

How Do Positive Emotions Influence Online Purchasing Decisions?

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Abstract:

Emotions significantly influence people's behaviors, decisions, and judgments. Variations in emotional states can affect how people purchase and spend money in everyday life. The same applies to purchasing decisions, and the current emotion, especially positive emotions, is mainly responsible for the consumer's decision to buy and invest. Previous research (Achar et al., 2016) has shown that emotions embedded in marketing stimuli, or integral emotions, influence decision-making through cognitive appraisals of the object or event. These emotions are elicited by marketing appeals and contexts, such as advertising or brand, and shape consumers' decision-making processes.

Keywords: Emotion, people's behaviors, consumer's decision, marketing

Emotions significantly influence people's behaviors, decisions, and judgments. Variations in emotional states can influence how people purchase and spend money in everyday life. The same applies to purchasing decisions, and the current emotion, especially positive emotions, is mainly responsible for the consumer's decision to buy and invest. Previous research (Achar et al., 2016) has shown that emotions embedded in marketing stimuli, or integral emotions, influence decision-making through cognitive appraisals of the object or event. These emotions are elicited by marketing appeals and contexts, such as advertising or brand, and shape consumers' decision-making processes. Different emotions have disparate influences on investment decisions. According to research (Charles & Kasilingam, 2015), positive emotions may cause investors to take on more risk than is prudent. Negative emotions can lead to fear-motivated decisions, such as panic selling in falling markets. Choosing more balanced and logical investments may be aided by neutral emotions. Over time, emotional maturity grows, which may result in less emotionally motivated and more educated investing judgments. After the outbreak of COVID-19, online shopping, as a convenient lifestyle, has become increasingly prevalent. Then, are there any differences between the influences of emotions, especially positive emotions, on traditional purchasing decisions and online shopping decisions? Factors that influence online purchasing decisions include online advertisements, brand content, and the convenience of online shopping (Oliva & Zahn, 2018). These factors affect people's emotions and eventually impact their purchasing decisions. Then, how do positive emotions influence online shopping decisions? Specifically, positive emotions are accompanied by pleasant feelings, such as happiness, interest, satisfaction, pride, and love, which individuals generate in response to internal and external stimuli and events. According

to Russell's circumplex model, positive emotions have a pleasant valence (Yin, 2019). They can extend an individual's instantaneous thinking activity sequence, build individual resources, and positively affect cognitive activities (Yin, 2019). Then what are online shopping decisions? Online shopping decisions refer to the process of making purchasing choices for products or services through online platforms (Yang & Zhu, 2018). The current paper discusses the correlation effects between positive emotions and online purchasing decisions as a cognitive process, the implications of marketing strategies for businesses, including advertisement and branding suggestions, and future research directions.

Prior Research on How Positive Emotions Affect Purchasing Decisions

Before going into more specifics, it is essential to understand how positive emotions and moods generally affect purchasing decisions. According to the research (S. Pepe & C. Buff, 2018), there is a positive correlation between consumers in a "pleasant" mood and their willingness to spend more money. This suggests that when consumers are in a good mood, they are more open to spending more than they might have originally planned—the research aimed to investigate the influence of mood on consumer impulsiveness. The researchers developed specific hypotheses predicting a relationship between positive mood and increased impulsiveness in consumer behavior, and they designed a survey to collect data relevant to their hypotheses. The study also indicated that consumers in a pleasant mood are more susceptible to impulsive spending decisions. This implies that a positive mood increases the likelihood of spending more and encourages less planned or spontaneous purchasing behavior. Another research by Wanglee (2013) has similar conclusions but has additional factors like motivation to

seek rewards. The study concludes that distinct positive emotions, particularly those arising from unpredictable circumstances, can significantly enhance consumption motivation and reward-seeking behavior.

Additionally, the study by Swinyard (1993) mentions that positive emotions significantly shape how customers approach purchasing decisions. When in a good mood, people often see their shopping experience in a more favorable light, which can lead to a stronger inclination to buy. This happens because a positive mood is a filter through which the shopping environment seems more appealing and welcoming. Unlike the previous two studies, this research includes environmental factors that lead customers to have positive moods. Positive moods also have a significant impact on investment decisions, not only for daily purchasing decisions. According to the study (Lepori, 2015), positive moods can lead to more cautious investment decisions. This effect is attributed to the desire of individuals to maintain their good mood, leading them to avoid risky financial decisions that could potentially result in losses. The study utilizes the release of comedy movies as a natural experiment to test these theories. It examines whether increases in comedy movie attendance, which presumably boosts the audience's mood, influence stock market returns. The results suggest a decrease follows an increase in comedy movie attendance in equity returns on the subsequent Monday. Interestingly, this study shows a result contrary to research by S. Pepe and C. Buff (2018). People tend to make unplanned purchasing decisions in positive moods but are more cautious when investing in positive emotions.

In addition to the purchasing and investing decisions in a general context, positive emotions also significantly influence online customer buying decisions. According to the study (Arruda Filho & Oliveira, 2022), good emotions significantly influence online buying decisions. Customers are more likely to act impulsively when purchasing online when they feel well. This implies a positive attitude may arouse an irrational inclination to purchase online. Additionally, the research shows that this impulsivity persists even with useful items.

Moreover, the research highlights that individuals with low self-control are likelier to make impulsive purchases in a positive mood. This is an important factor for online retailers to consider, as it suggests that marketing strategies could be tailored to emphasize consumers' positive moods to encourage more impulsive buying behavior. The study by Pappas et al. (2014) also provides similar conclusions. The study suggests that positive emotions play a significant role in enhancing online shopping experiences. When online shoppers experience positive emotions, they are more likely to have a favorable

attitude toward the shopping experience, which can increase their intention to make a purchase. The research demonstrates a direct positive relationship between personalization features on e-commerce platforms and eliciting positive emotions. These positive emotions, in turn, significantly influence the shoppers' intentions to purchase. Another study (Guo et al., 2020) emphasizes the significance of online reviews. The study found that positive emotion bias exists, meaning that pleasant reviews increase the likelihood of a purchase compared to unpleasant ones. This suggests that when potential buyers read online reviews, they are more influenced by those that convey positive emotions.

Discussion

After understanding how positive emotions significantly influence purchasing decisions, especially in an online context, how do businesses design their marketing strategy according to this correlation? Here are three leading suggestions for online businesses: the shopping experience, positive content, and website design. First, the most important aspect of the online shopping experience is personalization. Businesses should tailor the online shopping experience to individual customer preferences. For example, they can use data analytics to provide personalized product recommendations, customized deals, and relevant content. Secondly, website design should be user-friendly. More specifically, they should ensure the website is easy to navigate, simple to read and understand, and mobile-friendly. After that, online businesses must ensure the content is engaging and positive, especially for the reviews. Good reviews on the website significantly contribute to customers' positive moods, and positive moods lead to more purchases and deals. They can also develop advertising campaigns that create a positive emotion for the target audience. Whether humor, nostalgia, or inspiration, emotionally resonant advertisements can leave a lasting impact.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the correlation between positive emotions and customer purchasing decisions, especially in an online shopping context, provides valuable insights in understanding customer behavior. The previous studies suggest that positive emotions and moods generally increase customers' intention to buy offline and online, and they will make unplanned purchasing decisions in positive moods. This tendency is amplified in online shopping, where the ease and convenience of the platform, combined with positive emotions, encourage even more spontaneous purchasing decisions. As the digital marketplace continues

to evolve, understanding the impact of positive emotions on consumer behavior will be increasingly important for online businesses. Embracing these insights can lead to more effective marketing strategies, ultimately benefiting consumers and businesses in the online economy.

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