

Journal of Policy Options • RESDO



The Impact of Digital Empowerment on Consumer Satisfaction and Brand Perception

Mehmet Zaim^a, Eray Yucel^b

Abstract

In today's interconnected world, consumers have become more informed and empowered, gaining access to a wide array of information that influences their purchasing decisions. This consumer empowerment is closely tied to the growth of e-commerce, which not only makes information readily available but also facilitates comparisons between different offers, enabling consumers to make more autonomous decisions. The ease of accessing online platforms has shifted the power dynamics, allowing consumers to take control of their purchasing choices and increasing their reliance on digital resources for decision-making. This academic study aimed to explore the relationship between consumer empowerment and satisfaction, specifically examining the role of the online experience with respect to brand perception. A survey conducted with 300 Turkish internet users revealed interesting findings regarding these relationships. The results indicated that there is a significant link between consumer empowerment and satisfaction, as well as between online empowerment and the experience with a brand. In other words, when consumers feel more empowered through their online interactions, their satisfaction with the brand also increases, and their experiences with the brand online play an important role in reinforcing this sense of empowerment. However, the study also found that the relationship between online experience and satisfaction was not statistically significant. This suggests that while a consumer's empowerment and their engagement with the brand online may enhance their overall satisfaction, the mere act of interacting with the brand online does not necessarily lead to higher satisfaction by itself. This distinction is important, as it implies that factors such as the quality of information, ease of navigation, and personalized experiences might be more influential in shaping consumer satisfaction than the general online experience alone. The findings of this research contribute to the understanding of how consumer empowerment shapes brand interactions in the digital era. They underscore the importance of creating an empowering online environment that supports consumer autonomy and decision-making. However, they also highlight the need for brands to focus not only on facilitating online interactions but on ensuring these experiences are meaningful and tailored to consumer needs to foster true satisfaction.

Keywords: Consumer Empowerment, E-Commerce, Brand Perception, Online Experience, Consumer Satisfaction

JEL Codes: M31, D12, L86

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of consumer empowerment in modern marketing and consumer behavior has been increasingly acknowledged in recent research, particularly with the advent of the Internet and social media. Akhavannasab et al. (2018) emphasize that consumers today are more active, participatory, influential, social, and supportive in their consumption behaviors than ever before. This shift has been facilitated by digital technologies, which have provided consumers with unprecedented access to information and enabled them to create and share content on various online platforms. According to Labrecque et al. (2013), the rise of consumer power on these platforms is becoming even more pronounced, as social media allows consumers to interact with brands and other users in ways that were not possible before. One of the key outcomes of this digital empowerment is the emergence of online brand communities. These communities offer individuals a space to share their interests in a brand, exchange information, and engage in discussions with both the brand and other members (Hsieh et al., 2022). These interactions create a dynamic environment where consumers are not just passive recipients of information but also active participants in the creation and dissemination of brand content, further strengthening their sense of empowerment. The literature highlights how the rise of the Internet has redressed the power imbalance between consumers and companies by providing consumers with greater access to information, a wider range of product choices, and tools to support their decision-making (Wathieu et al., 2002; Harrison et al., 2006). In this context, the concept of empowerment is closely linked to the consumer's ability to make informed choices and exert control over their decisions. Wathieu et al. (2002) suggest that empowerment is an emotional state that arises from the freedom to choose, which significantly contributes to consumer satisfaction. Moreover, Pruche et al. (2015) argue that psychological appropriation mechanisms, such as the feeling of control over the purchasing process, further enhance consumer satisfaction through empowerment.

Empowered consumers are also more likely to engage with brands in meaningful ways. Research by Anderson and Berdahl (2002), Rucker et al. (2011), and Boyd et al. (2014) demonstrates that consumers who feel empowered are more likely to

^a Ekonometri Bölümü, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Denizli, Turkey

^b Ekonometri Bölümü, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Denizli, Turkey

actively engage with brands, seeking out experiences that align with their personal interests. As Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) suggest, the role of consumers has evolved from merely receiving information to actively sharing and co-creating individual experiences with brands online. This shift highlights the importance of consumer participation in enhancing brand experiences. Additionally, studies by Ha and Perks (2005), Janda and Ybarra (2005), Thomas and Veloustou (2013), and Lee and Jeong (2014) support the notion that consumers who engage with a brand online are more likely to be satisfied. Online experiences, including brand interactions and community participation, appear to have a direct impact on consumer satisfaction, reinforcing the idea that an empowered, engaged consumer is a more satisfied one. Building on this body of research, this article aims to further explore the relationship between consumer empowerment and satisfaction within the context of online brand communities, while examining the mediating role of the online brand experience. By reviewing the existing literature and presenting new empirical findings, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights into how consumer empowerment and online brand experiences intersect to influence satisfaction. The research hypotheses and empirical results will shed light on the complexities of consumer empowerment in the digital age and its effects on brand relationships.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of brand communities in the digital age has fundamentally shifted the role of consumers in the market, turning them into active participants who not only engage with brands but also collaborate with them and co-create value. These "producer consumers" or "actor consumers" possess new capabilities that empower them to have greater autonomy and control in their purchasing and consumption decisions (Makloul & Ouida, 2019; Wathieu et al., 2002; Harrison et al., 2006). Consumers now actively shape their relationship with brands through their participation in online communities, where they share interests, traditions, and rituals that are deeply tied to the brands they identify with. Brand communities have become crucial virtual spaces where individuals, often linked by common interests, can interact with one another around a product or service. In these communities, the brand is more than just a product; it becomes part of the consumer's identity and emotional state, playing an important role in their sense of belonging and personal expression (Makloul & Ouida, 2019). These platforms offer consumers a sense of ownership over the brand, allowing them to influence its development and their personal experiences with it. This increased sense of autonomy enhances consumers' affective states, which leads to higher satisfaction and a deeper desire to engage with the brand (Hunter & Garnefed, 2008; Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Boyd et al., 2014).

Online social networks, which serve as virtual communities, are key facilitators of this transformation. They bring together people with similar interests who communicate, exchange contact details, and build relationships. These platforms are spaces for shared stories, ideas, and experiences, whether written, visual, or through multimedia formats like images and videos (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Cheung & Lee, 2010; Imran et al., 2022). Michel (2009) defines these platforms as complex networks of relationships across various environments—social, political, cultural, and economic—illustrating the vast scope of influence these communities have. According to Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016), brand communities are essentially built on social micro-relationships centered around a common theme, such as a product, service, or brand. These communities are instrumental in fostering stronger relationships between the brand and its consumers, ultimately reinforcing brand loyalty and enhancing the experiential value for participants (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997; Holland & Stacey, 2001). By being part of these communities, consumers gain access to valuable information about the brand and can shape their interactions and experiences accordingly. The virtual space of online brand communities offers brands an opportunity to better understand their customers by monitoring the interactions and exchanges between community members. This real-time access to consumer feedback and sentiment allows companies to refine their strategies and create products that align more closely with consumer needs and preferences (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Williams & Cothrel, 2000; Kozinets, 2002). Moreover, as Zaglia (2013) points out, virtual brand communities differ from other online communities in their orientation and relational dynamics. Virtual brand communities tend to be more focused on specific brands, and the bonds between members are often stronger, fostering higher levels of personal commitment and engagement.

Brand communities not only allow consumers to connect and share experiences but also enable them to influence the brand in ways that were previously unimaginable. These communities are powerful tools for companies to strengthen customer loyalty, enhance brand experiences, and co-create value with their customers. As consumers become more empowered in these spaces, their role transitions from passive recipients of information to active participants in the ongoing development of the brand. Power is an essential human concern that significantly influences behaviors and the functioning of social systems. It has been explored in various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and marketing, and is a fundamental component of how individuals and groups interact within society. In psychology, power is defined as the opportunity an individual has to act according to their will, even in opposition to others (Weber, 1968). From a sociological perspective, power refers to the ability of some individuals or groups to produce desired outcomes or effects on others (Wrong, 1979). In marketing, consumer power is increasingly recognized as a central force that allows consumers to challenge traditional market structures. It refers to the ability of consumers to control elements typically predetermined by marketers, such as redefining brand meanings based on personal preferences (Wathieu et al., 2002), and reappropriating the brand through their own actions (Muñiz & Schau, 2005).

Consumer power, as discussed by Akhavanasab et al. (2018), is dynamic and relational, a personality trait that reflects a consumer's ability to resist or influence salespeople and companies. It is, therefore, an evolving perception that can vary

across different situations and interactions. For example, Grégoire et al. (2010) view consumer power as a one-dimensional construct—the perceived ability to influence a company directly. Meanwhile, Huang et al. (2014) focus on the personal aspect of power, relating it to consumers' trust and control over their decisions. These perspectives underscore the importance of power in shaping consumer behavior and interactions with companies. The concept of "empowerment" emerged in the early 1990s, especially in relation to the impact of new technologies on consumers and citizens (Doctor, 1991). Rust and Oliver (1994) conceptualize consumer empowerment as the process through which consumers are given power by providing them with resources like better information or a clearer understanding of their choices. According to Anderson and Galinsky (2006), empowerment enhances a consumer's ability to process information, make confident decisions, and influence their behavior (Brinol et al., 2007; Winterich & Zhang, 2014). In this context, empowerment is not just about the ability to make choices but also about the subjective feeling of control and understanding of one's environment (Bonnemaizon et al., 2008; Hunter & Garnefeld, 2008). Botti and Iyengar (2004) suggest that perceived choice is a crucial component of consumer empowerment, as it allows individuals to feel more in control of their decisions. Providing consumers with greater choice and the ability to evaluate and improve products or services is essential to empowering them (Wathieu et al., 2002; Fayn, 2017). Midha (2012) adds another layer by suggesting that consumer empowerment also relates to how individuals perceive their control over the distribution and use of their personal data, particularly in digital contexts. Consumer empowerment is not only a psychological experience but also a strategic approach for companies. As Moussafir and Qmichchou (2021) highlight, empowerment refers to the strategic actions taken by a company to delegate power to customers, which in turn increases their involvement in marketing strategies. Through this process, companies enable customers to control their consumption experiences, integrating them into value creation (Fayn et al., 2019). This shift in power dynamics is particularly evident in the context of social media, where consumers can actively engage with brands by creating content, posting reviews, sharing videos, and participating in brand conversations (Anber, 2020).

The online experience of the brand is another critical aspect of consumer empowerment, as it shapes how consumers perceive and interact with brands. Researchers such as Nysveen and Pedersen (2004), Ha and Perks (2005), and Brakus et al. (2009) define the online brand experience as a set of internal subjective responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral reactions triggered by brand-related stimuli. These stimuli can include a brand's design, identity, packaging, communication, and overall environment. Nambisan and Watt (2011) further define an online community experience as the overall experience a customer derives from their interactions within an online community. These experiences significantly shape customers' expectations and perceptions of e-merchants (Pappas et al., 2014). In our research, we focus on two important dimensions of the online brand experience: social interactions and emotional reactions. According to Bénavent and Evrard (2002), experiential consumption encompasses both the affective dimension (emotions) and the social component (interactions). Social interactions within online brand communities provide consumers with opportunities to engage with others, share experiences, and co-create content. These social interactions can enhance the overall brand experience by creating a sense of community and belonging, which in turn empowers consumers to have a more active role in their relationship with the brand. At the same time, emotional reactions—such as feelings of joy, trust, or excitement—play a crucial role in forming lasting connections between consumers and brands. Both social and emotional experiences contribute to the development of strong, empowering relationships between consumers and the brands they engage with.

Emotional reactions are an essential component of the consumer experience, and they can be categorized into two types: reactive and goal-directed emotions (Koelemeijer et al., 1995). Reactive emotions are those triggered spontaneously by a stimulus, such as joy or surprise, while goal-directed emotions are related to the accomplishment of specific consumer goals, such as satisfaction after achieving a desired outcome. According to Fornerino et al. (2008), the intensity of emotions depends on the type of experience a consumer undergoes. More intense experiences, especially those involving shared emotional moments or memorable interactions, tend to elicit stronger emotions (Claudet et al., 2008). Desmet (2003) emphasizes that emotions involve a comprehensive experience, encompassing behavioral responses, physiological reactions, and subjective feelings. Social interactions play a crucial role in shaping emotional reactions and the overall consumer experience. These interactions are viewed as two-way communications where both parties (typically the consumer and the brand) address each other, exchange information, and respond accordingly. Labrecque (2014) explains that social interaction is appreciated when communication is reciprocal. Deighton (1996) further elaborates that this interaction enables individuals to gather and remember responses, contributing to the construction of meaningful experiences. Additionally, Ladwein (2004) posits that the interaction between consumers and their environment is what gives significance to the experience. This interactive exchange helps consumers to feel more involved, in control, and empowered, especially when they can express themselves and have their voices heard.

Blattberg and Deighton (1991) were pioneers in addressing interactive marketing, which focuses on developing interactive relationships through "addressability," meaning the ability to communicate with individual consumers and create personalized, meaningful exchanges. This interaction fosters dialogue, which is critical in a consumer-centered approach, where customers are not just passive recipients but active participants in the relationship-building process. In terms of satisfaction, several researchers (Kotler, 2000; Hoyer & Macinnis, 2001; Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004) define it as the emotional response a customer experiences based on the difference between their expectations and the actual outcome of a product or service. Satisfaction reflects a psychological state that occurs when customers feel that their needs or goals are fulfilled. According to Vanhamme (2002) and Kotler and Armstrong (2010), satisfaction arises from comparing the perceived

performance of the purchasing or consumption experience with initial expectations. This satisfaction is important for building long-term relationships and customer loyalty, as indicated by Tsoukatos and Rand (2007), who emphasize its critical role in sustaining business success. Satisfaction also plays a crucial role in the online consumer experience. In virtual environments, such as online brand communities or e-commerce websites, customer satisfaction is influenced by how users navigate and interact with the platform. Szymanski and Richard (2000) suggest that to ensure online satisfaction, consumers must feel comfortable and confident during their website interactions. Maintaining a positive attitude while navigating the site, especially when the process is smooth and user-friendly, contributes significantly to the overall experience (Muylle et al., 2004). In a virtual community, satisfaction is seen as the positive gap between a consumer's expectations and their actual experience (Wu et al., 2010). This concept of satisfaction is articulated by Cheung and Lee (2009), who describe it as an affective state resulting from the overall evaluation of a user's experiences within a virtual community. Here, satisfaction is not just about the transactional outcomes but also the emotional and social interactions that occur within these online spaces. The relationship between consumer empowerment and satisfaction has been explored by several scholars, including Pruche et al. (2015), Castillo (2018), Berraies and Hamouda (2018), and Anber (2020). Pruche et al. (2015) explain that empowerment contributes to internal attribution, where consumers attribute success or failure to their actions, thus enhancing their sense of agency and satisfaction. This mechanism of psychological appropriation, described by Nuttin (1987), indicates that when consumers perceive themselves as being in control, they tend to form positive evaluations of the brand or product. Empowerment, therefore, not only enhances the sense of control but also fosters a positive emotional response that leads to higher satisfaction.

Moreover, Ramani and Kumar (2008) highlight that consumer empowerment fosters collaboration, which involves a set of interactions between customers and companies. This collaboration can involve feedback, co-creation of content, or other forms of active engagement, which, in turn, improves the customer's emotional connection to the brand and leads to greater satisfaction. The dynamic between empowerment, emotional reactions, social interactions, and satisfaction underscores the evolving relationship between consumers and brands in the digital age. Empowering consumers through online platforms, encouraging active participation, and fostering positive emotional experiences are crucial for building long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty. These interactions not only enhance the emotional bond with the brand but also improve the overall consumer experience, leading to a mutually beneficial relationship for both consumers and companies. The relationship between consumer empowerment and online brand experience has garnered significant attention in marketing literature. Boyd et al. (2014) argue that empowered consumers—those with greater control and agency—seek enhanced cognitive, affective, and behavioral experiences. This desire for enriched experiences stems from their ability to engage more deeply with brands and their environment. Similarly, Anderson and Berdahl (2002) and Rucker et al. (2011) suggest that empowerment allows individuals to overcome constraints that might otherwise limit their actions, motivating them to experiment and explore new possibilities in their interactions with brands. Keltner et al. (2003) and Fast et al. (2009) add that the sense of control associated with increased power enables consumers to manage their environment more effectively, shifting their focus from self-interest to broader engagement and interaction.

Satisfaction is closely tied to the online brand experience. Petr (2002) identifies activities such as sharing, interacting, and exchanging with friends and family, as well as fostering group identity, as key sources of satisfaction. This underscores the social and emotional dimensions of online brand interactions. Further, numerous studies, including those by Thomas and Veloustou (2013), Lee and Jeong (2014), Pratomo and Magetsari (2018), and Quan et al. (2020), have established a positive relationship between online brand experience and customer satisfaction. These findings are consistent with earlier work by Brakus et al. (2009) and Khan and Rahman (2015), which focused on how brand experiences in retail and internet marketing contexts influence satisfaction. The work of Ha and Perks (2005) similarly highlights the importance of experiential interactions in shaping customer satisfaction. E-satisfaction, a concept rooted in the digital context, is directly influenced by the consumer's online experience. Tran et al. (2018) define e-satisfaction as the perceptual fluency with which consumers navigate and utilize online information, which informs their cognitive efforts and selection decisions in virtual environments. Satisfaction, therefore, becomes an evaluation process influenced by prior experiences with similar services or products (Fang et al., 2014). This perspective aligns with Ren et al. (2016), who argue that customer satisfaction is outcome-oriented, emphasizing the role of past consumption experiences in shaping present evaluations.

Kotler and Keller (2006) emphasize that customer satisfaction arises as a consequence of the experiences customers have during the buying process. These experiences significantly influence future behaviors, such as repeat purchases, loyalty, and advocacy (Pereira et al., 2016). This underscores the importance of ensuring positive online experiences, as they not only impact immediate satisfaction but also shape long-term customer relationships and behavior. The interplay between consumer empowerment, online brand experience, and satisfaction highlights the evolving nature of consumer-brand relationships in the digital age. Empowered consumers seek richer, more engaging experiences, and their satisfaction is closely tied to the quality and effectiveness of these interactions. Online brand experiences, characterized by ease of navigation, meaningful engagement, and alignment with consumer expectations, play a crucial role in determining satisfaction levels. By fostering empowering and satisfying online experiences, brands can build stronger connections with consumers and drive long-term loyalty and positive behavioral outcomes.

3. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this empirical study is to examine how consumer empowerment influences satisfaction, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of online experiences towards the brand. To gather data, a structured questionnaire was created, targeting relevant aspects of consumer empowerment, online brand experiences, and satisfaction. However, before administering the questionnaire to the larger sample, a pre-test was conducted to ensure its clarity, relevance, and reliability. The pre-test involved a small group of respondents who resembled the target population, allowing the researchers to gather feedback on the structure and wording of the questions. After collecting feedback from the pre-test, an exploratory analysis was performed to simplify the data and identify underlying patterns. The goal of this analysis was to condense the large set of variables into a smaller, more manageable set of components that accurately reflect the main concepts of consumer empowerment, online brand experiences, and satisfaction. The use of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) allowed the researchers to uncover the key constructs that underlie these concepts, thus facilitating the process of measuring them more effectively. The factor loadings from this analysis helped to determine which items contributed most strongly to the respective factors. Items with lower loadings were either revised or removed to improve the clarity and reliability of the measurement. This exploratory phase also played a crucial role in ensuring the validity of the questionnaire. By identifying any redundant or poorly performing items, the researchers were able to refine the tool, ensuring that only the most relevant questions remained for the final data collection phase. In addition to refining the instrument, this process helped clarify the relationships between the constructs, ensuring that the factors derived from the data would serve as a solid foundation for hypothesis testing in the next phase of the study.

With the questionnaire refined through the pre-test and exploratory analysis, the next steps involved administering the final version to a larger sample of consumers who actively engage in online brand communities and participate in digital brand experiences. After data collection, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) would be employed to test the validity of the constructs and assess the measurement model based on the factors identified in the exploratory analysis. Structural equation modeling (SEM) or regression analysis would then be used to test the hypothesized relationships between consumer empowerment, online brand experience, and satisfaction. This process ensures that the study's findings are based on valid and reliable data, providing a robust framework for understanding the impact of consumer empowerment on online brand experiences and satisfaction.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table 1 presents the results of direct effects tests from a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis, where the focus is on evaluating the relationships between various latent variables and an outcome variable. Each of the rows in the table reflects a different hypothesis (H1, H2, and H3), which tests a specific causal link between variables. Let's break down the findings in more detail. In the first row, the relationship between Online Empowerment Experience and the outcome variable is examined. The standardized path coefficient is 0.729, which is relatively high and indicates a strong positive relationship. This means that as the online empowerment experience increases, there is a considerable positive effect on the outcome variable. The Critical Ratio (CR) value is 9.454, which is far above the typical cutoff of 1.96 for statistical significance. This high CR value strongly suggests that the relationship is statistically significant. Moreover, the p-value for this path is 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 significance threshold, further confirming that this relationship is robust and highly significant. Thus, we can confidently conclude that the experience of online empowerment has a substantial and statistically significant effect on the outcome being studied.

In the second row, the relationship between Satisfaction with the Online Experience and the outcome variable is tested. The standardized path coefficient here is 0.380, indicating a moderate positive relationship. While not as strong as the previous relationship, this still suggests that satisfaction with the online experience does have a notable, albeit less pronounced, impact on the outcome variable. The CR value is 2.581, which exceeds 1.96, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. However, the p-value is 0.059, which is slightly above the conventional cutoff of 0.05 used to determine statistical significance at the 5% level. This means that while the relationship is significant at a slightly higher threshold (close to the 10% level), it is not statistically significant at the more commonly accepted 5% level. In practical terms, this suggests that the influence of satisfaction with the online experience on the outcome is moderate but could be considered marginally significant, warranting further investigation.

The third row tests the relationship between Satisfaction with Empowerment and the outcome variable. Here, the standardized path coefficient is 0.203, which represents a weak positive relationship. This indicates that satisfaction with empowerment has a relatively minor effect on the outcome variable compared to the other two factors. The CR value is 1.575, which is below the critical value of 1.96, suggesting that this relationship is not statistically significant. Additionally, the p-value for this path is 0.115, which is well above the 0.05 threshold, further confirming that the relationship between satisfaction with empowerment and the outcome is not statistically significant at the 5% level. Given these findings, we can conclude that satisfaction with empowerment does not have a meaningful impact on the outcome variable in this model. When looking at the three hypotheses collectively, the results indicate that online empowerment experience has a strong, statistically significant effect on the outcome variable, making it the most influential factor among the three. Satisfaction with the online experience also has a moderate, statistically significant effect, though its significance is borderline and could be considered more marginal at the 10% level. On the other hand, satisfaction with empowerment appears to have a weak,

non-significant relationship with the outcome variable, meaning it does not appear to play a major role in explaining variations in the outcome in this particular analysis.

These findings suggest that while experiences of online empowerment are crucial for influencing outcomes, satisfaction with empowerment may not have as strong an impact. Similarly, while satisfaction with the online experience does have a moderate effect, it is less significant than the empowerment experience itself. These results may indicate that improving the actual empowerment aspect of online interactions could have a greater influence on the outcome, while satisfaction alone may not be as impactful unless it is linked more directly to empowerment outcomes. This could inform future research or interventions focused on enhancing online empowerment experiences.

Table 1: Direct Effects Test

	Liens de causalité	Structural link standardized	CR	P
H1	Online empowerment experience	0.729	9.454	0.000
H2	Satisfaction Online experience	0.380	2.581	0.059
H3	Satisfaction empowerment	0.203	1.575	0.115

In this table 2, the results are focused on testing relationships in a model involving consumer empowerment, where the direct and indirect effects are analyzed across multiple stages (Etape 2, Etape 3, Etape 4). The table shows how different factors—namely, empowerment, online experience, and satisfaction—are interrelated and affect each other in a sequential process. In Etape 2, the relationship between Empowerment and Online Experience is tested. The standardized estimate is 0.569, indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship between these two variables. A higher empowerment experience leads to a stronger online experience, suggesting that when consumers feel more empowered, they likely have better experiences with online platforms. The CR value is 10.572, which is well above the 1.96 threshold, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this path is highly significant and the relationship is robust. Moving to Etape 3, the relationship between Online Experience and Satisfaction is explored. Here, the estimate is 0.113, showing a weak positive relationship. This means that while a better online experience has some influence on consumer satisfaction, the effect is relatively weak. The CR value of 1.556 is below the typical threshold of 1.96, suggesting that this relationship is not statistically significant at the 5% level. The p-value is 0.120, which is above 0.05 and further indicates that this relationship is not significant. This suggests that while online experience might play a role in satisfaction, it is not a strong or significant one in this model.

Finally, in Etape 4, the relationship between Empowerment and Satisfaction is tested. The standardized estimate here is 0.417, indicating a moderate positive relationship between empowerment and satisfaction. This suggests that consumers who feel more empowered in an online environment tend to report higher levels of satisfaction. The CR value is 4.841, which is well above the 1.96 threshold for statistical significance, and the p-value is 0.000, confirming that this relationship is highly significant. This result suggests that consumer empowerment has a strong and statistically significant impact on consumer satisfaction. In sum, the findings from the table suggest that empowerment is the most influential factor across these relationships. It significantly influences online experience (Etape 2) and satisfaction (Etape 4). However, online experience has only a weak, statistically insignificant effect on satisfaction (Etape 3). This could imply that while consumers' sense of empowerment plays a critical role in shaping their satisfaction with online experiences, the experience itself does not necessarily drive satisfaction in a significant way in this model. Empowerment, therefore, seems to be the key factor driving satisfaction more directly than the mere quality of the online experience.

Table 2: Consumer Empowerment

Etapes	Liens	Estimate	CR	P
Etape 2 (X----->M) a	Experience en ligne <--- empowerment	0.569	10.572	0.000
Etape 3 (M ----->Y) b	Satisfaction<--- experience en ligne	0.113	1.556	0.120
Etape 4 (X-----> Y) c'	Satisfaction<--- empowerment	0.417	4.841	0.000

5. CONCLUSIONS

The research model aims to examine the mediating role of the online brand experience in the relationship between consumer empowerment and satisfaction. The empirical study conducted to test this model revealed significant findings regarding these relationships. The results confirmed that there is a direct and positive link between consumer empowerment and online brand experience, as well as between consumer empowerment and satisfaction. However, the relationship between online brand experience and satisfaction was not found to be significant. These findings suggest that while consumer empowerment positively influences both satisfaction and online brand experience independently, the latter does not play a mediating role in connecting empowerment to satisfaction. Based on these empirical results, it was concluded that the online brand experience does not mediate the relationship between consumer empowerment and satisfaction. This indicates that the effect of empowerment on satisfaction is likely direct and not contingent upon the consumer's online interaction with the brand. These results contribute to a nuanced understanding of how empowerment impacts consumer satisfaction and highlight the

complex dynamics between these constructs in the digital context.

REFERENCES

- Akhavannasab, S., Dantas, D., & Senecal, S. (2018). Consumer empowerment in consumer-firm relationships: Conceptual framework and implications for research. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 8(3), 214–227.
- Anber, M. A. (2020). The effect of customer empowerment and customer engagement on marketing performance: The mediating effect of brand community membership. *Business: Theory and Practice*, 21(1), 30–38.
- Anderson, C., & Berdahl, J. L. (2002). The experience of power: Examining the effects of power on approach and inhibition tendencies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 1362–1377.
- Anderson, C., & Galinsky, A. (2006). Power, optimism, and risk-taking. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 36, 511–536.
- Anderson, E. W., Lehmann, D. R., & Fornell, C. (1994). Customer satisfaction, market share, and profitability: Findings from Sweden. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3), 53–66.
- Arvidsson, A., & Caliandro, A. (2016). Brand public. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(5), ucv053.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Dholakia, U. M. (2002). Intentional social action in virtual communities. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 16(2), 2–21.
- Bénavent, C., & Evrard, Y. (2002). Extension du domaine de l'expérience. *Décisions Marketing*, 28, 7–11.
- Berraies, S., & Hamouda, M. (2018). Customer empowerment and firms performance: The mediating effects of innovation and customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 1–33.
- Blattberg, R. C., & Deighton, J. (1991). Interactive marketing: Exploiting the age of addressability. *Sloan Management Review*, 33(1), 5–14.
- Bonnemaizon, A., Curbatov, O., & Gallicher, M. L. (2008). Le Knowledge Marketing, une voie applicative du customer empowerment. Essai de méthodologie basée sur les compétences client. Paper presented at the 7th International Congress Marketing Trends, Venice, 1–34.
- Botti, S., & Iyengar, S. (2004). The psychological pleasure and pain of choosing: When people prefer choosing at the cost of subsequent outcome satisfaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(3), 312–326.
- Boyd, D., Clarke, T., & Spekman, R. (2014). The emergence and impact of consumer brand empowerment in online social networks: A proposed ontology. *Journal of Brand Management*, 21, 516–531.
- Brakus, J. J., Schmitt, B., & Zarantonello, L. (2009). Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 73(3), 52–68.
- Brinol, P., Petty, R. E., Valle, C., Rucker, D. D., & Becerra, A. (2007). The effects of message recipients' power before and after persuasion: A self-validation analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 1040–1053.
- Castillo, J. (2018). How interactions influence customer empowerment and satisfaction in the retail industry. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 12(4), 143–157.
- Cheung, C. M. K., & Lee, M. K. O. (2009). Understanding the sustainability of a virtual community: Model development and empirical test. *Journal of Information Science*, 35(3), 279–298.
- Claudet, L. B., Gianelloni, J. L., & Robinot, E. (2008). The role of shared emotions and social interactions on access to the state of flow: The case of skiing. In *Marketing Trends International Conference*, 1–22.
- Deighton, J. (1996). The future of interactive marketing. *Harvard Business Review*, 74(6), 151–161.
- Desmet, P. (2003). A multilayered model of product emotions. *Design Journal*, 6(2), 1–13.
- Doctor, R. D. (1991). Information technology and social equity: Confronting the revolution. *Journal of American Society for Information Science*, 42(3), 216–228.
- Fang, Y., Qureshi, I., Sun, H., & McCole, P. (2014). Trust, satisfaction, and online repurchase intention: The moderating role of perceived effectiveness of e-commerce institutional mechanisms. *MIS Quarterly*, 38(2), 407–427.
- Fast, N. J., Gruenfeld, D. H., Sivanathan, N., & Galinsky, A. D. (2009). Illusory control: A generative force behind power's far-reaching effects. *Psychological Science*, 20(4), 502–508.
- Fayn, G. M. (2017). Towards an enriched vision of consumer empowerment in marketing. In *Proceedings of the Congress of the French Marketing Association*, 1–10.
- Fornerino, M., Helme-Guizone, A., & Gotteland, D. (2008). Cinematic experiences in a state of immersion: Effects on satisfaction. *Research and Applications in Marketing*, 23(3), 93–111.
- Grégoire, Y., Laufer, D., & Tripp, T. M. (2010). A comprehensive model of customer direct and indirect revenge: Understanding the effects of perceived greed and customer power. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38(6), 738–758.
- Ha, Y. H., & Perks, H. (2005). Effects of consumer perceptions of brand experience on the web: Brand familiarity,

- satisfaction, and brand trust. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 4(6), 438–442.
- Hagel, J., & Armstrong, A. G. (1997). *Net gain: Expanding markets through virtual communities*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Hansemark, O. C., & Albinsson, M. (2004). Customer satisfaction and retention: The experiences of individual employees. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 4(1), 40–57.
- Harrison, T., Waite, K., & Hunter, G. (2006). The internet, information, and empowerment. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(9), 972–993.
- Hoffman, D. L., & Novak, T. P. (2009). Flow online: Lessons learned and future prospects. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23, 23–34.
- Holland, J., & Stacey, M. B. (2001). Customer participation in creating site brand loyalty. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 15(4), 34–45.
- Hoyer, W. D., & MacInnis, D. J. (2001). *Consumer behaviour* (2nd ed.). Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Hsieh, S. H., Lee, C. T., & Tseng, T. H. (2022). Psychological empowerment and user satisfaction: Investigating the influences of online brand community participation. *Information and Management*, 59, 1–15.
- Huang, Y., Lotz, S. L., & Bon, G. O. (2014). An investigation of consumer power in the process of purchase decisions. *Journal of Research for Consumers*, 25, 17–30.
- Hunter, G. L., & Grunefeld, I. (2008). When does consumer empowerment lead to satisfied customers? Some mediating and moderating effects of the empowerment-satisfaction link. *Journal of Research for Consumers*, 15, 1–14.
- Imran, C. A. B., Shakir, M. K., & Qureshi, M. A. B. (2022). Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Enhancing Construction Safety and Productivity. *The Asian Bulletin of Big Data Management*, 2(1), 63-74.
- Janda, S., & Ybarra, A. (2005). Do product and consumer characteristics affect the relationship between online experience and customer satisfaction? *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 4(4), 133–151.
- Keltner, D., Anderson, C., & Gruenfeld, D. H. (2003). Power, approach, and inhibition. *Psychological Review*, 110(6), 265–284.
- Khan, I., & Rahman, Z. (2015). A review and future directions of brand experience research. *International Strategic Management Review*, 3(1), 1–14.
- Koelemeijer, K., Prevo, O., Pieters, R., & Roest, H. (1995). Service evaluation process: An investigation into hierarchies-of-effect. In *Workshop on Quality Management in Services* (pp. 11–12). Tilburg: University and European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management.
- Kotler, P. (2000). *Marketing management: The millennium edition*. Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2006). *Marketing management* (14th ed.). Pearson France.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). The field behind the screen: Using netnography for marketing research in online communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(1), 61–72.
- Labrecque, L. I. (2014). Fostering consumer-brand relationships in social media environments: The role of parasocial interaction. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 28, 134–148.
- Labrecque, L. I., Esche, J. V. D., Mathwick, C., Novak, T. P., & Hofacker, C. F. (2013). Consumer power: Evolution in the digital age. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 27, 257–269.
- Ladwein, R. (2004). Consumer experience and self-narrative: The case of trekking. In *Proceedings of the 9th Burgundy Marketing Research Days* (pp. 15–34).
- Lee, S. A., & Jeong, M. (2014). Enhancing online brand experiences: An application of congruity theory. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 40, 49–58.
- Makloul, Y., & Ouida, I. (2019). The impact of satisfaction with the branded virtual community on brand loyalty: A netnographic study. *Revue Internationale du Marketing et Management Stratégique*, 2(1), 68–89.
- Michel, G. (2009). Les réseaux sociaux: Théorie, concepts et nouvelles orientations pour le marketing. *Compte-Rendu de l'Atelier de Recherche Appliquée AFM* (pp. 1–8). Paris: ESCP.
- Midha, V. (2012). Impact of consumer empowerment on online trust: An examination across genders. *Decision Support Systems*, 54, 198–205.
- Moussafir, K., & Qmichchou, M. (2020). Customer empowerment: An antecedent and a consequence of customer engagement in value co-creation. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing Management and Economics*, 2(5), 305–323.
- Muñiz, A. M. Jr., & Schau, H. J. (2005). Religiosity in the abandoned Apple Newton brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(4), 737–747.
- Muyllé, S., Moenaert, P., & Despontin, M. (2004). The conceptualization and empirical validation of website user satisfaction. *Information Management*, 41, 543–560.
- Nambisan, P., & Watt, J. H. (2011). Managing customer experiences in online product communities. *Journal of Business Research*, 64, 889–895.
- Nuttin, J. M. Jr. (1987). Affective consequences of mere ownership: The name letter effect in twelve European languages. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 17(4), 381–402.
- Nysveen, H., & Pedersen, P. E. (2004). An exploratory study of customers' perception of company websites offering various

- interactive applications: Moderating effects of customers' internet experience. *Decision Support Systems*, 37(1), 137–150.
- Pappas, I., Giannakos, M., & Pateli, A. (2014). Moderating effects of online shopping experience on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. *Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 42(3), 187–204.
- Pereira, H. G., Salgueiro, M. F., & Rita, P. (2016). Online purchase determinants of loyalty: The mediating effect of satisfaction in tourism. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 30(1), 279–291.
- Petr, J. (2002). Finding the hospitality industry: A response to Brotherton and Slattery. *Journal of Hospitality Leisure Sport and Tourism Education*, 3(1), 19–28.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(3), 5–14.
- Pratomo, L. A., & Magetsari, O. N. (2018). Online brand experience: Drivers and consequences. *Journal Dinamika Manajemen*, 9(2), 218–227.
- Pruche, L., Bertrandias, L., & Vernet, E. (2015). The psychological empowerment of the consumer by the internet when purchasing a service. In *31st Annual Congress of the French Marketing Association*. Marrakech: Palais des Congrès Ryad Mogador (pp. 1–20).
- Quan, N. H., Chi, N. T., Nhung, D. T., Ngan, N. T., & Phong, L. T. (2020). The influence of website brand equity, e-brand experience on e-loyalty: The mediating role of e-satisfaction. *Management Science Letters*, 1, 63–76.
- Raacke, J., & Bonds-Raacke, J. (2008). MySpace and Facebook: Applying the uses and gratifications theory to exploring friend-networking sites. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 11(2), 169–174.
- Ramani, G., & Kumar, V. (2008). Interaction orientation and firm performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 72, 27–45.
- Ren, A., Li, Z., Wang, Y., Qiu, Q., & Yuan, B. (2016). Designing reconfigurable large-scale deep learning systems using stochastic computing. In *International Conference on Rebooting Computing, ICRC Conference Proceedings* (pp. 1–7).
- Rucker, D. K., Galinsky, A. D., & Dubois, D. (2011). Generous paupers and stingy princes: Power drives consumer spending on self versus others. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(6), 1015–1029.
- Rucker, D., Galinsky, A., & Dubois, D. (2011). Power and consumer behavior: How power shapes who and what consumers value. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 20, 1–17.
- Rust, R. T., & Oliver, R. L. (1994). Service quality: Insights and managerial implications from the frontier. In *Service Quality: New directions in theory and practice* (pp. 1–19). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Szymanski, D. M., & Richard, T. H. (2000). E-satisfaction: Initial examination. *Journal of Retailing*, 76(3), 309–322.
- Thomas, M. A., & Veloustou, C. (2013). Beyond technology acceptance: Brand relationships and online brand experience. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), 21–27.
- Tsoukatos, E., & Rand, G. (2007). Cultural influences on service quality and customer satisfaction: Evidence from Greek insurance. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 17, 467–485.
- Vanhamme, J. (2002). Consumer satisfaction specific to a transaction: Definition, antecedents, measures, and modes. *Research and Applications in Marketing*, 17(2), 55–85.
- Wathieu, L., Brenner, L., Carmon, Z., Chattopadhyay, A., Drolet, A., Gourville, J., Muthukrishnan, A. V., Novemsky, N., Ratner, R., Wertenbroch, K., & Wu, G. (2002). Consumer control and empowerment: A primer. *Marketing Letters*, 13(3), 297–305.
- Weber, M. (1968). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*. New York: Bedminster Press.
- Williams, R. L., & Cothrel, J. (2000). Four smart ways to run online communities. *Sloan Management Review*, 81–91.
- Winterich, K. P., & Zhang, Y. (2014). Accepting inequality deters responsibility: How power distance decreases charitable behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(2), 274–293.
- Wrong, D. (1979). *Power: Its forms, bases, and uses*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Wu, X. M., Ramesh, M., Howlett, M., & Fritzen, S. (2010). *The public policy primer: Managing public policy*. London: Routledge.
- Zaglia, M. E. (2013). Brand communities embedded in social networks. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 216–223.