



A Study Of Emotional And Creative Elements In Advertising And Their Influence On Consumer Response

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Abstract: In an increasingly cluttered advertising environment, emotional and creative elements are widely used to capture attention and shape consumer perception. This study examines how emotional cues such as nostalgia, empathy, warmth, and relatability, along with creative elements including humour, music, and visual storytelling, influence consumer recall, brand recognition, and purchase consideration. Adopting a qualitative exploratory approach, the study involved showing five advertisements to participants, followed by semi-structured interviews supported by structured survey responses. The findings reveal that emotional and creative elements significantly enhance advertisement recall and viewer engagement, with music and humour emerging as particularly strong memory triggers. However, the results also indicate that high recall and positive emotional response do not consistently translate into purchase intent, as consumers continue to prioritise perceived product value, trust, and prior brand experience. The study highlights the importance of strategically integrating emotional depth and creative execution with clear brand cues to create advertisements that are both memorable and effective.

Keywords - Emotional Advertising, Creative Advertising, Consumer Recall, Brand Recognition, Purchase Intent, Advertising Effectiveness

I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising today is no longer just about promoting a product; it is about creating an experience that stays with the consumer long after the ad ends. With shorter attention spans, endless content, and a constantly switching audience, brands increasingly depend upon emotional storytelling and creative execution to stand out. Whether it is a nostalgic jingle, an empathetic storyline, a humorous twist, or a visually striking metaphor, ads often rely on emotions and creativity to make people *feel* something. This “feeling” is what helps an ad stay in memory and eventually influences how people think about a brand.

While emotional and creative elements in advertising have been widely used, the exact way in which they shape consumer recall, perception, and behavior is still not fully understood. Many ads become memorable because of their emotional depth or creative charm, but this does not always lead to action. Some emotionally strong ads create a warm impression but fail to influence purchase intent, while others with simple creative cues unexpectedly stick in people’s minds. This gap between what people *remember* and what they *act upon* makes it important to explore which elements genuinely matter.

This study aims to understand how everyday consumers respond to emotional and creative elements in advertisements. The respondents were first shown selected ads and then asked to share their thoughts through a structured survey. By combining quantitative analysis (such as frequencies and averages) with qualitative insights (through In-Depth Interviews), this research tries to uncover patterns in what people remember, what catches their attention, how they emotionally react, and whether these reactions affect their interest in the brand.

Overall, the study attempts to bridge the gap between creative intent and consumer reality while offering insights into what makes an advertisement not just "good," but genuinely *memorable and impactful* from a consumer's perspective.

II. OBJECTIVES

This research aims to understand how emotional and creative elements within advertisements shape consumer memory, perception, and behavior. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the key emotional elements (such as nostalgia, empathy, sentimentality and relatability) and creative elements (such as music, humor, visuals, and metaphors) that commonly appear in memorable advertisements.
2. To evaluate how these elements influence consumer recall and brand recognition, and determine which factors contribute most to retention for a long time.
3. To analyse the emotional and behavioural responses including engagement, preference, and purchase intent triggered by specific creative and emotional cues in ads.
4. To compare the relative influence of emotional versus creative elements, identifying whether one group has a stronger effect on consumer responses than the other.
5. To develop practical recommendations for advertisers on how these elements can be strategically combined to create ads that are not only memorable but also effective in influencing consumer decisions.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Advertising research increasingly shows that emotions and creativity are central to how people experience, remember, and respond to brand messages. Emotional content has long been recognised as a powerful driver of attention and memory. Studies on emotional processing suggest that feelings such as nostalgia, empathy, joy, and warmth activate cognitive pathways associated with long-term recall, making advertisements more memorable than purely rational appeals. Emotional cues help ads "stick" because they engage both thinking and feeling systems simultaneously, shaping judgments and influencing later behaviour (University of Southern California, 2023).

Several works emphasize that emotional connection often becomes the bridge between an advertisement and the consumer's personal experiences. Strong emotional storytelling not only enhances recall but also strengthens brand-consumer relationships over time (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023). Research in digital and social environments also shows that emotions spread quickly; highly emotional ads tend to be shared more and gain greater visibility, reinforcing the brand's presence in the consumer's memory (Hochreiter & Waldhauser, 2014). Moreover, emotional resonance plays a key role in shaping attitudes and purchase intent, as noted by Curtis et al. (2017), who highlight that emotions often determine whether consumers progress from attention to actual consideration.

Alongside emotions, creativity remains a crucial ingredient in effective advertising. Creative execution through humour, visuals, metaphors, storytelling, unexpected twists, or distinctive sound elements helps an ad break clutter and stand out in saturated media environments. Creativity's value lies in its ability to surprise, entertain, or delight the viewer, thereby enhancing engagement and recall. Research consistently finds that highly creative advertising can lead to stronger brand equity and better market performance, especially when it challenges norms or uses original elements that viewers are not accustomed to (Srivastava, 2024). Creative advertisements also tend to generate stronger purchase intentions because consumers perceive them as more enjoyable, thoughtful, and worth paying attention to (P.C & K.C, 2015). Humour is one of the most widely used creative tools, and many studies confirm its ability to generate positive attitudes toward ads. Meta-analyses show that humorous ads are often remembered better and create more favourable impressions, although their impact depends on relevance and execution (Kaur et al.,

2022). Cultural context also plays a role; creativity and emotional appeal can work differently across social groups. In India, for example, cultural symbols, family values, and relatable everyday scenarios significantly enhance the impact of both emotional and creative messages (Limbu & Mukherjee, 2024; Mamidi, 2018).

Another significant stream of research focuses on the memorability of ads. Many scholars argue that ad recall is shaped by a combination of emotional triggers, distinctive creative cues, and personal relevance (Hammerhead Global, 2025). Familiar music, iconic jingles, and strong brand cues enhance recall by creating mental associations between the brand and the feeling evoked. Studies in the FMCG sector show that consumers tend to remember ads with clear messaging, strong visuals, and repeated brand cues more easily (Nimavat, 2022). Similarly, emotional narratives combined with unique creative elements have been found to significantly improve both brand recognition and message retention (Rauwers et al., 2018).

Overall, the literature suggests that emotional and creative elements are not separate forces but complementary drivers of advertising effectiveness. Emotional depth enhances connection and long-term memory, while creativity captures attention, differentiates the brand, and shapes positive attitudes. When combined thoughtfully, they can influence not only how consumers feel about an ad but also how they behave afterward i.e. from remembering the brand to considering a purchase. This makes the study of their interaction essential for understanding real-world consumer responses and designing more impactful advertising strategies.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study follows a qualitative exploratory research design aimed at understanding how consumers emotionally interpret and creatively evaluate advertisements. Since the purpose was to capture authentic reactions, meanings, and thought processes, the study relied primarily on semi-structured interviews supported by guided discussions.

Research Design

A qualitative, exploratory approach was chosen because emotional and creative responses cannot be fully captured through numbers alone. This method allowed participants to express what they felt, what they remembered, and why certain elements stood out to them.

Data Collection Method

Data was gathered using a combination of:

(a) Semi-structured interviews (primary method)

Participants were shown five selected advertisements in real time. Immediately after watching, they were engaged in open-ended discussions to capture their spontaneous emotional responses, associations, likes, dislikes, and overall impressions. These discussions allowed flexibility to describe feelings, recall moments, or comment on creative elements in their own words.

(b) Small-group discussions (where applicable)

For some participants, ads were viewed in small groups. This allowed the researcher to observe shared reactions, collective interpretations, and how group dynamics influence recall and opinion formation.

(c) Structured Google Form (supporting tool)

To ensure consistency and prevent loss of details, a Google Form was used after the discussion. This form helped:

- record their ratings of creativity,
- capture which emotional or creative elements they remembered,
- gather short written insights,
- and maintain uniformity across all respondents.

Thus, the form served as a documentation tool, not the primary data source.

Sample and Participants

A total of 20 participants took part in the study. Respondents belonged to diverse age groups, primarily ranging from 18 to 50 years, ensuring a mix of perspectives. They were everyday consumers with varying exposure to ads, making their insights natural and unbiased.

Nature of Data

Since the study is qualitative, data mainly consist of:

- descriptive reactions,
- emotional expressions,
- recall-based comments,
- personal interpretations,
- and spontaneous responses during discussions.

Basic numerical measures (like frequencies and simple percentages) were used only to support patterns, not as core findings.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used.

Steps included:

1. Reading all interviews and form responses.
2. Identifying recurring emotions, creative cues, and recall triggers.
3. Grouping them into themes such as *nostalgia, humour, music, storytelling, relatability*, etc.
4. Interpreting how these themes connect to recall, liking, and purchase intent.

This approach helped uncover deeper meanings behind why some ads stay memorable while others don't.

Scope and Limitations

- Findings reflect perceptions of a small but diverse sample of people from suburban Mumbai .
- Emotional responses can differ based on personal experiences, making them subjective.
- Since ads were shown only once, long-term recall could not be measured.

However, the combined method of interviews + discussions + structured responses ensure rich, reliable insights into consumer reactions.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents findings drawn from qualitative interviews supported by structured survey responses after participants viewed the selected advertisements. The analysis is organised around the five research objectives to ensure direct alignment between the study's purpose and the insights generated from the data.

1. Identification of Key Emotional and Creative Elements

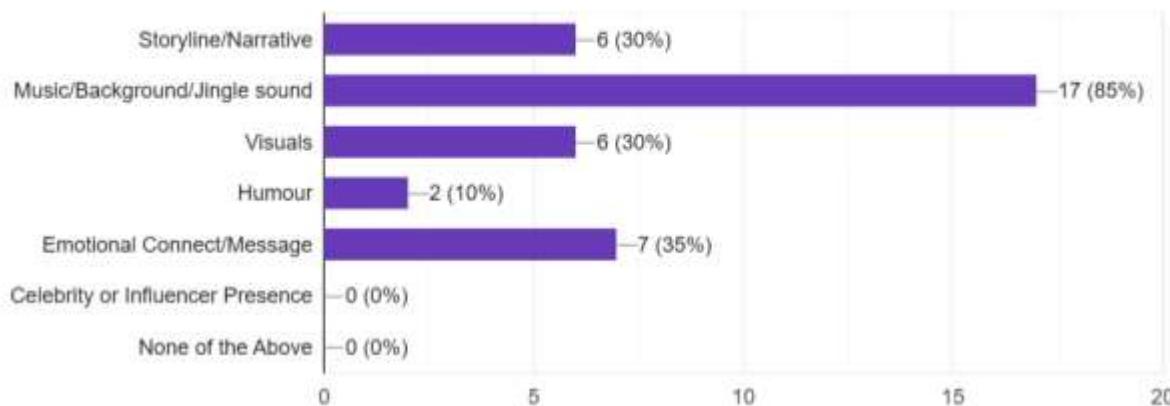
Across interviews, respondents consistently highlighted a set of emotional and creative cues that stood out during ad viewing.

Emotionally, **nostalgia, empathy, warmth, and relatability** emerged as dominant themes. Participants often connected scenes to personal memories or everyday family situations, suggesting that culturally grounded emotional cues resonated strongly.

Creatively, respondents identified **music/jingles, humour, storytelling, distinctive visuals, and taglines** as memorable features. The frequency chart of "elements that made the ad memorable" (Figure 1.1) shows that music and humour were selected most often, indicating their high sensory impact.

What element made you remember this ad?(Pick 1 or 2)

20 responses



2. Influence on Recall & Brand Recognition

To understand how emotional and creative elements influence recall, respondents were asked which ad they remembered most clearly.

The recall frequency chart (Figure 1.2) shows clear differences in memorability across ads. Ads with strong sensory cues, particularly **iconic jingles** or **familiar culture** Re-called far more frequently.

However, interviews revealed that **recalling the storyline did not always guarantee brand recall**. Respondents often remembered the emotional moment or humour but struggled to recall the

Which ad do you remember most clearly?

20 responses



exact
brand

unless the advertisement featured:

- repeated product shots,
- verbal brand cues, or
- distinctive slogans.

Thus, while emotional and creative cues enhance memory retention, **brand integration** determines whether that memory translates into brand recognition.

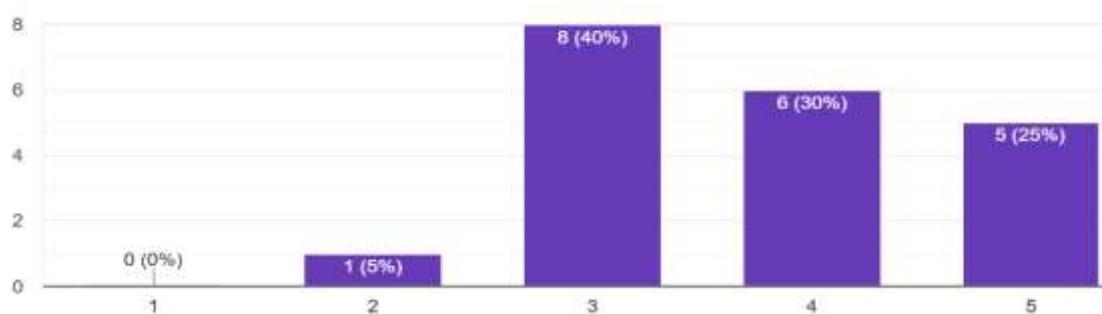
3. Emotional and Behavioral Responses

Participants showed strong emotional engagement with the ads. Expressions of **warmth**, **amusement**, **comfort**, and **relatability** were frequent. Many described feeling “positive,” “happy,” or “connected” to certain ads due to either the storyline or humour.

Behaviorally, however, these emotions did not always convert into purchase intent. The purchase-intent distribution (Figure 1.3) shows that while respondents expressed curiosity and openness to trying a product, only a few showed strong commitment.

How likely are you to consider buying or trying the product after seeing the ad?

20 responses



Three behavioral patterns were observed:

- **Interest without full intention** – viewers liked the ad but needed more information about the product.
- **Ad appreciation without brand switching** – viewers enjoyed the creativity but preferred brands they already used.
- **Emotion-led recall but not action** – respondents remembered the emotional moment but not enough to purchase.

4. Comparative Influence of Emotional vs. Creative Elements

The analysis indicates that both emotional and creative elements contribute to ad effectiveness, but their influence differs in nature:

- **Emotional elements** (nostalgia, empathy, relatability) create a *deeper psychological connection* and help consumers recall scenes and feelings.
- **Creative elements** (music, humour, storytelling) enhance *attention, enjoyment, and immediate recall*.

When comparing both, creative elements were more effective in generating instant recall, while emotional elements were more effective in creating a lasting impression or *mental association*.

However, neither alone guarantees brand recall. Ads that combined both emotional depth supported by creative devices and strong brand cues performed the best in terms of overall viewer impact.

5. Practical Recommendations for Advertisers

Based on the insights gathered from participant interviews and survey responses, several clear patterns emerged that translate into actionable recommendations for advertisers. These recommendations are grounded directly in the behavioural and emotional reactions observed during the study.

- ✓ **Integrate brand cues into emotional moments.**
Respondents frequently remembered the emotional storyline but not the brand unless it appeared at key narrative points. Advertisers should ensure that brand elements such as the logo, colour palette, tagline, or product shots are woven into emotionally charged scenes rather than placed only at the end.
- ✓ **Use music and jingles as strategic memory anchors.**
Music emerged as one of the strongest recall triggers, especially for younger respondents. Advertisers should invest in distinctive, repeatable audio branding that is easy to recall and emotionally resonant.
- ✓ **Balance storytelling and product clarity.**
Several respondents enjoyed the narrative or humour but were unsure about what the ad was selling. Advertisers must maintain clarity by showing how the product fits naturally into the story without breaking the emotional flow.
- ✓ **Ensure humour is culturally relevant and brand-linked.**
Humour significantly boosted memorability, but respondents reacted negatively to humour that felt stereotypical or irrelevant. Advertisers should use humour that reflects authentic cultural experiences while still reinforcing the product's purpose.
- ✓ **Enhance product credibility to convert emotional engagement into purchase intent.**
Even when ads were remembered and appreciated, purchase decisions depended on perceived product quality and trust. Advertisers should support emotional and creative messaging with cues that signal reliability like user scenarios, product demonstrations, endorsements, or value propositions.
- ✓ **Avoid over-sentimentality without purpose.**
Respondents pointed out that overly emotional ads without a clear connection to the product felt "nice but pointless." Advertisers should ensure that emotional depth supports brand meaning rather than overshadowing it.

Together, these recommendations highlight how emotional resonance and creative execution can be transformed into effective communication strategies when aligned with brand clarity and consumer expectations

VI. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate a clear relationship between emotional and creative advertising elements and how consumers recall, interpret, and respond to advertisements. The qualitative interviews, supported by structured responses, reveal that while creative execution and emotional storytelling significantly influence immediate recall and likeability, their effect on purchase-related behaviour remains conditional and mediated by product perceptions and prior brand familiarity. These insights closely align with existing literature on emotional advertising effectiveness and creative impact.

Emotional Elements as Drivers of Recall and Connection

The analysis shows that emotions particularly **nostalgia, empathy, warmth, and humour** play a central role in shaping advertisement recall. Respondents consistently described scenes that reminded them of personal experiences, childhood memories, or familiar Indian family settings. This confirms assertions in prior research that emotional resonance enhances long-term memory formation and strengthens the viewer's connection with the advertisement (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023; USC, 2023). Emotional cues served as "anchors," enabling respondents to remember specific scenes or feelings even minutes after viewing the ad. However, the emotional connection did not always guarantee brand recall. Some participants clearly remembered the emotional moment but struggled to associate it with the brand unless the brand cue was integrated into the emotional arc. This distinction echoes earlier findings which argue that emotional appeal strengthens memory only when the brand is meaningfully tied to the emotional trigger (Otamendi & Martín,

2020).

Creative Elements Enhance Attention but Require Strong Brand Linkage

Creativity was highly appreciated across respondents, reflected in the strong average rating (4.4/5). Storytelling, music, jingle patterns, humour, and visually interesting scenes were frequently highlighted as memorable components. These themes reinforce prior studies that suggest creative advertising enhances engagement and helps an ad stand out in cluttered media environments (Srivastava, 2024; Kaur et al., 2022). Yet, a recurring theme in the interviews was that **creativity alone is insufficient** without clear and consistent brand integration. Several respondents recalled the storyline or humour but could not recall the brand unless it was visually or verbally emphasized. This aligns with Rauwers et al. (2018), who highlight that creativity must serve a strategic purpose namely reinforcing the brand, not overshadowing it. Findings suggest that the most effective ads were those in which emotional storytelling and creative design were interwoven with recognizable brand cues such as taglines, jingles, colours, or product placement. Ads that lacked this integration were described as “nice to watch but forgettable” from a brand perspective.

Influence on Attitudes and Purchase Consideration

Although the emotional and creative elements produced strong positive attitudes toward the ads, their **impact on purchase intent was moderate**. Respondents generally expressed enjoyment, warmth, and appreciation but these reactions did not consistently translate into intention to buy. The findings demonstrate that viewers make a clear distinction between liking an advertisement and trusting or choosing a product. For many respondents, purchase decisions remained grounded in **product quality, previous experience, perceived value, and brand familiarity**, consistent with broader marketing literature that distinguishes emotional appeal from behavioural conversion (Curtis et al., 2017). Some participants noted that while the ad increased curiosity, they would still evaluate other brands or rely on past experience before making a purchase. Others described instances of liking ads but opting for competitor products due to perceived superiority.

This indicates that emotional and creative appeal fulfil an important **upper-funnel role** capturing attention, improving recall, and shaping positive attitudes but may not directly drive sales unless supported by a credible product offering. This finding echoes real-world advertising challenges where brand love does not automatically translate into product purchase (Hammerhead Global, 2025).

Factors Reducing Impact and Memorability

Interviews revealed several elements that reduced the effectiveness of certain ads. Weak brand linkage, overuse of sentimentality, lack of product relevance, and culturally insensitive cues all contributed to reduced recall and diminished persuasive power. These observations mirror past research emphasizing the risks of emotional overload or stereotype-driven creativity (Mamidi, 2018; Limbu & Mukherjee, 2024). Such findings highlight that while creativity and emotion can significantly enhance memorability, poor execution or weak alignment with brand identity can result in missed communication objectives.

Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the results suggest that emotional and creative elements are most effective when used **strategically and cohesively**. They enhance recall, build brand warmth, and make advertisements more engaging but their influence on behaviour depends on how well these elements reinforce the brand promise and product value.

The findings directly support the research objectives by identifying the emotional and creative elements that shape recall (Objective 1), demonstrating their influence on memory and attitude (Objectives 2 and 3), comparing their relative impact (Objective 4), and offering insights that inform practical advertising recommendations (Objective 5).

VII. CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand the extent to which emotional and creative elements in advertising influence consumer interpretation and response. The analysis demonstrates that these elements operate as powerful determinants of how advertisements are perceived, processed, and remembered. Emotional cues particularly those embedded in narrative, humour, relatability, and sentiment were found to enhance consumers' affective engagement and contribute to more meaningful brand connections. Likewise, creative execution

involving distinctive visuals, sound design, colour treatment, and conceptual originality emerged as a central factor in sustaining attention and elevating overall advertisement appeal.

However, these components significantly shape attitudinal responses, the findings indicate that their ability to directly translate into purchase behaviour is limited. Consumers acknowledge appreciating and recalling emotionally rich and creatively designed advertisements, yet final purchase decisions appear to remain grounded in rational considerations such as product attributes, perceived value, and comparative evaluation. This suggests that emotional and creative appeal primarily function as priming mechanisms enhancing brand favourability and perception rather than definitive behavioural drivers.

Taken together, the study highlights that contemporary advertising must integrate both emotional depth and creative differentiation to remain competitive in a saturated digital environment. Advertisements that successfully balance these dimensions are more likely to generate cognitive resonance, emotional engagement, and strong brand recall. Nevertheless, marketers should complement such appeals with clear, value-based product information to influence purchase outcomes more decisively.

Future research can build on these insights by adopting larger samples to examine how emotional and creative variations influence consumer decision-making across demographics, product categories, and media formats.

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