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Emotions by Design: A Consumer Perspective

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Abstract

What is the relationship between attribute tradeoff decisions at the time of purchase and emotional content of the consumption experience? This article offers a comprehensive overview and an enhanced model of the possible forms of this relationship. It sets forth new insights into negative post-consumption emotions in an integrated manner with prior work on attribute tradeoffs and positive emotions. The primary insights this research provides are as follows: (1) a negative experience with the choice of a product with superior utilitarian and inferior hedonic benefits (e.g., a highly functional cell phone with poor attractiveness) over a product with superior hedonic and inferior utilitarian benefits evokes feelings of sadness, disappointment, and anger, (2) a negative experience with the choice of a product with superior hedonic and inferior utilitarian benefits (e.g., a highly attractive cell phone with poor functionality) over a product with superior utilitarian and inferior hedonic benefits evokes feelings of guilt and anxiety. Further, an enhanced model is presented that integrates the results for four new negative post-consumption emotions with the results from replication of prior work on positive emotions and consumer behavior. Finally, the research shows that positive and negative emotions impact customer loyalty. The article discusses the theoretical contribution and strategic insights the research provides for product designers and marketers.

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