

# Role of Emotional Intelligence in Marketing – A Theoretical Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

In today's highly competitive marketing environment, it has become very challenging for the brands to get consumer attention. Marketers are trying to move away from their traditional approach of connecting with the consumers through rational and logical advertising and promotional communication and emotions have become the most powerful tools to penetrate into the consumer set of consideration. Although, in the existing literature, the importance of emotional intelligence in organizational studies, leadership and relationship management has been extensively analyzed and discussed in a greater detail (Reisel, 2016), its growing importance in the field of marketing and consumer-centric studies have yet to be explored. Therefore, the purpose of the present article is to highlight the perspectives available in the existing literature regarding the importance of emotional intelligence in the marketing field. The paper explores the different dimensions of consumer marketing research where the emotional intelligence has already been applied and the results that have been generated by it. This study is based on the meta-analyses of almost 33 research articles which discusses the role of emotional intelligence in marketing. The article assesses the potential that emotional intelligence has to revolutionize the existing field of marketing and consumer connectivity with a particular brand or service. As a result of this study, multiple themes have emerged, and on the bases of that further practical application of emotional intelligence in marketing has been discussed with the limitations.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Brands, Communication

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The scientific viability of the emotional intelligence (EI) is highly opinionated. Different people have expressed this term differently as per its applicability in the relevant field. However, Goleman (2006) elaborated this term as more powerful "twice as much as IQ" for the survival of human species. According to him, IQ is a genetic gift that has been given to the human species, and in consideration of our life experiences, as a human, we have a very less control over its modification. Goleman (2006) argued that emotional intelligence is a tool to motivate oneself. This ability encourages humans to acquire self-control, zeal and persistence, further can be taught to the upcoming generation to pursue best in their lives without being worried about the genetic lottery of intelligence quotient. Despite its growing importance, the emotional intelligence is also labeled as an elusive concept (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts,

1998). According to some other researchers, the phenomenon of emotional intelligence is resistant to adequate measurement (Becker, 2003). Contrary to that a considerable body of researchers suggested emotional intelligence as a basic competency required for almost every job (Cherniss, 2000), however, for some others, it seems to be more myth than science (Zeidner, Roberts, & Matthews, 2002).

The emergence of diversified judgments on emotional intelligence can be held responsible for the division of opinion in the field. Initially, the division on the concept of emotional intelligence has been brought to public attention through the continuous publishing threads of articles in newspapers and magazines (Gibbs & Epperson, 1995).

In the context of this paper, the term emotional intelligence has been considered important as described by Salovey and Mayer (2005) this is the ability to reason about emotion and to apply it for enhancing emotional thinking. It consists of an ability to precisely perceive, access and generate emotional insights to acquire knowledge about the emotions and to regulate and propagate its intellectual growth. In this research article, the meta-analysis of a number of papers has been synthesized on the basis of its applicability in the different fields. Moreover, the paper addresses the nature of emotional intelligence, its models and what has been done in the different fields in terms of its applicability.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Emotional Intelligence Context and Concept**

Our perception of the interaction between emotion and cognition get influenced by a number of cultural factors. For instance, according to the Greek Stoic idea the ability to rationalize or reason is greater than emotion (Sloman & Croucher, 1981). Contrary to that, the European Sentimentalist movement holds an impression of the existence of innate, pure emotional knowledge (Reddy, 2001). For Romantic Movement initiators, the emotional knowledge can be expressed through art (Wager, Barrett, & Moreau, 2000). To understand the application of emotional intelligence in different fields this paper discusses the concepts and their interconnection with the different field.

### **2.2 Intelligence**

Intelligence is termed as a general ability to learn and equip as per the environmental needs. It is actually the capacity to fulfill the abstract thought processes (Sternberg, 1982). Moreover, the types of intelligence are distinguished with respect to the kinds of their operational information (Buckner & Carroll, 2007).

## 2.3 Emotions

The philosophical evolutionary theory suggests that emotions are governed by the single and motivated response to the particular situation (Darwin & Prodger, 1998). Our emotions express an exclusive set of recognized emotional information, which may be communicated through distinguished cognitive, affective and proprioceptive communication channels (Izard, 1993).

## 2.4 Emotional Intelligence Domains

So far, plenty of models of emotional intelligence have been developed, but Goleman's (2001) model is by far the most famous of all. The latest powerful definition of emotional intelligence encapsulates this model as: "the abilities to recognize and regulates emotions in ourselves and in others" (Goleman, 2001). According to this definition, there are four major domains of emotional intelligence, namely: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. These four domains are the core components of the prime variations in emotional intelligence theories. However, different researchers refer to them differently. For instance, self-awareness and self-management can be categorized as "Intra-personal Intelligence" (Davis, Christodoulou, Seider, & Gardner, 2011). And, social awareness and relationship management fall under the definition of "Interpersonal Intelligence". As discussed earlier in this paper about the Goleman's domains of emotional intelligence, the aspect of "self-awareness" has a strong association with leadership and managerial proficiencies. He further explains that humans with strong self-awareness can be regarded as realistic. These types of people are usually not as much self-critical, instead of it, they are honest about themselves and others.

"Self-management" is the second domain of emotional intelligence as defined by Goleman, which he has associated with "self-control," "optimism," "transparency" and "adaptability." Those who have the ability to self-control will always be able to manage their disturbing emotions and impulsive decisions. Even in the highly stressful situation, these people stay calm and clear-headed. Moreover, their optimistic and transparent nature make them great leaders and managers.

"Social awareness in the third domain. Its competencies include "empathy," "organizational awareness" and "service orientation". The leader who can empathize with the group can better understand the unspoken words and unexpressed emotions. They develop a patience to calmly listen others perspective on an issue. With the organizational awareness, the leaders can better manage their powerful relationship to foster organization. Moreover, high service orientation helps people to manage the customer-client relationship.

**The last domain** of Goleman's model of emotional intelligence is "relationship

management". "Inspiration," "influence" and "conflict management" are its core competencies. For the organizational management "influence" is the most important attribute that a leader should have. The organizational leaders usually ask others to deliver what they themselves do. This gives rise to the culture of shared vision. Such leaders are the appropriate mentors for the staff and they believe in the goals their workforce want to achieve and cultivate their skills in achieving their goals.

## **2.5 Emotional Intelligence in Marketing**

In marketing, emotion management skills are used to determine how consumers' responses can be stimulated. In this field, the consumers are usually get motivated through advertisements and promotional campaigns. For that, their responses are better gauged through emotional intelligence (Park, 2013).

## **2.6 Perceived Emotional Intelligence in Consumer Behavior**

From the perspective of human psychology, the influencing nature of human emotions on their behavior has widely been discussed in the literature (Zajonc, 1985). In a process of understanding the consumer behavior, the emotional intelligence works as a bridge to compare, assess and motivate the stimuli to stimulate predictive responses.

This mechanism of enabling emotions to work as a motivator for taking purchase decision is stronger than the traditional approaches that considered consumers as a rational being and cognitive decision makers. From the perspective of emotional theories, the phenomenon of emotional intelligence may be adopted to elaborate the consumer behavior in the context of marketing field (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002).

## **2.7 Emotional Intelligence and Brands**

As described by Wyer, Sherman, and Stroessner (2000), our memory network has the capacity to store any type of information, ideas and concepts. This information can be in the form of verbal messages, visual images, abstract ideas and contextual processes. Keeping this thing in view, it is marketer's job to make their brand communication engaging in a way that it becomes the part of consumers existing set of knowledge and memory.

Due to its abstract nature and quality variance, depending on a particular group of customers and employees involved in delivering and receiving the expected service quality, the marketing itself has become an ultimate challenge. Therefore, for the service industry in particular, a need for strong branding has become more important and the emotional route to connect with the consumer lasted long in their memory.

## **2.8 Consumer Decisions through Emotional Intelligence**

Despite the growing realization of the importance of emotional influence in decision-making processes (Ruth, 2001), the researchers are still unable to fully found out the use of emotional intelligence by consumers in their purchase decision making. Consumer emotional intelligence is termed as an individual's ability to competently utilize emotional insights to obtain desired consumer responses. It is based on an aptitude to identify a first-order emotional set of skills that assist consumers to identify the purpose of emotional arrangements that drive the decision-making process and to come with the solutions of the problems based on this aptitude (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004).

The irony is, this aptitude-centric conceptualization of emotional intelligence is rarely found and largely ignored in the marketing research literature, however, few researched have been conducted to find out the ways individuals use emotions to stimulate responses. In one research, it was suggested that the existence of emotional information or benefits enabled the categorical association of experiences with the knowledge, hence, this emotional insight can be applied to the precise evaluation of the brand either in a favorable or unfavorable context (Ruth, 2001). On the other hand, Luce, Payne, and Bettman, (1999) suggested that for consumers, the ability of emotional trade-off is important, and surely influence the consumer choice strategy. Therefore, as per their trade-off difficulty model, consumer choices are influenced by their ultimate objectives and emotional satisfaction. These researchers endorse the role of emotional information in shaping the enhanced quality of consumer decision making.

However, there is a huge gap still exists to measure the level of consumer emotional processes. A clear knowledge of emotional insights can add immense value in encompassing our existing knowledge of consumer behavior, and how consumer purchase behavior can be influenced by emotional intelligence. Moreover, with the emerging knowledge of emotional intelligence, we would soon be able to recognize the consumers' decision-making pattern based on their quality. Based on which, the strategies can be devised for improving the quality regarding the consumption decisions.

## **2.9 Emotional Intelligence Affects Consumers as Information**

It is evident from the literature that visual and sensory processing of information significantly influences purchase intentions. Feelings are considered as a source of knowledge, hence it can be implemented in the decision making processes (Schwarz, 2006). This is an important domain for consumer emotional intelligence that is yet to be explored. It has been observed that people having a higher degree of emotional intelligence are more capable of adopting available emotional intelligence, and they apply it more eagerly to their consumption situations.

**Emotional intelligence** actually creates a buffer between the consumer behavior and their ultimate desire to purchase a product. It possibly works as an incidental tool to regulate consumer's mood in a particular purchasing situation. Therefore, the consumers with the better ability to manage and comprehend their moods in a particular situation where consumption is required can become emotionally intelligent to evaluate the fact that their mood is irrelevant to the current consumption situation, which will benefit the marketers in the longer run (Pham, 1998).

## **2.10 Consumers Face Negative Emotions with Emotional Intelligence**

In various contexts, the emotional intelligence has a significant impact on consumer well-being. Further researches have to be done to identify how improved emotional intelligence can positively influence consumer health behaviors. For instance, opting for medical tests for the early detection of dangerous, but treatable diseases and peoples' reaction to the detection of life-threatening illnesses can be improved through propagating emotional intelligence culture via marketing medical products through emotional advertising. Because it is widely believed that individuals having tendency to overcome their fears may widely opt for these preventive measures. This target a broad area for further research regarding individuals' tendency to cope with negative emotions. In particular, when they make a decision and anticipate future outcomes (Dowling & Staelin, 1994).

To overcome negative emotion is related to an individual's ability to effectively enforce their emotion. Therefore, it is expected that further research in this domain may examine consumers' potential to process and use emotional insights which might significantly influence numerous characteristics of emotional trade-off. Further, it could be further clarified through the research that people with higher emotional intelligence would be better aware of their feelings before and after making a certain decision, therefore, they would be in a better position to regulate their emotions. As a result, the less negatively impacting emotions would definitely be felt toward the trade-off (Poropat, 2009).

Additionally, consumers having low emotional intelligence be likely to choose or accept the existing situation, the way it is, to further avoid these trade-offs and they might go through a high level of negativity and stressful emotions, because they would have the strong feeling about their inability of using emotional intelligence to make the situation better. Hence it cannot be avoided that, emotional intelligence is the tool through which consumer can better handle their negative emotions.

## **2.11 Emotional Intelligence and Consumers Purchase Decision**

As confirmed in the literature available on marketing emotional intelligence, consumers' product choice is mostly influenced by the degree of emotional intelligence a consumer possess and their perceiving direction, when it comes to the selection of a product belonging to a particular category (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989).

Nevertheless, a more in-depth investigation is required to further investigate the triggers that influence emotional intelligence of the consumer to take certain decision related to the product choice or purchase. There are certain questions that need to be answered, for instance, is there any role of high and low emotional intelligence in consumers? The consumers who are unable to manage their emotion, what product attributes appeal to them? And how people with high emotional intelligence spend their money?

Future research may show us how the people with lower emotional intelligence can overspend and over consume the product and what is utilitarian versus hedonic products are in their existing set of preference. Further research in future should also investigate the actual purchase process they follow. Moreover, how people with higher emotional intelligence kept their loyalty to the brands or are they even loyal or not? However, previous researchers suggest that consumers with low emotional intelligence tend to be more loyal to the famous brand in comparison to those of having higher emotional intelligence. But here the main point is, are these consumers more aware of the risk of any type and want to averse that by consuming a known product or they are just unable to overcome their emotions associated with the consuming, even though the attributes of the unknown brands are superior than the known. And what type of processes influence the brand loyalty of the people having high emotional intelligence.(Kidwell, Hardesty, & Childers, 2008)

## **2.12. Emotionally Calibrated Decisions**

Growing interest in the emotional perspective involved in consumer self-confidence has urged on the need to examine potential emotional prejudices involved in consumer decision-making process and their impact on consumer responses. (Bearden, Hardesty, & Rose, 2001). Kidwell et al., (2008) suggest that consumers' judgments about the product and service are biased on daily basis, which includes several issues, for instance, inaccuracy in taking a decision. This unfortunate that such customers do not receive feedback for their poor decisions, hence, it becomes their habit. In

the same way, the consumers who mistakenly believe in their high emotional processing abilities are more disillusioned, because they are unaware of the potential resides in their emotions when it comes to decision-making process. (Schwarz, 2006) Emotionally attuned consumers have a high confidence level, which motivates them. Moreover, they also have the ability to drive the emotional process objectively that is why they may be in a better position of making a quality decision. Consumer biases, which involve emotional miscalibration have a strong impact on their responses.

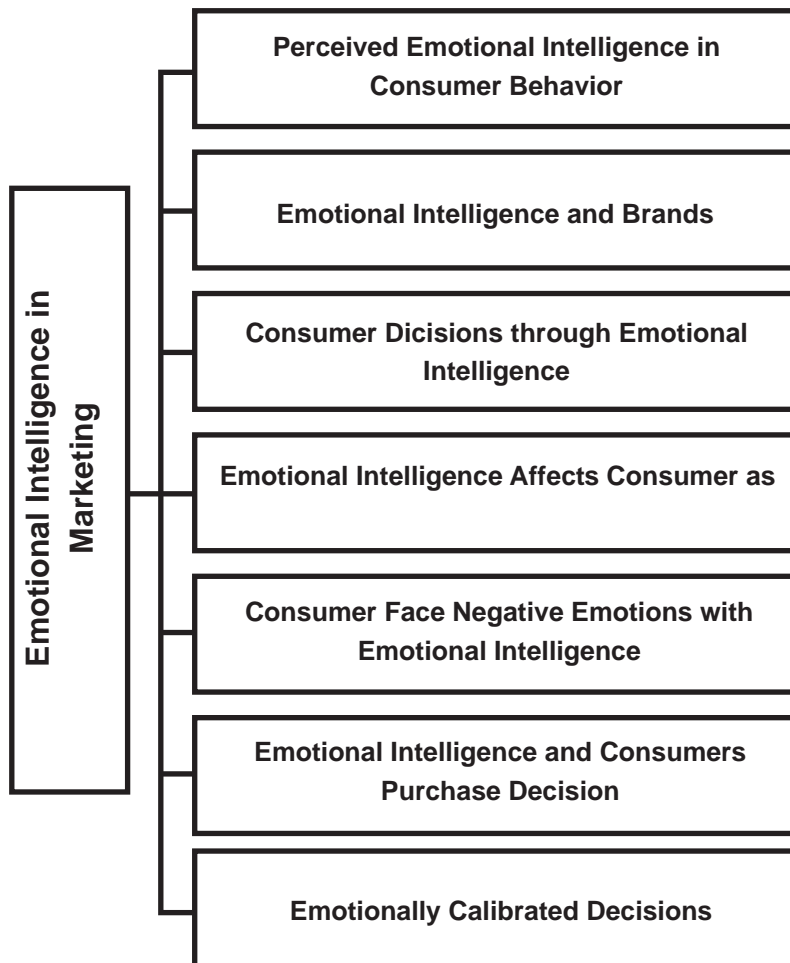
#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

Through google scholar search, and accessing online libraries, the plenty of articles have been searched, keeping emotional intelligence and its role in marketing constant. The articles with these keywords were first downloaded. The further shortlisting of the articles was done, exclusively on the basis of the content. The articles depicting any sort of relationship between emotional intelligence and marketing particularly in the abstract were kept intact. Here, it is important to mention that, to support the definition and concepts of emotional intelligence a few books and articles without having anything about marketing have also been included in this research study. Approximately 33 articles were further shortlisted. The articles were studied in a greater detail so that they can be put into a context for further discussion and elaboration. This study is based on an extensive paper review, which gives the theoretical perspective on the role of emotional intelligence in marketing.

#### **6. Themes Emerged**

Extensively discussed above, following themes have emerged from the article in the process of review:





#### Emotional Intelligence Themes in Marketing

### 5. Discussion And Conclusion

It can be concluded as, the importance of emotional intelligence and its role in the field of marketing is growing with the passage of time (Lassk & Shepherd, 2013). With the advent of contemporary marketing techniques, to break the cluttered communication buzz, the marketers are considering emotional intelligence as a tool to alter their communication strategy (Gladson Nwokah & Ahiauzu, 2009). The themes identified in this study are related to perceived emotional intelligence in consumer behavior, role of emotional intelligence in brand positioning, influence of emotional intelligence on consumer decision making process, effect of emotional intelligence on the consumer information, consumers' ability to face negative emotions through emotional intelligence, impact of emotional intelligence on consumers' decision-making process and emotionally calibrated decisions.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

This study will help research scholars to further analyze the role of emotional intelligence in marketing. The marketers can come up with more engaging emotional content to connect their brand emotionally with the consumers. This study will exclusively help marketing managers and advertisers to understand how they can alter the way consumers think by incorporating emotionally intelligent messages in their brand communication. Further, this research will help them to devise different strategies for emotionally intelligent and non-intelligent consumers.

## **7. LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study is limited to the exposé of the few articles and books, due to the time limitation of the course requirement. In future, neuro-marketing, artificial intelligence in the context of emotional intelligence are highly suggested to be explored.

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