

# Emotional Influences in Consumer Self-Regulatory Behaviour and Goal Intention

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## Abstract

Consumer self-regulation is a critical aspect of consumer behaviour especially in this digital era with increased avenues of social commerce and online shopping platforms and emotions can have a significant impact on a consumer's ability to regulate their behaviour. Emotions significantly affect consumer self-regulation as they can influence the extent to which consumers are able to resist temptations and pursue their goals. Emotions can either facilitate or inhibit self-regulation. Literature suggests that positive emotions and anticipated guilt can facilitate self-regulation by enhancing goal-directed behaviour and executive control, while negative emotions mostly inhibit self-regulation by depleting cognitive resources. PCE influences future intentions and mediates the impact of emotions on intentions. This article synthesizes the literature to investigate the effect of emotions on Consumer Self-Regulation and its relationship with goal intention with the moderating effect of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Emotions, Pride, Guilt, Consumer Self-Regulation, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Goal Intention

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Self-Regulation refers to the capacity of an individual to control one's urges in an attempt to achieve some definite goals. It involves all those processes of guiding one's thoughts or emotions or behaviours toward the achievement of one's goals. It influences an individual's capacity to control oneself and guides the behaviour towards the goal. Consumer self-regulation is a process by which individuals regulate their own behaviour in order to achieve a desired outcome. Self-regulation failures occur as people have limited resources for self-regulation and these resources are subject to depletion. False assumptions especially unwarranted emphasis on emotion is the major cause of mis-regulation (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). A consumer's emotional state affects his decisions (Achar et al., 2016a). Literature evidences different emotions to influence one's self-regulation mechanisms differently thus leading to different behaviours. Even the same emotion can have different effects explained by the nature of emotions and their interaction with contextual factors. Emotions activate appraisal tendencies associated with them which in turn influence consumers' decision-making in a situation (Achar et al., 2016a). Impulsive buying is understood as a failure of self-regulation in relation to long-term goals and as a strategy for mood regulation (Fenton-O'Creevy et al., 2018a). Ineffective emotion regulation is associated with higher propensity to buy impulsively and effective emotion regulation may to some extent mitigate the adverse consequences of the propensity to buy impulsively (Fenton-O'Creevy et al., 2018b). When individuals are more in control of their self-regulation mechanisms, it implies a long-term impact on consumer health and well-being (Fennis, 2022). Baumeister et al (2002) emphasized that self-regulation enables human ability to control the emotional and behavioral aspects to reach one's goals and fulfill obligations. (Achar et al., 2016b) reveal that emotions that are unrelated to the decisions influence decision-making via carried over appraisal tendencies and indicates future studies to examine how emotional influences can both undermine and help consumer decision-making. Billore et al., 2023 indicate that successful self-regulation and goal attainment depends on the subjective capacity of individuals to practice self-regulation and calls for future research focusing on self-regulation regarding consumer emotions. Berki-Kiss & Menrad (2022) assert that emotions significantly influence all determinants of behavioral intention. The study hence proposes to examine how emotions serve as

antecedents to consumer self-regulation thereby influencing goal intention with the moderating effect of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND MODEL DEVELOPMENT

. Literature has analyzed different theories like Regulatory focus theory, Social cognitive theory, Value theory, Attitude theory, Social affiliation theory, approach and avoidance principle, motivation and ego-depletion in the context of goal-directed behaviour. Studies have also examined how appraisal information and goals influence pride and regulatory behaviour (Salerno et al., 2015b), the role of anticipated pride and guilt in sustainable consumption (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014 ; Onwezen et al., 2014), the application of stage model of self-regulated behavioural change (Keller et al., 2021), the antecedents and consequences of consumer guilt (Kazançoğlu & Özhan Dedeoğlu, 2012), influence of emotions on consumer decision-making (Achar et al., 2016a) and anthropomorphism in the context of self-control (Hur et al., 2015). Studies have mostly examined the relationship between one or two specific emotions especially Guilt and Pride and behaviour. However, a comprehensive study assessing the effect of various self-conscious emotions (positive and negative) on goal intention is considered to be non-existent in the literature. The study also proposes the mediating effects of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness on the influence of emotions on goal intention.

### 2.1 Positive Emotions – Pride, Mindfulness, Busy Mindset, Hope

Emotions are multidimensional feelings that reflect information about consumers' relationship to their social and physical surroundings as well as their interpretations regarding these relationships (Achar et al., 2016b). Pride is a positive emotion associated with some achievement or self-worth. Literature identifies two forms of pride: hubristic pride associated with dominance and authentic pride associated with prestige (Cheng et al., 2010). However this study deals with authentic pride. (Baumeister, 2002) reports that pride impact individuals' ability to control personal decisions in line with long term goals. Incidental pride plays a variable role in self-regulation by encouraging indulgent choices while promoting a sense of achievement and virtuous choices while promoting self-awareness (Wilcox, Kramer, & Sen, 2011b). The experience of pride after executing a decision will positively influence Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014b). Tangney et al. (2012) explored the effect of positive emotions on self-control. The study found that individuals who experienced positive emotions, such as gratitude and contentment, were less likely to engage in addictive behaviors. (Kim et al., 2019) proposes that a busy mindset can increase self-control by boosting one's sense of self-importance. (Liang et al., 2022) acknowledge the positive impact of mindfulness implying the state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present on self-control. Emotions associated with future-focused appraisals like hope increase consumers' self-regulation relative to emotions associated with present-focused or past-focused appraisals like pride (Winterich & Haws, 2011). Hence based on previous studies it is hypothesised that:

H1: Positive emotions have a positive effect on Consumer Self-Regulation

H2: Positive emotions positively influence Perceived Consumer Effectiveness

### 2.2 Negative Emotions- Guilt, sadness, shame, temptation

Consumers are mostly regret-averse and try to avoid and regulate their regrets in order to regulate behavior (Zeelenberg and Pieters 2007). Anticipated guilt facilitate self-regulation (Coleman et al., 2020) and thereby guide intentions (Onwezen et al., 2014). When experiencing guilt, people may respond positively to this failure by regrouping and increasing their regulatory behavior (Salerno et al., 2015a). Consumer guilt has been found to have both direct and indirect enhancing effects on intentions (Kabadayı et al., 2015). Antonetti & Maklan, (2014b) concludes that the experience of guilt after executing a decision will positively influence Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE). Negative emotions are the most common antecedents to compulsive buying, an indication of self-regulation failure and euphoria or relief from the negative emotions are the most common consequence of compulsive buying (Miltnerberger et al., 2003). Incidental sadness leads to more hedonic consumption because consumers are trying to regulate their feelings (Salerno et al., 2014). Negative emotions have been found to inhibit self-regulation by depleting cognitive resources and impairing executive control (Baumeister et al., 2007).

Literature evidences that some emotions hinder self-regulation including anthropomorphizing of sadness (Chen, Chen, & Yang, 2020) and temptation (Hur, Koo, & Hofmann, 2015), anticipating shame (Patrick et al, 2009). Shame can inhibit self-regulation by reducing self-efficacy. Consumers who experience a psychological threat may engage in within-domain compensation to repair the self. However, within-domain compensation may trigger ruminative thinking about the threat and thus undermine subsequent self-regulation (Lisjak, Bonezzi, Kim, & Rucker, 2015). Several factors can modulate the effect of emotions on consumer self-regulation, such as the intensity and valence of the emotions, the context in which they are experienced, the regulatory focus of the individual, and the individual's level of self-control capacity (Koo and Fishbach, 2014). Anticipated emotions are expected emotional consequences of achieving a goal and these anticipated emotions are found to influence goal intentions and behaviour (Hunter, 2006). Therefore the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3: Negative emotions have an influence on Consumer Self-Regulation

H4: Negative emotions have an effect on Perceived Consumer Effectiveness

H5 : Emotions have an influence on Goal Intention

### **2.3 Consumer Self-Regulation**

Consumer self-regulation refers to an individual's ability to control their own behavior in a manner that aligns with their personal goals and values. It is a critical aspect of consumer behavior research, as it can have a significant impact on various consumer behaviors, such as impulse buying, addiction, and risk-taking. Emotions are an important factor that can affect a consumer's ability to regulate their behavior, as they can either facilitate or inhibit self-regulation (Baumeister et al., 2007). Self-regulation refers to the capacity to alter one's own states and responses, and represents the capacity to resist temptations that are likely to be regretted later (Baumeister 2002). Impulsive buying behavior can be understood as a failure of self-regulation in relation to financial goals and is often adopted to regulate emotions (Fenton-O'Creevy et al., 2018b).

### **2.4 Perceived Consumer Effectiveness**

Perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) refers to an individual's belief that their actions as a consumer can have a positive impact on the environment or society (Luchs et al., 2010). It is the perceived ability of a consumer to affect outcomes. Individuals with high Internal Locus Of Control (ILOC) often attribute outcomes to their actions (Schwepker Jr & Cornwell, 1991). PCE influences future intentions and mediates the impact of pride and guilt on behavioral intentions. (Wan et al., 2014) found that the effect of emotions on consumer choice is stronger when consumers perceive themselves to be effective in achieving their goals. Kabadayı et al., (2015) found emotions and Perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) to significantly influence the purchase intention of Fairtrade-cut roses. People with stronger PCE had stronger green product purchase intentions (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). (Kabadayı et al., 2015) in the context of green purchase intention revealed that perceived consumer effectiveness is the most influential construct on intention. Influencing this variable can lead to goal intentions and behavioural changes. Hence, in line with the existing literature, the following hypothesis is formulated:

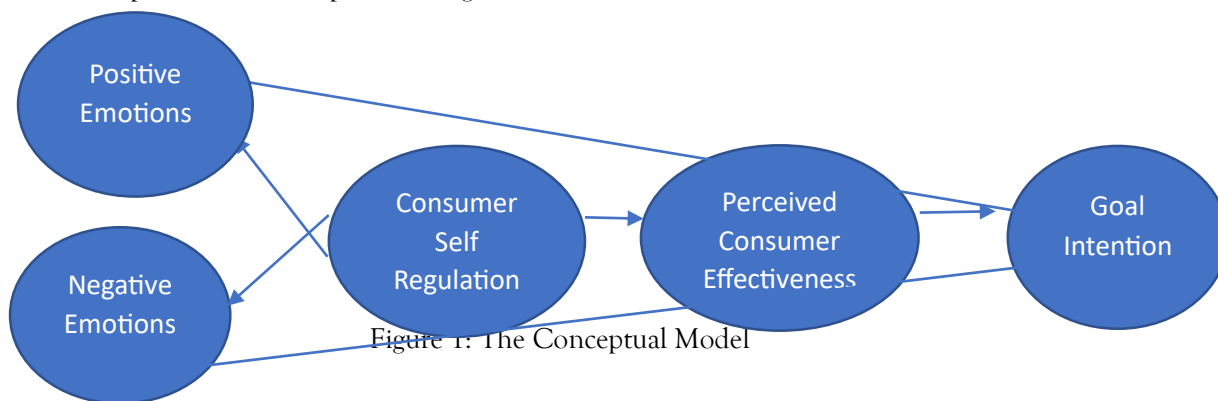
H6: PCE has a positive influence on Goal Intention

### **2.5 Goal Intention**

Intentions and emotions arise together and emotions compel us to pursue goals. Emotional awareness and goal pursuit are related concepts. (Lewis, 2005). Anticipatory emotions are expected to lead to goal-directed behaviours thereby leading to goal attainment and goal attainment again functions as the basis for a new set of appraisals and accompanying goal outcome emotions (Bagozzi & Pieters, 1998). Appraisal of goals includes an assessment of the prospects of both success on attaining the goal and failure to do so which in turn elicits emotional reactions. In both cases the ensuing emotional reaction is believed to be predicated upon through a thought process referred to as pre-factual appraisals which in turn influence goal intentions (Bagozzi et al., 2003). Anticipated emotions are similar to futuristic views of emotions and the notion of the hope of success and the fear of failure act as antecedents of approach and avoidance behaviors in achievement contexts (cf. Weiner, 1992). Anticipated emotions represent an important way in which emotions determine what decision makers choose (Zeelenberg, 1999a).

## CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The conceptual model is depicted in Figure :1



## Conclusion and Further Research

The study contributes to the literature on consumer self-regulation by demonstrating the impact of emotions on goal intention with the moderating effect of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness. The findings suggest that interventions that target proper control of emotions can enhance consumer self-regulation and help consumers achieve their desired goals. This review contributes to the literature on consumer behaviour by synthesizing the literature on the effect of emotions on goal intention. Overall, the findings suggest that interventions that target managing of emotions can enhance consumer self-regulation and perceived consumer effectiveness and help consumers achieve their desired goals. Marketing practitioners can use this knowledge to design interventions that enhance consumer self-regulation and help consumers achieve their desired goals. Providing consumers with appraisal information about the consequences of their emotional behaviour and their ability to influence outcomes can enhance their ability to resist temptations and pursue their goals. Similarly, increasing consumers' perceived effectiveness can boost their confidence in their ability to regulate their own behaviour. The study identifies that emotions have complex effects in various decision-making domains and there is rich scholarly potential in studying the processes through which emotions influence decision making and persuasion.

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