



Research Article

An Empirical Study of Understanding Consumer Emotions and Its Role in Crafting More Effective Ads

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Abstract	Manuscript Information
<p>Advertising effectiveness is heavily influenced by consumer emotions. This paper explores how different emotions, such as joy, fear, and surprise, affect consumer engagement and behavior, ultimately influencing purchasing decisions. Using a mixed-method approach, including surveys and emotional response analysis from eye-tracking data, this study identifies key emotional triggers in advertisements and provides actionable insights for advertisers to craft more impactful campaigns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ISSN No: 2583-7397 ▪ Received: 03-08-2024 ▪ Accepted: 21-09-2024 ▪ Published: 13-11-2024 ▪ IJCRM:3(6); 2024: 28-31 ▪ ©2024, All Rights Reserved ▪ Plagiarism Checked: Yes ▪ Peer Review Process: Yes <p>How to Cite this Manuscript</p> <p>Shreya Bagchi. An Empirical Study of Understanding Consumer Emotions and Its Role in Crafting More Effective Ads. International Journal of Contemporary Research in Multidisciplinary.2024; 3(6):28-31.</p>

KEYWORDS: Consumer Emotions, Advertising Effectiveness, Emotional Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Eye-Tracking

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements are a major tool for influencing consumer behavior. In an increasingly competitive market, brands must create emotionally resonant ads to engage their target audience effectively. Emotional appeals have emerged as powerful tools in advertising. According to a 2016 Nielsen study, ads with emotional content increase sales by 23% compared to those that do not focus on emotions. Furthermore, research from the UK's Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) shows that emotional campaigns are twice as likely to achieve long-term success as rational ones. Emotional engagement triggers subconscious responses, affecting how consumers perceive and remember advertisements. For example, research has found that ads evoking positive emotions like joy or humor improve ad

recall by 40% compared to neutral ads. Conversely, negative emotions such as fear can capture attention, but they must be balanced with a sense of resolution or safety to convert attention into positive consumer actions.

2. MAIN OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study are to:

- Examine how specific emotions (joy, fear, surprise, sadness) influence consumer engagement, ad recall, and purchase intent.
- Provide advertisers with insights to create more emotionally engaging and effective ads.

3. METHODS

Sample and Demographic Profile: A sample of 40 participants was recruited from Kolkata, India representing a balanced demographic profile. Participants were exposed to six advertisements from various industries, each designed to evoke distinct emotions. Demographic details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Demographic	Category	Participants (N = 40)	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	50%
	Female	20	50%
Age	18-25 years	15	37.5%
	26-35 years	15	37.5%
	36-45 years	10	25%
Educational Level	High School	10	25%
	Undergraduate	20	50%
	Postgraduate	10	25%
Occupation	Students	12	30%
	Working Professionals	22	55%
	Homemakers	6	15%

Data Collection: Surveys and eye-tracking technology.

Survey Questions and Responses

Participants answered a series of questions after viewing each ad, with responses recorded on a 1-5 Likert scale. The key questions were:

Question 1: How strong was your emotional response to the ad?

Answer: (Very weak) to 5 (Very strong)

Question 2: How likely are you to purchase the product after watching the ad?

Answer: 1 (Not likely) to 5 (Very likely)

Question 3: How well do you remember the ad 10 minutes after viewing it?

Answer: 1 (Poor recall) to 5 (Excellent recall)

Table 2: Survey Responses Summary

Question	Average Score (1-5)
Emotional Response Intensity	4.2
Likelihood of Purchase	3.9
Ad Recall	4.1

Eye-Tracking Data

The eye-tracking technology recorded attention-related metrics, including time spent on the ad, pupil dilation (indicating emotional arousal), and facial expressions such as smiles and frowns. This allowed for real-time measurement of participants' emotional engagement with the ads.

4. RESULTS

Survey responses revealed that joy and surprise were the most potent emotional triggers, significantly enhancing purchase

intent and ad recall. While ads that evoked fear successfully captured attention, they did not substantially influence purchasing decisions

Table 3: Emotional Response and Purchase Intent by Ad Type

Emotion Trigger	Average Emotional Response (1-5)	Average Purchase Intent (1-5)	Average Ad Recall (1-5)
Joy	4.5	4.2	4.3
Fear	4.0	3.5	3.9
Surprise	4.6	4.4	4.5
Sadness	3.8	3.2	3.7

Eye-Tracking Results

Eye-tracking data revealed that ads evoking joy and surprise held participants' attention for the longest duration and elicited the strongest emotional reactions, as indicated by increased pupil dilation and positive facial expressions.

Table 4: Eye-Tracking Data by Emotion

Emotion Trigger	Average Time Spent on Ad (Seconds)	Average Pupil Dilation (%)	Facial Expressions (% Positive)
Joy	32.1	8.5	85%
Fear	29.4	7.2	45% (mixed expressions)
Surprise	33.5	8.8	90%
Sadness	28.1	6.8	35% (mostly neutral)

5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study underscore the powerful influence of emotions on advertising effectiveness. Emotions such as joy, surprise, fear, and sadness not only shape consumer engagement with ads but also impact ad recall and willingness to purchase the advertised products. Eye-tracking data and survey responses confirm that emotional triggers are crucial in determining consumer behaviour. Our findings showed that joy and surprise were the most effective emotions in driving engagement, purchase intent, and ad recall.

Ads evoking joy generated the highest levels of positive emotional response, purchase likelihood, and recall scores. This aligns with previous studies, such as Heath et al. (2010), which demonstrated that positive emotional appeals create stronger brand connections and longer-lasting recall. Joyful ads foster a positive association between the consumer and the brand, increasing the likelihood of brand loyalty. The fact that joy also leads to high purchase intent supports Nielsen's 2016 report, which found that ads generating positive emotions drive more sales than those using rational appeals.

Surprise was another strong emotional driver of consumer engagement. Participants exhibited strong emotional responses, attention, and recall when surprised. This aligns with Teixeira et al. (2012), who found that surprise captures attention and enhances memory retention. In our study, surprise resulted in the highest average recall score of 4.5 out of 5, indicating that consumers are more likely to remember ads that surprise them. The high purchase intent associated with surprise-driven ads

suggests that this emotion not only captures attention but also enhances persuasiveness, highlighting the importance of emotional engagement in advertising success.

Fear had a more complex impact. Although fear-based ads captured attention, as evidenced by high pupil dilation and longer time spent on the ad, the emotional intensity did not translate into strong purchase intent. This confirms findings by Witte and Allen (2000), who noted that fear appeals are most effective when coupled with a clear resolution or call to action. In our study, fear-based ads heightened emotional arousal but did not resolve the fear in a way that compelled consumers to act, resulting in lower purchase intent scores. This highlights the need for caution when using fear appeals to avoid alienating or overwhelming the audience.

Sadness, while eliciting empathy and emotional engagement, was the least effective in driving purchase intent. Ads evoking sadness received the lowest purchase scores, consistent with findings by Bagozzi *et al.*, (1999), which noted that negative emotions like sadness do not generate the same action-oriented behaviour as positive emotions. Sadness may create a deeper emotional connection with the ad's narrative, but it does not necessarily motivate consumers to purchase the product. This suggests that sad ads may be more effective for charitable causes or social change messages than for driving commercial sales.

Comparing these results with previous studies highlights that emotional engagement is a universal principle in advertising, but the effectiveness of specific emotions varies based on context and product type. For example, Holbrook and Batra (1987) observed that emotional responses to ads are influenced by personal preferences, past experiences, and cultural background. Our study, conducted in Mumbai, India, suggests that while joy and surprise are universally effective, cultural factors may influence how emotions like fear or sadness are perceived. In India, where collectivist values emphasize community and social harmony, fear-based ads may be perceived differently than in individualistic cultures, where fear might prompt a more self-preserving response. This suggests that cultural factors can further moderate the impact of emotional advertising and should be explored in future research.

The use of eye-tracking technology provided valuable insights into consumers' emotional responses. Ads evoking joy and surprise held participants' attention the longest, confirming the positive correlation between emotional engagement and attention. Interestingly, while fear-based ads also captured attention, they elicited a mixed emotional response, as indicated by facial expressions and eye-tracking results. This highlights the complexity of negative emotions in advertising: they can capture attention but need careful management to avoid detracting from the message.

Another key finding relates to the link between emotional intensity and purchase intent. Ads generating stronger emotional responses—particularly joy and surprise—resulted in higher purchase intent scores, suggesting that emotional engagement is critical for influencing consumer behaviour. This finding is consistent with Aaker *et al.*, (1992), who showed that emotionally charged ads create stronger brand associations and

increase purchase likelihood. Joy and surprise are particularly effective in triggering positive consumer reactions, underscoring the importance of crafting ads that not only capture attention but also leave a lasting emotional impact.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the importance of emotional appeals in advertising, particularly those evoking joy and surprise, which are the most effective in driving consumer engagement, ad recall, and purchase intent. While fear captures attention, it does not significantly influence purchase behaviour unless accompanied by a resolution. Sadness, though emotionally engaging, is less effective in driving sales. Future research should explore how cultural and demographic factors influence emotional responses to advertising. Overall, advertisers should focus on emotions that create positive associations and sustain emotional engagement throughout the consumer's interaction with the brand.

6. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of consumer emotions in crafting more effective advertisements. Emotional appeals, especially those evoking joy and surprise, have a strong impact on consumer engagement, recall, and purchase intent. Ads that successfully elicit positive emotions foster stronger brand connections and drive higher consumer actions, such as product purchases. Fear, while effective at capturing attention, does not significantly influence purchase behavior unless resolved. Sadness, although engaging, is less effective in driving sales. These insights emphasize that emotions are essential for capturing attention and leaving lasting impressions that influence consumer behavior. The study also highlights the importance of cultural context, as emotional responses vary based on societal norms and values. Advertisers should focus on leveraging emotions that create positive associations and lasting emotional impact to maximize the effectiveness of their campaigns. Further research is encouraged to explore cultural and demographic differences in emotional responses to advertising.

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