

Consumer emotional ambivalence: a state-of-the-art review

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Abstract-

Emotional ambivalence has been examined across diverse consumption contexts, resulting in an extensive but fragmented body of research with irreconcilable findings on the role of emotional ambivalence in consumer behaviour. In this state-of-the-art review, we synthesise evidence from 87 manuscripts published in marketing journals that examine emotional ambivalence in consumer contexts. We clarify the conceptual boundaries of emotional ambivalence and define it as the integration of discrete emotions with opposing or contrasting valence. Challenging the view that ambivalence is inherently unpleasant, we highlight how consumers often seek out and enjoy ambivalent emotions. We propose an integrative framework in which customer emotional ambivalence gives rise to three distinct pathways, labelled discomfort, resolution and cognitive processing, each of which may lead to either negative or constructive consumer outcomes. We conclude by outlining a research agenda to guide future enquiry.

Index Terms- Ambivalence; mixed emotions; mixed feelings; consumer behaviour; marketing communications

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