

How can Emotion Regulation help consumers avoid cognitive biases when exposed to personalized products (The IKEA Effect)?

This paper aims to examine both; the factors that may influence consumers' willingness to pay more while engaging in self-creation products and the emotion regulation strategies that can be used to evade this effect. The IKEA effect is defined as consumers' willingness to pay more for self-created products than for identical products made by others. According to my hypothesis, consumers' psychological need to signal competence to themselves and others can be satiated by creating products with increased valuation, this effect can be avoided through the application of some emotion regulation strategies; specifically, by following the Process Model by James J. Gross and the Regulatory Flexibility Model by Bonanno and Burton. In spite of the IKEA effect being prevalent, it is often overlooked by consumers, because they see it as a non-threat. However, by assessing the situation and avoiding it, consumers of personalized products would save a great deal of money.

During the assembly of products, the feelings of competence that arise increase their value, and the threat of consumers' sense of self increases their propensity to create things themselves. This effect is a great marketing strategy, companies now actively involve consumers in the design, marketing and testing of products ([Lengnick-Hall 1996](#)). Some ways in which companies use the ikea effect to attract their consumers is by getting people to interact with your product. As an example, app designers provide sample data, pre-filled defaults, and editable templates to encourage people to put some effort and creativity into creating their accounts. Allowing your customers to customize the product. Nike, for instance, lets its customers design their own shoes. Customers can choose the colors, stitching, and performance features. They are willing to pay twice as much for these features. A common way for companies to attract customers is by seeking their feedback, input, and ideas. Eventually, customers will respond to your questions, feel like their opinions are valued, and feel more attached to the company.

Since the IKEA effect is common and a great way for companies to make money by exploiting their customers, understanding the effect is extremely important. For instance, a 2011 study found that subjects were willing to pay 63% more for furniture they had assembled themselves, than for equivalent pre-assembled items ([Berman, Jillian](#)). Emotion regulation strategies can help us identify this effect and avoid it. The term emotion regulation refers to the ability of an individual to effectively manage and respond to emotional experiences ([Gross, 1990; Gross, 2013](#)). Downregulation of emotion refers to the ability to decrease and minimise the intensity of emotional experiences ([Gross, 2013](#)). Using the Process Model by James J. Gross, we can specify how emotions are generated and regulated. It identifies a number of strategies that could be used to regulate emotions. Emotion is controlled at five points within the emotion generating process: **1** selection of the situation, **2** modification of the situation, **3** deployment of attention, **4** change of cognitions, and **5**

modification of experiential, behavioural or physiological responses. In terms of strategy family classifications, the four first families tend to be antecedent-focused, which means they are used before the emotional response, while the fifth family tends to be response-focused, since it is used after the emotional response has been activated. Furthermore, the antecedent-focused strategies are described as more effective since they affect how emotions are expressed than the reaction-focused ones that affect how people respond after an emotion has been expressed. One can experience this by building a product and becoming emotionally attached to it. However, when they try to down regulate this sense of desire and sentimental emotion they use a strategy that does not work, and as a result they end up developing a deeper connection to the object.

Bonanno and Burton's Regulatory Flexibility model will be instrumental in regulating emotions in the way that is most beneficial to the individual. Emotion regulation strategies are neither inherently good nor bad, according to Bonanno & Burton. Their effectiveness is based on the context in which a person is situated, as well as on their own skill sets. They believe that emotion regulation is a skill that develops over time and note that it can differ from person to person. Regulation flexibility is what they refer to as this skill. In their article, Bonanno and Burton discuss the "Fallacy of Uniform Efficacy," which states that the efficiency of a regulation strategy cannot apply the same emotion regulation technique to all contexts and expect it to work the same way because the impact of emotion regulation is not uniform.

The regulatory flexibility model has three sequential components: **1** context-sensitivity, **2** repertoire, and **3** responsiveness to feedback. The first step is to be aware of the context, which entails assessing demands and opportunities. The second step is to choose a suitable regulatory strategy from the repertoire. The third step is to monitor the feedback and make any necessary changes. On the basis of monitoring, one could choose to keep the strategy if it was performing well, adjust it if it was performing well but needed some refinement, or terminate the strategy if it was not performing well, and replace it with a new regulatory strategy as needed. Emotion regulation differs from person to person and can vary from one person to another, according to the Process Model of emotion regulation and the Regulatory Flexibility Model. According to both articles, coping strategies were inconsistently used across situations, so that the consequences differed between individuals. As such, there will be differences between individuals owing to the context in which a product is designed and built. Hence, the context will differ among people, but there are aspects of it that are similar rather than different.

Emotion dysregulation or emotion regulation failure can lead to individuals paying unnecessary expenses that can be easily avoided. This happens due to an imbalance in emotions (which have not been regulated properly and so are at a high) the emotions are desire and the affection towards inanimate objects. The reasons for

emotion dysregulation or emotion regulation failure may include misinterpreting a situation or using ineffective regulating methods.

Being able to choose from a variety of ways to manage your emotions is very important not only for resolving the Ikea effect, but also for other situations, as having a greater number of strategies to manage your emotions grants you greater flexibility. Following are some emotional regulation strategies a customer can use when engaging with personalized products.

Response modulation refers to directly influencing experiential, behavioral, or physiological components of the emotional response after the emotion is well developed ([Gross, 2001](#)). To effectively utilize this strategy, ask yourself the question "why do I want this product" before you make the purchase. To effectively deal with this, make a habit of asking others for feedback (and taking it seriously). You should choose someone who is not invested in the outcome of your work or in you, so they can offer an objective perspective.

Cognitive change refers to modifying one's appraisal of a situation in order to alter its emotional impact ([Gross, 2001](#)). One form of cognitive change is reappraisal. Reappraisal or cognitive re-evaluation is the ability to see a situation differently in order to reduce its emotional impact ([Gross, 2001](#)). Emotion regulation employs the reappraisal strategy extensively. Reappraisal is most commonly used to decrease negative emotion, but it can also be used to increase or decrease negative or positive emotions ([Ochsner & Gross, 2005](#)). Use this strategy to your advantage by considering the cost of the product against the value of your time. The IKEA effect can make us believe we're getting a great deal, because we inflate the value of the product that we've made ourselves. A way to counteract this would be to consider how long it will take to actually assemble a product, as well as whether its cheaper price is really worth all the time it will take to set it up or to put it to use. The cost of a meal kit dinner may be less than the cost of eating out, but the preparation will take about an hour. Does that sound like a good deal? In every decision you make, decide whether you prefer convenience or minimizing up-front costs. Your choice could be drastically altered if you perform this self-evaluation.

Situation modification refers to taking actions that directly alter a situation in order to change its emotional impact ([Gross, 2015](#)). Use this strategy to your advantage by taking control of the situation by raising questions about the worth of the product, whether it is a good investment, and other general concerns, which may give you a better chance to reconsider their decision.

Situation selection is the capacity to select shrewdly in what circumstance you're putting yourself in. An individual ought to maintain a strategic distance from being in a circumstance where emotion would be a primary issue. Consider this strategy when

searching for products that need assembling. Hands-on experiences are valuable, and products that need to be assembled may not be bad options., or build your own bookshelf (even if it comes out a teensy bit crooked). However, you should not choose the DIY options just because they are more cost-effective; this is the IKEA effect at work. Oftentimes these products aren't as high-quality as alternatives, so although they may be less expensive, you may regret your decision later. As a result, you could end up paying more in the long run if you need to change them sooner.

The IKEA effect can be practised for positive purposes, for instance; parents get their kids to eat more vegetables by using the IKEA effect, kids are more likely to like vegetables if their parents involve them in cooking activities ([Radtke,2019](#)). In a not-so-surprising way, the kids who liked vegetables also ate more of them. Dan Ariely, an author of the original IKEA effect paper, views the IKEA effect as contributing to parents' positive evaluations of their children. They put a lot of effort into raising them, so they think more highly of them. Using the IKEA effect in this manner is a positive way to develop a child-parent relationship and to bring a family closer together.

While the IKEA Effect has positive purposes, its negative side outweighs its positive aspects. My research question- How can Emotion Regulation help consumers avoid cognitive biases when exposed to personalized products (The IKEA Effect)? This question is answered by using the above-mentioned strategies to regulate our emotions in different situations. The "Fallacy of Uniform Efficacy" mentioned in Bonanno and Burton's article serves as another reason why we need a robust repertoire. A person's ability to control their emotions is more effective when they have a larger range of strategies to use. Often, individuals will use several strategies to regulate their emotions effectively, so knowing which strategies to use in what situation is very important. The IKEA effect has been a part of many customers' lives and it has cost them a lot. A simple issue like the IKEA effect should not be looked down upon and it should be avoided by customers to maintain a healthy experience when they shop for products. The emotion regulation strategies are effective and could potentially save customers their money. To further my research on this topic, I would like to conduct surveys to find out to what extent the emotion regulation strategies described above helped individuals avoid the IKEA effect. Moreover, this would be a perfect means of raising awareness of the IKEA effect, since it is very common but often overlooked.

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