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The facilitating role of negative emotion in decision making process: A hierarchy of effects model approach

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore and investigate the role of negative emotion as facilitator in consumer decision making process based on the hierarchy of effects model. Based on the hierarchy of effects model presented by Lavidge and Steiner, the researchers relied on questionnaire to gather data and implemented structural equation modeling. The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that negative emotions significantly facilitate the decision making. The sequence of negative emotion facilitating the movement of consumer in HEM is shame, fear, anger and shame. The major limitation of our study is our measurement approach and, therefore, our research results may lack generalizability. Also the relatively small sample size and the demographic characteristics of respondents limit the generalizability of the findings. The information disclosed in this paper may help the marketing to have a better understanding of the role and importance of negative emotion as a facilitator in marketing communications. This research integrated the hierarchy of effects model and emotion to investigate the role of negative emotion in consumer behavior. Also it tried to evaluate the role of negative emotion in hierarchy of effects model as facilitating factor.

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1. Introduction

It has been argued that negative and positive emotions can facilitate the decision making and Damasio (1994) asserted that these emotions play a critical role in people's selection of alternatives. The recent focus on emotional decision making can be attributed to several reasons. First from psychological aspect, consumers' emotional reaction in consumption context should be studied specifically because it is as important as cognitive process in understanding consumer behavior (Batra & Ray, 1986; Derbaix & Pham, 1991). Also it can be attributed to the fact that today products are more homogenized. Unlike the past, today almost all products satisfy the utilitarian aspects of consumers' needs (Heath, 2001) and other factors than rational and logical factors are being employed by consumers in order to make consumption decision. Today consumers don't purchase a product solely for its features or physical attributes. Therefore other factor should be considered as influential factors in this process. In order to provide a reliable model for the facilitating role of emotion in the hierarchy of effects model, it seems necessary to understand the role of emotion in HEM. (See Figs. 2–4.)

Emotion is a key element in consumer behavior, decision making and consumption (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Leone, Perugini, & Bagozzi, 2005; Luce, 1998; Pham, 1998; Ruth, 2001) and has been perceived as opposite to

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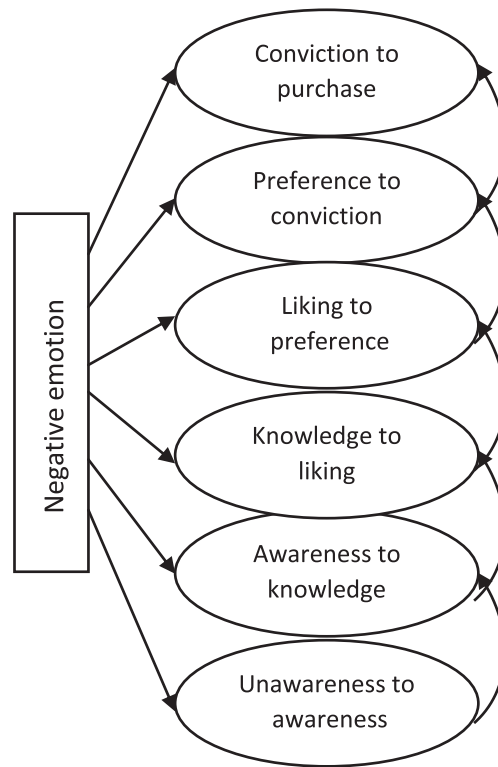


Fig. 1. Conceptual model of the study.

rationality (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Putnam & Mumby, 1993). But how do consumers use emotion to make decisions and to process information? It has been discussed whether emotions are functional or disruptive (Gohm & Clore, 2002).

Some researchers debate that emotions are a source of bias (Shiv, Loewenstein, Bechara, Damasio, & Damasio, 2005). Other researchers assert that emotion can play an adaptive role in decision making (Damasio, 1994). In this study we try to shed some light on this debate by suggesting that whether negative emotions are functional, they facilitate the process of decision making through hierarchy of effects model. We propose that consumer experience positive and negative emotion during decision making and use these emotions to facilitate their decision making process. We empirically examined the proposed relationships in Iranian smartphone

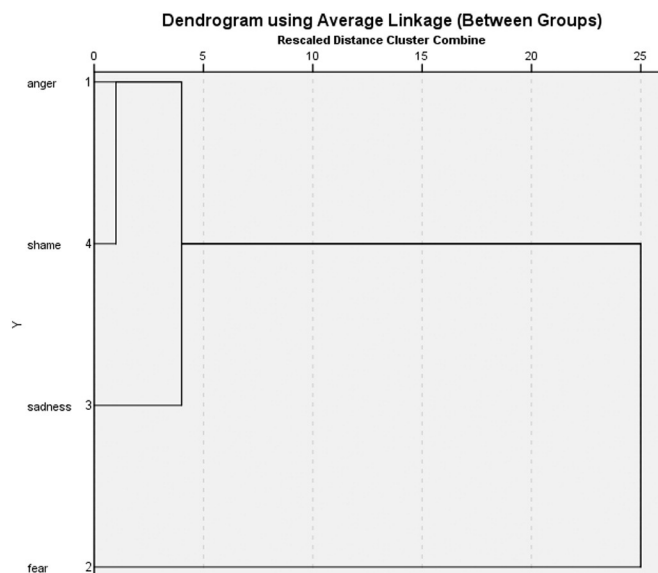


Fig. 2. Dendrogram of emotions.

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