



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Impact of Emotional Marketing Strategies on Patients' Decisions Regarding Infertility Treatment Options: A Study of Legal and Ethical Aspects

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## ABSTRACT

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This investigation explores the way in which emotional marketing affects patients' decisions regarding fertility treatments, it focuses on the legal and ethical aspects. It attempts to understand the way in which emotional appeals, such as hope and fear, influence the way patients are decision-makers in complex medical situations. Emotional marketing is based on theories of consumer behavior, ethics, and marketing, the investigation demonstrates that emotional factors and ethical concerns are involved in healthcare. A descriptive analytical approach was employed that combined surveys of patients with qualitative interviews with healthcare professionals to explore the emotional impact of marketing and the ethical concerns associated with it. Marketing by emotions has a considerable impact on patient decisions in terms of luring them into hope and decreasing their levels of fear. This, however, involves manipulating and abusing emotions. The results have been discussed within the legal and ethical domains, particularly emphasizing the dire need for marketing that is transparent and ethically correct. The limitations include the type of patient population since it was a specific population, and bias may have been introduced in the reported data. The work has proposed practical strategies for healthcare marketers, who can follow the ethical code without ignoring the emotional needs of the patients while achieving the end of elucidating the topic of emotional marketing in healthcare among the association's challenges. This study is aimed at generating novel insight in designing morally accepted marketing strategies mindful of the emotional and psychological wellness of the patient during infertility treatment.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of infertility is a major concern related to health and society, with immense suffering imposed on individuals as well as couples in Iraq. Further tests cause severe worry and tension to the patients in Najaf during the finding of the right treatment procedure; such conditions always end in a feeling of isolation. In this case, 'emotional marketing strategies' have now become potent tools for meeting these objectives and building a closer bond between patients and their doctors. The type — "patient stories, messages based on feelings, pictures that cause compassion, videos, etc." — all together might create some emotional attachment which in its turn might seriously influence the treatment choice regarding fertility treatments. Other studies argue that emotional marketing increases patients' interest in receiving necessary treatments by building empathy and faith through common experiences. Regarding infertility cases in Al-Sadr Teaching Hospital, efforts towards the problem must capture this aspect of emotional specificity. The hospital will need to apply marketing strategies, which should be of a nature that would not only evoke emotions in the patient but provide overall support and assurance to the patients. Messages are communicated using marketing based on human experience; patients are likely to overcome a feeling of being alone and may turn out to be

positive with regard to the available lines of treatment. The use of emotional marketing in healthcare poses severe legal and ethical dilemmas. It is possible that such strategies will take undue advantage of sick patients' vulnerability for financial gains. Such communication would then have to comply with professional ethics by being transparent, apt, and truthful and not manipulating emotions for commercial ends. Awareness and educational info are what marketing activities should concentrate on as they must avoid becoming an activity to manipulate emotions for financial benefits. This study aims to investigate the impact of emotional marketing strategies on patient fertility treatment choices and the legal and ethical considerations regarding their use. Patients' data will be collected from Al-Sadr Teaching Hospital to determine the efficacy of these strategies in altering the available treatment options and enhancing the patient experience. Thus, findings from this research will be beneficial for the healthcare sector in terms of recommending appropriate ways of using emotional marketing approaches.

## Objectives

**The specific objectives of this study are:**

1. Researching the Impact of Emotional Marketing on Infertility Treatment Decision Making Processes by Patients
2. Studying the Ethical and Legal Aspects Concerning Emotional Marketing Strategy in Health Care
3. Proposing Efficient 'Best of Breed' Strategies for Health Care Institutions with Respect to Emotion-Based Marketing

This research will clarify how the quality of services to infertile patients can be enhanced with good-will marketing, and in the process, their protection and satisfaction ensured.

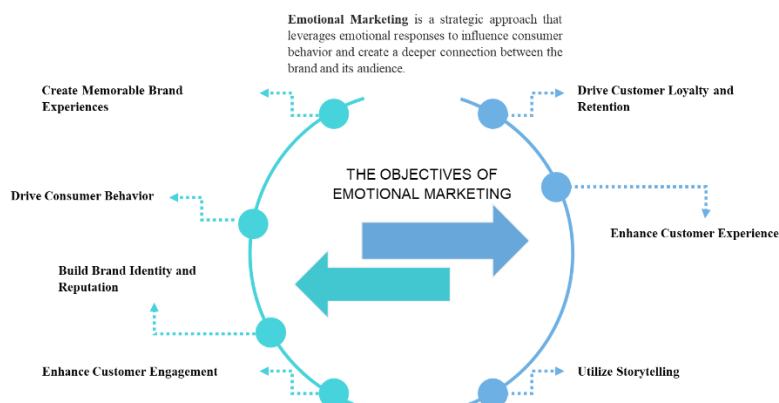
## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. EMOTIONAL MARKETING: DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVES

The use of emotions in marketing is knowing that purchasing behavior can be largely determined by the effect of pressure applied through emotions; this way, the organization can relate more closely with its target. Basically, it involves taking consumer emotions into account to kindle engagement and commitment, which ultimately lead to a transaction. Such an approach very much is founded on the assumption that most of the time, it is emotion that drives decision making rather than logic (Zhang & Deng, 2023,p.8; Der Asad et al.,2024,p.5). The emotional marketing refers to the practice of emphasizing the emotional aspect in marketing communication and marketing practices. While traditional marketing concentrates on features or price, emotional marketing stands apart from traditional marketing. Unlike rational marketing, emotional marketing is based on a belief in consumer loyalty through touching their hearts. This connection is fostered through the story, pictures, and words that make sense to the viewers at a human level (Paramita et al., 2021, p.1). The core of emotional marketing is in its capacity to communicate with consumers' innermost desires and emotions. Whether it's through an emotional marketing strategy, a touching narrative, or a powerful brand description, emotional marketing is intended to instill a specific sentiment in consumers regarding a brand or product. This emotional commitment often causes a stronger brand association, increased customer devotion, and a higher probability of repeated purchases (Ponsonby-McCabe and Boyle,2006, p.177). One of the primary goals of emotional marketing is to create a remarkable and meaningful brand experience. By causing specific emotions like happiness, sadness, or empathy, brands can distinguish themselves from their competitors and leave a permanent mark on consumers. This emotional bond facilitates the development of brand loyalty, as consumers who have a positive emotional experience with a brand are more inclined to remain committed to the brand and recommend it to others (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, p.134). Another primary goal of emotional marketing is to influence the behavior of consumers and influence the decisions they

make. Emotions have a significant role in the decision-making process, which is often superseded by logic. By capitalizing on these emotional triggers, brands can effectively inspire consumers to act, whether it is purchasing a product, signing up for a service, or participating in the brand's social media endeavors (Umrallyeva et al., 2022, p.16). Emotional marketing promotes the idea of a sense of necessity or urgency that causes consumers to act, this causes revenue and sales (Bagozzi et al., 1999, p. 186). Also, emotional marketing is intended to increase and maintain brand reputation and identity. Through emotional marketing, brands can communicate their values, purpose, and personality in a way that satisfies their intended audience. This facilitates the development of a distinct brand reputation that is distinguishable from the competition (Bagozzi et al., 2017, p. 3). For instance, a brand that consistently promotes happiness and positivity will become associated with the aforementioned emotions in the minds of consumers, this will in turn enhance the brand's reputation and general image.

Other than that, emotional marketing also attempts to increase customer interaction and engagement. By creating content that evokes an emotional response from consumers, brands can promote a greater degree of interaction and engagement with their audience. This can manifest in different ways, such as social media shares, comments, or user-generated content (Ayanso, 2014, p. 23). When consumers feel emotionally associated with a brand, they are more inclined to participate in it on a significant level, this will lead to an increase in visibility and reach. Additionally, emotional marketing attempts to promote customer commitment and retention. A strong emotional bond with a brand can facilitate long-term commitment, as consumers are more inclined to continue supporting a brand that causes them to feel good (Shin, 2020, p. 55). This loyalty is often demonstrated by repeated purchases, positive feedback from friends and family, and a desire to pay a premium for the brand's products or services. Through the deepening of an emotional bond, brands can create a dedicated base of devoted customers that will remain committed over time (Nasser and Al-Hadrawi, 2024, p.432). Another goal of emotional marketing is to improve the overall customer experience. By integrating emotional components into marketing campaigns, brands can lead to a more entertaining and enjoyable experience for consumers. This can include components such as personalized communication, interactive content, or brand experiences that are immersive. A positive emotional experience can have a lasting effect on consumers and contribute to their overall satisfaction with the brand (Pine & Gilmore, 2019, p. 93). Apart from these objectives, marketing has been injected with the power of 'storytelling.' Often, brands use 'emotional marketing' to tell very evocative stories that embody their brand and speak to the world. Stories may inspire various feelings, such as inspiration, empathy, or excitement, and these stories generate stronger bonding with consumers (Escalas, 2004, p.171). The use of 'emotional marketing' in story-telling helps messages to be communicated more provokingly and memorably. "See Figure 1".



**Figure (1) Emotional Marketing: Definition and Objectives**

In conclusion, marketing on emotion is a comprehensive approach that will seek to tap into consumers more emotionally. It shifts the attention from the product itself to the feelings ignited by the product, allowing brands to relate better and more meaningfully to their audience. The objectives of emotional marketing are branding about consumer behavior, relation with the customers to retain

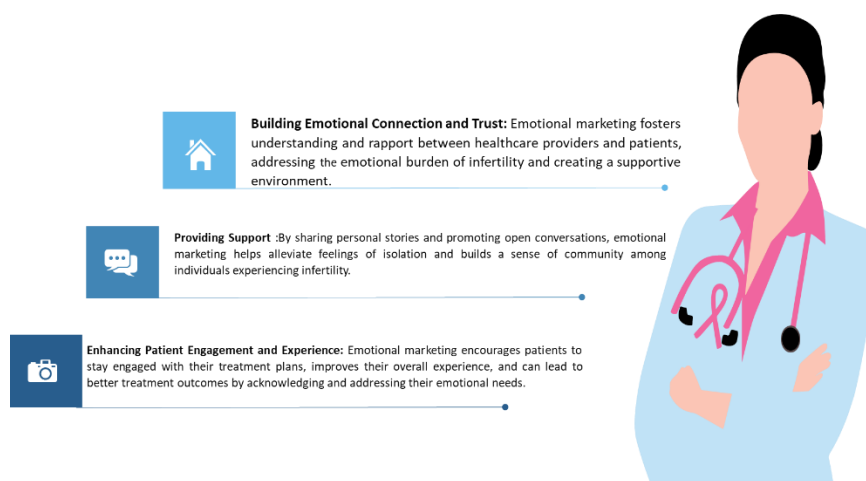
them, and improving the customer's overall experience. Emotional appeal and narrativity can help in differentiating branding among others and each other, increasing sales, and making a long-lasting relationship with customers.

## 2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL MARKETING IN ADDRESSING INFERTILITY

The significance of emotional marketing in regards to infertility cannot be underestimated. Infertility is a personal problem that is often painful, affecting thousands of people worldwide. This emotional and psychological burden associated with infertility is greater than the physical burden associated with treatment, and can have a significant impact on a person's mental health. As a result, emotional marketing becomes an important tool in this context, it not only provides solutions to problems, but also promotes empathy, support, and connection (Hart, 2002, p.32). At its heart, emotional marketing is about creating messages and strategies that appeal to the emotions of people, their concerns, and their hopes and desires. In the event of infertility, this implies addressing the complex emotional issues associated with the lack of fertility. Traditional marketing strategies may only concern the clinical aspects of fertility treatment, such as the success rates, procedures, and technology. These are undoubtedly significant, but they often disregard the emotional journey patients travel through. Emotional marketing addresses this deficiency by recognizing and addressing the emotional issues experienced by individuals who have infertility. One of the primary objectives of emotional marketing in this context is to instill a sense of comprehension and association between healthcare providers and patients. Infertility is frequently accompanied by feelings of disappointment, sadness, and solitude. When healthcare providers and fertility clinics utilize emotional language in their messages, they can demonstrate that they understand the emotions and are dedicated to addressing them. This method promotes trust and rapport, which causes patients to feel more comfortable and supported during their treatment process (Suryakant, 2016, p. 54). For example, stories can be narrated by 'infertile' patients who later became parents. By so doing, the clinic can perceive real individual suffering patients as being empathetic towards them, and provide some glimmer of hope to the rest. Such stories may be good vehicle helps to bond with the patient at emotional levels since it will at least assure the patient that he is not the only one suffering and that there is a way out. Personal experience would make the clinical process less cold and more comforting (Kim, 2021, p. 143). Furthermore, emotional marketing may help in lowering the psychological burden of 'infertile' patients. The process of attempting fertility treatments is quite a complicated one that requires numerous visits and tests while still being unsure. By passing along positive emotional messages, clinics may reduce this stress and fear that their patients hold. This may include referring to the existing supportive system, for example, counseling or support groups; these can offer additional emotional support and orientation (van Empel et al., 2010, p.144). The other crucial attribute of emotional marketing is the propagation of society and fitting. This is because barrenness is generally seen as a journey one undertakes alone, with most people feeling alienated from the rest who do not seem to fathom their ordeal. Emotional marketing strategies would enable the building of a supportive community by opening up discussions on matters to do with barrenness and encouraging the sharing of experiences. This can be done through online forums and social media groups as well as activities like community events which bring people together, allow for the sharing of experiences, and offer moral support (Brochu, 2019, p.76).

More subtly, emotional marketing also inspires the patient to seek help and commit to daunting treatment regimens that can last long and be quite 'enthusiasm draining'. Thus, it inspires patients by spinning the results as positive and technically attainable efforts as continuing unsolicited Emotional Marketing Messages Spin on Infertility and Prospective Parenting: An Alternative View – Rosaleen K. Ainsworth Lagos Business School Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria. Emotional marketing strategies in healthcare practices can support an individual "... with an individualized and humane attitude to its partner in care" (Naidu, 2011, p. 30). When patients feel that their emotional needs are shown attention and regard in healthcare delivery, then positively they will rate their experience with healthcare providers. This will eventually enhance client satisfaction and loyalty to the doctor or hospital. Helping patients emotionally may also lead to better treatment outcome since emotionally supported patients are prone to following their treatment plans and doing the necessary procedures (McCull-Kennedy et al., 2017, p. 249). Overcoming barriers and stigma: The fertility

problem is one topic still sidestepped or brushed under the rug, with many dejectors having second thoughts in getting help due to fear of judgment or social sanctioning. This kind of stigma: Schoenherr & Le-Bouar, 2024, p. 270). is founded on taboo and prejudice, which emotional marketing on infertility is willing to break. It might seem 'taboo' yet it 'taboos' but since the emergence of modern advertising a taboo slowly being broken by marketers One of the most notable advantages is that of engagement, allowing the company to build long-term brand loyalty with its customers from healthcare providers who harness emotional marketing well – one clear cutting edge in an otherwise competitive industry. When patients feel a genuine emotional connection to a provider or clinic, they are more likely to share it with others and become repeat clients. This can lead to increased recommendations and a positive reputation in the community (Khandai et al.,2023,p.221)."See Figure 2".



**Figure 2: The importance of emotional marketing in addressing infertility**

Emotional marketing is crucial to addressing infertility because it addresses the emotional and psychological components of the problem. By connecting with patients, providing emotional support, promoting community spirit, and reducing stigma, emotional marketing increases the overall experience of patients and improves the results of treatment. It alters the method of treating infertility from a purely clinical perspective to one that recognizes and values the personal emotional journey. As such, emotional marketing not only facilitates the individual's navigational efforts regarding infertility but also promotes a more compassionate and supportive healthcare climate.

### 2.3. EMOTIONAL MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE FIELD OF INFERTILITY TREATMENT

We will explore three different strategies for emotional marketing in the field of fertility treatment:

#### 2.3.1. Personal Stories and Testimonials

Emotional marketing in the field of fertility treatment is primarily based on personal narratives and case histories. These stories are not just short stories; they are powerful tools that are intended to create a strong emotional bond between potential patients and providers of treatment (Mimoun et al., 2022, p. 1075). Studies not only have shown that narratives of successful survivors of infertility provide personal stories more than just hope but evidence of what is possible (Daniluk, 2001, p.124). When people see an individual success story— others relating to the sufferers' experiences and good coming out after all the difficult situations, the viewers are filled with more empathy and hope (Kemp & Bui, 2017, p. 87). Such stories often portray the personal and psychological journey that people undergo rather than merely focusing on the 'clinical' angle of the treatment. For example, a testimonial could state the experience of a "ride" in undergoing different fertility treatments; the level of stress and disappointment comes along with failed attempts and that relief and happiness when it comes out to be successful (Lehto et al., 2019, p.446). Sharing those vivid details in personal information can create a story that is highly emotionally resonant for those considering their options

for fertility therapy (Weeseaman et al.,2024,p.141). The impact of these stories is more extensive than simply inspiring. They facilitate the reduction of feelings of solitude and fear that many patients will experience. Infertility can often be perceived as a solaceless conflict, the presence of other patients who have successfully navigated this path can provide comfort and a sense of community (Read et al.,2014,p.393). Testimonials often demonstrate the human side of the treatment process, this can help potential patients perceive the providers as having a compassionate nature rather than merely being medical professionals (Sears,2010,p.99). This emotional bond can greatly affect their decision-making process, making them more inclined to choose a provider that understands and sympathizes with their issues (Frank, 1990, p.58).

Additionally, personal anecdotes can facilitate the development of trust. When patients potentially hear about other patients' positive experiences with a particular clinic or provider, they are more likely to believe that the services offered are quality and effective (Vidhya & Venkatesh,2024,p.135). These testimonials serve as examples of positive peer pressure, which can be more effective than traditional marketing claims (Schwartz & Woloshin,2019,p.32). Patients may feel the treatment is more valid and of a good quality when hearing about others who have been treated in the same way (Jiaying & Lasi 2023, p. 84). Moreover, it is insisted that marketing of emotion through stories and testimonials is not just about 'look at all this money we've made' but also recognizes and validates the trauma of potential parents involved through infertility. Providers show they are offering a response to the emotional pain related to infertility in addition to the clinical diagnosis of the condition by openly addressing these issues (Hasanpoor-Azghdy et al., 2014, p. 6). This sort of wholistic approach would lead to a closer emotional tie and would make the patients feel more supported and understood in their routine of treatment (O'Reilly et al., 2014, p. 4).

### 2.3.2. Emotional Images and Videos

Powerful images and emotive films are commonly used in fertility treatment sectors as images to explain and then to set a scene of motion related to infertilities that infertile patients might be going through. When the essence of motion related to infertility is well captured as visual content, prospective patients can be greatly influenced by it. These are meant to engender in prospective viewers hope and comfort - the two emotions so critical when faced with the complexities of infertility (Hutchins,2023,p.2).Images and videos that capture the excited first ultrasound, a positive pregnancy test, or holding a newborn will evoke strong feelings of happiness (Takhar & Pemberton,2020,p.11). It enables the prospective patients to see the fruits that they can finally achieve from their treatment journey and to believe in attaining it. Providing 'hope' with an actionable outlet of returning for treatment produces in...sic!...potential patient motivation for taking steps toward infertility treatment (Slaughter,2019,p.9). Images and other emotional content help in developing a sense of trust among possible patients and make the latter feel comfortable and at ease. Furthermore, images and video files with strong emotional content may contribute to breaking the taboos surrounding infertility. While traditional media shapes public perceptions on health matters through cinematography and drama concepts, these visually presented representations provide the viewers with a different impression of the character of infertility, its diagnosis, and how it is approached. By making infertility appear common and treatable, providing testimonies of people who have succeeded in life after infertility, and portraying such examples in real life settings, the visual aspect helps to normalize the topic of discussion giving out less shame or embarrassment feelings by those involved (Gerrits et al.,2023,p.5).This, therefore, makes people take the initiative to go for assistance regarding their fertility. Strategic questioning facilitation: Would proper questioning significantly enhance the outcomes from viewing visual representations on infertility and related conditions (Gerrits et al.,2023,p.5)? In today's digital world, content that is aesthetically appealing and emotionally provoking stands a better chance of being shared through social and other online modes of communication. This increased rate of visibility can really allow the message to have far-reaching connections and reach out to many people. Finally, creating a 'story' of considerable emotional pictures and videos in the advertising works to appeal meaningfully to would-be patients regarding the nature of infertility treatment (Puhlmann & Jurgensen 1993, p. 11). It turns clinical and rather emotionless aspects of treatment for infertility into something much more relatable and fuller of emotion for a better bonding between patient and provider.

### 2.3.3. Supportive Messages

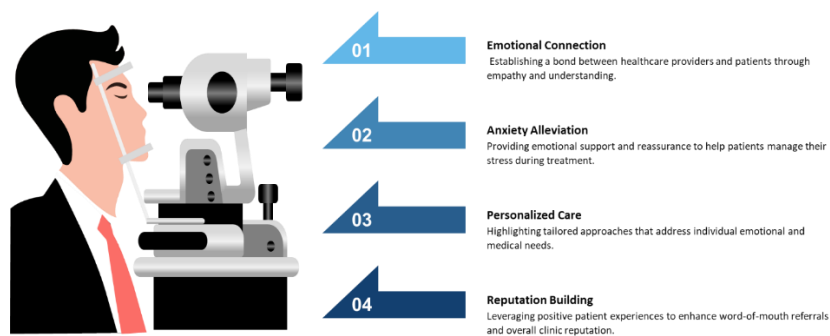
In a way, this manifests in a combination of logistical and emotional marketing for fertility. Such communications are carefully crafted to convey positive anticipation, optimism, and empathy, as well as lowering sensitive concerns of individuals that might involve fear, anxiety, and uncertainty towards available treatment options (Aarts et al., 2015, p.68). Well-crafted supportive communication helps in limiting a great deal of pain and emotional distress associated with infertility. Messages of hope and reassurance can also unfetter very “stressed” and emotionally weighted individuals battling cancer. For example, messages covering scientific details on the success rates, modalities of various treatments, technology applied in the process, and the perpetual availability of emotional support can lower patient anxiety levels while strengthening their acceptance of the given treatment regime (Di Matteo et al., 2000, p. 2103). Supportive messages open up lines of communication between the provider and the patient. When the language used by hospitals and doctors is one of feeling for the patient’s emotional problems, it creates a very compassionate and supporting environment. This could enhance the patient’s sense of value and understanding, critical to building trust and favorable treatment experience. Moreover, these messages can attract more resources and support services for the patients. This information could include, for example, counseling services, group support, or educational programs helping someone “tame” the emotional “beast” of infertility. By pointing out these resources, then supportive messages may help the patients get help with the situation as the outcome and experience relevant to them, if ideal (Yağmur & Oltuluoğlu, 2012, p. 101). Reassurance to available resources and transparency – in this relationship also lies an important aspect of supportive messages is what can make most of a patient’s treatment plan. Messages of staying, taking care of oneself, and continued support inspire people to follow their treatment protocol and maintain a good attitude. Attributed as the importance in the long run, where sometimes motivation and optimism must be kept as a secret to success (da Silva et al., 2020, p. 4). In sum, supportive messages are critical components of emotional marketing in the infertility treatment process. They prepare an emotional environment at the home of the patient, have positivity and the presence of support as common factors, and maintain continued involvement in treatment. Therewithal encouraging hope confidence emotional support-related messages in infertility treatment provide a more humane and effective approach towards the issue (Jarvis, 2022,p.442).

### 2.3.4. THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL MARKETING ON DECISION-MAKING

Currently, direct emotional persuasion is relevant for decision-making in health care, notably in areas such as infertility. Patients involved in infertility usually undergo a painful and personal issue, which mostly results in decision-making processes that are based on emotions rather than mere facts which are cold and hard to get. This is where the subtlety of emotional marketing comes into play, influencing choices by wisely crafted messaging that strikes a chord at the personal level (Bunting et al.,2013,p.387). Consistent research results depict that the use of strategies of emotional marketing has a great influence on judgment. The implementation of these strategies would influence the choice made by the patient, especially when used in treating infertility. Whether a system is efficient or protocols are followed may not depend on the firm parameters and measurable outcomes of, for example, treatment rates or success; typically, patients follow these because of attachments to the health center from the heart. Transitioning from rational consideration to emotional bonding underscores the intrinsic value of emotion in the context of health care decision-making (Kemp et al.,2014,p.87). Infertility is a situation that provokes diverse feelings varying from optimism and anticipation to anger and dejection. But financial pressure from infertility impels people and couples to put not just the most potent remedies but also an atmosphere of struggling and understanding and providing comfort. Therefore, in this context, emotional branding shifts into a form of talking to clients closer: addressing their issues and worries while giving assurance and feeling of security(Mimoun et al.,2022,p.1076).

Among other factors, one very essential role that emotional marketing plays in the decision-making process while undergoing treatment to conceive is creating a ‘movie’ of a positive emotional experience around a center or treatment. By focusing on hopeful, successful, and emotional

communication messages, health service providers could create a feeling of trust and bonding with 'would-be' patients. For instance, if a fertility center releases testimonials from couples who are done with their infertility issue, they will mostly talk about the kind of emotional shoulder and understanding they were walked through during the treatment; such communication proves to the world that the clinic has professionals, as well as win over prospective patients thereby siding with that particular center (Shaffer & Zikmund-Fisher, 2013, p.8). Further, the use of emotional marketing strategies may reduce psychological stress during reproductive procedures. Passing through tests, procedures, and treatments can be tiresome and emotionally depleting enough to hinder rational decision-making. Health marketers make the process less anxious for patients by including kind elements in their messages to show comfort and reassurance. This could be online resources that deal with issues around anxiety; the organizing of support groups; or development of content that speaks to people's common fears and concerns: all these things are doable. When a patient feels supported and understood, they will still make the best decision based on information but without the weight of more emotional pain (Zurlo et al., 2020, p. 7). The other aspect of emotional infertility marketing is personal care towards the patients. Infertility is not such a condition where treatment can be generalized for all patients; it requires personalized treatment catering to individual emotional and medical needs. Extensions that follow the confirmation of the above appended, well sensory network marketing positively correlate both with the connections forged among patients and the particular infertility clinic and opposing views and strategies currently existing among various medical centers in using service marketing in communicating with prospective clients since many other facilities offering infertility services do not know how to wrap it all into a marketing mix. On one hand, the infertility treatment can bond that patient to the hospital and, at a time when most standalone clinics fuse biology and modern communications technology that can bond the patient to its staff, it is an awesome competitive edge. Specializ(ation of) fertility center attracts bonding with patients much over the provided services than other forms of medical centers. By creating a narrative that parallels the emotional experiences of patients, healthcare providers can distinguish themselves from other providers and attract individuals who want more than just medical expertise, they also want a supportive and understanding environment (Kanibir & Nart, 2012, p.1379). Other than affecting individual decision-making, emotional marketing can also affect the larger public perception of a medical center or treatment option. Patients' positive experiences can facilitate referrals via word of mouth and increase the overall popularity of a practice. When patients feel a strong emotional bond with the hospital and receive the assistance they need, they are more inclined to share their experiences with others, this will influence the decisions of those around them, thereby affecting the medical center's overall success and growth (Fisher & Hammarberg, 2012, p.4). This effect can be larger than the individual decisions of a medical center, this will affect the center's overall success and growth. It's crucial to recognize that while emotional marketing can be beneficial, it's also important to use it ethically and transparently. The objective should be to genuinely connect with patients and provide them with the assistance they need, rather than merely attempting to manipulate their emotions to make a profit. Ethical emotional marketing involves recognizing the genuine difficulties patients encounter, providing honest and empatetic communication, and making sure that marketing messages are in line with the specific services and care provided (Katirai, 2003, p. 10)."See Figure 3".



**Figure 3: The impact of emotional marketing on decision-making**



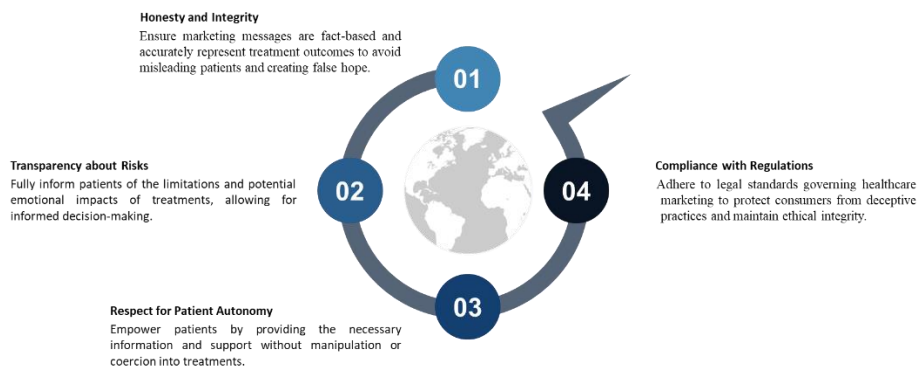
Emotional marketing has a significant impact on the process of fertility treatment helping patients tie their stories to the emotions and experiences of treatment providers would have a huge impact on their decisions. Not only does it create trust and reduce anxiety, but it also increases patients' overall experience. As the healthcare environment evolves, emotional branding is likely to remain crucial in the treatment of infertility.

### **2.3.5. LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF EMOTIONAL MARKETING IN INFERTILITY TREATMENT**

The application of emotional marketing into the treatment of infertility is a very complicated mix regarding legal and ethical issues that needs careful examination and thoughtful navigation (Marshall, 2023, p.3). Since infertility is an issue that goes deep into the lives of people, and couples in particular, it is known to be the perfect spot where emotional triggers can be applied. When marketing strategies use emotional triggers as a way of attracting and engaging potential patients, sensitivity to the patient's perspective, transparency and respect must be observed in high magnitude (Alon et al., 2024, p.12). The emotional burden of infertility is not exaggerated. Many people view it as both a physical burden and a psychological one. This emotional landscape is fertile ground for marketing strategies that involve hope, compassion, and the desire for resolution. However, using such sentiments for pecuniary benefit carries significant moral bearing. They are to walk between helping and not so much as manipulating individuals going through infertility. 'Well, the main ethics concern in emotional marketing is creating a need for truth and upright communication. Information in marketing messages should be correct and they should provide a practical idea of what treatment will be possible. Here it is: the presentation of treatment outcome possibilities or a too rosy forecast would both mislead one and create false hope ... for the first time' (Woods et al. 2014, p.17). These practices not only jeopardize trust that is pivotal to patient-provider relationships but may also lead to significant emotional distress because of the disappointment resultant from unfulfilled expectations Carbone, M., & Gottheim, L. (2005). Developing policy for marketing assisted reproduction. In *Ethical and Legal Issues in Reproductive Enhancement*. Hague: Kluwer Academic, p. 7. Cited in Pennings, G. (2004) "Policy Development as a Continuous Interaction between Social Reality and Ethical Ideal" *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 7, 151-158 at 155. This transparency is important in order to ensure that patients can make decisions that are informed by a comprehensive understanding of the treatment's details and what they can expect (Tobias, 1997, p.65). If the information is not Honest, the results can be damaging to patients or financially lossful (Quick, 2022, p.326). Respecting patient dignity and autonomy is another pillar of ethical marketing (Farid, 2024, p.13). Emotional marketing should not involve or coerce patients into making decisions that are detrimental to their interests. Instead, it should grant patients greater autonomy by providing them with the information and assistance necessary to make informed decisions (Shultz, 1985, p. 87). Marketing strategies should be designed to assist patients in their decision-making process, rather than to force them into treatments that they are not familiar with or cannot handle (Elwyn et al., 2000, p.894).

From a legal perspective, some rules and regulations regulate the advertising and marketing of healthcare (Sage, 1999, p. 96). These rules are intended to prevent consumers from being misled by advertising and to protect them from deceptive practices. In the context of infertility treatment laws, the standards of đạo pháp often require that promotional materials regarding the efficacy and risks of treatments are accurate (Hall, 2000, p.123). If a person fails to comply with these regulations, they will be subject to legal consequences and lose their ethical standards. Additionally, healthcare providers and marketers must recognize the potential for exploitation in the context of emotional marketing (Gusmano et al., 2019, p. 370). Infertility treatments are costly and emotionally taxing, which causes individuals to be more susceptible to aggressive marketing tactics (Alferova, 2022, p. 54). Ethical marketing should avoid utilizing these vulnerabilities by ensuring that all communications are intended to inform and support rather than to manipulate or coerce (Wu et al., 2014, p. 93). In addition to individual patient concerns, there is a larger ethical obligation to the public (Kumar, 2016, p.33). Marketing that employs emotional appeals should be scrutinized to ensure it does not contribute to larger social issues, such as the stigmatization of infertility or the propagation of unrealistic standards of treatment success. Responsible marketing should attempt to

educate and inform rather than promote myths or misconceptions regarding infertility and its treatment (Hartman, 2016,p.945)." See Figure 4".



**Figure 4: Legal and ethical considerations of emotional marketing in infertility treatment**

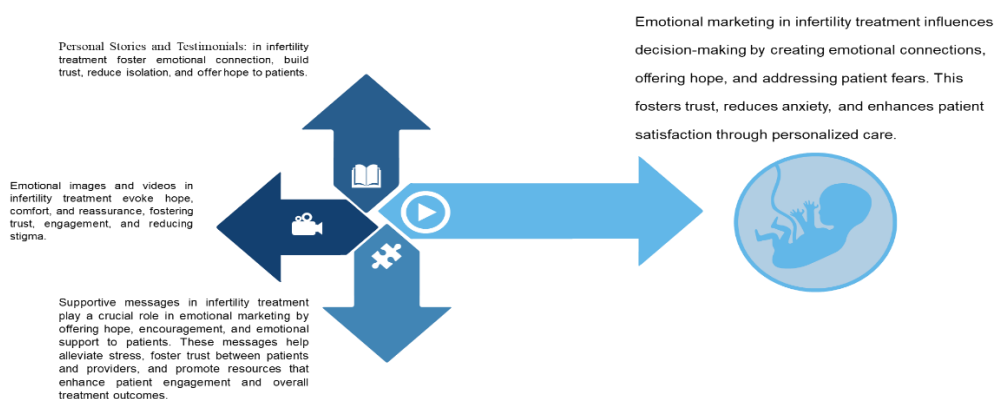
The legal and ethical concerns surrounding emotional marketing in the treatment of infertility are multifaceted and complex. They require a careful توازن between effective communication and the preservation of patient rights and dignity. Marketing strategies should be based on honesty, transparency, and respect, they should instead promote patients. Following these principles is not only a legal obligation, but also a moral imperative that is crucial to maintaining faith and promoting the health of individuals as they travel through the difficult path of infertility. From the aforementioned, the hypotheses can be deduced as follows:

**H1.** *There is a statistically significant impact of personal stories and testimonials on patients' decisions in Sadr Medical City.*

**H2.** *There is a statistically significant impact of emotional images and videos on patients' decisions in Sadr Medical City.*

**H3.** *There is a statistically significant impact of supportive messages on patients' decisions in Sadr Medical City.*

Based on the study hypotheses, the hypothetical study framework has been formulated. "See Figure 5"



**Figure 5: Hypothetical study framework**

### 3. PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1. DATA AND METHOD

Through a survey of a sample of patients at Al-Sadr Educational Hospital in Najaf, a questionnaire tool was used to collect the required data by distributing it to a sample of (500) individuals from the total study population of (712). It was found that (14) questionnaires contained incomplete data and were therefore excluded. Additionally, an outlier test was conducted, revealing (4) outlier data points, which were also excluded from the dataset, resulting in a final sample size of (482) valid questionnaires for statistical analysis, representing a rate of (96%), which is an acceptable and high percentage. The data were analyzed using various statistical tests available in the (SPSS) software. The first part of the questionnaire included personal information about the surveyed sample (gender, age group, educational attainment, duration of illness). The second part was dedicated to measuring the variable of emotional marketing strategies, which included a scale consisting of several questions distributed across three strategies: Personal Stories and Testimonials (5 questions), Emotional Images and Videos (6 questions), and Supportive Messages (6 questions). See Appendix1. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the statements, defined by five responses: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The third part focused on measuring the variable of patients' decisions, consisting of six questions. See Appendix2. A scale was constructed with six questions, and a five-point Likert scale was also used to measure the statements, defined by five responses: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

### 3.2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the study results are presented and statistically analyzed to determine the effects of personal stories, emotional images and videos, and supportive messages on patients' decisions in Sadr Medical City as follows:

**H1.** There is a statistically significant impact of personal stories and testimonials on patients' decisions in Sadr Medical City. Through the review of the table values(1), the analysis of the statistical results indicates the relationship between the independent variable "Personal Stories and Testimonials" and patients' decisions. The value of the constant (A) in the model is (2.325), suggesting a positive expected impact of this variable. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is (0.472), indicating a direct relationship; an increase in personal stories and testimonials is associated with an increase in patients' decisions. Looking at the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), which is (0.264), we find that approximately (26.4%) of the variance in patients' decisions can be explained by this variable. While this percentage reflects a noticeable effect, it also suggests that other factors play a role in shaping patients' decisions. The calculated (F) value is (22.841), which is much higher than the critical values at significance levels of (0.01) and (0.05) (7.078) and (4.002), respectively. This indicates that the statistical model has strong significance, enhancing the credibility of the results. As for the significance level (P-value) of (0.000), this indicates that the relationship between the independent variable and patients' decisions is statistically significant, meaning that the observed effect is not random. Overall, the results indicate the significance of personal stories and testimonials in regards to influencing patients' decisions, while also recognizing the presence of additional factors that may be involved in those decisions.

**Table (1) Analysis of the Impact of Personal Stories and Testimonials on Patients' Decisions**

DV	(P-Value)	Calculated (F) Value	$(R^2)$	Model Coefficients		IV
				$\beta$	A	
Patients' decisions	0.000	22.841	0.264	0.472	2.325	Personal Stories and Testimonials
The critical (F) value at (0.01) = 7.078						
The critical (F) value at (0.05) = 4.002						

**H2.** There is a statistically significant impact of emotional images and videos on patients' decisions in Sadr Medical City. Through the review of the table values (2), The results presented in the table

indicate the relationship between the independent variable "Emotional Images and Videos" and patients' decisions. The value of the constant (A) in the model is (2.479), suggesting a positive expected impact of this variable. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is (0.448), indicating a direct relationship between the use of emotional images and videos and an increased likelihood of patients making certain decisions. Looking at the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), it is (0.259), meaning that approximately (25.9%) of the variance in patients' decisions can be explained by the independent variable. While this percentage reflects a noticeable effect, it also suggests that other factors play a role in shaping patients' decisions. The calculated (F) value is (21.518), which is much higher than the critical values at significance levels of (0.01) and (0.05), which are (7.078) and (4.002), respectively. This indicates that the statistical model has strong significance, enhancing the reliability of the results. Regarding the significance level (P-value), it is (0.000), indicating that the relationship between the independent variable and patients' decisions is statistically significant, meaning that the observed effect is not random. Overall, these results affirm the importance of emotional images and videos in influencing patients' decisions, while also recognizing that there may be additional factors contributing to those decisions.

**Table (2) Analysis of the Impact of Emotional Images and Videos on Patients' Decisions**

DV	(P-Value)	Calculated (F) Value	$(R^2)$	Model Coefficients		IV
				$\beta$	A	
Patients' decisions	0.000	21.518	0.259	0.448	2.479	Emotional Images and Videos
The critical (F) value at (0.01) = 7.078						
The critical (F) value at (0.05) = 4.002						

**H3.** There is a statistically significant impact of supportive messages on patients' decisions in Sadr Medical City . Through the review of the table values(3), The analysis of the table presents the relationship between the independent variable "Supportive Messages" and patients' decisions. The constant value (A) in the model is (2.533), indicating a positive expected impact of this variable. The regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is (0.441), which suggests a direct relationship; as the amount of supportive messages increases, the likelihood of patients making specific decisions also increases. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is (0.189), meaning that approximately (18.9%) of the variance in patients' decisions can be explained by the independent variable. Although this percentage reflects a significant effect, it also implies that there are other factors that contribute to shaping patients' decisions. The calculated (F) value is (14.546), which is considerably higher than the critical values at significance levels of (0.01) and (0.05), which are (7.078) and (4.002), respectively. This indicates that the statistical model has strong significance, enhancing the credibility of the results. The level of significance (P-Value) is (0.000), implying that the relationship between the independent variable and decisions of patients is statistically significant and that the effect observed is not by chance. All these results back up that encouraging messages matter when it comes to impacting the decisions of patients, although other factors might also contribute to such decisions.

**Table (3) Analysis of the Impact of Supportive Messages on Patients' Decisions**

DV	(P-Value)	Calculated (F) Value	$(R^2)$	Model Coefficients		IV
				$\beta$	A	
patients' decisions	0.000	14.546	0.189	0.441	2.533	Supportive Messages
The critical (F) value at (0.01) = 7.078						
The critical (F) value at (0.05) = 4.002						

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The influence of marketing strategies with patients' emotions on final decisions concerning treatment of infertility has been examined among patients attending Al-Sadr Teaching Hospital in Najaf-Ashraf, Iraq. A review of patient-related data revealed that emotional marketing has a significant bearing on the choices of treatments to be made. The findings further indicated that personal narratives of patients play a very critical role in increasing the positive attitudes among infertility patients as they help to ease the fear and uncertainties linked to the treatment programs. Then, the patient is advised on some suitable methods that will assure recovery thereby increasing the acceptance of treatment. Thus, it is believed that using such information in advertising is a good way of getting into contact with patients. Furthermore, findings demonstrated that emotive pictures and videos on personal stories of a patient have an impact on their decisions. Such emotion media do create that human bond wherein patients feel that they are not alone in such experiences, increasing the will for positive action in recovery. This highlights the necessity of appealing to human emotions in marketing communication to enhance viewer interactivity.

However, there are certain ethical and legal reservations that accompany the inquiry. Emotional marketing strategies must therefore be approached with much caution against capitalizing financially on patients' emotions. There should be a proportionality between information as to what options are available treatment and the emotional impact of the same. Therefore, sound professional ethical practices would require that promotional messages be both true and transparent. The research thus proves the need for increased consciousness about regulations and laws related to marketing within the health sector. It is recommended that there should be an improvement in the education and training of health professionals concerning the use of emotional marketing so that it may be applied in an ethical manner and with "common" sense. The results of the study have unveiled that emotional marketing strategies are not mere promotional tools but can be a good mode of communication with patients to help them make informed decisions regarding treatment. Hospitals and health clinics should therefore embrace the strategies mentioned above along with ethical principles in providing medical services that are full of integrity and caring.

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## APPENDIX 1

### EMOTIONAL MARKETING STRATEGIES SCALE

#### Personal History and Experiences

1. Personal accounts and stories about patients' experiences are genuine.
2. Personal accounts and stories affect patients' perception of the legitimacy of the service provider.
3. Personal accounts and stories of faith are motivating towards treatment.
4. Personal accounts and narratives increase patients' knowledge of available treatment options.
5. Personal accounts and stories help to cultivate a relationship of trust with the healthcare provider.

#### Emotional Expressions and Videos

1. Emotional content and videos have an effect on patients' emotions towards a particular product or service.
2. Emotional content in images and videos increases the patients' desire to learn more about healthcare services.

3. Emotional content and videos enhance the communication of marketing messages.
4. Emotional images and videos have an effect on patients' decisions regarding health-related content.
5. Emotional content and images have a greater impact on people than written words.
6. Emotional images and videos facilitate a greater understanding of health issues.

### **Helpful Messages**

1. Helpful messages inspire patients to want to receive treatment.
2. Supportive messages facilitate the patients' experience of comfort during treatment.
3. Helpful messages are vital in promoting patients' faith in the healthcare professional.
4. Helpful messages facilitate an increase in the patient's experience of healthcare services overall.
5. Supportive messages encourage patients to be open about their experiences with others.
6. Supportive messages alleviate the patient's concerns regarding the treatment.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **PATIENT'S DECISION SCALE**

#### **Patients' Choices**

1. The data provided has an effect on patients' decisions regarding treatment options.
2. Other patients' experiences have an effect on the patient's decisions regarding healthcare providers.
3. Recommendations from friends or family influence the patients in their decision to begin treatment.
4. Emotional support messages facilitate better treatment decisions.
5. Online reviews and ratings have a significant effect on patients' decisions regarding treatment.
6. Patients' understandings of the disease affect their treatment decisions.