

How positive and negative experiences of freedom foster consumer happiness

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Cite as:

Gaston-Breton Charlotte, Sørensen Elin, Thomsen Thyra (2020), How positive and negative experiences of freedom foster consumer happiness. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 49th, (63785)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



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Abstract

This article focuses on consumers' experiences of freedom as a source of happiness. In three studies (a multi-sensory sculpting study, a survey, and an experiment), we demonstrate the presence, meaning, and role of experiencing freedom through consumption and investigate how this fosters consumer happiness. The findings underscore the existence of negative and positive experiences of freedom in the everyday consumption of goods: respectively, "freedom from" worries and stress and "freedom to" be oneself and achieve self-realization. We show that negative experiences of "freedom from" are more likely to foster hedonic happiness while positive experiences of "freedom to" are more likely to foster eudaimonic happiness. This research provides a typology of consumer experiences likely to enhance affective or meaningful relationships between firms and customers and informs consumers about routes to happiness.

Keywords: *Experience; Freedom; Consumer happiness*

Track: Consumer Behaviour