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Research Paper

Opinion Aggregator Platforms in the Restaurant Sector: Experience, Relation and Satisfaction of the Users

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ABSTRACT

This work intends to understand to what level consumers collect information before going to a restaurant and if they know and use online food Apps for gathering information and restaurants reservation, and above all, if they trust these Apps. To understand consumer trust in online platforms, a set of variables was established with an emphasis on consumer happiness with the experience, consumer satisfaction, online brand relationship, online brand experience, and time availability. We used a quantitative methodology – PLS-SEM and Hayes Process - and data was gathered by an online survey collected in May 2021, for Portuguese consumers. The direct effect of the relations hypothesized is conforming; however, the moderate effect of time availability only influences the relation between online brand experience and consumer's happiness with the Apps. This study contributes to fulfilling the gap existing in the research on consumer rating food Apps.

Keywords: Online brand relationship, Online brand experience, Happiness, Consumer Satisfaction, Food Apps

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet has changed the configuration of consumption globally. By 2022 the world population is expected to be close to 8 billion (World Bank, 2021), of which approximately 4.7 billion are internet users (Johnson, 2021), and 3.8 billion are smartphone users (Galov, 2022). About 230 billion app downloads were recorded in 2020 (Ceci, 2021).

Consumers have become more enlightened and have more resources to find the necessary information for their choice. Online customer reviews have become an increasingly important factor in brand communication. Web 2.0 (characterized by greater user interactivity and collaboration, more pervasive network connectivity, and enhanced communication channels) has a major effect on how individuals generate, exchange, and use information (O'Connor, 2010; Youssef, 2017). When it comes to searching for information about restaurants, consumers rely on the millions of reviews and opinions posted on platforms such as Google, Tripadvisor, The Fork, and Zomato to help them feel more confident in their decisions (Youssef, 2017).

In recent years, we have witnessed a growing technological dynamism with direct and transversal impact in practically all economic and social sectors. If, on the one hand, technological companies were already emerging and growing in a sustainable way, COVID-19 and the successive confinements in Western countries have contributed exponentially to the adaptation of existing platforms and the birth of new players in the market (Hasegawa *et al.*, 2022). Specifically, the restaurant and food sector, which over the years has gradually adapted to new technological realities and consumer preferences (Monty, 2018), saw its possible livelihood dependent on food delivery platforms such as Uber Eats, iFood, DoorDash, Zomato, FoodPanda, GrubHub, Deliveroo, Glovo, Postmates, among others (Gelder, 2022; Perri, 2022; Raj *et al.*, 2020). If, on the one hand, restaurants already combined social notoriety on review and opinion sharing platforms, on the other hand, with the growth of Food Delivery Apps (FDA) platforms and the increasing use and consumption of "digital dining," ratings and reviews from other consumers have gained even more relevance in the FDA and restaurant choice process (Hasegawa *et al.*, 2022; Ray *et al.*, 2019).

The growing popularity of FDAs can be attributed to several causes related to their ability to (a) facilitate convenient and fast-food delivery to customers and (b) provide restaurants with more opportunities to increase revenue without increasing their physical capacity (Xu & Huang, 2019). All of this is amplified by the shifting costumes of consumer lifestyles with increasingly uncertain and globalised work schedules. The work published by Ray, Dhir, Bala, and Kaur (2019) points to the concept of user gratification (U&G) as a relevant factor in the use of FDAs and the use of opinion aggregators. This study is contextualized in Portugal, where approximately 80% of the population is an internet user (World Bank, 2021) and 56% of the population uses the internet as a mean to purchase online, values historically lower than the European average 95% and 73% respectively (Lone et al., 2021). Opinion aggregator, FDAs and hybrid platforms have been growing their usage and importance as a reliable source of inspiration, information and decision taking for Portuguese consumers and led the platform tripadvisor.pt as the most visited in its sector and the 61th most visited web platform in Portugal (Similarweb, 2022; Statista, 2022).

Considering the increased use by Portuguese consumers of the online meal and food delivery platforms, this study aims to understand consumers' perceptions regarding the use of restaurant opinion aggregator platforms. In this study, these platforms were assumed as brands, and the relationship and experience that one can establish with these online brands was analysed. Specifically, a set of dimensions was used to assess the relationship with the online (platform) brand, online experience, time availability, happiness with the experience and, finally, satisfaction. There are several studies that address consumer satisfaction with this type of platforms (Fileri et al., 2021) and the consequences of this on satisfaction (Mahat & Hanafiah, 2020). However, the existing research offers a limited understanding of food online brand relationship and consumers' behavioural responses (Tandon et al., 2021). The novelty of this study relies on the analysis of online brand experience and relationship with of consumer's apps satisfaction mediated by happiness. Research regarding the concept of happiness in marketing is helpful for several reasons, namely how happiness affects consumer behaviour and consumption itself (e.g., information seeking, evaluation, decision making, etc.), how consumption affects consumer happiness (e.g., satisfaction, experience) and what the outcomes of a happy consumer are (e.g., loyalty, positive word of mouth, etc.) (Kumar, Paul, & Starčević, 2021). This study centered on consumer happiness explores how consumers decide, for specific online food apps, based on theory of consumer brand relationship (CBR).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Consumer Opinion Aggregator for Food Online Platforms

With the diffusion of mobile apps and online interactive platforms, the number of user reviews on websites such as Tripadvisor has increased, becoming one of the most important ways for consumers to express their opinion about products and services (Minkwitz, 2018; Yan et al., 2021). These platforms can be seen from three perspectives: as a source of information for consumers, as websites and online navigation platforms, and, finally, as awareness and image tools for restaurants.

As a source of information for consumers, these platforms are an essential resource for decision-making (Youssef, 2017). The growth of these platforms has allowed online reviews to become one of the main sources of recommendations constituting an aid for consumers in their online purchasing process, such as when booking hotels, buying products, ordering meals, among others (Huang, 2022; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015; Yan et al., 2021). Thus, the feedback expressed by these consumers can influence the final decisions of other users (Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2018), in line with the growing importance of the concept of user generated content and its impact on modern marketing (Ray, Bala, & Dwivedi, 2021).

As a space for navigation and information search, these platforms act as references, as authentic brands, to which consumers turn for information (Minkwitz, 2018). Consequently, these platforms must pay special attention to the relationship established with the user and the experience they provide, aspects that have already been studied in the academic context (Cassar & Caruana, 2021). The ease of use of a website or platform is currently an extremely important factor for websites and applications (Chow & Shi, 2014), conditioning the acceptance or rejection of these same platforms (Khasawneh & Kornreich, 2015). In this context, the ease and effectiveness in use positively interfere with the user experience (Voigt-Antons et al., 2018) and satisfaction (Ramos, Rita, & Moro, 2019).

As awareness and image tools for restaurants, these platforms can also be useful for these companies. Monitoring post-purchase attitudes is of great importance to marketers and management professionals. Consumer behaviour has become easier to track allowing companies to monitor consumer feedback, obtain information and concerns that allow them to improve their products and services (Mondo, Perinotto, & Souza-Neto, 2022; Yan et al., 2021).

In brief, applications, and platforms such as TripAdvisor, The Fork, Zomato and Yelp, have demonstrated their importance for managers (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015). In the professional context, several experts highlight the advantages of being present in these comment archives, like the possibility of having greater trustworthiness by consumers, greater visibilities in search engines, and the opportunity to have a positive impact on revenues (Men, O'Neil, & Ewing, 2020; Voicu, 2020).

2.2. Consumer-brand relationship (CBR) in online applications

As said previously, in this study, opinion aggregator platforms were assumed as brands, materialized through their websites, and with which consumers can establish relationships. According to Fournier (1998), brands can be relationship partners from the consumers' perspective. In this context, consumer-brand relationships are valid at the level of experiences that can be lived, and these relationships can be specified in multiple situations (Fournier, 1998). Ray et al. (2019) explain that this relationship is based on an expectation of user gratification (U&G) in a way that consumers feel important / relevant when participating and sharing ideals, places and experiences, either in the role of consuming that information either by adding new reviews (Ray et al., 2019). Several studies have explored the consumer-brand relationship in the context of websites and digital applications. For example, Van Noort and Van Reijmersdal (2019) analysed consumers' affective and cognitive responses towards the brand in the context of branded apps having found that branded apps enhanced brand responses, namely the brand relationship. Sharma, Singh, Kujur, and Das (2021) analysed social media as platforms where users are exposed to comments and opinions about products and services and concluded that consumer-brand relationships have a positive impact on satisfaction and purchase intention. Ghorbani, Karampela, and Tonner (2022) conducted a systematic literature review, seeking to identify dominant theories, contexts, characteristics, and methodologies used to study consumers. In their work they analysed, among others, consumer-brand relationships theory in digital contexts, such as websites and online stores, social media and new technologies. Aureliano-Silva et al. (2022) used the consumer-brand relationship theory for analysing the mediating role of service recovery between brand love, brand trust and purchase intention in the context of food-delivery apps.

This study uses CBR theory to contextualize consumers' relationship with online food apps brands, their experience, happiness, and satisfaction with their use.

2.3. Online Brand Relationship (OBR)

Considering food platforms as brands, it is important to analyse the relationship that users establish with them. By interacting with a brand online, and experiencing it, the consumer is creating a relationship and a connection with it (Christodoulides et al., 2006). This relationship can be understood as a construct composed of functional and affective connections with the brand. Some authors (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017; Park et al., 2010) advance the concept of brand attachment, that is, the connection between the consumer and the brand.

This relationship grows stronger as customer-brand interactions increase in both frequency and duration. Therefore, the more frequent the interaction between consumer and brand and the longer the time elapses, the stronger the relationship may become (Christodoulides et al., 2006).

The relationship with the brand has a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Budi, Hidayat, & Mani, 2021) and can increase the intention to repeat purchase and generate loyalty (Park, Chung, & Woo, 2013). In the online context, food-related application users generally look for speed, convenience, and efficiency. Moreover, the possibility of getting an informed opinion from other users and, therefore, a rating ranking contributes to consumers' relationship with the apps. Considering this, it is expected that the consumer's relationship with the food app will increase their happiness.

H1: Online brand relationship has a positive and significant influence on consumer happiness with the experience.

2.4. Online Brand Experience (OBE)

In relating to and searching for a brand, consumers seek satisfaction of their experiential needs (Schmitt, Brakus, & Zarantonello, 2014). Brand experience involves cognitions, sensations, feelings, and behavioural responses that are generated by brand-related stimuli, such as design and communication (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Budi et al., 2021).

Consumers can have experiences with the brand through various means, including the Internet. In the digital context, these experiences may involve a diversity of stimuli and situations such as the search for products/services, their evaluation, and their purchase (Brakus et al., 2009). In this process, brand experience can be considered a way to differentiate products and services and form perceptions about a brand (Moreira, Fortes, & Santiago, 2017).

A positive brand experience can have several consequences. First, this experience can have a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Ha & Perks, 2005), information sharing, recommendation to other consumers, repeat purchase (Khan & Fatma, 2017) and brand loyalty (Budi et al., 2021). In the search for happiness, people often engage in food apps markets, in which food-related products, services, consumption experiences, and brands have central roles. According to Schmitt et al. (2014) when an individual consumes goods or services and evaluates them, they can derive happiness from both material and experiential dimensions. Thus, we propose that positive consumers experience with food online apps will improve their happiness.

H2: Online brand experience has a positive and significant influence on consumer happiness with the experience.

2.5. Happiness with the Experience (HE)

Research in the field of digital marketing has paid particular attention to customer satisfaction (Ertemel et al., 2021). In the context of consumption, the concept of happiness emerges as a higher level of customer satisfaction (Alexander, 2010), which can improve people's quality of life and lead to repeat experiences (Gong & Yi, 2018).

In general, happiness constitutes a positive judgment, from a subjective point of view, of an individual who feels satisfied with a certain situation. Consequently, consumer happiness refers to the emotions that are related to consumption activities that are satisfying (Zhong & Moon, 2020). In some studies, the practice of consumption has been shown to increase people's happiness (Dunn, Gilbert, & Wilson, 2011; Kim & Lee, 2020). Thus, the shopping experience, or a particular consumption-related experience, can bring happiness to customers, and to achieve greater happiness, customers may repeatedly engage in such activities (Zhong & Moon, 2020). In this sense, making a consumer happier can be a good marketing strategy for a company (Baumeister et al., 2013).

Satisfaction is the measure of how well a product or service provided by a company meets or exceeds customer expectations (Budi et al., 2021). It can be defined as the difference between expectations before consumption of the product and the attitude toward the product's performance after consumption (Giao, 2020). Therefore, on the consumer's part, satisfaction constitutes a positive reaction regarding the results of previous experience (Budi et al., 2021; Chinomona, 2013).

Previous research has shown that satisfaction is often considered as an important determinant of intention to repeat purchase (Liao & Shi, 2009). It is thus considered that if a company can satisfy its customers' needs better than its competitors, it will be easier to achieve their loyalty (Moreira et al., 2017). In this sense, customer satisfaction is one of the most important aspects for the success of a business (Nguyen, Nguyen, & Tan, 2021) and is the main goal of every brand (Budi et al., 2021).

Despite the existence of studies on consumer happiness in various contexts, such as relationship marketing (Belanche, Casaló, & Guinalú, 2013); hedonic consumption (Rodrigues, Sousa, & Veloso, 2022); luxury brand management (Castillo-Abdul, Pérez-Escoda, & Civila, 2021); and mastery marketing (Kumar et al., 2021), according to the authors best knowledge there is an absence of studies that analyse the importance of consumer happiness in the satisfaction with the experience. This study proposes to analyse this relationship in the context of online food brands.

H3: Consumer happiness with the experience has a positive and significant influence on consumer satisfaction.

2.6. Moderate effects of time availability

The consumer's time availability may eventually condition consumption experience. In fact, this availability may be one of the main factors influencing the selection of shopping channels. Kim, Park, and Park (2007) argue that consumers who value their time tend to shop online, while consumers who have time available shop more offline. In fact, nowadays, convenience and time saving are key reasons for shopping online (Khalil, 2014).

Understandably, in general, people feel more positive emotions when they invest their time in positive experiences. In fact, time is one of the precious resources that matter for happiness. Thus, to promote happiness people should consider spending more time engaged in activities and experiences that give them pleasure (Mogilner & Norton, 2019).

H4a: Consumer time availability has a moderating effect on the relationship between online brand relationship and consumer happiness with the experience.

H4b: Consumer time availability has a moderating effect on the relationship between online brand experience and consumer happiness with the experience.

2.7. Mediate effect of the happiness with online food apps experience

Several studies, analyse the mediating role of happiness between antecedents and consequences of consumer behaviour. Eckhaus (2018) analysed the mediating role of happiness as a pre-disposition

on the relationship between fashion involvement and purchase intentions. Results confirm that happiness constructs show a multiple mediation effect on this relationship. Bangun et al. (2021) examines the relationship between happiness, attitudes, power technology, and lectures' job performance in higher education. Results confirmed that happiness fully mediated the relationship between attitude toward digital technology and job performance. Recently, in the context of fast-food service industry, Zhong and Moon (2020) investigated the factors that can influence customer satisfaction, loyalty, and happiness and found that happiness functions has a mediator between satisfaction and loyalty.

In this study, based on consumer brand relationship, happiness with food online interactions is a mediator of online brand relationship and online brand experience and satisfaction.

H5: Consumer happiness with the experience mediates the relationship between online brand relationship and experience and consumer satisfaction.

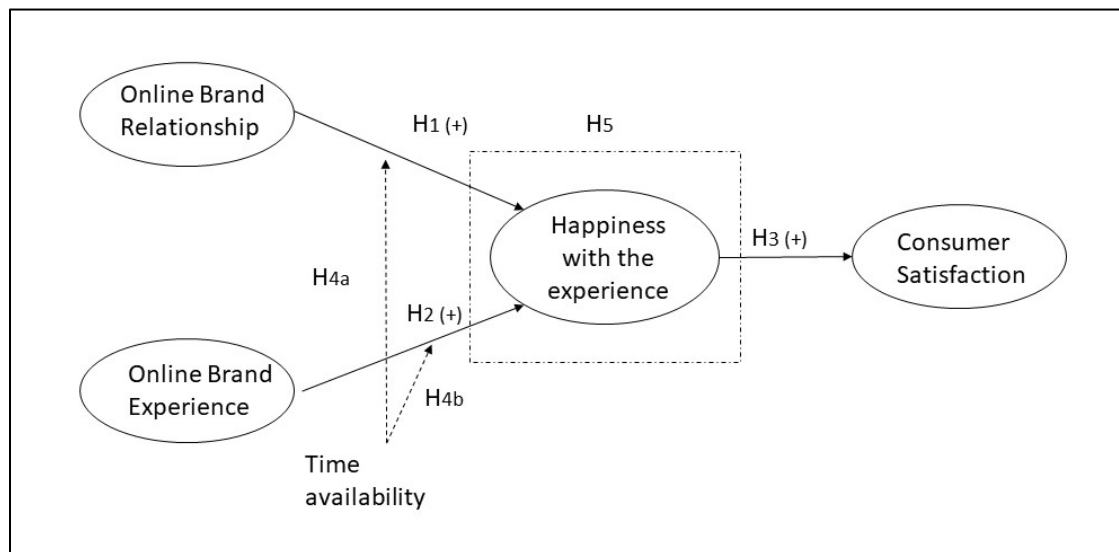


Figure 1 - Conceptual Model

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data collection

The hypotheses were tested using an online survey collected in May 2021, in Portugal. A convenience sampling method was used. The sample was acquired through a multi-faceted approach, involving the dissemination of the questionnaire online on the Google Drive platform, targeting diverse regions of Portugal. Additionally, we leveraged various social media platforms,

including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, as well as email channels to ensure widespread outreach. To address the geographical breadth of Portugal, we strategically implemented this methodology to obtain responses from different regions, such as [North, Centre and South, with the islands left out], thereby striving for a comprehensive representation of the entire Portuguese territory. This approach was carefully designed to guarantee that our sample encompassed a diverse cross-section of the population, reflecting the demographic diversity of Portugal. The questionnaire consisted of three major sections: the first section enquired the respondent's personal information (demographic data), the second section assesses the respondents' knowledge of, use and preference for online restaurant platforms, and the last section evaluates consumer's brand experience, relationship, and satisfaction with the preferred online food platform. The sample is presented in Table 1. Most of the respondents is female (67.5%) and between 18 and 25 years old (64.2%). When the respondent was asked their preferred online platform for restaurant information/booking, the most popular was Tripadvisor (30%), followed by Google (23.6%).

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample

Variable	Freq. (%)	Variable	Freq. (%)
<i>Gender</i>		<i>Income</i>	
Male	32.5	≤ 1000€	18.7
Female	67.5	1001€ – 2000€	48.0
		2001€ – 3000€	26.0
		> 3000	7.3
<i>Age</i>		<i>Online platforms</i>	
18 – 25	64.2	Tripadvisor	30.0
26 – 40	30.1	Google	23.6
> 41	5.7	Uber Eats	18.6
		The Fork	16.3
		Other	11.5
<i>Total = 123</i>			

In Portugal, the use of restaurant-related platforms follows the main global trends of using opinion aggregators, FDAs and hybrid platforms where these two concepts interconnect and provide the user, when choosing a restaurant meal or home delivery, with reviews and opinions of other

consumers about their experience with a particular restaurant. We highlight Tripadvisor, The Fork, Uber Eats, Glovo, Too Good to Go, Takeaway.com, EatTasty, Comer em Casa, noMenu and sendEAT (Portugalist, 2021; Statista, 2022).

Evaluating specifically the tripadvisor.pt platform it is possible to understand that it is the #1 platform in Portugal in the travel and tourism sector, being the 61st most visited web platform in Portugal, registering on average, approximately 4 million monthly visits (Similarweb, 2022). It is also verified that the main age groups that visit the platform are 35-44 and 25-34 years old and that the female audience has a slight prevalence, representing approximately 53% of visitors. Booking.com, thefork.pt, zomatoportugal.com and pt.restaurantguru.com are identified by Similarweb as the main platforms competing with tripadvisor.pt (Similarweb, 2022).

3.2. Measures

All constructs were measured in a response format of a five-point Likert scale ranging 1 from (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Online brand relationship was measured using eight items, adapted from Veloutsou (2007), and online brand experience was measured using six items, adapted from Christodoulides et al. (2006) and Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Malhotra (2005). The scale to measure happiness with the experience was adapted from Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2013) (three items) and consumer satisfaction was measured by a three-item scale adopted from Rose et al. (2012). Lastly, to assess time availability four items adapted from Etkin, Evangelidis, and Aaker (2015) were used.

3.3. Data analysis

PLS-SEM using Smart PLS was used to carry out data analysis. PLS-SEM is a robust modeling technique, with few identification issues and well-suited for testing the strength of relationships between latent variables and when the sample size ($n = 123$) is relatively small (Hair et al., 2018). It followed a two-step approach: (1) the reliability and validity of the measurement model was assessed, and (2) the structural model was evaluated (structural relations among the latent factors) (Chin, 2010).

To test whether a common method bias is present in the data (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, & Podsakoff, 2003), we conducted the Harman's one factor test. The result indicated that 34.51% (< 50% cut off point) of total variance explained by a single constrained factor, which suggested that the instrument was free from significant common method bias effects. We also assessed the degree of multicollinearity among the model variables was examined through the variance

inflation factor (VIF). Values vary from 1.312 to 1.939, which is below the common cut-off threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2018).

The measurement model was assessed through the internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). We first assess the indicators' loadings and significance. The items with standardized loadings below 0.65 were removed, corresponding to three items from the online brand relationship scale and one from the online brand experience scale. Next, we measured construct's reliability through Cronbach's alpha (α), Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A), and composite reliability (CR). The results are shown in Table 2. In the assessed model, all latent variables successfully achieved an adequate convergent reliability, whereby their AVE values exceeded 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 2. Estimates of the measurement model parameters

Constructs/Items	Loadings	Indicator mean	Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A)	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (AVE)
Online Brand Relationship			0.834	0.797	0.852 (0.537)
I am willing to give feedback on the experience with the online platform	0.797	3.35			
I care about the developments relevant to this online platform	0.741	3.33			
It means more to me that other online platforms	0.649	3.00			
I believe using it is in my best interest	0.796	3.75			
Over time this online platform becomes more important to me	0.669	3.37			
Online Brand Experience			0.815	0.802	0.864 (0.561)
The online platform layout is appealing	0.655	3.47			
It is easy to navigate	0.781	4.05			
Results are always returned promptly	0.746	3.86			
The results are always up to date	0.699	3.62			
Accurate search results are always returned	0.850	3.60			
Happiness with Experience			0.715	0.695	0.828 (0.617)
The expectation raised by the platform was matched by the experience at the restaurant.	0.825	3.72			
I give positive feedback when the expectation raised by the platform matches the experience at the restaurant	0.767	3.63			
I give negative feedback when the expectation raised by the platform does not correspond to the experience at the restaurant	0.761	3.41			

Consumer Satisfaction			0.877	0.868	0.919 (0.792)
I am satisfied with my overall experience regarding the information/booking provided by the online platform	0.915	4.07			
I am satisfied with the experience when it comes to gathering information on the online platform	0.911	4.07			
I am satisfied with the experience when it comes to booking on the online platform	0.841	3.78			

Table 3 shows that all variables achieved discriminant validity according to both the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion and the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). Concerning the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria, results show that the square root of AVE is greater than the variables' correlations. For the HTMT criteria, the shared variance between constructs is lower than the cutoff values of 0.90, demonstrating the singularity of the constructs (Hair, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020).

Table 3. Discriminant validity

	Fornell-Larker criterion				Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)			
	1.	2.	3.	4.	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Consumer Satisfaction	0.890							
2. Happiness with the Experience	0.499	0.785			0.621			
3. Online Brand Experience	0.599	0.517	0.749		0.707	0.656		
4. Online Brand Relationship	0.433	0.452	0.578	0.733	0.483	0.554	0.680	

4. RESULTS

The model's explanatory power was medium for consumer's happiness with experience ($R^2 = 0.302$) and consumer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.249$). In reference to the results in Table 4, online brand relationship ($\beta = 0.229$, $p < 0.05$) and online brand experience ($\beta = 0.384$, $p < 0.001$) show a significant and positive influence on consumer's happiness with the experience, respectively, supporting hypotheses 1 and 2. Moreover, happiness with the experience was seen to have a positive and significant effect on consumer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.499$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis 3.

Table 4. Results of Structural Equation Model Test

	Hypotheses			Path Coeff (β)	t-statistic	Confidence Interval (95%)	Supported
H1	Online Brand Relationship	→	Happiness with Experience	0.229*	2.284	[0.064; 0.457]	Yes
H2	Online Brand Experience	→	Happiness with Experience	0.384***	3.683	[0.157; 0.571]	Yes
H3	Happiness with Experience	→	Consumer Satisfaction	0.499***	6.610	[0.345; 0.637]	Yes

To test H4a and H4b, we assessed the moderating effect of consumers' time availability on the relationship between online brand relationship and online brand experience and consumers' happiness with the experience, using the product indicator approach (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003). Findings show that consumer's time availability has a moderating effect on the relationship between online brand experience and consumer's happiness with the experience, partially supporting hypothesis 4 (Table 5). This means that consumers' lack of time will negatively influence the relationship between preferred online brand experience and feelings of happiness with the experience.

Table 5. Results for the moderation effect

Hypothesis	Path	β^a	β^b	β^c
<i>H4a</i>	Online brand relationship x Time availability → Happiness with the Experience	0.058	-0.201	-0.143
<i>H4b</i>	Online brand experience x Time availability → Happiness with the Experience	0.082	-0.153*	-0.071*

Note: * $p < 0,1$

To test the mediation effect of happiness with the experience between the two antecedent constructs - online brand experience and online brand relationship - and consumer satisfaction was used, the bootstrapping procedure was recommended by Hayes (2018). The mediation analysis was performed using Hayes' PROCESS SPSS macro (model 4) to 5000 bootstrapped samples. The Table 6 shows the indirect effects, standard errors, and the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

Table 6. Mediation Effect

Mediation Effects	Direct effects	Indirect Effects	Standard error	95% bias-corrected CI	Result
OBR →H→CS	0,264***	0,135***	0,049	[0,05; 0,243]	Partial mediation
OBE → H→ CS	0,442***	0,139***	0,052	[0,05; 0,246]	Partial mediation

Note: *** $p < 0,001$

The two indirect effects studied are statistically significant as the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval of their estimates does not contain zero. Thus, as the direct effects of online brand relationship and online brand experience on consumer satisfaction is significant, we conclude that the happiness with the experience is a partial mediator of the impact of online brand relationship and online brand experience on consumer satisfaction.

5. DISCUSSION

In the literature it has been found that a positive experience with a brand can have several consequences which are also positive. This experience can have a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Ha & Perks, 2005), information sharing, recommendation to other consumers, repeat purchase (Park, 2017) and brand loyalty (Budi et al., 2021).

The relationship with the brand can also involve positive outcomes. For example, it can have a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Budi et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021), and can increase the intention to repeat purchase and generate loyalty (Park et al., 2013).

In this study, we analysed consumer brand relationship with online food apps and its influence on happiness and satisfaction. We also tested the moderating effect of time availability on consumer brand relationship with online food apps and happiness and the mediating effect of happiness between online brand relationship, online brand experience and satisfaction.

The results showed that the online brand experience and the online brand relationship had a positive effect on consumers happiness experience with the online platform. This, in turn, lead to a positive consumer satisfaction. In this context, a brand experience, and a relationship with the brand, both positive, can result in a feeling, also positive, or happiness, because it is associated with a satisfactory use of these platforms (Zhong & Moon, 2020).

It was also possible to prove that happiness with the experience had a positive influence on consumer satisfaction. Since the concept of happiness is a higher level of customer satisfaction (Alexander, 2010), it is natural that this positive feeling results in a feeling of consumer satisfaction. Although indirectly, it is possible to resume the perspective of other researchers who argue that the experience can have a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Ha & Perks, 2005), and that the relationship with the brand can also have a positive effect on that satisfaction (Budi et al., 2021).

Other interesting result was the moderate effect of the time availability that in the absence of time can negative effect the relation the online brand experience and the online brand happiness with the food app. Consumers' lack of time in terms of availability to frequent online food apps will negatively influence the perceived happiness of the experience. These results support Mogilner and Norton (2019) study in the sense that the more time a person has available for positive online activities and experiences, the happier they are.

Another result concerns the mediating effect of happiness, which partially affects the mediation relation between the consumer's experience and relationship with online food apps and the satisfaction obtained with these apps. This result extends the work carried out in different studies previously referred (Bangun et al., 2021; Zhong & Moon, 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

Despite the numerous studies that have been conducted on online consumer behaviour, research on opinion aggregator platforms is scarce. In this context, the present study contributes to fill this gap by analyzing consumers' relationship towards these platforms.

This study also addresses the concept of happiness in the context of online brand experience and the relationship between brand and consumer, both of which are essential topics in the context of academic research. Moreover, it opens the way to the possibility that these platforms may go beyond the mere assortment of information about restaurants, and that they may represent sources of relationships and positive consumer experiences.

This study makes several contributions to the theory. First, it applies the theory of consumer brand relationship in the context of online brand experience using food platform brands for that purpose. It analyzes the consumer experience with these in obtaining happiness and satisfaction. This model

is innovative and extends the knowledge in this field of research. Second, this study analyses the moderating effect of the consumer's time availability on the online brand relationship and experience on happiness with this experience. Third, it also proposes consumer happiness as a mediator between consumers' online brand experience and satisfaction.

6.2. Managerial Contributions

With the existence of a wide variety of apps available to collect information about restaurants and their reservation, it becomes essential to try to stand out by the ease of search, speed of delivery of information, variety of information available, content available, variety of available establishments, as well as the promotions that some of these platforms offer to attract their users trying to gain a competitive advantage.

Given this, it becomes necessary to know to what extent consumers appreciate the online platforms available for collecting information and booking restaurants, and more, to what extent consumers trust the online platforms and what factors influence this trust (Cheng et al., 2019; Xiao, Zhang, & Fu, 2019).

Alongside with this study findings, it could also be fruitful for restaurants and food industry to strengthen ties with opinion aggregator platforms to better integrate and process the large amount of data collected in a way that could help them to perform better their business in general but, in particular, their customer's satisfaction and demands. Data has been used over the past years as the main asset by many other industries and could also have a significant contribute to the share of the food industry and services that deal directly with the customer.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the contribution of this study, some limitations should be pointed out, namely regarding the sample. In this context, we must point out the limitation of the sample in the number of individuals and in the diversity of age groups, since it was essentially composed of young people. Future research should use larger and more diverse samples in terms of age groups. Another limitation concerns the assessment of the happiness construct. In the present study, a unidimensional concept was used. Future studies may assess the impact of different dimensions of happiness, namely, hedonic, and eudemonic happiness (Garner et al., 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2022). Furthermore, it would be interesting to assess the moderation effect of demographic characteristics such as age and gender in this model, as well as the consumer's technology perceived usefulness.

Another interesting contribute could be to develop studies on other countries to broaden the conclusions drawn. Lastly, future research might consider the analysis of negative behaviours regarding food apps. For example, how the fees charged by these platforms, the restricted availability of available menus, and sometimes the presentation conditions/quality of the service being inferior to that of restaurants influence the individual's experience and generate dissatisfaction behaviours.

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