The emotional consumer

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Introduction

Since the 1990s many researchers have acknowledged that consumers are not always rational because they are driven by their emotions. The impact of emotions upon consumer behaviour is evident through many different aspects of research. It is impossible to cover all aspects of affect that have been researched so far as there have been a vast number of papers published. However, there are aspects of affect that clearly indicate that it is an important part of understanding consumer behaviour fully such as attention, recall, decision-making, atmospherics and persuasion, all of which will be discussed in this chapter.

Emotions

Consumers are sometimes described as being rational in the decisions that they make and the ways in which they interact with different types of consumption. The rational theories used to explain 'rational consumer behaviour' mostly assume that emotions are something that can be controlled and at times even completely disregarded so that humans are capable of acting in a rational manner. Some researchers argue that emotions do not really fill a function (e.g. Ledoux, 1998) and from such a perspective there is no reason why the impact of emotions upon consumption should not be ignored. However, there are many more scientists who argue that emotions do indeed play a role in human functioning (e.g. Damasio, 1994; Frijda, 1986) and there is no reason why this would not also be applicable to consumer behaviour. Consequently, it would be rash to assume that emotions can be controlled and that consumers always act in a rational manner. Since the 1990s this has been recognized by many consumer researchers, so that it now is one of the most popular lines of investigation within consumption-related studies.

So what is emotion? *Emotion* can generally be defined as intense affect. The word affect is commonly used in the research literature to describe an internal feeling state that can incorporate both emotions and mood. An emotion is a feeling

that comprises physiological, behavioural and cognitive reactions to internal and external events (Carlson & Hatfield, 1992) and they tend to be intentional in that they represent something in particular (Frijda, 1993), such as when a consumer is especially pleased with the effectiveness of a product. Mood, on the other hand, is a bit more difficult to clearly distinguish from emotion. Generally, moods are more pervasive, longer lasting and less intense than emotions. To date, it appears that a high number of consumer researchers that have investigated affect have chosen to focus on mood (e.g. Barone, Miniard, & Romeo, 2000). Perhaps this is partially due to the fact that moods have been found to be easily manipulated by the use of stimuli such as music and pictures (Cohen & Andrade, 2004).

Researching affect

There is no 'standard' way to investigate the impact of emotions and mood upon consumer behaviour and thought processes. Since the 1990s there has been a surge in the amount of research conducted within this area, but even so there are those who think that the research does not link emotion to a wide enough range of consumption experiences (Richins, 1997). With an increase in the quantity of consumer studies investigating affect, the research world has naturally also seen a wider range of methods used. What the high number of research studies conducted have in common is that the researchers have had to make use of some sort of method to ensure that their participants are somehow experiencing the emotions that they wish to measure.

Inducing emotions and mood

Making people experience certain feelings can be difficult at times, which is often why researchers instead opt for mood induction. Even when researchers are successful in inducing the emotions that they wish to test, it is important that the dependent variable is measured shortly afterwards as induced emotions tend not to last long (Isen, Clark, & Schwartz, 1976).

The research literature shows that the methods used to induce certain types of feelings and moods vary. Some of the methods used include using films or film clips to try and make people feel happy or sad (e.g. Adaval, 2001; Andrade, 2005), music that has previously been established to be disagreeable or agreeable (Gorn, Goldberg, & Basu, 1993), as well as providing people with positive or negative feedback on performance (Barone, Miniard, & Romeo, 2000). None of the methods used have been identified as being superior in the induction of emotions and mood. However, some of the methods used have been criticized in that, depending on how the research is conducted, an experimenter may generate more than just the feelings they wish to measure. Put simply, some methodologies may impact on participants in other ways that may also in turn influence the research results. For example, providing people with negative feedback may decrease their self-esteem

as well as changing the way they are feeling (Hill & Ward, 1989) and consequently it can be difficult to determine which of the two factors have generated the research results. Such examples demonstrate that researchers need to be alert when it comes to considering any confounding variables in their research studies.

Measuring emotional responses to stimuli

One common way to measure consumers' responses to a particular stimulus is by the use of self-reports (most commonly questionnaires). Typically participants are then presented with a number of questions that are directly linked to both positive and negative types of emotions that measure how they may feel about a stimulus. A lot of the time the questionnaires are analysed by using factor or cluster analysis in the hope of establishing specific underlying emotional factors that can explain how people feel about certain products and services. Using self-report techniques such as questionnaires has its drawbacks as participants are often prone to provide answers that they think are socially desirable or that they think the researcher wants, which can lead to incorrect research outcomes. Even so, questionnaires (in combination with factor analysis) have been very helpful when it comes to establishing scales that explore people's emotional responses. In particular, a number of useful scales have been developed that tap into how people feel about different types of advertisements (e.g. Edell & Burke, 1987).

Many of the scales developed incorporate a high number of different items, some as many as 90 or more (e.g. Holbrook & Batra, 1987). Regardless of how many items the scales consist of, most have been found to have only a few underlying emotional factors (e.g. Edell & Burke, 1987; Holbrook & Batra, 1987). There are even some that have been narrowed down to consist of only two factors that can be neatly described as positive and negative affect (e.g. Oliver, 1994). Categorizing emotional responses into positive and negative may be far from ideal, as not all positive (and negative) emotions generate the same kind of response in consumers. Consequently it can be wiser to divide positive (and negative) emotions into sub-categories or treat them as single entities (as will be discussed further in this chapter).

Emotions, attention and recall

Emotions impact upon people's cognitive processes, as they can affect the ability to encode, store and retrieve information (Blaney, 1986). Two particular areas that clearly demonstrate how emotions play an important part in how consumer-related information is processed are selective attention and recall. Both areas show that emotions are an integral part when it comes to understanding how people function and why they are more likely to focus on certain factors than others.

Selective attention

Most marketers want to know what it is that makes consumers focus more on some products than on others and whether specific product attributes are more likely to capture their attention. It appears that how people are feeling at a particular point in time may (at least partially) offer an explanation.

In a study conducted by Bower, Gilligan and Montiero (1981), it was discovered that mood can make people engage in selective learning. Participants were made to feel happy or sad through hypnosis and were afterwards asked to read drafts of psychiatric interviews. Interestingly enough they found that happy participants focused on and remembered a higher number of happy facts than did the sad ones, while sad participants remembered more sad facts. Hence the study shows that emotions activated by subconscious experiences can bias the information they focus on and encode into memory. One explanation as to why this happens is because material that is congruent with the way people feel is more likely to be semantically elaborated upon (Bower & Cohen, 1982).

Another piece of research that also supports the idea that mood can make people biased in what they pay attention to was conducted by Adaval (2001). She showed that Bower et al.'s research findings are also applicable to the product domain. Adaval's participants were given a mood-induction task so that they felt either happy or sad. Afterwards they were asked to evaluate a piece of clothing that was described by an attribute which was likely to be judged on subjective or non-subjective criteria. The results demonstrated that participants were more likely to pay attention to information that matched the feelings they were experiencing at the time, even though the feelings had no relationship to the piece of clothing. Hence, the research provides evidence that emotion can play a part in how much attention people pay to certain types of product information, provided the information is similar in valence to the evaluator's mood.

Impact on recall

Similar to selective attention, recall is also impacted upon by mood-congruent information. In particular, it has been suggested that a positive mood is more likely to generate recall of positive events than a negative mood (Bower & Forgas, 2000). One explanation as to why negative moods are different may be because people are generally motivated to make themselves feel better (something known as **affect regulation**) and consequently negative feelings can at times encourage recall of positive events (Isen, 1984). There are also some who suggest that not only are individuals in a positive mood more likely to recall positive information, they are also more likely to recall information of a negative nature. This may have something to do with the relevance of the information encountered. When highly relevant information is presented to people that are in a good mood it is just as likely to be recalled regardless of whether the information is positive or negative (e.g. Trope & Pomerantz, 1998). For example, in a study conducted by Raghunathan and Trope

(2002), it was found that high caffeine consumers had an enhanced recall about negative aspects of caffeine consumption when they were in a good mood. However, this was not found to be the case for low caffeine consumers. Hence, it would appear that how relevant the information is to the consumer will play an important part in whether or not a 'happy' consumer remembers the information encountered.

An additional factor that plays a part in understanding emotional impact upon recall is the actual strength of the emotions that people are experiencing. Highly intense emotions have been found to increase immediate and long-term memory. In a study by Bradley, Greenwald, Petry, & Lang (1992), pictures were used to generate different levels of arousal in their participants; some made the participants feel highly aroused while others produced low arousal levels. When participants felt highly aroused, they were better at recalling the pictures they had seen. The findings were the same whether the recall was conducted immediately after seeing the pictures or a year later. It should be noted though, that highly arousing stimuli may not necessarily generate accurate recall since highly affective experiences are just as prone to reconstruction as any other kind of memories (Levine, 2000).

Impact of emotions upon decision-making

Emotional reactions have been suggested to precede and be fairly independent of cognitive judgements (Zajonc, 2000). When confronted with products and services which consumers can choose from, it appears that they search their feelings in an attempt to establish how they feel about the stimuli they are exposed to (e.g. Schwarz, 1990). This may be done without the individual being aware of it (Peters & Slovic, 2000), something that is recognized as a 'how-do-I-feel-about it' heuristic (e.g. Finucane, Peters, & Slovic, 2003). This heuristic is used as a basis for making a judgement (Schwarz & Clore, 1983) and consequently consumers' moods inform their decisions even if how they are feeling is unrelated to the decisions they are about to make. This is why it is important to try and ensure (when possible) that consumers are in a good mood when deciding upon what to consume as otherwise they may end up associating a particular product with their negative mood and subsequently evaluate the product in a disapproving way. Individuals who are in a good mood have repeatedly been found to evaluate stimuli more positively whether it is consumer goods (Isen, Shalker, Clark, & Karp, 1978; Srull, 1983) or something else such as other people (Forgas & Bower, 1987) or past life events (Clark & Teasdale, 1982). However, positive emotions are unlikely to influence the evaluation of a highly familiar stimulus (e.g. Srull, 1984; Salovey & Birnbaum, 1989) as consumers are then more likely to be guided by past evaluations that are already an integral part of their schema.

Controlling feelings through consumption

At times, consumption-related decisions are linked to the consumer's desire to control the way they feel. When consumers experience negative emotions of some sort, they tend to be eager to engage in consumption behaviours that will lighten their mood (Cohen, Tuan Pham, & Andrade, 2008). Examples of consumption-related behaviour that they might make use of in such instances include buying presents for themselves, watching funny television programmes, eating chocolate and listening to uplifting music (Andrade, 2005; Cohen & Andrade, 2004; Luomala & Laaksonen, 1997; Weaver & Laird, 1995). It does not really matter what kind of consumption activities a person with negative emotions engages in as long as they genuinely believe that they will enhance their mood. This means that if marketers can create associations between products and the belief that they will make people feel happy, consumers in a bad mood are much more likely to purchase them.

Additionally, the type of feelings that consumers are hoping to change also plays a part in what kind of mood changing activities they take part in. For example, if an individual is experiencing anxiety, they are less likely to take part in something that is perceived as risky (Raghunathan & Pham, 1999), and consequently will purchase something that they feel certain will have guaranteed benefits.

The Appraisal-Tendency Framework (ATF)

The Appraisal-Tendency Framework (ATF) is a general theory that can be applied to explain consumer choices (Han, Lerner, & Keltner, 2007). The framework was proposed by Lerner and Keltner (2000; 2001) and is based upon the idea that explicit emotions generate specific cognitive and motivational processes, which in turn also influence consumers' evaluations of objects and events that they come across when experiencing the emotion. This means that people appraise situations and objects based upon how they are feeling at a particular point in time – a process known as *appraisal*. It is worth noting that the appraisal can impact upon both the content and depth of processing (Lerner & Tiedens, 2006) during the decision-making process.

Prior to the ATF, most theories of emotional influences on choice have made use of a *valence-based approach*, basically looking at the impact of positive versus negative emotions (e.g. Bower, 1991; Mayer, Gaschke, Braverman, & Evans, 1992). However, what they failed to take into account was whether or not specific emotions of the same valence could impact differently on the choice process. Consequently the ATF was structured to find out if emotions of the same valence that differ in appraisal generate different judgements.

The idea was first tested by Lerner and Keltner in 2000 when they investigated two types of emotions of the same valence: anger and fear. They found that those who experienced fear generally made more pessimistic judgements of future events, while angry people tended to make optimistic ones, hence, demonstrating that judgement and choice can be affected differently by the same type of valence-based mood. This was also reinforced by a later study conducted by Lerner and

Keltner (2001) when they found that angry individuals perceive risk in a similar manner to happy individuals, rather than those who experience emotions of fear which is valence-congruent with anger. Consequently, if marketers and retailers try to make use of stimuli to induce positive or negative moods in consumers they should not assume that all positive or negative emotions will influence evaluations and choice in the same way.

Risk taking

When it comes to the likelihood of engaging in risk taking behaviour, it is good to categorize mood into only two categories. People have been found to be more likely to take risks when they are in a good mood, provided that the chances of loss are low. However, if the chances of risk are high, they are less likely to take risks (Arkes, Herren, & Isen, 1988). This is most likely because they wish to maintain their good mood which may be negatively influenced if they experience some sort of loss.

Unfortunately, researchers who have investigated the impact of negative affective states on people's willingness to take risks have not managed to come up with evidence that is as clear-cut as those for positive affective states. Some have suggested that negative moods can increase the likelihood of individuals taking risks (e.g. Leith & Baumeister, 1996), while others have found that negative emotions make people risk averse (e.g. Fessler, Pillsworth, & Flamson, 2004). The explanation for this may be found in Lerner & Keltner's (2001) Appraisal-Tendency Framework. It may simply be that one should not assume that all 'negative emotions' generate the same kind of results. Instead it may be better to distinguish between different types of negative emotions.

Atmospherics

Another way to influence the decisions people make in store is by using the environment to create a certain atmosphere that can produce emotional responses that in turn impact upon people's in-store behaviour, something know as **atmospherics**. The term 'atmospherics' was first used by Kotler (1973) when he suggested that consumers do not just buy the product itself, but that they are influenced by other additional elements such as the packaging, advertising, image, as well as the atmosphere in the place where they bought it. It is important to get the atmosphere right within a shop as it can be the difference between a business being a success or failure (Bitner, 1990) as it may determine whether or not a consumer chooses to approach or avoid that particular environment (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

Four categories of atmospheric stimuli

It has been proposed that atmospheric stimuli can be divided into four different types of categories (Berman & Evans, 1995). The four categories are as follows:

1 *External variables* (include all exterior aspects of the shop).

Examples of variables include: signs, building size and colour, parking availability, surrounding stores and general area, and the entrance.

2 *Interior variables* (all general aspects of a shop interior).

Examples of variables include: lighting, music, flooring, colour schemes, scents, width of aisles, temperature and cleanliness.

3 *Layout and design variables.*

Examples of variables include: space design, placement of equipment and work stations, waiting areas, furniture, and dead areas.

4 *Point-of-purchase (POP) and decoration variables.*

Examples of variables include: POP displays, pictures, price displays, wall decorations, and permanent product displays.

In addition to the four categories outlined by Berman and Evans, a fifth category has been proposed by Turley and Milliman (2000): the human variables. This category proposes that factors such as how crowded the shop is, what kind of people work there and what they wear (e.g. uniform) can also play an important role in the generating the right kind of ambiance and consequently affect the way the consumer is feeling.

To date, only a limited amount of research has been produced in regard to external variables and store atmospherics. Nevertheless, there are some interesting ones, such as the impact of window displays (Edwards & Shackley, 1992), and parking (Pinto & Leonidas, 1994) upon consumer behaviour. Nor has much research been conducted on how layout and design affect consumer behaviour, but the existing research has demonstrated some interesting and significant results. For example, Iyer (1989) found that when consumers have plenty of time to stroll around a shop and little prior knowledge of the shop itself, they are more likely to make unplanned purchases. Unlike external and layout and design variables, POP variables have generated a lot of research studies, most of which seem to agree that a well-designed and well-placed display can increase sales, sometimes dramatically (e.g. Gagnon & Osterhaus, 1985; Wilkinson, Mason, & Paksoy, 1982). Perhaps the most well-researched category out of the four proposed by Berman and Evans is the one focusing on general interior variable and in particular how music affects retail consumers.

Use of music

Music is often used to create a certain image and atmosphere in retail environments and it appears to have the ability to influence a wide range of cognitive and behavioural responses in consumers, even when they are not consciously aware of it (Gulas & Schewe, 1994; Milliman, 1982). In supermarket settings it has been found that the pace of classical music can change the speed of the in-store traffic (Milliman, 1982). Slower music decreased the speed of the traffic and increased

sales volume. Similarly, this was also found when fast and slow-paced music was tested in a restaurant. It was then found that slower music made the customers eat at a slower pace and that they spent more on alcoholic drinks (Milliman, 1986).

The impact of background music in travel agents has also been investigated (Chebat, Chebat, & Vaillant, 2001). In particular, the authors were interested in whether or not music may be a contributing factor to how consumers process in-store information. They showed their participants four different videos of a couple visiting a travel agent so that they could get information about trips abroad. Each video had different classical background music that varied in the arousal quality through changes in tempo. The music used had been pre-tested so that the music was perceived to be equally pleasurable. Their findings showed that soothing music that created low arousal in the participants increased cognitive activity, while highly arousing music hindered cognitive activity. However, it is questionable if retailers ought to encourage heightened cognitive activity as the study showed that it went hand in hand with less desirable attitudes. The authors proposed that the underlying reason for this may be that the 'fit' between the highly arousing music and the context of their message from the travel agency was low.

It has been found that when shoppers like the background music played in a store, it influences their desire to affiliate in buyer–seller interactions (Dube, Chebat, & Morin, 1995). Research has also demonstrated that it is important to choose music that 'fits' with the type of store. This was suggested when Grewal, Baker, Levy, & Voss (2003) used classical music as a variable to test if it impacted upon the atmosphere in a jewellery shop and people's intention to shop there.

Unfortunately, music is often tested in combination with other factors such as lighting, which makes it difficult to determine to what extent music is an influential factor. For example, in a study where music and lighting were combined to create either high or low ambience, ambience was found to interact with the number and friendliness of the staff (Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992).

Shopping satisfaction

All retailers want all of their customers to be satisfied ones, as it increases the likelihood of repeated custom. This is particularly important in the current shopping climate where many consumers are increasingly turning away from traditional shopping trips to stores and malls and are instead favouring online shopping. The question is, can retailers make use of store atmospherics to make their consumers feel more satisfied?

For some time it has been known that emotions impact upon how satisfied people feel (e.g. Mano & Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1996; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991), and such emotions can possibly be generated by the in-store environment. However, only recently was it actually explored whether or not the feeling of satisfaction may be stronger at certain times depending on the source responsible for the feelings (Machleit & Powell Mantel, 2001). In a field study, 738 students and 153 non-students were asked to answer a questionnaire after a shopping trip.

Three types of questions were incorporated into the questionnaire: (1) shopping satisfaction: (2) emotions; and (3) what they attributed their feelings to. The results indicated that emotions have a stronger impact on whether or not the consumer is satisfied if their feelings are believed to be related to the store. Consequently, it appears as if retailers should pull out all the stops available to create an 'emotionally pleasant' shopping experience for their consumers as they are more likely to feel satisfied which ought to mean repeat business for them.

Persuasive theories of emotion

In addition to looking at how emotions influence aspects such as cognitive processes and decision-making, researchers have also investigated how emotion can be used to persuade people to consume certain products and services. Two theories of emotion that are particularly useful when it comes to explaining whether or not consumers may be persuaded are Mandler's and Zillman's theories of emotion.

Mandler's theory of emotion

Mandler (1975, 1982, 1984) suggested that emotional arousal is produced by *discrepancies* or unexpected events. Discrepancies often require people's immediate attention so it is good that they increase arousal so that we are alerted to them. As a general rule the greater the discrepancy, the greater the increase in arousal levels. Small discrepancies tend to produce enjoyable feelings as small arousal levels tend to be experienced as interesting, while greater discrepancies produce negative feelings due to their high inconsistency with our schemas. The reason why greater inconsistencies with our schema produce negative emotions is because if events clash with our existing knowledge structures, we tend to think that something is wrong.

Just like discrepancies, unexpected interruptions also produce arousal and can generate positive and negative emotions. The more a person thinks that what they are doing is important, the more the arousal increases when they get interrupted. Negative emotions occur when the interruptions are preventing people from achieving a goal; for example, you are about to purchase a new laptop when you are told that the shop is about to close and consequently you have to wait until another time to get it. However, interruptions that assist us in achieving a desired goal will produce positive arousal. For instance, you feel under pressure to decide which laptop to buy because you know that the shop is about to close, when a friend calls you on your mobile who wants to offer to drive you to another shop with a bigger laptop selection that is open longer.

Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989) argued that Mandler's theory can be applied to explain why brands that are moderately different from other brands in the same product category are viewed more favourably than brands that are highly typical or

not at all typical of the product category. Basically when consumers are trying to figure out why and how one product differs from another they are happy to do so, provided that the differences are not too great as it would then be cognitively too straining for them. If the products are very similar, consumers are less likely to think in more depth about the products and as a result they would not be evaluated as positively.

It is also worth noting that it has been suggested that prior knowledge of a product also plays a part in whether or not moderate incongruity will generate positive feelings about a product (Peracchio & Tybout, 1996). If people have low prior knowledge of a product category, a moderate incongruity effect is likely to happen. However, individuals with high prior knowledge of a product category are more likely to rely on what they already know and consequently ignore category-inconsistent information.

In line with Meyers-Levy and Tybout's research it has also been suggested that Mandler's theory might offer some insight as to why trying 'own brand' products may increase likeability of that product (Sprott & Shimp, 2004). Several studies have supported the idea that certain products are favoured over others based purely on the brand and stores' 'own brand' products are generally thought of as inferior to national brands (e.g. Allison & Uhl, 1964; Bellizzi & Martin, 1982). However, such perceptions can be combated by making people take part in taste tests. This was found by Sprott and Shimp (2004) when they asked people to taste and judge the quality of juice. The results demonstrated that provided the 'own brand' juice was of good quality, those who actually tasted it generally evaluated it favourably compared to those who had not tried it. One underlying explanation for this is that once the participants had tasted the 'own brand' juice and realized that the quality was just as good as national brands, their 'own brand' schema and their actual experience were moderately incongruent. Consequently, the moderate incongruity resulted in positive emotions for the 'own brand' product.

Zillmann's theory of emotion

Zillmann's theory is based upon the idea that emotional excitement can be transferred from one stimulus to another, something that is known as **excitation transfer** (Zillmann, 1978). He suggested that there are four key aspects of emotions:

1 Arousal can make both positive and negative emotions stronger.
2 People tend not to notice small changes in arousal.
3 Individuals normally assume that there is one single cause for arousal.
4 Perceived arousal tends to disappear more quickly than physiological arousal.

The third and fourth aspects of emotions seem to indicate that there is a very small window of opportunity when emotions can be transferred from one stimulus to another. That individuals assume that there is something in particular that is making them feel aroused suggests that they would focus so much on it that very little

transference would take place, and once arousal starts to decrease, it will not be long before there is nothing left to be transferred. Hence, arousal transference is most likely to happen between the two stages when focus on a single factor and arousal decline is at moderate levels.

Having an understanding of Zillmann's theory can be particularly useful for those working in media planning as it may have implications for which TV programmes the commercials are integrated into. Watching television can cause people to become physiologically aroused (Klebber, 1985) and it is possible that evaluations of commercials can be more extreme when they have become highly aroused by what they have watched. This seems perfectly feasible since research has found that evaluations of objects are normally more intense and focused when consumers happen to be highly aroused due to other factors non-related to the object being evaluated (e.g. Gorn, Pham, & Sin, 2001; Mattes & Cantor, 1982; Zillmann, 1971).

Zillmann himself suggested that sport-related programmes are highly likely to generate strong emotional responses which subsequently may be transferred over to the adverts seen during a commercial break. Researchers have also found that the type of emotion experienced can be easily confused with another kind of emotion. For example, in a study where participants had to walk either over a scary and unstable or a stable concrete bridge while being interviewed by an attractive female it was found that fear can be transferred into feelings of attraction (Dutton & Aron, 1974). Participants who had walked across the scary bridge were later much more likely to call the attractive female experimenter to find out what the results of the study were. Hence it is possible for marketers to make use of the excitation transfer even in situations where the emotion generated is not of a positive nature.

Key Terms

Affect regulation
People generally strive to make themselves feel better.

Atmospherics
Creation of a certain atmosphere that has the ability to generate emotional responses.

Excitation transfer
When emotional excitement can be passed on from one stimulus to another.

Summary

Affect-based research is often focused on people's mood rather than emotions. At times it can be difficult to research how emotions and mood impact upon consumers. Nevertheless, it has been established that affect has the capacity to guide attention and increase recall, provided the information encountered is congruent with how people feel. Affect has also been found to contribute to how consumers make decisions. The decisions made are often influenced subconsciously by the way consumers feel at the time, even though it may have no relevance to the decision-making task. It is important not to assume that positive and negative feelings will impact in the same way on the decision-making process, which is evident from the Appraisal-Tendency Framework. Atmospherics have also been found to influence whether or not consumers will shop in a particular store, as well as the decisions made when there.

Mandler's and Zillman's theories of emotions offer some insight into how the way people feel can be used to persuade consumers to see products in a more favourable light. Mandler suggest that positive emotions can be generated through small discrepancies between a stimulus and our expectations of the stimulus, while Zillman suggests that emotional excitement can be transferred from one stimulus to another.

Discussion questions

1 Is it possible to distinguish between emotions and mood?
2 How can emotions be used to persuade consumers to purchase specific products and services?
3 What are the potential pitfalls a researcher needs to consider when investigating emotions?
4 Are consumers rational? Explain your answer by providing research examples that support your argument.
5 What does the Appraisal-Tendency Framework teach us about emotions?