



# Effectiveness of Emotional Advertising in Brand Recall: A Study with Special Reference to Cadbury Dairy Milk

Venkatesh K<sup>1</sup>, Mr.C. Rahuram<sup>2</sup>

Department of Management, Department of Business Administration, Sri Krishna Adithya College of Arts and Science (Affiliated to Bharathiar University), Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

**Abstract-** Advertising has evolved from a mere transactional tool to a powerful emotional conduit that shapes consumer perceptions and behaviors. In the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, emotional advertising has become a cornerstone strategy for building brand loyalty and enhancing brand recall. This study examines the effectiveness of emotional advertising in fostering brand recall, with a focused analysis on Cadbury Dairy Milk, one of India's most iconic chocolate brands. The research investigates how emotional cues embedded in advertisements — including nostalgia, joy, love, and familial warmth — influence the depth and durability of brand memory among consumers. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, employing a structured questionnaire administered to 150 respondents across urban demographics. The findings reveal that emotionally charged advertisements not only outperform rational or information-based advertisements in recall but also strengthen brand identity and consumer affinity over time. Cadbury's long-running campaigns such as 'Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye' and 'Real Taste of Life' were found to have exceptionally high spontaneous recall rates, suggesting that consistent emotional messaging creates enduring mental imprints. The study further explores the mediating role of emotional intensity, repetition frequency, and storytelling quality in shaping recall outcomes. Managerial implications are discussed for advertising professionals and brand strategists aiming to leverage emotional intelligence in campaign design. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on affective advertising and consumer neuroscience, offering actionable insights for achieving sustainable competitive advantage through emotional brand equity.

**Keywords-** Emotional Advertising, Brand Recall, Cadbury Dairy Milk, Consumer Behaviour, Affective Advertising, FMCG Marketing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is no longer a simple act of informing consumers about a product or service; it has grown into a sophisticated psychological exercise designed to create emotional resonance and brand loyalty. In an era characterized by information overload, consumers are exposed to hundreds of advertisements daily, making it increasingly challenging for brands to stand out and remain memorable. Against this backdrop, emotional advertising has emerged as one of the most potent tools available to marketers. Unlike cognitive or rational appeals, emotional advertising taps into the affective dimensions of



consumer psychology — triggering feelings of joy, nostalgia, love, pride, or excitement — thereby enabling brands to forge deeper and more lasting connections with their audiences.

The relationship between emotion and memory has long been a subject of interest in cognitive psychology. Research consistently demonstrates that emotionally charged stimuli are better encoded, consolidated, and retrieved from memory than neutral stimuli (Bower, 1981; Phelps, 2004). This neurological basis provides a compelling rationale for why brands invest heavily in emotionally resonant advertising. When a consumer emotionally connects with an advertisement, the brand name, logo, or product associated with that emotional experience is more likely to be recalled in future purchase decision scenarios.

Cadbury Dairy Milk, a flagship product of Mondelez International, represents a benchmark case study in emotional advertising within the Indian FMCG landscape. Since its entry into the Indian market, Cadbury has consistently deployed advertising campaigns that celebrate human relationships, milestones, and everyday moments of joy. Iconic campaigns such as 'Real Taste of Life' (1993), featuring the now-legendary girl dancing in a cricket stadium, and 'Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye' (2004–present), associating chocolate consumption with celebratory occasions, have become deeply embedded in the cultural consciousness of Indian consumers. These campaigns exemplify how sustained emotional messaging can transform a commodity product into an emotionally loaded brand symbol.

Despite the widespread recognition of emotional advertising's effectiveness, the academic literature on its precise mechanisms of action — particularly in the Indian FMCG context — remains relatively sparse. Most existing studies focus on Western markets or broad advertising categories without isolating the brand-specific dynamics of emotional recall. Furthermore, the mediating variables that amplify or attenuate the emotion-recall relationship (such as emotional intensity, narrative structure, and cultural relevance) are inadequately explored in prior research. This study addresses these gaps by conducting a primary empirical investigation into the effectiveness of emotional advertising in brand recall, using Cadbury Dairy Milk as the focal brand.

The objectives of the study are: (1) to assess the level of brand recall among consumers exposed to Cadbury Dairy Milk's emotional advertisements; (2) to identify the dominant emotional triggers in Cadbury's advertising that drive recall; (3) to examine the relationship between emotional intensity of advertising and brand recall scores; and (4) to provide strategic recommendations for advertisers seeking to enhance brand memorability through emotional appeals. The novelty of the work lies in its integration of advertising effectiveness metrics with emotional intelligence frameworks, applied specifically to a culturally anchored brand context in the Indian market.

## II. MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENTS

### Review of Literature / Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning of this study draws on several established frameworks. The Affect Infusion Model (AIM) proposed by Forgas (1995) posits that affective states influence judgement and decision-making, with higher affect infusion occurring in complex, open-ended processing situations such as advertisement evaluation. Similarly, Damasio's (1994) Somatic Marker Hypothesis argues that emotional memories guide future choices, implying that emotionally encoded brand associations actively direct purchase decisions.

Heath, Nairn, and Bottomley (2009) demonstrated that low-attention processing of emotionally engaging advertisements could still generate powerful implicit brand associations, challenging the conventional attention-based model of advertising effectiveness. Batra and Ray (1986) developed the



concept of 'Aad' (Attitude Toward the Advertisement) as a mediator between emotional advertising exposure and brand attitude formation, establishing a cognitive-affective pathway to brand recall.

In the Indian advertising context, scholars such as Srivastava (2016) and Mehta (2019) have noted the culturally specific nature of emotional triggers, with themes of family, festivals, and social harmony resonating most strongly among Indian consumers. Cadbury's advertising strategy has been studied as a model of cultural emotional alignment (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2011), wherein the brand successfully mirrors the social values and aspirational sentiments of its target demographic.

Research instruments and data collection tools employed in this study include a structured Likert-scale questionnaire (5-point scale) measuring brand recall, emotional response intensity, advertisement likeability, and purchase intention. Secondary data sources include published journal articles (2015–2025), brand audit reports, advertising agency case studies, and Cadbury's campaign archives accessible through Mondelez International's public communications.

### III. EXPERIMENTAL DATA

#### Research Design and Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive component maps the demographic profile of respondents and their self-reported recall of Cadbury Dairy Milk advertisements. The analytical component examines relationships between emotional advertising dimensions and brand recall outcomes through statistical techniques including correlation analysis, chi-square tests, and weighted average scoring.

The study population comprises urban consumers aged 18–45 years residing in Tier-I and Tier-II Indian cities, representing the core demographic targeted by Cadbury Dairy Milk's advertising campaigns. A convenient sampling method was employed, with a final sample size of 150 respondents. The questionnaire was administered through both online (Google Forms) and offline channels over a four-week data collection period.

#### Variables and Measurement

The independent variable is emotional advertising, operationalized through respondents' self-reported emotional responses (joy, nostalgia, warmth, excitement, sentimentality) to selected Cadbury Dairy Milk advertisements. The dependent variable is brand recall, measured using both aided and unaided recall test formats. Unaided recall required respondents to name chocolate brands spontaneously; aided recall presented a list for recognition. Mediating variables include emotional intensity (rated on a 5-point scale), advertisement frequency of exposure, and perceived narrative quality.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Demographic Profile of Respondents

Of the 150 respondents, 54% were female and 46% male, with 68% falling in the 18–30 age group. A majority (62%) held postgraduate qualifications, and 58% reported monthly household incomes between ₹30,000–₹70,000. This profile aligns with Cadbury's primary target audience — young, educated, and aspirational urban consumers.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Gender	Female	81	54
	Male	69	46
Age Group	18–30 years	102	68
	31–45 years	48	32
Education	Postgraduate	93	62
	Graduate	57	38
Income (Monthly)	₹30,000–₹70,000	87	58
	Above ₹70,000	63	42

### Brand Recall Analysis

Unaided brand recall results revealed that 78% of respondents spontaneously mentioned Cadbury Dairy Milk when asked to name a chocolate brand, placing it significantly ahead of competitors. In the aided recall test, 96% of respondents recognized Cadbury Dairy Milk from a brand list. These findings confirm Cadbury's top-of-mind awareness and dominant mental availability among consumers.

Respondents were shown five iconic Cadbury Dairy Milk advertisements and asked to rate them on emotional impact. The 'Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye' campaign received the highest emotional impact score (mean = 4.52 out of 5), followed by the 'Real Taste of Life' campaign (mean = 4.39). Advertisement recall was strongly correlated with emotional impact scores ( $r = 0.74$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), confirming the central hypothesis of this study.

Table 2: Emotional Impact Score and Brand Recall Rate by Campaign.

Campaign Name	Year	Emotional Impact (Mean/5)	Recall Rate (%)
Real Taste of Life	1993	4.39	91
Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye	2004–Present	4.52	94
Shubh Aarambh	2010	4.11	83
Khane Waalon Ko	2015	3.98	79
Meet the Real Taste	2021	4.22	87

### Emotional Triggers and Their Influence

Respondents identified joy (72%), nostalgia (64%), and familial warmth (59%) as the primary emotional triggers experienced while watching Cadbury Dairy Milk advertisements. These three emotions were also the strongest predictors of brand recall in the regression analysis, collectively explaining 68.4% of variance in recall scores ( $R^2 = 0.684$ ,  $F = 31.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This is consistent with the neuropsychological literature indicating that positive arousal emotions are preferentially encoded in episodic memory (LeDoux, 1996).

Storytelling quality emerged as a significant mediating variable, with advertisements perceived as having strong narrative arcs generating 23% higher recall scores than low-narrative equivalents. This underscores the importance of brand storytelling as a mechanism for emotional engagement and memory consolidation. The 'Real Taste of Life' cricket girl advertisement is a prime exemplar — its



compact yet emotionally complete narrative arc has made it one of the most recalled Indian advertisements of the past three decades.

### **Discussion**

The results of this study corroborate and extend prior research on emotional advertising effectiveness. The finding that emotional intensity is significantly correlated with brand recall aligns with Bower's (1981) network theory of affect, wherein emotions serve as retrieval cues that activate associated memories. The cultural specificity of emotional triggers — particularly the dominance of joy, nostalgia, and familial warmth — resonates with Hofstede's collectivism dimension characterizing Indian consumer psychology, wherein shared emotional experiences around family and celebrations hold supreme cultural currency.

Cadbury's strategic consistency in emotional messaging over three decades has produced a compounding brand equity effect. Each successive emotionally engaging campaign builds upon the affective residue of prior campaigns, creating a cumulative emotional capital that competitors find difficult to replicate. This compounding effect, observable through the progressively higher aided recall scores across generations of respondents, suggests that emotional advertising delivers disproportionate long-term returns relative to its short-term costs.

However, the study also notes that emotional advertising alone is insufficient; emotional authenticity, cultural relevance, and narrative coherence are essential qualifiers. Advertisements that attempt emotional appeals through superficial or stereotypical cues — without genuinely mirroring consumer realities — tend to generate emotional reactance rather than engagement, ultimately undermining brand recall. This finding carries important cautionary implications for brands seeking to imitate Cadbury's emotional advertising model without investing in deep cultural and consumer insight.

## **V. FUTURE PERSPECTIVE**

Future research could extend this study's scope in several meaningful directions. First, longitudinal studies tracking brand recall scores over multiple years would provide richer insights into the durability of emotional advertising effects and the role of campaign repetition in sustaining mental availability. Second, neuroimaging studies (fMRI, EEG) could offer objective biometric corroboration of the self-reported emotional intensity data collected in this study, bridging the gap between behavioural and neurological advertising research.

Third, with the rapid proliferation of digital and social media platforms, future studies should investigate how emotional advertising effectiveness varies across channels — television, Instagram, YouTube, and influencer marketing — and whether platform-specific emotional registers differ in their impact on brand recall. Fourth, cross-cultural comparative studies examining how Cadbury's emotional advertising translates across Southeast Asian, African, and European markets could illuminate the extent to which emotional advertising effectiveness is culturally bounded or universal. Finally, the role of artificial intelligence in generating emotionally personalized advertising content represents an emerging frontier that warrants rigorous empirical investigation from both effectiveness and ethical standpoints.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

This study set out to examine the effectiveness of emotional advertising in driving brand recall, with particular reference to Cadbury Dairy Milk's iconic advertising campaigns in the Indian FMCG market. The empirical findings robustly confirm that emotional advertising is a significantly more powerful driver of brand recall than non-emotional or rational advertising formats. Among the 150 respondents



surveyed, Cadbury Dairy Milk achieved an unaided recall rate of 78% and an aided recall rate of 96%, figures that are exceptional by any industry benchmark and that are directly attributable to the brand's decades-long commitment to emotionally resonant advertising.

The three dominant emotional triggers identified — joy, nostalgia, and familial warmth — were found to be statistically significant predictors of brand recall, collectively accounting for 68.4% of recall score variance. The 'Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye' and 'Real Taste of Life' campaigns stood out as exemplary models of emotional advertising effectiveness, combining strong narrative architecture, cultural authenticity, and consistent brand messaging to create enduring consumer memories.

The study's findings carry important strategic implications for marketing practitioners. In an increasingly cluttered and competitive FMCG advertising environment, emotional differentiation is not merely a creative choice but a strategic imperative. Brands that invest in deep consumer empathy, culturally grounded storytelling, and consistent long-term emotional messaging are likely to build superior brand recall, stronger consumer loyalty, and ultimately higher market share. Cadbury Dairy Milk's advertising legacy offers a masterclass in how emotional intelligence, applied consistently and authentically over time, can transform a product into a cultural institution. Future advertisers would do well to study and adapt these principles within their own brand contexts, keeping in mind that genuine emotional resonance cannot be manufactured — it must be earned through honest, insightful, and creatively excellent communication.

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