et al. (2019) find that search process satisfaction and smart shopping feelings are generally higher for experiential products. Online shopping offers two distinct types of engagement, personal and social-interactive (Calder, Malhotra, & Schaedel, 2009). Personal engagement can be stimulating and inspirational, while social-interactive engagement involves socializing and community. The consumption of experiential products leads to enjoyment, sensations, and emotions; these brand-to-member relationships include physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). Through social exchanges and firm-generated benefits, wine clubs can deliver higher perceived value that fosters long-term relationships and affective commitment.

2.2. Perceived value and affective commitment

In its original form, Sheth et al. (1991) defined five types of value that influence a consumer's choice behavior: (1) functional, (2) conditional, (3) social, (4) emotional, and (5) epistemic. Whereas functional value revolves around the physical measurement of its features and their respective benefits, emotional value involves the feelings derived from the product/service such as love, fear, and arousal. Social value involves the customer's surroundings; products or services that denote a high social value allow consumers to appear posh in society. Epistemic value derives from an individual's desire for knowledge, novelty-seeking, and curiosity. Lastly, conditional value takes the situation (time/context) into account, as illustrated by the notion that scarcity creates a high conditional value. More recently, Walsh, Shiu, and Hassan (2014) identify four factors in their perceived value scale including quality, emotional, price, and social aspects of value. Originating from economic utility theory, Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as the utility gained for sacrifices made (i.e., money spent). Considering hedonic products and services, consumption spans beyond the product and includes meaning, self-brand identity formation, and the feelings of belonging generated from club membership (Thompson, Newman, & Liu, 2014). Hence, perceived value for hedonic club memberships can also include symbolic value. According to Holbrook (1999), three different dualities help explain perceived value: extrinsic versus intrinsic, active versus reactive, and self-oriented versus other-oriented. The intrinsic versus extrinsic typology incorporates a self-versus-other approach, which appropriately describes the context of wine clubs (Ruiz-Molina, Gallarza, & Gil-Saura, 2018).

Research identifies two dimensions of consumer commitment to brands: rational or calculative commitment and emotional or affective commitment (Brodie et al., 2013). Affective commitment is defined as the feelings, emotional attachment, connection, identification, and closeness that consumers experience with brands, products, corporations, or services (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). This type of commitment can stem from positive feelings and memories generated with a brand. Affective commitment towards brands can increase through positive feelings in online communities and virtual experiences (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2021; Wu, Chen, & Chung, 2010).

The link between perceived value and affective commitment has been proposed and validated in multiple domains. In the context of online group buying, Chiu et al. (2018) show that the perceived value dimensions of monetary savings, product variety, aspirational products, hedonic value, and social value all lead to affective commitment. Likewise, in the hospitality industry, perceived value consisting of functional, psychological, and external value, also leads to affective commitment to hotel brands (Koo, Yu, & Han, 2020). For co-operative and mutual enterprises, perceived value dimensions (functional, financial, emotional) also lead to affective and continuance commitment (Mazzarol, Soutar, & Limnios, 2019). Affective commitment stems from emotional attachment to a brand like self-brand identification and a sense of belonging with the brand and brand membership (Tanford, Raab, & Kim, 2011).

Proposition 1. (P1): Perceived value dimensions, including quality, emotional value, price, and social value, are all ingredients for affective commitment towards wine clubs.

2.3. Age cohorts and perceived value

Due to cognitive and physical changes over time, older consumers (1) rely on heuristics and schema-based processing in order to reduce their cognitive load (Ganesan-Lim, Russell-Bennett, & Dagger, 2008), (2) are less likely to remember negative information (Mittal & Kama-kura, 2001), (3) value efficient service (Javalgi, Belonax, & Robinson, 1991), and (4) associate their financial and cognitive costs more closely with perceived value (Sharma, Chen & Luk, 2012). In contrast, younger

consumers (1) are willing to expend more cognitive effort processing information while shopping (Javalgi et al., 1991), (2) gather information from a larger array of resources during decision-making (Ganesan-Lim et al., 2008), and (3) utilize trendy and innovative shopping channels (e.g., online shopping) (Sousa et al., 2008).

Millennial consumers, or digitally savvy ones, may be more likely to utilize webrooming, which is a two-stage decision-making process wherein consumers seek online information to facilitate offline purchases (Flavian et al., 2019). Younger consumers are more likely to utilize webrooming to avoid salespeople conversations (i.e., low need for interaction), because they perceive online reviews to be useful, and they seek to lower shopping risk (Aw et al., 2021). Digital natives, or younger consumers, having engaged with multiple purchasing channels for their entire lives, act as experienced researchers in online environments, and can seamlessly aggregate purchase information across sources, thus forming prior expectations (Hult et al., 2019). On the other hand, digital immigrants, or older consumers, utilize tried-and-true skills in both online and offline environments, thus forming expectations in similar patterns regardless of the purchase channel. Hildebrand and Schlager (2019) show that exposure to Facebook prior to purchasing increases a focus on others during the subsequent purchase process.

Proposition 2. (P2): *The four types of perceived value (quality, emotional value, price, and social value) will combine in different recipes to increase affective commitment for consumers over 40 versus those who are 40 and under.*

In summary, our study seeks to explore how different types of perceived value with wine club purchasing affect consumer commitment. Fig. 1 shows the perceived value model.

3. Research methodology

Whereas structural equation modeling and multiple regression analysis could yield interesting results as quantitative techniques, our interest is in capturing complexity and nonsymmetrical relationships among our variables of interest (Woodside, 2013). Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) is an asymmetric data analysis technique that integrates the theoretical reasoning and context information of qualitative methods with quantitative approaches (Ragin, 2009). Pappas and Woodside (2021) argue that if a quantitative model explains 57 % of the variance in the dependent variable, although acceptable, it does not

explain the rest of the sample. The fsQCA process allows the researchers to utilize domain knowledge and interpret the results in a fashion consistent with context and theory (Fiss 2007). Given the exploratory nature of our inquiry, our study acknowledges that various combinations of perceived value dimensions could lead to affective commitment, making fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) an appropriate technique (Ragin, 2009).

While our study is based on social exchange and relationship marketing theory, we seek to understand age cohorts and perceived value patterns as they relate to long-term commitment to wine clubs. As a methodology, interdisciplinary research now utilizes fsQCA in many areas such as social media and interactive marketing (e.g., Krishen et al., 2021), the services industry (e.g., Woodside, Prentice, & Larsen, 2015), and organizational behavior research (e.g., Lee et al., 2022). Given the proliferation of wine clubs and the heightened importance of relationship marketing post-pandemic, we seek to explore antecedents to wine club membership to build on extant theory. As such, fsQCA is an appropriate methodology and serves as a quasi-quantitative mechanism to derive salient recipes (Woodside, 2014).

4. Methods and analysis

Our study is conducted using an online survey capturing wine club membership information. This study uses fsQCA to identify configurations of the ingredients of affective commitment to wine clubs. We specifically investigate the four perceived value factors of social, emotional, quality, and economic/price value as they relate to the specified outcome variable. Further, we test two age cohorts to identify how shifting of values occurs with age. Antecedent and outcome conditions can be derived with fsQCA and configuration patterns can then be identified (Fiss, 2007).

4.1. Participants and measures

An online survey panel was used to collect a sample of $N = 274$ who are not currently members of a wine club but would consider joining one. After removing missing data, $N = 269$ participants were viable for this study. The participants are from the US, with $n = 136$ being 40 years of age and younger and $n = 133$ being over 40 years of age. The survey captured demographic details such as age, gender, ethnicity, and level of education, along with the subjective constructs. The study uses

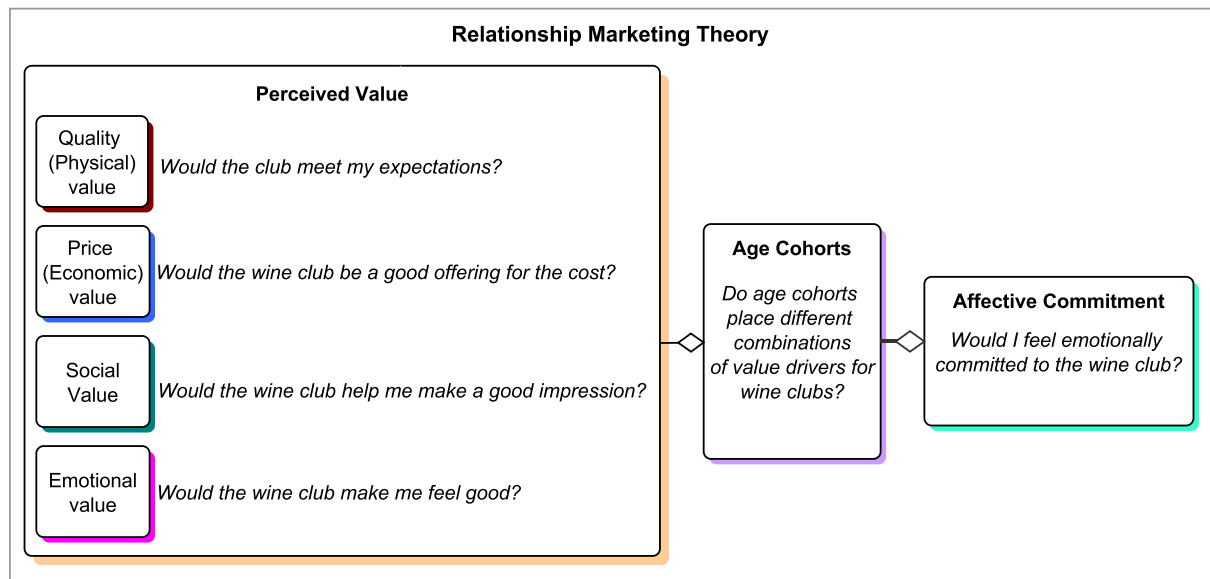


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model.

established constructs, including Quality Value (QV), affect Emotional Value (EV), Price Value (PV), Social Value (SV), and Affective Commitment (AC). All constructs were found to have appropriate reliabilities, with Cronbach alpha scores of $\alpha = 0.7$ or higher. Table 1 provides the sample demographics and Table 2 details the items, references, and reliability scores for all the constructs. All items used 7-point Likert-type scales with endpoints of 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

4.2. Data calibration

Data calibration maps the responses from a 7-point scale to a fuzzy score between 0.00 and 1.00. The fuzzy score indicates the partial membership of a case in a set, in contrast with a simple binary “yes” or “no” (0 or 1). Higher scores indicate higher level of membership in the sets and vice-versa. First, the thresholds for full membership, full non-membership, and maximum point of ambiguity are chosen. In this study, a score of 0.05 (and less) is chosen as the cutoff for full non-membership, a score of 0.95 (and higher) is used for full membership in the set, and a score of 0.5 indicates the maximum point of ambiguity. The next step in the data calibration is to create a construct score by multiplying the items for each measure. A construct score immediately above 5 percent of all cases is assigned a membership score of 0.05 (cutoff for full non-membership). Alternatively, a construct score immediately below 95 percent of all cases is assigned a membership score of 0.95 (a full member). A median construct score is assigned a membership score of 0.50 indicating the maximum point of ambiguity. Tables 3, 4, and 5 provide the threshold values used in calibration of scores.

4.3. Consistency and Coverage

The fsQCA approach uses consistency and coverage scores to compare the relative importance of a causal configuration. *Consistency* is essentially a metric for necessity that measures the extent of overlap between a causal configuration and the outcome condition. A high consistency score would reflect that a bulk of cases in the configuration subset will also be present in the outcome subset. Consistency is a metric of QCA technique analogous to the correlation metric used in traditional statistics. A consistency score can be obtained as follows:

$$\text{Consistency} (X_i \leq Y_i) = \frac{\sum \min[X_i, Y_i]}{\sum X_i}$$

Here X_i represents case i 's membership score in the configuration set X and, Y_i represents case i 's membership score in the outcome set Y . *Coverage* score measures the *sufficiency* of a causal configuration to trigger the outcome. Coverage can be understood as analogous to the R^2 value in statistics. Coverage of the relation $X_i \leq Y_i$ can be obtained as follows:

Table 1
Sample Demographics.

Gender	N	Total
Male	96	269
Female	170	
Others	3	
Ethnicity	N	Total
White/Caucasian	210	269
Black/African American	32	
Hispanic	12	
East Asian	5	
Native American	4	
Others	5	
Age Group	N	Total
40 and under	136	269
Over 40 years	133	

Table 2
Measures and Reliability.

Construct and Reference	Items	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Quality (QV) Walsh, Shiu, Hassan (2014)	1. ...Has consistent quality ...Is well made ...Has an acceptable standard of quality ...Has poor workmanship ...Would perform consistently	0.90
Emotional (EV) Walsh, Shiu, Hassan (2014)	1. ...Is one that I would enjoy ...Would make me want to use it ...Is one that I would feel relaxed about using ...Would make me feel good ...Would give me pleasure	0.94
Price (PV) Walsh, Shiu, Hassan (2014)	1. ...Is reasonably priced ...Offers value for money ...Is a good product for the price ...Would be economical	0.86
Social (SV) Walsh, Shiu, Hassan (2014)	1. ...Would help me to feel acceptable ...Would improve the way I am perceived ...Would make a good impression on other people ...Would give its owner social approval	0.91
Affective Commitment (AC) (Harrison-Walker, 2001)	1. For me, a wine club that I belong to should be one of the best of its kind I should be proud that I am a member of a wine club I should agree with the wine club's policies and procedures on important matters A wine club I would belong to should be good I should care about the fate of a wine club A wine club I belong to should inspire the best in me in terms of being a good customer I should like the way a wine club operates A wine club should understand my needs If I were in charge of a wine club, I shouldn't want to run it any differently I should like a wine club I should have a special relationship with a wine club I should want to help a wine club achieve its goals Doing business with this wine club should be enjoyable I should want to do business with a wine club because I like it	0.95

$$\text{Coverage} (X_i \leq Y_i) = \frac{\sum \min[X_i, Y_i]}{\sum Y_i}$$

5. Empirical results

5.1. Truth tables

Tables 6, 7 and 8 are *Truth tables* that illustrate causal configurations, number of cases in each configuration, and subset consistency scores in the causation of the outcome condition AC, while considering all ages, ages under 40, and ages above 40 respectively. Four causal conditions were considered; hence, there exist a total of $2^4 = 16$ possible configurations. Symbol ● indicates presence of a causal condition whereas symbol ○ denotes its absence. Following the recommended threshold score by Ragin (2009) and Ferguson et al. (2017), the required score for

Table 3
Construct Calibration Details.

Construct	All ages (N = 269) Range of Multiplicative Construct Score	Threshold for Full Non Membership (0.05)	Maximum Point of Ambiguity (0.5)	Threshold for Full Membership (0.95)
Quality Value (QV)	1–16,807	1,200	7,560	16,807
Emotional Value (EV)	1–16,807	1,280	7,776	16,807
Price Value (PV)	1–1,029	320	1,296	2,400
Social Value (SV)	1–1,029	18	540	2400
Affective Commitment (AC)	1–7 ¹⁴	5.76x10 ⁸	7.61x10 ¹⁰	6.78x10 ¹¹

Table 4
Construct Calibration Details.

Construct	40 years of age and under (n = 136) Range of Multiplicative Construct Score	Threshold for Full Non Membership (0.05)	Maximum Point of Ambiguity (0.5)	Threshold for Full Membership (0.95)
Quality Value (QV)	1–16,807	960	5,400	16,800
Emotional Value (EV)	1–16,807	786	7,776	16,800
Price Value (PV)	1–1,029	252	1,296	2,400
Social Value (SV)	1–1,029	18	600	2058
Affective Commitment (AC)	1–7 ¹⁴	3.35x10 ⁸	4.00x10 ¹⁰	6.78x10 ¹¹

Table 5
Construct Calibration Details.

Construct	Above 40 years of age (n = 133) Range of Multiplicative Construct Score	Threshold for Full Non Membership (0.05)	Maximum Point of Ambiguity (0.5)	Threshold for Full Membership (0.95)
Quality Value (QV)	1–16,807	1,440	8,820	16,800
Emotional Value (EV)	1–16,807	2,500	7,776	16,800
Price Value (PV)	1–1,029	500	1,296	2,400
Social Value (SV)	1–1,029	16	400	2400
Affective Commitment (AC)	1–7 ¹⁴	1.14x10 ⁹	9.07x10 ¹⁰	6.78x10 ¹¹

Table 6
Truth Table of Configurations: Distribution of Cases for AC (all ages).

Configuration	QV	EV	PV	SV	Number of Cases	Cumulative Percentage	Subset Consistency
1	○	○	○	○	39	20	0.47
2	●	○	○	○	35	38	0.77
3	●	●	○	○	34	56	0.85
4	○	○	○	●	23	67	0.62
5	○	●	○	●	21	78	0.79
6	○	●	○	●	10	83	0.75
7	●	○	○	○	5	86	0.72
8	●	●	○	○	5	89	0.75
9	●	○	●	○	5	91	0.80
10	●	●	○	●	5	94	0.85
11	○	●	○	○	3	95	0.72
12	○	●	○	○	3	97	0.80
13	●	○	○	●	2	98	0.83
14	○	○	●	●	2	99	0.76
15	●	○	●	●	1	100	0.86
16	○	○	●	○	0	100	–

Note: ● indicates presence of attribute, and ○ absence of attribute. Truth table shows all possible configurations appeared in the dataset. Bold indicates high subset consistency scores (>0.82).

a configuration to be considered consistent was set to 0.82.

5.2. Sufficient configurations

The Quine-McCluskey algorithm reduces the truth table to obtain causal configurations, leading to an outcome condition. The solutions

are categorized among complex, parsimonious, and intermediate solutions, indicating varying levels of complexity. All the solutions are equally conclusive of the empirical evidence. Ragin (2009) suggests that the intermediate solutions provide easily interpretable configurations resulting in a more meaningful study. Four causal conditions were used to search for configurations leading to the outcome condition, *Affective*

Table 7

Truth Table of Configurations: Distribution of Cases for AC (under 40 years of age).

Configuration	QV	EV	PV	SV	Number of Cases	Cumulative Percentage	Subset Consistency
1	○	○	○	○	25	22	0.39
2	●	●	●	●	19	40	0.84
3	●	●	●	○	17	56	0.81
4	○	●	●	●	13	67	0.78
5	○	○	○	●	12	78	0.59
6	○	●	○	●	5	83	0.75
7	●	○	○	○	3	86	0.67
8	●	○	●	○	3	89	0.82
9	●	○	●	●	3	91	0.87
10	○	●	○	○	2	93	0.67
11	●	●	○	○	2	95	0.83
12	●	○	○	●	2	97	0.80
13	○	○	●	●	2	99	0.77
14	●	●	○	●	1	100	0.85
15	○	○	●	○	0	100	–
16	○	●	●	○	0	100	–

Note: ● indicates presence of attribute, and ○ absence of attribute. Truth table shows all possible configurations appeared in the dataset. Bold indicates high subset consistency scores (>0.82).

Table 8

Truth Table of Configurations: Distribution of Cases for AC (above 40 years of age).

Configuration	QV	EV	PV	SV	Number of Cases	Cumulative Percentage	Subset Consistency
1	●	●	●	○	20	22	0.87
2	●	●	●	○	15	39	0.74
3	○	○	○	○	15	56	0.58
4	○	●	●	●	8	65	0.87
5	○	●	○	●	6	72	0.78
6	○	○	○	●	5	78	0.70
7	●	●	○	○	4	83	0.76
8	●	●	○	●	3	86	0.85
9	○	●	●	○	3	89	0.82
10	●	○	●	○	3	93	0.79
11	●	○	○	○	3	96	0.75
12	○	●	○	○	2	98	0.75
13	●	○	○	●	1	100	0.83
14	○	○	●	○	0	100	
15	○	○	●	●	0	100	
16	●	○	●	●	0	100	

Note: ● indicates presence of attribute, and ○ absence of attribute. Truth table shows all possible configurations appeared in the dataset. Bold indicates high subset consistency scores (>0.82).

Commitment. As a first step, [Proposition 1](#) investigates recipes for affective commitment for all ages. The model for this exploration then becomes the following equation:

$$S = f(QV, EV, PV, SV)$$

The first part of [Table 9](#) provides causal configurations using intermediate solutions for all ages. Frequency cutoff for the algorithm was designated 1 and for the consistency cut, 0.82. The algorithm converges on a model having only one configural condition:

$$QV.SV \leq AC$$

Consistency and coverage scores for the model are above 0.8 and 0.4 respectively, which are considered acceptable. Note that this is the only path that leads to an outcome condition. This means that QV and SV are both *necessary* but not *sufficient* conditions. In other words, AC is not induced without QV or SV, but presence of QV or SV alone does not guarantee AC.

Our next set of analysis interrogates [Proposition 2](#) by testing age differences in perceived value recipes for affective commitment to wine clubs. To do so, we investigate configurations leading to outcome conditions in the below 40 cohort and provide the causal configurations using intermediate solutions in the second part of [Table 9](#). Frequency cutoff for the algorithm was chosen as 1 and the consistency cut as 0.82. The algorithm converges on a model with three configural conditions. Out of the three we select the following to explain the outcome

condition:

$$QV.PV.SV \leq AC$$

Consistency and coverage scores for the model are acceptable, respectively, they are above 0.8 and 0.6. This path implies that QV, PV, and SV are *necessary* but not *sufficient* conditions. In other words, AC is not induced without QV, PV, or SV. But presence of QV, PV, or SV alone does not guarantee the AC.

Next, we explore configurations leading to outcome conditions in the above 40 age cohort. The last part of [Table 9](#) provides the causal configurations using intermediate solutions for the above 40 group. Frequency cutoff for the algorithm was designated as 1 and as 0.82 for the consistency cutoff. The algorithm converges on a model having two configural conditions:

$$QV.SV \leq AC$$

$$PV.SV \leq AC$$

Consistency and coverage scores for the model are acceptable at above 0.8 and 0.6. Both paths are relevant and when combined can be presented compactly as:

$$(QV + PV).SV \leq AC$$

This means that SV is a *necessary* condition and that no *sufficient* condition exists. That is, AC is not induced without SV in the ages 40 and

Table 9
Causal Configurations for AC.

Causal Configurations for AC – All ages			
Model: $AC = f(QV, EV, PV, SV)$			
frequency cutoff: 1	Raw Outcome	Unique	Subset
consistency cutoff: 0.82	Coverage	Coverage	Consistency
Solution			
QV*SV	0.47	0.47	0.80
Solution coverage: 0.47			
Solution consistency: 0.80			
Causal Configurations for AC – Under 40 years			
Model: $AC = f(QV, EV, PV, SV)$			
frequency cutoff: 1	Raw Outcome	Unique	Subset
consistency cutoff: 0.82	Coverage	Coverage	Consistency
Solution			
QV*PV*SV	0.47	0.17	0.83
QV*~EV*PV	0.34	0.03	0.82
QV*EV*~PV	0.38	0.065	0.83
Solution coverage: 0.61			
Solution consistency: 0.80			
Causal Configurations for AC – Above 40 years			
Model: $AC = f(QV, EV, PV, SV)$			
frequency cutoff: 1	Raw Outcome	Unique	Subset
consistency cutoff: 0.82	Coverage	Coverage	Consistency
Solution			
QV*SV	0.48	0.04	0.82
PV*SV	0.60	0.14	0.85
Solution coverage: 0.63			
Solution consistency: 0.82			

above. At the same time, the presence of SV alone does not guarantee the AC. When SV is combined with either QV or PV, they become sufficient.

5.3. Robustness checks

The fsQCA approach often leads to multiple configurations (solutions), from which the researchers must select the most consistent with theory and context. Hence, the robustness issue is often approached not through reproducibility of the results on a different sample, but rather by performing sensitivity checks within the fsQCA procedure (Skaaning, 2011). Consistent with the literature, we adopted two robustness checks while performing the fsQCA analysis: (a) the effects of thresholds variation on the calibration of sample into set memberships and (b) the effects of different frequency and consistency cutoffs. We adopted a percentile-based calibration approach (see tables 3, 4, and 5), where we varied the upper and lower calibration thresholds from the 5th and 95th percentiles to the 10th and 90th percentiles (Hartmann, Inkpen, & Ramaswamy, 2022). Similarly, we varied the frequency and consistency cutoffs between 0 and 2 and 0.81 to 0.84, respectively. Overall, our sensitivity analysis confirmed the main hypothesis considered in this paper. In many instances, the analysis produced different sets; however, the chosen configurations (see Table 9) were present in most of them, thus confirming the robustness and sufficient predictive power of the method.

6. Results and discussion

Our findings for Proposition 1 show that quality/functional value and social value are the primary drivers of affective commitment to wine clubs. Thus, our study indicates that consumers immersed in a wine club experience pay more attention to the extrinsic values they gain from being part of a club than the intrinsic values. In the context of brand communities, Swinberghe et al. (2018) argue that perceived value for a brand increases the psychological sense of brand community in elderly consumers. Consistent with their findings, our Proposition 2 analysis suggests that consumers who are above 40 gain affective commitment when they experience either quality value or price value in combination

with social value. On the other hand, quality, price, and social value are all key ingredients to affective commitment for consumers who are 40 and under. In the context of wine clubs, our findings show that for both age categories, social value is an important ingredient for recipes for affective commitment. The absence of emotional value as a necessary ingredient for affective commitment seems to be consistent with our focus on membership in the community experience of a wine club. Specifically, even though wine is a hedonic product, when packaged as part of a wine club experience, the service and community aspects are accentuated. As such, the social and functional values outweigh the emotional and value-for-money aspects when considering the entirety of the consumer market. These extrinsic values can be distilled down to status and excellence (self-esteem and efficiency) versus ethics and play (spirituality and aesthetics) (Holbrook, 1994). In fact, Gallarza, Gil-Saura, and Holbrook (2011) indicate that identifying how perceived value dimensions differ across contexts is important. Overall, our findings show that quality value is a key ingredient in the main recipe for all consumers. However, social value is consistently found as the most important ingredient for wine club affective commitment across all recipes.

This research explores the motivations behind joining wine clubs, or requirements of wine clubs to obtain affective commitment from both current and potential customers. Through the lens of the perceived value model, 269 participants shared the aspects of wine clubs that are most important to them in terms of earning and keeping their patronage. The results of this study contribute to the literature on wine club marketing and offer marketers necessary insight into what variables affect the success of wine clubs. For participants overall, affective commitment requires the wine club to offer both quality value (QV) and social value (SV). However, QV and SV alone are not necessarily sufficient to bring customers to the level of affective commitment. This suggests that there can be some discrepancy among the participants in terms of their expectations from wine clubs. This is not surprising considering the age diversity of participants, ranging from 21 to 80 years old.

It is important to note that the constructs all originate from the perceived value model, which is particularly significant when it comes to goods and services that are less tangible such as wine or wine clubs. As with any personal preference, one person's likes may be another's dislikes. Wine clubs must consider that as their customers grow in terms of age, they also evolve in terms of their expectations as consumers. Wine clubs should not assume that the same strategy used to attract or retain a specific customer in the present will be as effective in the future. Loyalty research is clear about the cost savings of achieving a loyal customer base. However, maintaining a loyal base requires continuous investment in the dynamic, shifting relationships that govern consumer choice, including a customer's age. Marketers should consider using dynamic value propositions to attract customers from different age groups and attain a level of affective commitment that allows for retention by introducing new value propositions and recognizing purchase behaviors. Additionally, these recipes can benefit lesser known or smaller wineries that might utilize e-commerce platforms to compete with well-known brands.

7. Conclusion and implications

A wine club may offer a different perception of price value to consumers depending on the level and type of service they provide. Social value perceptions are influenced not only by wine club employees, but also by other members of the club. Perceptions are shaped by interactions, social identity within a club, and social acceptance from peers. As shown by An and Han (2020), social interaction increases three different types of value including functional, hedonic, and social. In terms of wine clubs, the social interaction could therefore be increased through marketing efforts such as advertisements, social media campaigns, price positioning, and expert testimonials. The needs and expectations that influence affective commitment for consumers will also

likely change, costing wine clubs additional resources.

To effectively explore the drivers of affective commitment for wine club consumers, we next examine participants according to two distinct age cohorts (18 through 40 and over 40). Considering the financial status of many in the 40 and under group, price value (PV) is a necessary ingredient for this cohort (Sharma, Chen & Luk, 2012) to exhibit affective commitment. The younger cohort seeks value for money and is more concerned about economical options than their older counterparts. Younger consumers are more apt to spend time researching aspects of wine clubs such as quality, price, and social value from multiple resources as well as use innovative shopping channels. Wine clubs may be at greater risk of losing younger consumers than older given their research capacity (Javalgi et al., 1991; Ganesan-Lim et al., 2008; Sousa et al., 2008). Since younger consumers have a lower need for interaction (Flavian et al., 2019) and often utilize webrooming, brick and mortar wine clubs may decide to focus more on digital marketing efforts to encourage online engagement and provide options that allow for transactions to be completed with less human interaction.

Participants over 40 years of age are not as concerned about price value (PV) or quality value (QV) as their younger counterparts. People in this group are more likely to be financially secure and thus are less worried about saving money for the future. To foster affective commitment in this group, they must experience a combination of either social value and quality value, or social value and price value. As discussed previously, a large portion of this group are considered digital immigrants due to their lack of savviness with the internet and social media. As opposed to the younger cohort, this group still considers Facebook their social network of choice, and their purchase behavior is often influenced by others (Hildebrand and Schlager, 2019). Despite what may be trending, wine clubs still need to have an active presence on reliable social media platforms like Facebook (Ganesan-Lim, Russell-Bennett, & Dagger, 2008).

Considering the hedonic aspect of experiential products such as wine and wine clubs (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003), our finding that emotional value was not an ingredient in any recipe for affective commitment to wine clubs, while potentially surprising, is consistent with new research that finds that emotional connections do not necessarily drive loyalty to brands (Wolter et al., 2022). However, this finding highlights the importance of distinguishing between wine consumption and wine club experiences. Consumers may not experience the same enjoyment from drinking a glass of wine as they do from joining a wine club. This difference represents a tremendous opportunity for wine clubs to further distinguish their offerings from competitors, ideally leading to increased affective commitment. Wen & Leung (2021) discuss the need for online and subscription wine clubs to be more creative and offer more experiential products such as virtual tours and tastings, essentially extending the in-person experience into the virtual world.

Research finds that when wineries provide experiential marketing, such as less congestion, consumers can perceive higher emotional value (Cuellar, Eyler, & Fanti, 2015). Along with their core product, wine clubs can provide new and innovative wine-based experiences. For example, a wine club's website can provide a list of options from which to select, including type of occasion (birthday, anniversary, Thanksgiving dinner, picnic with friends, etc.), number of guests, and budget. Based on customer selections, wine clubs can offer a curated, planned-out, turn-key experience including wine and food pairing suggestions, décor, music, and even a movie list, with links to purchase or access the suggested items or have them delivered as a bundle. This could even be offered as a monthly subscription with differing themes available to choose from each month. Once members begin to experience higher perceived levels of emotional value, wine clubs can utilize that resource to impact perceived social value by connecting members who may wish to share their experiences via social media. The level of perceived social value can be further enhanced by encouraging members interacting on these forums to organize local meet ups and enjoy wine experiences in groups.

As shown in the brand community literature, when consumers identify with brands, they develop both public and private loyalty towards the brand (Mills et al., 2022). Similarly, wine club self-identification may provide social value, like feelings of acceptance, positive perceptions, making a good impression, and overall social approval. This aspect of membership may be supported by members' ability to share their club experience with friends and family who are not members, further enforcing their identity as being part of something with like-minded people. This phenomenon can be compared with sports fans who feel attached and identify with their favorite team (and its wins/losses), and brand team logos, despite not being on the team or perhaps even interacting with other fans (Scheinbaum, Krishen & Lacey, 2022). This suggests that wine clubs can further enhance the social experience for their members by providing branded items for members to use, display at home (wine openers, decanters, stemware), or even wear (hats, t-shirts).

8. Limitations and future research

The study sample utilized in this paper largely consists of people residing in the US who identify as Caucasian and American. Future research should consider cultural, national, socioeconomic, and generational differences, including needs and expectations and access to a speedy, reliable, and secure internet connection for online wine clubs. An analysis utilizing control variables and interactions would provide further robustness to this research. Additionally, it would be beneficial to compare members of different types of wine clubs, such as online, brick and mortar (at wineries and satellite locations), wine clubs that are specific to a particular vineyard, wine clubs that represent multiple labels, wholesale clubs, and clubs that are branded to an organization or cause such as NPR, Wall Street Journal, and Macy's. These wine clubs may sell the same wine marketed under different labels. A qualitative approach such as using personal interviews of current, former, and potential future wine club members is also an important perspective to explore. Qualitative analysis might reveal some of the hidden motivations and nuances behind consumer perceptions and commitments. Another potential limitation is the limited definition of commitment that focuses on affective commitment. Future research should consider other forms of commitment (cognitive and conative).

We studied the perceived value of wine club memberships using a single cross-sectional descriptive design. To augment our findings, future studies could utilize an experimental approach to uncover causal relationships. Whereas our exploratory analysis using fsQCA offers recipes for affective commitment, future research could provide more intricate relationships to identify moderators and mediators to affective commitment using structural equation modeling. A field-based data collection could provide an avenue to increase the ecological validity of our model. In addition to studying consumer intentions, secondary data of actual wine club behavior could also improve our findings.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Anjala Krishen: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft and final draft, Revising, Data collection, Visualization, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Orie Berezan:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Shaurya Agarwal:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Software, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Sheen Kachen:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Investigation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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