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## EMOTIONAL BRANDING / MARKETING COMMUNICATION: A REVIEW OF DEFINITIONS

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**Abstract:** *The low number of studies on emotional branding / marketing communication and the lack of unanimously agreed definitions of this new trend in marketing show that it is still in its infancy. The study presents a linguistic analysis of the definitions of emotional branding / marketing communication based on both the verbs relating the "definiendum" (the phrase to be defined, i.e., emotional branding / marketing communication) with its "definiencia" (the nouns defining emotional branding / marketing communication), and the nouns defining the "definiendum". The findings show that there are definitions close to formal ones, and definitions that move away from the true essence of emotional branding / marketing communication. The analysis shows that these definitions point to specific focuses, specific goals, and a specific means of achieving these goals.*

### • Introduction

The scientific study of emotions was spurred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Darwin's (1897) interest in the expression of the emotions and has currently reached a level which exceeds all expectations. This pursuit also touches on interdisciplinary domains such as neuromarketing which applies the tools of neuroscience and psychology to the area of marketing and economics. Moreover, it also interacts with Artificial Intelligence and complex networks in computer systems, using analytical processes and quantitative algorithms to find better solutions to improve human life, while also collecting data in order to analyze not only consumer behaviours and preferences, but even their innermost emotions. The latter are among the most challenging issues we are confronting in the new AI realm, from an ethical point of view.

To understand the importance of emotions in marketing – and, therefore, the importance of emotional branding / marketing – one needs to review the famous laws of emotion, accompanied by illustrations of how emotion always involves action or behaviour.

The validity of these laws is confirmed by the developmental approach, which considers development as synonymous with progress towards more complex meanings and worldviews:

- Emotional phenomena vary across cultures;
- Emotional response complexity increases with age;
- Emotions are interculturally shared;
- Emotions vary in the same situation throughout individuals.

By applying these laws, brand designers create strong brands, which prove that the management team of a company have found ways to distinguish it from other brands, meet the needs the brand has set, identify what the brand is really good at, and, most significantly, what emotions the brand connects with.

### • Material and method

The material subjected to this study consisted in definitions of emotional branding or emotional marketing, a rather new concept in the field of marketing provide in the few studies on emotional branding / marketing. Our interest in this topic was sparked by the novelty of this concept in the field of marketing and by the need for clear definitions. All the definitions below have been taken from Dictionary.com.

The method employed to carry out the research and analysis is that of linguistic / semantic analysis.

### • Results and discussions

Over the last 13 years, there have been a few attempts to define emotional marketing. We may consider that the concept has been merely described rather than properly defined so far, as illustrated by our study of the literature available on the topic, which we have scrutinized in detail.

From the analysis of the terminology employed by the authors discussed, we may conclude that emotional branding / marketing focuses on:

- Affecting the consumption habits of the consumer;
  - Approaching, interacting and influencing consumers / users;
  - Arousing emotions in people;
  - Building brands and companies;
  - Communicating with consumers / users;
  - Creating emotional relationships between the company and the consumer;
  - Developing meaningful relationships with consumers / users;
  - Evoking emotions in people;
  - Managing the emotional connection established between the consumers and the company;
  - Retaining customers;
- Also, emotional branding / marketing aims to:
- Appeal to customers' emotional states or desires;
  - Foster long lasting relationships;
  - Develop satisfaction and loyalty among consumers / users;
  - Induce people to buy a particular product/service;
  - Lure people into buying various products or services; deciding which products make a difference based on positive defects, as in comparative cases on how to maintain healthier teeth.
  - Motivate consumers' buying / consumption decisions and exchange;

Finally, we may conclude that the closest one may come to a definition is that emotional branding / marketing means the use of aspects pertaining to emotions.

### • Conclusions

The bibliographic analysis and the discussions on emotional branding and marketing have led to the following conclusions. The novelty of emotional branding / marketing is still in its infancy, as proven by the lack of unanimously agreed upon definitions. To understand how the realities behind these terminologies operate, one needs to refer to the laws of emotion at work in the field. For this purpose, emotional branding / marketing has been defined with the help of a verb connecting it to nouns.

The findings indicate that there are definitions close to formal ones, on the one hand, as well as definitions that stray from the genuine essence of emotional branding / marketing communication. The analysis also indicates that these definitions point to specific goals, based on specific means of reaching them.

Thus, on the one hand, definitions closer to a formal definition contain verbs of actions, conditions, and events in the present tense simple; other definitions suggest rather semblance than being, or mere possibility.

On the other hand, definitions closer to a formal definition contain nouns such as act, method, mode of procedure, practice, or use of a stratagem, while the other ones move away from the true essence of emotional branding / marketing.

In conclusion, given the comparative analysis on the definitions of emotional branding / marketing points to specific focuses and goals, correlated to particular modalities of achieving these targets. Emotional marketing focuses on customer emotions, while it relies on the development of a bond between the providers of the product or service and the users of the product / service, and should be used without repetitiveness.

