

Internet technologies as a source of consumer information on their consumption

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Abstract: Mistrusting food brands have strongly affected the consumers' assurance, alongside the health crisis we live in nowadays. Inside this terrible context is where the consumers find themselves ahead of a food universe in full mutation. As an outcome, their anxiety keeps growing, and they find it difficult to know what exactly they are eating. And as [1] writes, "If we don't know what we eat, doesn't it become difficult to know not only what we are going to become, but also what we are?". The main objective of this article is to define through a literature review the new consumption tendency of the customers while they are choosing their products. It covers the fact that consumers search for information about what they are consuming before taking the final decision and buying a product. Technology became a tool in which consumers can find any information they might need, and it is an evolving behaviour. Technology gave access to the missing information consumers used to have. It was able to assist them with data and brought back their power or even their empowerment. In general, technology comes to change the passive role the consumers have in the creation process. The consumers are the main actor in the final result of their food and have their expectations met. They have become a "consumer-actor" [2]. The empowerment and power gained through technology can transform and change the way consumers and eaters choose what to eat.

1 INTRODUCTION

The successive food crises happening lately and the rise of food fears have destabilized the trust between consumers and the various direct actors in the food sector. Consumers undervalue methods used by other food companies, such as not communicating the truth about the information that is fundamental for their final choice. Their ambition is to take into account their expectations, their wishes and their life choices. This consumer awareness of the close link between food and health has led them to adopt an informative approach. It is the use of technology to get information about the products of the brands they consume. With the rise of internet technologies, consumers are surrounded by all kinds of information that allows them quick access to compare alternative offers and rethink the

way they choose their consumption. This would voluntarily promote their autonomy from producers and improve their ability to monitor their purchasing process [3]. This paper aims to propose different conceptions about empowerment and how the consumer may have received it. This has led us to carefully analyse the literature review and to draw on empirical cases in the food sector to clarify and introduce the concept from different perspectives..

2 State of the art

2.1 Internet technologies as a source of emergence of a new consumer profile:

With, the massive use of the internet, consumers have become very informed about what they consume. Like [4] states, the use of the internet favours the consumer's power of expertise through the information available on all online information media while at the same time helping to reduce the asymmetry of information within the market relationship. It would also promote the consumer's voice by contributing to the dissemination of positive and, or negative opinions to as many people as possible [5]. And finally, these Internet technologies would provide a legitimate power to the customer by reconsidering the normal distribution of roles within the market relationship [6]when the brand allows it the ability to be engaged in the product development process. This power acquired through internet technology has contributed to developments in consumer empowerment [3]. Another concept affirmed by [7] is that there are two sources of empowerment that the consumer can receive: the power transferred by the producer to his consumers which, manifests itself in the delegation of power for specific tasks to consumers and the power perceived by the use of the Internet that the consumer acquired. The power perceived by the consumer through Internet technologies to collaborate in specific tasks initiated voluntarily is called psychological empowerment. The producers delegate power so their consumers can participate in specific tasks, following an initial source called structural empowerment or an empowerment strategy. This empowerment process is called customer empowerment, also called the 'delegation of power' [8] or a 'top-down' relationship. With internet technologies, specific tasks are attributed to the consumer, such as selecting the technical or aesthetic characteristics of the product, its design, its mode of distribution or its price. Empowerment is the permission conceded to the consumers to participate and control some variables of mixed marketing. The second type of empowerment as a psychological state of the consumer is conceptualised by [9] as "a mental state commonly accompanied by action that enables a consumer or group of consumers to express their own choices, ambitions and expectations of other individuals or organisations in the marketplace". It is a power voluntarily perceived by the consumer through internet technologies [7].

2.2 Empowerment as a result of the consumer being aware of his consumption

Internet technologies collect information about the products consumed, as a way to be aware of their quality and how reliable they are, and that leads the consumer to be more strict and mistrust what they consume. A behaviour that became a trend and is happening inside industrial companies. The objective is to involve the brand and the consumers, both as collaborators, in the creation process of the product consumers will evaluate as a final

result. This procedure is a new SDL approach [10], involving the consumers as active actors that can decide what they want to have in their product while looking at the market. Consumers and the company can integrate and use resources as a base of the values created and encouraged only by the inputs of each of the stakeholders involved, co-creating and generating the worth behind the product [11]. This tendency appears in the food sector in different and diverse cases, including the invention of spirulina. Their consumers were invited to the creation process of the product, following an upstream process. It's by interactions in the development stage where the brands benefit from the different perspectives and opinions from their consumers, alongside their creativity and with the fact that they ensure they meet their clients' expectations. [12] In this company's case, they used an open strategy called "open innovation", which involves the consumers. That is one of the ways to do upstream co-creation, which requires strong participation of future clients. Another strategy used by companies in the food sector is to delegate the power and decision-making to the consumer to develop and co-create ethical, responsible, and healthy final products. As an example, there is the case of the company "C'est qui le patron" that empowers its future clients to define their brand using co-creation platforms. This process is called the consumers' empowerment inside marketing, an unusual and unconventional cocreation case that differentiates two empowerment strategies: one to create, and another to select. Empowerment to create is related to how involved the consumer is in the development of the concepts of the new product, taking into consideration their innovation potential [13] [14] [15]. The main objective of this strategy is to call their consumers and collect designs, ideas, and proposals for the upcoming products. Empowerment to select is related to how involved the consumer is to choose and take the decision of the final offer that will be placed, used, and promoted by the company. This operation was developed in various countries, and was noticed initially in Morocco in 2020, with the foundation of the consumers brand "Dyalna". Also called "Almaosatahlik", the initiative aims to ensure that Moroccan customers can co-create the final products and results they want, meet their expectations without letting go of the quality, responsibility, and fairness. The analysis of this literature takes different perspectives discussed and analyzed by the authors. It considers the two types of empowerment in the food sector acquired by the consumers through empirical cases. Empowerment is delegating the power of creation to the consumers through online platforms, where they can co-create and join the manufacturing of their future product. Empowerment done as a volunteer step by the potential customers is where they use technology to identify how reliable that brand is and collect all answers to their questions to make a good and correct choice and be involved in the whole development and creation process.

3 Conclusion

The responsibility of the consumers has increased towards what they eat and towards the difference in their consuming habits. They want to improve their health while being responsible for the environment, and the reason behind it is the growth of nutritional information you can access using the Internet. This clarification should be able to strengthen the efforts of the food industry and shape a new approach using co-creation strategies, inserting the consumer and involving them in shaping their product through online platforms. The main goal is to be transparent to the offers they place and make their brands firmly positioned when consumers, Are considering health, creating this direct link between health and food. Brands involve their consumers to upstream the value chain using one of the two strategies of empowerment, aiming to embody the consumer into the process

of creativity and creation of their food. those strategies can only be implemented thanks to the facilities offered by the Internet.

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