

The role of consumer happiness in brand loyalty: a model of the satisfaction and brand image in fashion

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Abstract

Purpose – *The study of the antecedents to loyalty is of great interest to both academics and professionals in the context of fashion consumption. The purpose of this paper is to define a SEM model, in which brand image and its dimensions, as well as consumer satisfaction and consumer happiness as mediators, are explained as antecedents to loyalty.*

Design/methodology/approach – *A transversal descriptive study based on primary data were, therefore, carried out using a survey with a sample of 2,515 consumers representing the Spanish population. The Partial Least Square method was applied to test the hypotheses.*

Findings – *The results of this research tell us which variables have a positive influence on consumer loyalty to fashion brands, where brand image, satisfaction and consumer happiness are the determining variables of loyalty.*

Research limitations/implications – *This model has important implications and contributes both to the literature and to the choice of differentiation and brand positioning strategies for marketing to a global and highly competitive market.*

Originality/value – *One of the novelties of this study is the fact that it considers the consumer happiness variable as an antecedent to loyalty in the fashion consumer sector.*

Keywords *Satisfaction, Brand image, Brand loyalty, Fashion, Consumer happiness, SEM model*

Paper type *Research paper*

1. Introduction

The relationship between brand image, loyalty and satisfaction has aroused great interest in recent times (Chiou, 2004; Sondoh *et al.*, 2007; Upamannyu and Sankpal, 2014; Neupane, 2015; Salami Sheeba and Malarvixhi, 2019; Cuong and Khoi, 2019) and has been studied in various sectors. These include internet service providers, cosmetics consumption, retail supermarket chains, the hotel industry and convenience stores. One of the novelties of this work is its study of the relationship between brand image, loyalty, satisfaction and consumer happiness in the branded fashion consumption sector.

It is generally accepted that consumer satisfaction has a positive influence on loyalty (Taylor, 1998; Bennet and Rundle-Thiele, 2004; Schultz, 2005; Sondoh *et al.*, 2007). However, entities perceive that despite high consumer satisfaction with their brand image, they often lose customers. Authors such as Reichheld and Markey (2000) state that highly satisfied customers will not necessarily be loyal. Nowadays, entities are worried that current consumers tend to be less loyal (Dekimpe *et al.*, 1997; Kapferer, 2005; Bennett and Rundle-Thiele, 2004, Anaya-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020). This makes it necessary to introduce new variables into the model that will positively influence consumer loyalty.

The path to customer loyalty does not begin with satisfaction, but rather with the drivers of satisfaction (Smith, 2020). More loyalty studies need to be conducted to better grasp this

Received 5 March 2021
Revised 7 April 2021
Accepted 27 April 2021

The co-authors would like to thank the research groups for the material resources to make this paper possible: Consumer behaviour, Organisational, and Market Analytics; Tourism competitiveness and innovation at University of Alcalá; and Iberoamerican Group of Multidisciplinary Studies on Happiness (IGOMSOH) at University of Cádiz.

idea (Sondoh *et al.*, 2007; Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2020), i.e. to understand that, in addition to brand image and its interrelationships in the context of the retailer's branded product, there are other variables that can be considered to be antecedents of loyalty. One of the novelties of this study is, therefore, the fact that it considers the variables happiness and satisfaction, as well as brand image, to be determinants of loyalty.

Research into consumer happiness is common in the fields of psychology, education, organizational behavior, sport, religion, tourism and hospitality (Fun and Wang, 2020). One of the novelties of this study is the fact that it considers the consumer happiness variable to be an antecedent of loyalty in the consumer fashion sector.

The main aim of this research is, therefore, to propose a SEM model that explains the relationship between satisfaction and consumer happiness as antecedents to loyalty, which in turn mediates brand image. This model has important implications for the practical choices of marketing strategies to achieve differentiation and brand positioning. It also makes a significant contribution to the literature.

This paper is structured as follows: first, the framework of the study is described together with the hypotheses to be tested in the SEM model, and then the results of the model are explained. Finally, the conclusions are stated, detailing the implications of the proposed model for the branded fashion sector.

2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

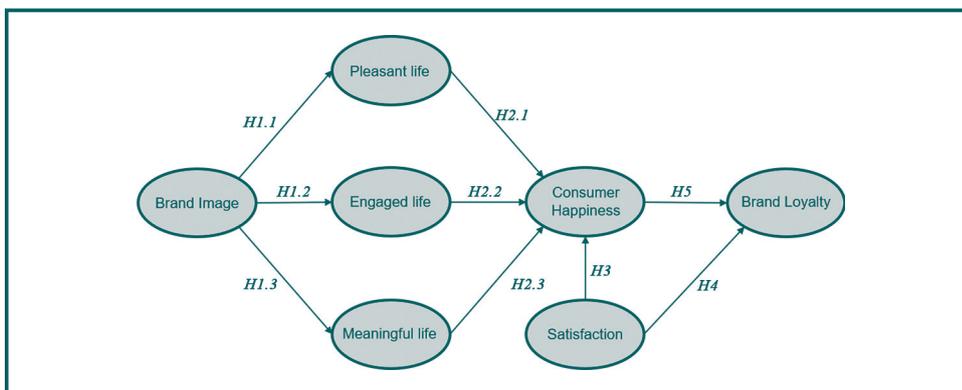
2.1 Research framework

The relationships in the model that has been developed, and its associated hypotheses, are presented in detail below. Figure 1 summarizes the research model with the study constructs and the hypothesized links between them.

Brand image has been conceptualized in various ways, but all agree that it is a construct formed by perceptions in the consumer's mind about a brand (Reynolds, 1965; Aaker, 1991; Biel, 1992; Keller, 1993; Kotler, 2001; Faircloth *et al.*, 2001). That construct has been measured on the basis of product attributes (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000; Koo, 2003); brand benefits (Roth, 1995; Bhat and Reddy, 1998; Hsieh *et al.*, 2004) or by using the brand image scale (Malhotra, 1981; Faircloth *et al.*, 2001).

This work uses an approach similar to Keller's (1993) conceptualization of brand image, which is considered to be a perception about a brand, as reflected in the brand associations held in the consumer's mind.

Figure 1 Model of satisfaction and brand image in fashion



Thus, the benefits of *brand image* can be classified into *functional, experiential and symbolic benefits* (Park *et al.*, 1986; Keller, 1993):

- Here, the *functional benefits* are related to the intrinsic advantages of branded fashion consumption and usually correspond to the brand-related attributes (Park *et al.*, 1986). These attributes may be classified into product-related and non-product related attributes. Non-product-related attributes include price, packaging, product appearance information and images of use and consumption. Product-related attributes are considered to be those aspects that are necessary to make the product, and in turn are sought by consumers, while non-product-related attributes refer to the external aspects of the product that are related to its purchase or consumption (Keller, 1993).
- The *experiential benefits* refer to what it was like to consume the fashion brand. Thus, brand image can be defined as “the understanding consumers derive from the total set of brand-related activities engaged in by the firm” (Park *et al.*, 1986).
- The *symbolic benefits* are associated with the underlying need for social approval. Likewise, according to Keller (1993), brand image generates general brand attitudes, which refer to “the general evaluations that consumers make of a brand” Wilkie (1986).

Brand image can thus generate value by helping the consumer to process information, differentiating the brand, generating reasons to buy and generating feelings (Aaker, 1991). The following hypotheses can, therefore, be defined:

H1.1. *Brand image has a positive influence on pleasant life.*

H1.2. *Brand image has a positive influence on engaged life.*

H1.3. *Brand image has a positive influence on meaningful life.*

Other authors such as Seligman (2002), Peterson *et al.* (2005) and Filep and Deery (2010) explain the following three constructs as antecedents to consumer happiness: a *pleasant life*, an *engaged life* and a *meaningful life*.

The *pleasant life* considers past, present or future pleasures and positive experiences (Filep and Deery, 2010). Frederickson (2001) identifies emotions such as love, enjoyment, interest and contentment, thus advocating that a pleasant life occurs when people develop their virtues and strengths in those activities they are passionate about. In addition, psychologists explain a pleasant life as a state that is hedonically charged with experiences (Brickman and Campbell, 1971; Kahneman, 1999). Additionally, Ryan and Deci (2001) explain that consumer happiness is a reflection of the sum of hedonic moments.

The *engaged life* refers to feeling more confident and committed to the brand (Massimini and Delle Fave, 2000). An engaged life is also the result of immediate experience (Hom Cary, 2004; Duckworth *et al.*, 2005). Customers may become engaged when they go through active or passive experiences (Schmitt, 2012). Multiple points of contact with clients can be created, such as live events and direct interactions, which enhance the direct experience. On the other hand, the experience may be passive, through traditional mass media and even make use of online media to foster brand immersion (Schmitt, 2012; Castillo-Abdul *et al.*, 2020).

Some authors explain consumer happiness as the positive psychological state derived from a good, pleasant and satisfying experience (Loranca Valle *et al.*, 2019; Jang *et al.*, 2017).

A meaningful life occurs when people engage in activities that contribute to the common good or can be the result of memorable and transformative experiences (Duckworth *et al.*, 2005). Positive psychology explains how a life with meaning through achieving individual and social goals is another reason why people achieve consumer happiness (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2020). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2.1. A pleasant life has a positive influence on consumer happiness.

H2.2. An engaged life has a positive influence on consumer happiness.

H2.3. A meaningful life has a positive influence on consumer happiness.

Some authors (Oliver, 1997; Szymanski and Henard, 2001) explain satisfaction as a perception of consumer response to consumption, with levels of compliance being either insufficient or excessive when compared with expectations. Other authors consider other variables such as consumption experience (Cadotte et al., 1987); consumption of the ideal product (Tse and Wilton, 1988); equity theory (Oliver and Swan, 1989); and desires (Spreng and Olshavsky, 1993).

Perceptions derived from the shopping experience form the basis of consumer satisfaction and in turn lead to consumer happiness (Dagger and Sweeney, 2006; Anderson and Mansi, 2009; Sweeney et al., 2015; Gong and Yi, 2018). Han et al. (2019) add that satisfaction influences consumer happiness and retention.

In the literature on consumer behavior, several authors argue that the shopping experience translated into satisfaction levels positively influences consumer happiness with the purchase (Nicolao et al., 2009; Howell and Guevarra, 2013; Gilovich et al., 2015; Theodorakis et al., 2015).

Satisfaction is reflected in global feelings arising from the material and experiential consumption derived from the purchase (Yoshida and James, 2010; Theodorakis et al., 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3. Satisfaction has a positive influence on consumer happiness.

Brand loyalty can be defined as “a deep commitment to buy the preferred brand repeatedly and continuously in the future despite the influences of situational factors and the marketing efforts to switch to another brand” (Oliver, 1999).

The research of Oliver (1999) states that consumers develop a positive attitude toward the brand or preference for the brand as a result of satisfactory repetitive use over time. Likewise, several researchers have verified that consumer satisfaction has a positive influence on loyalty (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Bloemer and De Ruyter, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Chiou, 2004; Schultz, 2005; Yang and Peterson, 2004; Da Silva and Syed Alwi, 2006; Sondoh et al., 2007; Upamannyu and Sankpal, 2014; Neupane, 2015; Alves et al., 2019; Salami Sheeba and Malarvixhi, 2019; Cuong and Khoi, 2019).

When consumers are satisfied with the product and its brand image, they are more likely to make repeat purchases (Bennet and Rundle-Thiele, 2004) and become prescribers of that product. Brand image studies confirm that satisfaction positively influences loyalty intention, especially the intention to buy back (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000), the intention to revisit the shop (Bloemer and De Ruyter, 1998; Sondoh et al., 2007) and the intention to recommend (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 1998; Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000).

The importance of identifying the true determinants of loyalty is based on the desire to better understand consumer retention in branded fashion consumption (Taylor, 1998). Brand loyalty to a company or its products ensures the survival of that company (Bennett and Rundle-Thiele, 2005; Kapferer, 2005):

H4. Satisfaction has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

Many studies have identified that consumer happiness has a significant effect on loyalty (Shin, 2008; Khan and Hussain, 2013; Kim et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2017; Vittersø et al., 2017; Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2019; Ravina-Ripoll, 2020).

The importance of making customers happy not only involves cultivating happiness as a state but also the favorable consumer behavior that results from that state (Higgins, 1997; Fredrickson, 2001).

Also, clients tend to repeat experiences that are pleasant and cause happiness and avoid unpleasant ones (Higgins, 1997). Positive emotions can thus expand the consumer's thoughts at that moment and facilitate the construction of lasting physical, intellectual, social and psychological patterns of purchasing behavior (Fredrickson, 2006).

In addition, certain authors (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003) explain purchase happiness as the sum of material consumption and purchase experience and that this has an impact on the consumer's choice to consume the product again and, therefore, has a positive influence on loyalty. The following hypothesis can, therefore, be put forward:

H5. Consumer happiness has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Survey design

This research is based on a cross-sectional descriptive study using primary data from a questionnaire answered by a representative sample of the Spanish population between October and December 2020. The total number of valid questionnaires collected was 2,515, implying a sampling error of $\pm 1.99\%$ (with a 95.5% confidence interval and $p = q = 0.5$).

The questionnaire is composed of two main sections. In the first part, data are collected that describe the demographic characteristics and behavior of respondents. The second part examines the dimensions analyzed. For this part, the initial selection of the items related to the seven constructs of the questionnaire was based on an exhaustive review of the literature. Once the items had been selected and before sending out the questionnaire, prior qualitative research was carried out through a focus group. This focus group was comprised of four professors from different Spanish universities with expertise in fashion marketing and consumer happiness management, two professionals who work in different fashion companies and four regular fashion shoppers. As a result of this qualitative research, the final questionnaire was obtained, consisting of seven constructs with a total of 25 items.

The questionnaire included multiple-item measurement scales that have been adapted from the literature and help to ensure the validity of measurement scales for all constructs: five items for brand image (Sondoh, 2007), four for pleasant life (Fu and Wang, 2020), three for meaningful life (Fu and Wang, 2020), three for engaged life (Fu and Wang, 2020), four for consumer happiness (Al Mandil, 2016, Swart, 2011, Theodorakis *et al.*, 2019, Theodorakis *et al.*, 2015), three for satisfaction (Theodorakis *et al.*, 2015) and three for brand loyalty (Al Mandil, 2016, Swart, 2011). The scale used for these 25 items was a five-point Likert-type response format, in which respondents could rate the items from 1 ("completely disagree") to 5 ("completely agree"). It also included questions on a series of general classification variables and others specific to the buying behavior of fashion brand products (Table 1).

A pretest of the questionnaire was carried out in September 2020 on a representative sample of the Spanish population, made up of 26 people between 16 and 72 years of age, 13 men and 13 women. The aim of this pretest was to determine whether the scales were well constructed and to ensure that the people to whom the survey was to be addressed understood each of the questions in the questionnaire perfectly. After this process, some typos were corrected and all questions were validated. Once the questionnaire had been refined, it was launched online through a discretionary non-probabilistic sampling by quotas, with the aim of achieving a distribution of sexes and age as similar as possible to that of the Spanish population. The questionnaire was distributed through the main social networks from October to December 2020. The result was that a representative sample of the population was studied, with a total of 2,515 valid questionnaires.

Table 1 Constructs, items, factor loading, reliability and validity

Factor loadings		Sources of adoption
<i>Brand image RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.86, AVE: 0.66, Composite reliability: 0.90</i>		
This brand performs as it promises	0.79	Sondoh (2007)
This brand makes me feel good	0.82	
This brand helps me feel accepted	0.79	
This means that I make a good impression on other people	0.87	
This brand enhances the perception that I have a desirable lifestyle	0.88	
<i>Consumer happiness RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.88, AVE: 0.73, Composite reliability: 0.92</i>		
I am pleased with my decision to purchase this brand's product	0.85	Al Mandil (2016)
Purchasing this brand's product is gratifying to me	0.91	Theodorakis et al. (2019)
Purchasing this brand's product contributes to my overall happiness in life	0.88	Theodorakis et al. (2015)
Purchasing this brand's product really improves the quality of my life	0.77	
<i>Pleasant life RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.81, AVE: 0.63, Composite reliability: 0.87</i>		
I enjoyed purchasing this brand's product	0.75	Fu and Wang (2020)
I am excited to purchase this brand's product	0.89	
Purchasing this brand's product relieves my stress	0.78	
Purchasing this brand's product helps me forget my worries temporarily	0.74	
<i>Engaged life RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.83, AVE: 0.74, Composite reliability: 0.90</i>		
Purchasing this brand's product involves me with the brand	0.84	Fu and Wang (2020)
Time goes by fast when I am purchasing this brand's products	0.88	Fu and Wang (2020)
Purchasing this fashion item makes me feel that my efforts at work or school are worthwhile	0.87	
<i>Meaningful life RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.84, AVE: 0.76, Composite reliability: 0.90</i>		
Being able to purchase this brand's product makes me feel like I am a lucky person	0.87	Fu and Wang (2020)
Purchasing this brand makes me feel that I benefit other people	0.85	
Being able to purchase this brand's product makes me feel like it is worthwhile to work hard	0.89	
<i>Satisfaction RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.91, AVE: 0.85, Composite reliability: 0.95</i>		
This brand's product meets these expectations	0.93	Theodorakis et al. (2015)
My decision to purchase this brand's product was a good one	0.94	
My overall satisfaction level with the purchase of this brand's product is...	0.90	
<i>Brand loyalty (BRL) RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.89, AVE: 0.82, Composite reliability: 0.93</i>		
I will continue to buy this brand in the future	0.92	Sondoh (2007)
When I need a new product, I will buy this brand as my first choice	0.86	
I will highly recommend buying this brand to any of my friends or family	0.94	

Note: RVM = reliability and validity measures

3.2 Sample size and composition

The total sample size was 2,515 individuals who represent the Spanish population aged 15 to 64. The composition of the sample was 46% men and 54% women. By age group, 16% are 15–19 years old, 41% are 20–39 years old, 28% are 40–54 and 15% are 55–64 years old. By buying behavior, 52% buy only in physical stores, 7% buy only online and 41% buy both in physical stores and online. And finally, from the point of view of branded clothing items purchased monthly, 27% do not buy any items, 58% buy 1–2, 12% buy 3–4 and 3% buy more than 4 items (Table 2).

4. Findings

4.1 Measurement model: reliability and validity

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was developed by Wold (1982). It is a multivariate analysis technique and is increasingly applied in management research. Wold (2006) defines this method as an innovation that combines econometric prediction with the psychometric modeling of latent variables (or constructs), with multiple observed indicators (manifest variables). A block of observable indicators represents each latent variable that is not directly observable. The latent variables have pre-defined and

Table 2 Sample information		
Gender	%	Total 2,515
Male	45.8	1,152
Female	54.2	1,152
Age	%	Total 2,515
15–19	15.8	396
20–39	41.0	1,032
40–54	28.4	715
55–64	14.8	372
Purchase in physical stores or online	%	Total 2,515
Purchase only in physical stores	52.2	1,314
Purchase only online	7.0	175
Purchase in physical stores and online	40.8	1,026
Branded clothing items purchased monthly	%	Total 2,515
0	27.2	683
1–2	58.1	1,461
3–4	12.2	306
More than 4	2.6	65

theoretically established relationships. The results were obtained using SmartPLS 3.3.2 (Ringle *et al.*, 2015).

The first step in PLS is to assess the model's reliability and validity. To assess the measure's reliability, it is necessary to determine how each item relates to the latent constructs (Table 1). All of the loadings exceed 0.74 for these items and load more highly on their own construct than on others. Using the rule of thumb of accepting items with loadings of 0.707 or more, we observed that none of the 25 items failed to reach this level of acceptable reliability (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011). These results provide strong support for the reliability of the reflective measures. In this model, all latent constructs were constructed with reflective measures. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) assess internal consistency. As shown in Table 1, all the coefficients of each construct of reflective measures in the study for both indices exceed 0.80. A value of 0.80 has been suggested as a "stricter" measure of reliability applicable in basic research (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). To ensure this internal consistency, the average variance extracted (AVE) is also used and a value at least equal to 0.5 is recommended (all the coefficients of each set of reflective measures in the study have a value of AVE that exceeds 0.5).

AVE is also used for assessing discriminant validity. For this, the square root of AVE is compared with the correlations among constructs. The square root of AVE is greater than the correlation between the constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). These statistics suggest that each construct relates more strongly to its own measures than to measures of other constructs. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations is commonly used in assessing the discriminant validity in the PLS-SEM model, as a second option. The bootstrapping routine (5,000 bootstrap samples in our results) must be run, and if the value is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been established between two reflective constructs (all the coefficients in the study have a value below 0.9).

4.2 Structural model: goodness of fit statistics

Absolute fit indices indicate how well a model fits the sample data (McDonald and Ho, 2002). Henseler *et al.* (2014) introduce the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as a goodness of fit measure for PLS-SEM that can be used to avoid model misspecification. Standardized SRMR is defined as the difference between the observed correlation and the model's implied correlation matrix. A value less than 0.10 is considered to indicate a good fit to data (Hu and Bentler, 1999). For this model, SRMR is 0.096,

suggesting that the model is an acceptable fit. The results of the model also suggest that the dimensions explain a large amount of variance in meaningful, pleasant and engaged life, consumer happiness and brand loyalty, with R^2 values of 0.37, 0.51, 0.34, 0.77 and 0.62, respectively. The Stone–Geisser (Q^2) results for the same variables are 0.28, 0.31, 0.25, 0.56 and 0.50, respectively, where values larger than zero indicate that the model’s predictive relevance is good.

4.3 Results of SEM

The results for the conceptual model (Figure 2) show how brand image is related to each of the dimensions of consumer happiness. With a coefficient of 0.72, the results suggest that brand image has the most important positive influence on the pleasant life dimension. This situation also applies to the meaningful and engaged life dimensions, which are influenced strongly and positively by brand image (with value coefficients of 0.61 and 0.59 respectively). The $H1.1$, $H1.2$ and $H1.3$ hypotheses are, therefore, not rejected (Table 3).

Among all the dimensions of consumer happiness, only pleasant life shows a strong positive influence on consumer happiness (0.57). Neither meaningful life nor engaged life has a significant influence on consumer happiness (0.05 and -0.05 respectively). Given these values, hypothesis $H2.1$ is not rejected, but $H2.2$ and $H2.3$ are rejected.

For the hypothesis that attempts to discover the relationship between satisfaction and consumer happiness, it is very clear that the relationship is strong and positive, with a high coefficient (0.36). Brand loyalty is the other variable in the model that is influenced positively by satisfaction. In fact, satisfaction has a very strong and positive influence (0.47). $H3$ and

Figure 2 Results

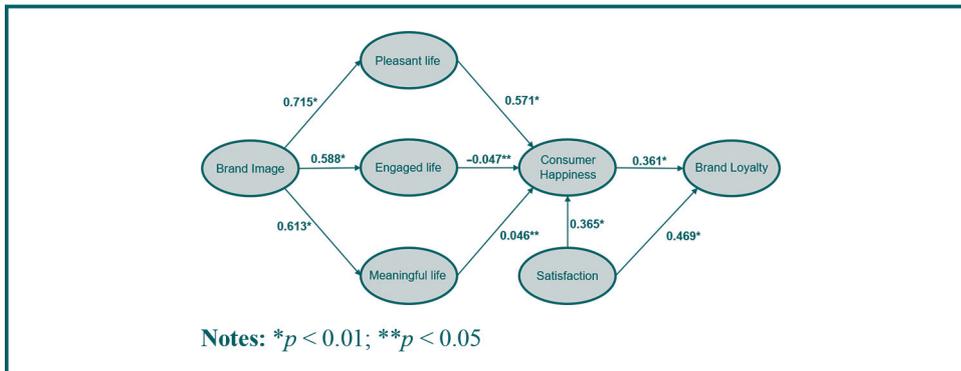


Table 3 Summary of hypothesis verification

Hypothesis	Content	Verification
$H1.1$	Brand Image has a positive influence on Pleasant life	Supported
$H1.2$	Brand Image has a positive influence on Engaged life	Supported
$H1.3$	Brand Image has a positive influence on Meaningful life	Supported
$H2.1$	Pleasant life has a positive influence on Consumer happiness	Supported
$H2.2$	Engaged life has a positive influence on Consumer happiness	Rejected
$H2.3$	Meaningful life has a positive influence on Consumer happiness	Rejected
$H3$	Satisfaction has a positive influence on brand loyalty	Supported
$H4$	Satisfaction has a positive influence on brand loyalty	Supported
$H5$	Consumer happiness has a positive influence on brand loyalty	Supported

H4 are, therefore, not rejected. Finally, consumer happiness has a positive and relevant influence on brand loyalty (0.36), so hypothesis *H6* is not rejected.

Finally, analyzing the results of the total indirect effects (Table 4) is relevant, but only the indirect total effect between brand image and consumer happiness indicates a significant influence (0.41). However, this value is principally owing to pleasant life.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The conceptual model of brand image, satisfaction and loyalty is generally accepted (Chiou, 2004; Sondoh *et al.*, 2007; Upamannyu and Sankpal, 2014; Neupane, 2015; Salami Sheeba and Malarvixhi, 2019; Cuong and Khoi, 2019). However, with the model validated in this work, progress has been made in the literature in the sense that, among the variables that are precursors of loyalty we can find not only consumer satisfaction but also significant consumer happiness, which functions as a mediator of brand image.

In the fashion sector, brand image generates value in terms of functional benefits (Park *et al.*, 1986; Keller, 1993; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020) and meaningful life (Wilkie, 1986; Aaker, 1991; Lai and Perminiene, 2020) and engages the consumer with the firm (Park *et al.*, 1986; Monferrer *et al.*, 2019; Castillo-Abdul *et al.*, 2021). These conclusions continue along the same line as previous works that studied other sectors.

In other sectors such as tourism, Seligman (2002), Peterson *et al.* (2005) and Filep and Deery (2010) explain the three constructs – a pleasant life, an engaged life and a meaningful life – as antecedents to consumer happiness. However, in the fashion sector, only pleasant life has a significant positive influence on consumer happiness. This represents major progress for managers ensuring the efficient allocation of resources in the marketing strategies of fashion firms.

The fact that satisfaction has a positive influence on loyalty is another generally accepted hypothesis (Taylor, 1998; Bennett and Rundle-Thiele, 2004; Schultz, 2005; Sondoh *et al.*, 2007). But the reality is that consumers are increasingly attracted to new brands and highly satisfied customers are sometimes no longer loyal (Reichheld and Markey, 2000). This, in turn, means that companies must come up with new strategies to retain consumers. One of the original contributions made by this work is, therefore, the fact that it considers the consumer happiness variable to be an antecedent to loyalty in the fashion industry.

The present research deepens our knowledge of the variables that positively influence branded fashion consumer retention, which ensures the companies' ongoing existence (Bennett and Rundle-Thiele, 2005; Kapferer, 2005) in global markets, which are highly competitive and in continuous growth (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2013).

There are an increasing number of studies on the importance of happiness for consumer behavior, and this background is benefiting management significantly. This is because managers are realizing the importance of examining and developing consumer happiness.

Table 4 Total indirect effects	
	Total indirect effects
Brand image > brand loyalty	0.148*
Brand image > consumer happiness	0.409*
Pleasant life > consumer happiness	0.206*
Engaged life > consumer happiness	-0.017**
Meaningful life > consumer happiness	0.017**
Satisfaction > brand loyalty	0.132*

Notes: *Significant path coefficients (at $p < 0.05$); **Significant path coefficients (at $p < 0.01$)

They should, therefore, pay attention to those dimensions that influence happiness and attempt to develop strategies to increase levels of consumer happiness, because happy consumers generate significant revenue for the company and result in consumer retention. The findings of this study indicate that fashion companies have managed the happiness emotional dimension (within the pleasant life dimension), and brand image is a good antecedent for achieving this goal. Other ways to achieve increased happiness do not seem to be useful in the fashion sector. However, the model can help managers to understand an overall model in which consumer satisfaction is present and is still the major influence on loyalty while sharing this position with consumer happiness. If they understand that it is possible to build a company strategy focused on consumer happiness, they can gain a competitive advantage for their fashion business. The companies in this sector that manage a growth strategy and wish to avoid becoming impersonal need to be aware of the importance of happiness for achieving their aims, because consumer happiness increases brand loyalty. Consumer happiness connects fashion products to consumers' enjoyment of life, exciting them and helping them forget their problems. Companies are building future strategies based on brand loyalty. On the other hand, satisfaction will continue to develop brand loyalty because managers must try to meet customer expectations through marketing strategies that help consumers believe that they made a good decision. In this case, managers also know that this increased satisfaction will have a positive influence on consumer happiness.

In addition, another practical implication of this work is that fashion brands can develop marketing and management strategies to improve the consumer experience in the fashion shopping process both at the point of sale (offline) and online to improve shopping pleasure and, therefore, consumer happiness and brand loyalty (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2021).

The present work allows to extend social marketing strategies not only to the implementation of strategies in relation to corporate social responsibility (CSR), as it is a generalized concept of what constitutes desirable business behavior (Robins, 2008; Lenssen *et al.*, 2011). It allows to develop sustainability strategies into the organizations from the happiness consumer in an ethical context to meet the needs of all individuals involved in the value chain, their human capital, stakeholders, audits, consumers and society at large (White, 2009; Eriksson and Svensson, 2016; Bacha *et al.*, 2020).

On the other hand, it is recommended that fashion firms implement happiness management certification in the near future, as an instrument that certifies that the collective well-being of all their human capital and stakeholders is cultivated within these organizations, under the guiding principles of the collaborative economy, happiness philosophy, CSR and positive psychology (Rok, 2009). In this way, fashion firms can carry out strategic actions aimed at achieving satisfactory experiences that help to attract and retain their potential consumers. Thus, in the post-COVID-19 era, opportunities are generated for entities that actively develop this type of culture, marketing and business management based on the key factor of corporate happiness (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2019). In this way, fashion firms will be able to adopt a strong positioning in the market with an intangible resource that also generates brand value.

One of the objectives of this work was to study the role that consumer happiness plays in a model that aims to improve brand loyalty. To fulfill this aim, it is necessary to broaden the field of research, through studies that could include other industries and a more representative sample in terms of the regions surveyed. Our future lines of research are orientated in that direction, and it would be also desirable to work toward extending future studies to include other consumer variables. Finally, another possible line of research could be a longitudinal study using the panel data of fashion industries that have incorporated happiness management strategies into their marketing strategies, to evaluate their impact on brand loyalty. On the other hand, future research could extend the scope of the sample study to European or even international levels.

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Further reading

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