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## Exploring the Role of Emotional Intelligence in Advertising: A Theoretical Analysis

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### Abstract

The rapid expansion of the advertising arena compels marketers to contest each other for acquiring greater market share than their competitors. Therefore, it has become extremely complex for brands to grab the audience's attention for sustaining a greater market share. Considering this, advertisers nowadays are making a 360-degree shift in their traditional approach of reaching out the customers through rational advertising and communication strategies. Contrary to the rational advertising approaches, emotional advertising approaches are being widely considered more effective to grab and sustain the market share. To incorporate the emotional advertising approaches, advertisers and marketers have yet to innovate the concept of emotional intelligence in the context of advertising and the marketing domain. Emotional Intelligence is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions." Consumers form an external emotional connection with the brand aligned with their personal experiences. Hence, advertisers want to float advertising messages carrying positive emotional meaning. This, in turn, should help advertisers to acquire a greater market share than their competitors.

Specifying the importance of emotional intelligence in the field of advertising, this study aims to investigate the prospects/potential of innovating emotional intelligence for the advertising and marketing field. The objective of this study is to assess the multiple dimensions of consumer research, where emotional intelligence has already been applied. Further, the results have been generated to analyze the gaps where more innovation can be made in terms of incorporating the concept of emotional intelligence. The study uses 33 articles published in well-reputed journals. The exploratory analysis of 33 research articles discussing the role of emotional intelligence in marketing and advertising has been conducted. Based on the analysis, this study assesses the potential that exists in this field and its role in the existing field of advertising regarding consumer association with certain brands. Multiple themes have been identified that hint upon greater connectivity of emotional intelligence in purchase decisions and other relevant advertising processes. This study will further help advertisers and marketers to innovate the concept of emotional intelligence in the context of advertising and the marketing domain.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, marketing, consumer behavior, brands, communication, advertising.

### 1. Introduction

The scientific viability of emotional intelligence (EI) is highly opinionated. Different scholars have expressed this term differently as per its applicability in the relevant field. However, a scholar

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like D. Goleman (Goleman, 2006) elaborated this term as more powerful “twice as much as IQ” for the survival of the 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 very little control over its modification. This ability encourages humans to acquire self-control, zeal and persistence, which further can be taught to the upcoming generation to pursue the best in their lives without being worried about the genetic lottery of intelligence quotient. Despite its growing importance, emotional intelligence is also labelled as an elusive concept (Davies et al., 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 et al., 2002).

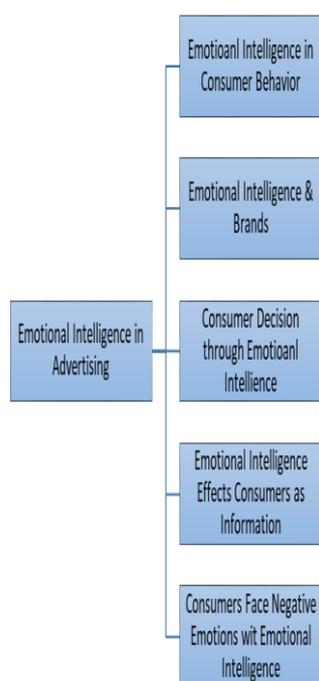
The emergence of diversified judgments on emotional intelligence can be held responsible for the division of opinion in the field. Initially, the division on the concept of emotional intelligence has been brought to public attention through the continuous publishing threads of articles in newspapers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

Emotional advertising can nurture a strong and lasting attitude and behavioural change in the exposed audience. A study conducted by Hamelin and fellow authors (Hamelin et al., 2017) on determining the effect of High Emotional Advertisement and Low Emotional Advertisement on the driving attitude score of the participants suggested that there is a remarkable difference between the two. The high emotional advertisement encouraged a higher and safer driving attitude score in contrast to the low emotional advertisement.

In the context of this paper, the term emotional intelligence has been considered important as described by authors named Salovey and Mayer (Salovey, 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 emotions and to regulate and propagate its intellectual growth. In this research article, the theoretical of several papers has been synthesized based on 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. Material and methods

Through Google Scholar search, and accessing online libraries, plenty of articles have been searched, keeping emotional intelligence and its role in marketing constantly.



**Fig. 1.** Emotional Intelligence Themes in Advertising

The articles with these keywords were first downloaded. The further shortlisting of the articles was done, exclusively based on 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 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. As discussed above, the following themes as shown in [Figure 1](#) have emerged from the article in the process of review.

### 3. Discussion

Advertising support marketing campaigns by influencing and/ marking impressions on the target audience. The main goal of advertising is to create brand awareness, resulting in a noticeable increase in sales for a successfully curated marketing campaign. This is the reason why an effective marketing campaign requires a detailed advertising plan that covers the objectives and brand message for the target audience. A target audience is a well-defined, measurable part of the target market that is more likely to experience the advertisements. The composition of the target audience can be influenced by certain factors such as demographics and psychographics ([Vredeveld, 2018](#)).

Psychographics are important in determining the target audience, so does the emotional intelligence of an individual. The persuasive factor that determines the effectiveness of advertising is emotion. Emotions in advertising not only influence the recall in brands but also in the messages they transmit ([Poels, Dewitte, 2019](#)).

Our perception of the interaction between emotion and cognition gets influenced by some 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, emotional knowledge can be expressed through art ([Wager et al., 2000](#)). To understand the application of emotional intelligence in different fields this paper discusses the concepts and their interconnection with the different fields.

Intelligence is termed as a general ability to learn and equip as per the environmental needs. It is the capacity to fulfil abstract thought processes ([Sternberg, 1982](#)). Moreover, the types of intelligence are distinguished concerning the kinds of operational information ([Buckner, Carroll, 2007](#)).

The philosophical evolutionary theory suggests that emotions are governed by a single and motivated response to a 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](#)).

Several authors have examined social media communication. They suggested that the intra-community communications of online communities affect users' perception and responses toward social media advertising and can induce effective communication mechanisms to gain positive reactions. They analyzed that mindful usage of interpersonal intimacy and attachment can foster a positive reaction of users on advertising. This is because the original intention of users to participate in an online community is the communication itself. They proposed that in an online community, there exists a barter between users' social appeals and advertising messages. Communication techniques establish a positive relationship between a sense of attachment, beliefs, involvement, and social bonds among all the users. The community members combinedly hold a uniform emotional intention. They internalize a positive perception towards advertising as a means for the sustainable growth of the community ([Bidmon, 2017; Zeng et al., 2017](#)).

So far, plenty of models of emotional intelligence have been developed, but D. Goleman's model ([Goleman, 2001](#)) is by far the most famous of all. The latest powerful definition of emotional intelligence encapsulates this model as: "the abilities to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and 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 et al., 2011). And, social awareness and relationship management fall under the definition of “Interpersonal Intelligence”. As discussed earlier in this paper about 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, 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 a 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 the patience to calmly listen to others perspectives on an issue. With organizational awareness, the leaders can better manage their powerful relationships to foster the organization. Moreover, high service orientation helps people to manage the customer-client relationship.

The last domain of D. Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence is “relationship management”. “Inspiration,” “influence” and “conflict management” are its core competencies. For organizational management “influence” is the most important attribute that a leader should have. Organizational leaders usually ask others to deliver what they do. This gives rise to the culture of a 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.

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).

From the perspective of human psychology, the influencing nature of human emotions on their behaviour has widely been discussed in the literature (Zajonc, 1985). In a process of understanding consumer behaviour, 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 making a purchase decision is stronger than the traditional approaches that considered consumers as rational beings and cognitive decision-makers. From the perspective of emotional theories, the phenomenon of emotional intelligence may be adopted to elaborate the consumer behaviour in the context of the marketing field (Ashkanasy, Daus, 2002).

As described by other authors like Wyer, Sherman and Stroessner (Wyer et al., 2000) asserted our memory network can 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 the marketer’s job to make their brand communication engaging in a way that it becomes 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, 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.

Despite the growing realization of the importance of emotional influence in decision-making processes, the researchers are still unable to fully find out the use of emotional intelligence by consumers in their purchase decision making (Ruth, 2001). 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 solutions to the problems based on this aptitude (Salovey et al., 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 favourable or unfavourable context (Ruth, 2001). On the other hand, other scholars have 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 (Luce et al., 1999).

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 behaviour, and how consumer purchase behaviour 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 patterns based on their quality. Based on this, strategies can be devised for improving the quality of consumption decisions.

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 they 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 adapting available emotional intelligence, and they apply it more eagerly to their consumption situations.

Emotional intelligence creates a buffer between consumer behaviour and their ultimate desire to purchase a product. It possibly works as an incidental tool to regulate a consumer's mood in a particular purchasing situation. Therefore, the consumers with the better able 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).

In various contexts, 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 behaviours. 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 tending 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 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 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 a 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.

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

Certain questions 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 emotions, what product attributes appeal to them? And how do people with high emotional intelligence spend their money? There are variations in the effectiveness of commercials. The commercials corresponding to joy, surprise and anger generated a significant amount of impact on the participant. But, the commercial corresponding to sadness determined best results regarding the

remembrance of the transmitted and activity of the advertiser. That made the sad advertisement most attractive for the participating subjects.

However, previous researchers suggest that consumers with low emotional intelligence tend to be more loyal to the famous brand in comparison to those of have 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 et al., 2008).

The growing interest in the emotional perspective involved in consumer self-confidence has urged the need to examine potential emotional prejudices involved in the consumer decision-making process and their impact on consumer responses (Bearden et al., 2001). Authors like Kidwell and colleagues (Kidwell et al., 2008) suggest that consumers' judgments about the product and service are based daily, which includes several issues, for instance, inaccuracy in taking a decision. Unfortunately, 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 that resides in their emotions when it comes to the decision-making process (Schwarz, 2006). Emotionally attuned consumers have a high confidence level, which motivates them. Moreover, they also can 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. Results

This research concludes with the prominence of emotional intelligence in the advertising arena. The research advocates incorporating the marketing and advertising strategies aligned with the consumers' emotions and perceptions to derive favourable results. The research further highlights the themes that can be quantitatively investigated by research scholars to quantify the findings of this study. It has been noted that with the evolution of the advertising formats and types in the digital world, advertisers are considering the utilization of emotional intelligence as a tool to penetrate more in the virtual world of their consumers as projected by them on their social media platforms.

The themes identified in this study are related to perceived emotional intelligence in consumer behaviour, the role of emotional intelligence in brand positioning, the influence of emotional intelligence on the consumer decision-making process, the effect of emotional intelligence on the consumer information, consumers' ability to face negative emotions through emotional intelligence, the impact of emotional intelligence on consumers' decision-making process and emotionally calibrated decisions.

In today's digital realm, consumers are not just passive receivers of any product, service or marketing communication, but they actively contribute to its development. Hence, consumers behaviours can be settled in a favourable manner by incorporating their opinions based on emotions.

Further, brand positioning is another important aspect that should be considered by the marketing professional these days. Consumers make any brand a part of their consideration set based on their perceptions about the brand, and the perceptions are driven by emotions.

Therefore, this perception-emotion relationship needs to be aligned with the positioning of the brand as well. Consumers' decisions are the consequence of their rational thought processes or their emotional impulses. For marketers, it is important to understand how this rational-emotional weightage should be distributed in designing campaigns of a product category to influence consumers' decision-making process.

For instance, campaigns related to stock investment may need to incorporate more rational appeals, however, chocolate can be sold by incorporating an emotional impulse buying appeal. Moreover, consumers, these days are informed and they prefer to opt for smart buying options.

They may not look for big brands, but the right brands for them, therefore it has now become crucial for marketing experts to analyze their emotional intelligence level. Once the emotional intelligence level of the consumers can be calibrated their decision-making process can also be regulated through persuasive advertising campaigns. Persuasive advertising campaigns can also mitigate the effect of negative feedback consumers are exposed to in digital media platforms.

## 5. Conclusion

Therefore, all the themes that emerged in this study urge for a greater role of emotional intelligence in devising branding strategies. This would help the marketers and advertisers to come up with more emotionally engaging content to connect their brand 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 is helpful for brands to devise different strategies for emotionally intelligent and non-intelligent consumers.

However, future research may show us how 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 preferences.

Further research should also investigate the actual purchase process the consumers follow. Moreover, questions like how do people with higher emotional intelligence keep their loyalty to the brands or are they even loyal or not must also be explored. Neuro-marketing, artificial intelligence in the context of emotional intelligence are highly suggested to be explored.

Nevertheless, a more in-depth investigation is required to further examine the triggers that influence the emotional intelligence of the consumer to make certain decisions related to the product choice or purchase.

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