

Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Management in Purchase Decisions

Athanasia Vlachou

Athens University of Economics and Business

Konstantinos Lionakis

Athens University of Economics & Business

George Baltas

Athens University of Economics and Business

Cite as:

Vlachou Athanasia, Lionakis Konstantinos, Baltas George (2023), Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Management in Purchase Decisions. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, (117184)

Paper from the EMAC Regional Conference, Athens, Greece, September 27-29, 2023



Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Management in Purchase Decisions

Abstract

This paper considers the relation between emotional intelligence and various aspects of emotion management such as shopping under stress, shopping due to sadness, regret of decision, control of emotions and satisfaction during purchase. We analyze survey data from 205 consumers and focus on the market of durable products. We find that higher levels of self-control are positively associated with satisfaction from a purchase, whereas lower levels of self-control may lead to regretful shopping decisions. There are also significant differences between men and women as such patterns are more notable in the behavior of female consumers. The findings yield actionable insights and important implications for marketing practitioners and researchers.

Keywords: *Consumer behavior, emotional intelligence, management of emotions*

1. Introduction

Empirically determined insights into consumer behavior are essential for business success (Iyer, Blut, Xiao and Grewal, 2020). Consumer behavior is shaped by both cognitive and emotional processes (Ambler et al. 2004; Gohm & Clore, 2002; Schwarz & Clore, 1996; Schiffman, Kanuk & Wisenblit, 2009). Emotional Intelligence (henceforth EI) is defined as the individuals' ability to skillfully process emotional information to achieve a desired outcome (Kidwell, Hardesty and Childers, 2007). It has been suggested that EI is associated with the ability to recognize, understand, express, and manage emotions, as well as to choose wisely between different alternatives, since it activates and includes analytical thinking, senses, and intuition (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997; Cohen, Pham & Andrade, 2008). In addition, management of emotions, which includes consumer ability to deal with or control emotions in purchase decisions, do play an important role in consumer behavior (Mayer and Salovey, 1997), and one that may vary between male and female consumers (Mayer et al., 2003).

Our paper seeks to augment this research area by exploring the association between EI and management of emotions. Specifically, the research objective of this paper is to examine the relation between EI and management of emotions in consumer choice of durable goods, while controlling for gender effects.

2. Conceptual background (emotional intelligence & management of emotions)

The research literature has given significant attention to the study of EI, mainly due to the importance of emotions in various aspects of our daily lives (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000; Iyer, Blut, Xiao and Grewal, 2020). EI allows us to direct our attention and actions to a specific behavior (Baumeister, 2002). According to Mayer et al. (1997) and Kidwell et al. (2008), EI consist of a set of emotional abilities that enable individuals to recognize the importance of emotional patterns which form the basis of decision-making, to think logically, and to solve problems. This kind of intelligence may lead to stronger self-control, allowing better regulation over decisions (Pop, Iorga & Pelau, 2013), especially in the field of durable goods, which, unlike nondurable goods, may have distinct features (Clements et al., 2020).

Consequently, this kind of intelligence may relate to management of emotions which concerns the awareness and comprehension of own emotions, as well as the ability of using these emotions to facilitate cognitive activities (Mayer et al., 2003). Generally,

management of emotions may be perceived as the ability of a consumer to be open to feelings and to modulate them regarding a purchase decision (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

Additionally, past research on the effects of gender on decision making suggests that males and females may differ relative to their performance outcomes on a variety of tasks (Piercy, Cravens and Lane, 2001). Furthermore, it has been suggested that females tend to outperform males on tasks that involve emotional reasoning, such as the reasoning involved in emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2003). Thus, management of emotions may differ between male and female consumers.

3. Research methodology

A self-administrated structured questionnaire designed for the purpose of this research was used for collecting survey data from a convenience sample in a European country. The questionnaire was constructed to capture the variables of this research, namely (a) EI, (b) management of emotions, and (c) gender. Specifically:

(a) The Trait Emotional Intelligence model, as proposed by Petrides & Furnham (2006), was applied for capturing the construct of EI. This model was used since it focuses on the perception, understanding, management and use of emotions in order to adapt to the environment and maintain well-being. The Trait EI model consists of 30 questions measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree / 7=strongly agree) which refers to four factors namely (i) Well-being, (ii) Self-control, (iii) Emotionality, (iv) Sociability (see table 1). The roots of this approach are found in the long-lasting study of emotions in terms of personality (Revelle & Scherer, 2009), and it is widely used in the relevant literature (Petrides, 2001; Pérez, Petrides & Furnham, 2005; Stough, Saklofske & Parker, 2009; Keefer, Parker & Saklofske, 2018) for studying EI (Kidwell et al., 2007).

(b) Management of emotions was operationalized with six separate questions, as proposed by the relevant literature (Mayer et al., 2003), concerning shopping under stress or sadness, impulse purchases, regret of decision, control of emotions and satisfaction regarding the purchase (see table 2). These items were measured as 7-point Likert type variables (1=strongly disagree / 7=strongly agree).

(c) Finally, gender was measured as a nominal (male-female) variable.

The questionnaire was uploaded in a link using Google forms and distributed to consumers during June 2022. Before distributing the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted, ensuring the content validity of the questions. A cover letter was used to

inform participants about our study and request participation, guaranteeing anonymity. This approach resulted to an effective sample of 205 consumers (42% males, 58% females), with an age range from 18 to 65.

4. Analysis and results

To identify the four factors of EI (Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality, Sociability), we followed Petrides & Furnham (2006). We applied principal component factor analysis in the 30 items of the Trait Emotional Intelligence model, (the scales in these items were reversed-scored, where necessary, so that higher levels of agreement would always represent higher levels of EI).

As shown in table 1, items loaded significantly explaining 58.7% of the total variation. Then, a composite measure that averages the responses from the respondents was computed for each EI factor. Reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha index. Respondents were characterized by high levels of Well-being and Emotionality (mean values > 5 out of 7) and moderate levels of Self-control and Sociability (mean values < 5 out of 7). We also calculated the descriptive statistics of the six questions for management of emotions (Table 2). Inspection of Table 2 reveals that a great deal of shopping is triggered by stress, sadness, and impulsive behavior while consumers very often regret their purchase decisions.

We computed the correlations between the four factors of EI and the six questions concerning management of emotions, by applying Pearson correlation as shown in Table 3. It can be seen that the factor concerning self-control has a significant negative association with shopping due to stress, shopping due to sadness, impulse purchasing, and regret of decisions, while it is positively associated with control of emotions and satisfaction from the purchase decisions.

Finally, independent samples t-tests identified gender differences in management of emotions. More specifically, Table 4 reveals that females are more prone to make purchase decisions when they are sad or stressed. Females are also more likely to regret such purchase decisions.

Table 1. Emotional Intelligence				
	<i>factor loadings</i>			
	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me.			<i>0,486</i>	
I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint.			<i>0,679</i>	
On the whole, I'm a highly motivated person.	<i>0,638</i>			
I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions.		<i>0,400</i>		
I generally don't find life enjoyable.	<i>0,567</i>			
I can deal effectively with people.				<i>0,485</i>
I tend to change my mind frequently.		<i>0,616</i>		
Many times, I can't figure out what emotion I'm feeling.			<i>0,550</i>	
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	<i>0,562</i>			
I often find it difficult to stand up for my rights.				<i>0,570</i>
I'm usually able to influence the way other people feel.				<i>0,647</i>
On the whole, I have a gloomy perspective on most things.	<i>0,370</i>			
Those close to me often complain that I don't treat them right.			<i>0,427</i>	
I often find it difficult to adjust my life according to the circumstances.			<i>0,464</i>	
On the whole, I'm able to deal with stress.		<i>0,528</i>		
I often find it difficult to show my affection to those close to me.			<i>0,508</i>	
I'm normally able to "get into someone's shoes" and experience their emotions.			<i>0,495</i>	
I normally find it difficult to keep myself motivated.		<i>0,497</i>		
I'm usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to.		<i>0,486</i>		
On the whole, I'm pleased with my life.	<i>0,519</i>			
I would describe myself as a good negotiator.				<i>0,521</i>
I tend to get involved in things I later wish I could get out of.		<i>0,595</i>		
I often pause and think about my feelings.			<i>0,602</i>	
I believe I'm full of personal strengths.	<i>0,562</i>			
I tend to "back down" even if I know I'm right.				<i>0,487</i>
I don't seem to have any power at all over other people's feelings.				<i>0,556</i>
I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life.	<i>0,465</i>			
I find it difficult to bond well even with those close to me.			<i>0,550</i>	
Generally, I'm able to adapt to new environments.	<i>0,499</i>			
Others admire me for being relaxed.		<i>0,598</i>		
X	5,59	4,65	5,14	4,67
SD	0,86	0,87	0,75	0,98
Cronbach's alpha	0,71	0,64	0,63	0,69

Notes: (1) X=mean value, (2) SD = standard deviation, (3) N=205, (4) PC Factor analysis: varimax rotation / Total % of Variance Explained = 58,7 / KMO=.9 / Bartlett's Test of Sphericity =1015.8 / sig.<.01 / italic text in columns represent factor loading for each item >.4

<i>Scale values</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	X	SD
When I am stressed, I usually shop.	4,9	11,7	7,9	13,7	17,1	16,9	27,8	4,74	1,85
When I feel sad, I usually shop.	7,3	12,7	8,8	12,2	13,7	29,3	16,1	4,64	1,93
I make impulse purchases due to my emotions.	2,9	10,7	9,8	10,7	14,6	31,7	19,5	4,96	1,80
Sometimes I buy things and then regret it.	5,9	14,6	11,7	10,2	16,1	31,7	9,8	4,50	1,83
I can control my emotions, so they do not influence my purchase decisions.	16,1	33,2	17,6	10,7	10,7	3,9	7,8	3,06	1,68
I am always satisfied with my purchase decisions.	5,4	27,3	22,0	13,2	16,1	14,1	2,0	3,58	1,59

Notes: (1) values listed in columns 1-7 (scale values) are percentages, (2) X=mean value, (3) SD = standard deviation, (4) N=205

	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
When I am stressed, I usually shop.	,116	-.153**	,108	,089
When I feel sad, I usually shop.	,052	-.189**	,081	,079
I make impulse purchases due to my emotions.	-,017	-.190**	,048	,064
Sometimes I buy things and then regret it.	-,078	-.281**	-,016	-,068
I can control my emotions, so they do not influence my purchase decisions.	,035	.184**	-,083	-,036
I am always satisfied with my purchase decisions.	,077	.204**	-,078	,021

Notes: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), Pearson correlation / N=205

	male (42%)	female (68%)	sig.
When I am stressed, I usually shop.	3,87	4,69	p<.01
When I feel sad, I usually shop.	3,93	4,83	p<.01
I make impulse purchases due to my emotions.			ns
Sometimes I buy things and then regret it.	3,98	4,81	p<.05
I can control my emotions, so they do not influence my purchase decisions.			ns
I am always satisfied with my purchase decisions.			ns

Notes: (1) N=205, (2) the table shows the means values on a scale of 1-7 (1: strongly disagree,7: strongly agree) / sig: level of significance

5. Findings and Discussion

In the context of the foregoing, it is clear that self-control is the most important factor of EI with respect to the association between EI and management of emotions.

Specifically, lower levels of self-control may lead to purchase decisions under stress or due to sadness, as well as to impulse purchases. Consumers are likely to regret such purchases. Emotions not only influence purchasing decisions but also trigger them.

Factors of EI concerning well-being, emotionality and sociability do not appear to have a significant correlation with items concerning management of emotions. This can be partially attributed to the rationality that characterizes consumer choice of durable goods (Clements et al., 2020).

Gender may moderate the way emotions affect the buying process, in the sense that females are more likely to buy due to sadness or under stress and more likely to regret such purchase decisions.

Our findings shed more light on the relationship between EI, emotion management and consumer behavior. Specifically, our findings may help marketers to better understand how consumers make purchasing decisions and what determines consumer choice behavior in durable goods markets. In addition, marketers may apply the present findings to design informed marketing plans, improve the strategic positioning of their products and better align their communications with the consumer buying process.

References

Ambler, T., Braeutigam, S., Stins, J., Rose, S., & Swithenby, S. (2004). Salience and choice: Neural correlates of shopping decisions. *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 21 No.4, pp. 247–261.

Barchard, K. A., Brackett, M. A., & Mestre, J. M. (2016). Taking stock and moving forward: 25 years of emotional intelligence research. *Emotion Review*, Vol. 8, pp. 289.

Baumeister, R. F. (2002). Yielding to Temptation: Self-Control Failure, Impulsive Purchasing, and Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 28 No 4, pp. 670-676.

Clements, K. W., Si, J., Selvanathan, E.A., Selvanathan, S., 2020. Demand Elasticities for 9 Goods in 37 Countries. *Applied Economics* 52(24), 2636-2655.

Cohen, J. B., Pham, M. T., & Andrade, E. (2008). The Nature and Role of Affect in Consumer Behavior. *Handbook of Consumer Psychology*, pp. 297–348.

Cooper, R. K., & Sawaf, A. (1997). *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in leadership and organizations*. New York: Grosset/Putnam.

Fisher, C. D., & Ashkanasy N. M. (2000). The Emerging Role of Emotions in Work Life: An Introduction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 21, pp. 123–129.

Gohm, L. C., & Clore, L. G., (2002). Four latent traits of emotional experience and their involvement in well-being, coping, and attributional style, *Cognition and Emotion*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 495–518.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.

Iyer, G.R., Blut, M., Xiao, S.H., Grewal, D., 2020. Impulse buying: a meta-analytic review. *J. Acad. Market. Sci.* 48, 384–404.

Keefer, K., Parker, J. D. A., & Saklofske, D. H. (2018). *Emotional Intelligence in Education: Integrating Research With Practice*. New York, NY: Springer.

Kidwell, B., Hardesty, D. M., & Childers, T. L. (2007). Consumer Emotional Intelligence: Conceptualization, Measurement, and the Prediction of Consumer Decision Making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 35 No 1, pp. 154–166.

Kidwell, B., Hardesty, D. M., & Childers, T. L. (2008). Emotional Calibration Effects on Consumer Choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 611–621.

Mayer, John D., Peter Salovey, David R. Caruso, and Gill Sitarenios (2003), “Measuring Emotional Intelligence With The MSCEIT V2.0,” *Emotion*, 3(1), 97-105.

Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications. Basic Books, pp. 3–34.

Pérez, J. C., Petrides, K. V., and Furnham, A. (2005). Measuring trait emotional intelligence. *Emotional Intelligence: An International Handbook*, pp. 181–201.

Petrides, K. V. (2001). A psychometric investigation into the construct of emotional intelligence (Doctoral dissertation). University College London.

Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2000). On the dimensional structure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 29, pp. 313–320.

Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2001). Trait emotional intelligence: Psychometric investigation with reference to established trait taxonomies. *European Journal of Personality*, Vol 15, pp. 425–448.

Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2004). Technical manual of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue). London: University of London, Institute of Education.

Petrides, K. V. & Furnham, A. (2006). The role of trait emotional intelligence in a gender-specific model of organizational variables. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 36, pp. 552–569.

Piercy, Nigel F., David W. Cravens, and Nikala Lane (2001), “Sales Manager Behavior Control Strategy and Its Consequences: The Impact of Gender Differences,” *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 21(Winter), 39-49.

Pop, A. N., Iorga, A., & Pelau, C. (2013). Using Neuromarketing Studies to Explore Emotional Intelligence - as a key to the Buying Decision Process. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Knowledge Management*.

Revelle, W., & Scherer, K. R. (2009). Personality and emotion. Oxford companion to emotion and the affective sciences. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 21–28.

Schiffman, L. G., Kanuk, L. L., & Wisenblit, J. (2009). *Consumer Behavior* (10th ed). Pearson College Div.

Schwarz, N., & Clore, G. L. (1996). Feelings and phenomenal experiences. In E. T. Higgins & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles*, pp. 433–465. The Guilford Press.

Siegling, A. B., Saklofske, D. H., & Petrides, K. V. (2015). Measures of ability and trait emotional intelligence. In G. J. Boyle, D. H. Saklofske, & G. Matthews (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological constructs* (1st ed., pp. 381–414). Oxford, UK: Academic Press.

Stough, C., Saklofske, D. H., & Parker, J. (2009). *Assessing Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Research and Applications*. New York, NY: Springer.