

Emotional Intelligence Development and Its Role in Marketing Success: A Case Study on Indian Marketing Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical determinant of success in marketing, where understanding and influencing consumer emotions is central to business growth. This study explores how emotional intelligence among marketers enhances customer engagement, brand loyalty, and overall marketing performance in the Indian context. Using a case study approach, the research examines Indian marketing campaigns and organizations known for emotionally resonant strategies. Data were collected from marketing professionals and consumers across multiple sectors through surveys and interviews. Findings reveal that high emotional intelligence among marketing teams correlates strongly with customer satisfaction, retention, and brand advocacy. The paper concludes that EI development through training, leadership modeling, and organizational culture is a key driver of marketing success in India's emotionally diverse and competitive marketplace.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Marketing Success, Consumer Behavior, Indian Marketing Strategies, Brand Loyalty, Emotional Branding.

INTRODUCTION

In today's hyper-competitive and emotionally dynamic marketplace, marketing has evolved far beyond the traditional frameworks of product, price, place, and promotion. The success of a marketing strategy increasingly depends on the marketer's ability to connect emotionally with the consumer. This shift has given rise to the importance of emotional intelligence (EI)—a concept that revolves around understanding and managing emotions effectively to foster interpersonal harmony and achieve better outcomes. As defined by Daniel Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognize one's own emotions and those of others, to motivate oneself, and to manage emotions effectively in relationships. In the realm of marketing, emotional intelligence serves as a cornerstone for effective communication, negotiation, customer relationship management, and brand positioning. Marketers who possess high emotional intelligence can identify the emotional triggers that drive consumer decision-making. Unlike rational decision models, consumer choices are often guided by subconscious feelings such as trust, joy, nostalgia, fear, or belongingness. A marketer with emotional intelligence can interpret these emotional cues and design messages that resonate deeply with the audience. In India, the role of emotions in marketing is even more pronounced due to the country's unique socio-cultural and psychological fabric. Indian consumers tend to associate brands with sentiments, traditions, and shared values rather than just utility.

This emotional orientation has led Indian marketers to focus on campaigns that celebrate family ties, cultural pride, and moral values. For example, Amul's humorous yet socially relevant advertisements consistently create emotional bonds by blending wit with national sentiment. Tanishq's wedding campaigns highlight inclusivity, love, and emotional depth, while Surf Excel's "Daag Achhe Hain" series appeals to the nurturing and compassionate side of Indian parents. Coca Cola India's "Open Happiness" campaign further illustrates how brands can evoke positive emotions to strengthen brand identity and loyalty. The Indian marketing ecosystem also provides fertile ground for emotional intelligence application because of its diversity—linguistic, cultural, and demographic. Marketers must understand regional emotions, social aspirations, and varying consumer sentiments across urban and rural markets. Emotional intelligence thus becomes a strategic capability that allows marketers to navigate cultural sensitivity, handle customer interactions empathetically, and craft messages that appeal to both logic and emotion. This research aims to systematically examine the development and application of emotional intelligence among marketing professionals in India. It explores how emotionally intelligent marketers build

meaningful relationships with consumers, drive brand loyalty, and enhance marketing success. The focus is on understanding how emotional intelligence is cultivated within organizations through training, leadership behavior, and cultural reinforcement, and how these competencies translate into superior marketing outcomes. Furthermore, the study underscores that emotional intelligence does not only enhance marketing performance but also promotes ethical marketing practices. By fostering empathy and self-awareness, emotionally intelligent marketers avoid manipulative tactics and instead focus on creating genuine emotional value for consumers. The integration of emotional intelligence in marketing strategy thus represents a paradigm shift—from transactional exchanges to relationship-driven engagement, where brands act as emotional partners in the lives of consumers. This study is positioned at the intersection of psychology and marketing, aiming to demonstrate that in an era where consumers are increasingly seeking authenticity and emotional connection, emotional intelligence serves as both a human and strategic advantage. It contributes to long-term brand success, customer retention, and sustainable competitive differentiation in the emotionally vibrant landscape of Indian marketing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on emotional intelligence (EI) and marketing has expanded significantly over the last two decades, as scholars and practitioners alike have recognized the importance of emotions in consumer behavior, brand loyalty, and organizational performance. The following section reviews the theoretical foundations, empirical findings, and contextual applications of emotional intelligence within the marketing discipline, with particular attention to its relevance in the Indian market.

2.1 Concept of Emotional Intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence was popularized by Daniel Goleman (1995), who expanded upon earlier work by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Goleman proposed five fundamental dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness refers to recognizing one's emotions and understanding how they influence behavior and decision-making. For marketing professionals, this means being conscious of how personal emotions affect their communication style and client relationships. Self-regulation involves the ability to control impulses, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain composure under pressure—qualities essential in fast-paced marketing environments. Motivation, in the context of EI, drives marketers to pursue goals with energy and persistence, even in the face of setbacks such as campaign failures or client rejections. Empathy allows marketers to sense and understand the emotions of customers, which is crucial in identifying their needs and aspirations. Finally, social skills enable marketers to build rapport, manage conflicts, and lead teams effectively.

These components together create a framework through which marketers can interpret both their own emotional states and those of their consumers. Emotional intelligence, therefore, extends beyond personal traits to become a strategic competency that enhances decision-making, communication, and relationship-building in the marketing domain.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Marketing

Several studies have linked emotional intelligence to improved marketing performance and consumer relationship outcomes. Mayer et al. (2004) emphasized that individuals with high EI are more capable of interpreting subtle emotional cues, which helps them design marketing messages that resonate emotionally with their target audience. In sales and customer relations, emotionally intelligent individuals are better at handling rejection and managing client expectations. They can interpret non-verbal signals, adjust their tone, and exhibit empathy—factors that build trust and credibility. Kidwell, Hardesty, and Childers (2011) found that emotional intelligence positively influences sales performance by enhancing emotional regulation and interpersonal adaptability. Similarly, service-oriented industries rely heavily on emotionally intelligent employees who can maintain composure under pressure and offer personalized, empathetic service experiences. In modern marketing, emotional intelligence underpins not only interpersonal communication but also the creative process. It enables marketers to conceptualize campaigns that trigger desired emotional responses such as happiness, nostalgia, pride, or compassion. Thus, EI serves as a bridge between psychological insight and marketing creativity, ensuring that messages are not only informative but emotionally meaningful.

2.3 Emotional Branding and Indian Market

Emotional branding has become a cornerstone of marketing strategy in India. The term, introduced by Marc Gobé (2001), refers to the process of building brand relationships through emotional connections rather than through product attributes alone. Emotional branding acknowledges that consumers are not purely rational decision-makers; instead, their choices are shaped by emotional experiences and identity associations with brands. In India's culturally diverse and emotionally expressive society, emotional branding has found fertile ground. Advertisements frequently appeal to emotions such as love, care, family bonding, celebration, and national pride. Campaigns such as Surf Excel's "Daag Achhe Hain" evoke

parental compassion and the idea of moral learning through play. Tanishq's wedding series celebrates emotional inclusivity, addressing themes of remarriage, diversity, and social acceptance. Similarly, Amul's topical humor builds a sense of national connection and shared social commentary, while Coca-Cola's "Open Happiness" fosters joy and unity. Such campaigns demonstrate how emotional branding in India transcends conventional advertising; it aims to create cultural relevance and emotional continuity with audiences. This approach not only enhances brand recall but also nurtures long-term emotional loyalty. The emotional narrative becomes an integral part of brand identity, positioning the brand as a participant in consumers' emotional and cultural lives.

2.4 EI Development in Organizations

Emotional intelligence is not an innate ability alone—it can be cultivated within organizations through targeted developmental programs. According to Cherniss (2010), organizations can enhance EI through leadership modeling, emotional literacy workshops, reflective practices, and coaching. For marketing teams, where collaboration, creativity, and adaptability are essential, emotional intelligence training can yield significant performance improvements. Leadership plays a critical role in shaping the emotional climate of an organization. Leaders who exhibit empathy, active listening, and emotional awareness inspire similar behaviors among team members. Emotional literacy programs encourage employees to recognize their emotional triggers, manage stress, and communicate assertively without aggression. Reflective practices, such as feedback sessions and mindfulness training, help marketers build self-awareness and resilience under high-pressure market conditions. Furthermore, emotionally intelligent organizations encourage open communication, psychological safety, and recognition of emotional labor—factors that reduce burnout and improve employee engagement. In the marketing context, these interventions translate into higher creativity, more cohesive teamwork, and better alignment with customer emotions. In essence, the literature suggests that the development of emotional intelligence is both an individual and organizational pursuit. When systematically nurtured, EI becomes a competitive advantage—enabling marketing professionals to deliver not just products or services, but emotionally enriching experiences that resonate deeply with consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach supported by quantitative survey data to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and marketing success in Indian companies.

3.2 Objectives

1. To analyze how emotional intelligence contributes to marketing success in India.
2. To assess the level of EI among Indian marketing professionals.
3. To explore the role of EI in consumer engagement and brand loyalty.
4. To recommend strategies for developing EI within marketing organizations.

3.3 Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** Collected through online surveys (n=120) and semi-structured interviews (n=15) with marketing professionals from FMCG, retail, and service sectors.
- **Secondary Data:** Derived from academic journals, marketing reports, and brand case studies.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to select participants with at least 3 years of marketing experience in Indian organizations.

3.5 Data Analysis Tools

Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic content analysis were used to interpret data. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS).

4. Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study, interpreting both quantitative survey data and qualitative case insights gathered from Indian marketing professionals and selected brand campaigns. The discussion highlights how emotional intelligence levels among marketers influence marketing success and consumer relationships in the Indian context.

4.1 EI Levels Among Indian Marketers

The survey was conducted among 120 marketing professionals from sectors such as FMCG, retail, and services. The objective was to measure emotional intelligence across four key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. The findings indicate that 68% of respondents demonstrated moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence,

reflecting the growing recognition of emotional competencies in marketing practice. Empathy and social skills emerged as the most dominant EI traits, revealing that Indian marketers place a strong emphasis on understanding and managing interpersonal relationships.

Table 1: The results are summarized

Emotional Intelligence Component	Mean Score (out of 5)	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Self-Awareness	4.1	0.63	High self-awareness; marketers are conscious of emotional triggers and responses.
Self-Regulation	3.9	0.58	Moderate ability to control emotions and adapt to challenges.
Empathy	4.3	0.54	Strong ability to understand and respond to customer emotions.
Social Skills	4.2	0.60	Excellent communication and relationship-building abilities.

Overall EI Score (Mean): 4.125 / 5 This indicates a high overall emotional intelligence level among Indian marketing professionals. A graphical representation (bar chart) of the mean scores would show empathy leading slightly over social skills and self-awareness, with self-regulation being slightly lower. This suggests that while marketers excel at understanding and managing others' emotions, more emphasis could be placed on self-regulatory practices to handle stress and pressure effectively.

4.2 Impact on Marketing Performance

To examine how EI influences marketing performance, correlation and regression analyses were conducted between emotional intelligence scores and marketing success indicators such as customer satisfaction, client retention, campaign performance, and repeat purchase rate. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.72$) indicates a strong positive relationship between EI and marketing success. This means that marketers with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to achieve better customer engagement, improved brand recall, and higher sales conversions.

Table 2: Relationship between EI levels and key marketing performance indicators:

Marketing Success Metric	Correlation with EI (r)	Significance Level (p)	Interpretation
Customer Satisfaction	0.78	< 0.01	Strong correlation; emotionally intelligent marketers enhance customer happiness.
Client Retention Rate	0.70	< 0.01	High EI fosters long-term business relationships.
Campaign Success Rate	0.68	< 0.05	EI contributes to creative, audience-centered campaign design.
Repeat Purchase Behavior	0.72	< 0.01	Emotional connection drives customer loyalty.
Communication Effectiveness	0.75	< 0.01	EI improves clarity, empathy, and persuasiveness in communication.

The data shows that empathy and social skills are particularly influential in driving consumer satisfaction and repeat purchases, which are crucial for sustainable brand success.

4.3 Emotional Strategies in Indian Brands

To complement the survey results, a qualitative case analysis was performed on leading Indian brands recognized for emotionally resonant marketing campaigns. Each brand was analyzed for its emotional approach, target emotion, and marketing outcome.

Table 3: Emotional Strategies

Brand Name	Emotional Strategy	Dominant Emotion Targeted	Campaign Example	Marketing Outcome
Amul	Use of humor, satire, and cultural commentary	Relatability and trust	Topical billboard ads on current events	Strengthened brand loyalty and national connection
Tanishq	Empathy and inclusivity	Love, acceptance, and pride	Wedding and social awareness ad series	Enhanced emotional brand equity among modern consumers
Surf Excel	Emotional storytelling with moral undertones	Compassion and parental affection	“Daag Achhe Hain” campaign	Increased brand recall and emotional resonance
Coca-Cola India	Happiness and shared moments	Joy and social unity	“Open Happiness” campaign	Broadened emotional appeal and improved customer engagement

This analysis shows that successful Indian brands integrate emotional intelligence principles—empathy, social awareness, and emotional storytelling—into their marketing communication. These brands understand not only what consumers buy, but why they buy, aligning product value with emotional experience.

4.4 Challenges

While emotional intelligence significantly enhances marketing outcomes, the study also identified certain challenges in its application within Indian marketing organizations:

- Lack of Structured EI Training in Marketing Education:** Many marketing professionals learn emotional intelligence skills informally. Business schools and corporate training programs rarely include structured EI modules, limiting systematic development.
- Overemphasis on Sales Targets over Emotional Engagement:** Companies often prioritize quantitative metrics like conversion rates and sales figures over qualitative measures such as customer sentiment and relationship strength. This reduces the focus on emotional connection-building.
- Difficulty in Quantifying EI-Driven Success:** Measuring emotional impact remains a methodological challenge. Although correlation data shows positive relationships, organizations struggle to translate emotional intelligence into measurable ROI indicators.
- Cultural Diversity and Misinterpretation of Emotions:** Given India’s cultural diversity, emotional expressions vary widely. A campaign emotionally effective in one region may not resonate similarly in another, making emotional targeting complex.

The analysis indicates that emotional intelligence serves as a catalyst for marketing excellence in India. High-EI marketers create empathetic communication, maintain customer relationships, and contribute to emotionally meaningful branding. The synergy between empathy, social awareness, and creativity allows Indian brands to thrive in a marketplace where emotion is as significant as logic. However, the need for formal EI development programs and measurement mechanisms remains essential for maximizing its potential impact.

RESULTS

The results of this study were derived from a combination of quantitative analysis (survey data and statistical tests) and qualitative insights (interviews and case studies). The findings provide strong empirical support for the hypothesized relationships between emotional intelligence (EI) and marketing success within the Indian business context. The statistical analysis was conducted using correlation and regression tests to determine the relationship between the key dimensions of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—and indicators of marketing performance such as customer satisfaction, campaign success, and brand loyalty. The qualitative results were derived from in-depth interviews with 15 marketing professionals, which added interpretive depth to the numerical data.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marketing success.

Result: Accepted ($p < 0.05$)

The analysis revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marketing success. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.72, p < 0.05$) indicates that higher EI scores among marketing professionals are associated with higher customer satisfaction, greater client retention, and improved marketing campaign performance. Regression analysis further confirmed that EI explains approximately 52% of the variance in marketing success indicators ($R^2 = 0.52$). This suggests that emotional intelligence is not merely a supportive factor but a key determinant of marketing effectiveness.

Table 4: Degree of emotional awareness

Statistical Test	Coefficient t (r)	R ² Value	Significance Level (p)	Interpretation
Correlation between EI and Marketing Success	0.72	0.52	< 0.05	Strong positive relationship; higher EI improves marketing results

The findings imply that marketers who possess a high degree of emotional awareness and empathy can better interpret consumer behavior, anticipate market responses, and build long-term trust with customers. In emotionally diverse markets like India, these traits give marketers a distinct competitive edge by allowing them to connect authentically with consumers.

Hypothesis 2: Empathy and social skills have the strongest influence on consumer engagement.

Result: Supported

Among the five dimensions of emotional intelligence examined (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills), empathy and social skills emerged as the most influential factors in driving consumer engagement. The mean scores for these dimensions—4.3 for empathy and 4.2 for social skills—indicate a consistently high level of proficiency among marketers. Statistical tests further revealed that empathy had the highest beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.41$), followed by social skills ($\beta = 0.37$), when predicting consumer engagement outcomes such as emotional connection, satisfaction, and repeat purchase behavior.

Table 5: Mean Score and Beta Coefficient

EI Component	Mean Score (out of 5)	Beta Coefficient (β)	Significance Level (p)	Influence on Consumer Engagement
Self-Awareness	4.1	0.21	< 0.05	Moderate
Self-Regulation	3.9	0.18	> 0.05	Low
Empathy	4.3	0.41	< 0.01	Strong
Social Skills	4.2	0.37	< 0.01	Strong

These findings align with earlier research by Kidwell et al. (2011), which suggested that empathy and interpersonal adaptability are critical for influencing consumer behavior. In the Indian context, where emotional values, relationships, and trust play a central role in purchase decisions, marketers with strong empathy and social skills can form deeper, more meaningful connections with consumers. This explains why brands such as Tanishq and Surf Excel, which heavily rely on emotional storytelling and empathy-based campaigns, consistently achieve higher engagement and brand loyalty scores.

Hypothesis 3: EI development initiatives positively impact marketing team collaboration.

Result: Supported

The qualitative data from interviews highlighted that organizations investing in emotional intelligence development initiatives—such as leadership training, mindfulness programs, and emotional literacy workshops—reported a noticeable improvement in team collaboration, creativity, and morale. Out of 15 interviewed marketing professionals, 12 confirmed that EI-based training helped improve interpersonal understanding and reduce internal conflicts. Teams that underwent emotional intelligence workshops displayed greater cohesion, adaptability, and openness to feedback. Quantitative findings supported these insights. Respondents from organizations with formal EI programs scored an average of 4.4/5 on team collaboration compared to 3.7/5 among those without such programs.

Table 6: Mean collaboration

Type of Organization	EI Training Implemented	Mean Collaboration Score (out of 5)	Reported Team Morale	Creativity Level (Self-reported)
With EI Development Program	Yes	4.4	High	High
Without EI Development Program	No	3.7	Moderate	Moderate

These findings demonstrate that EI development initiatives not only benefit individual marketers but also enhance collective team dynamics. In emotionally intelligent teams, members communicate more effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and exhibit higher levels of creativity and problem-solving—key factors that drive innovation in marketing campaigns.

Overall Interpretation of Results

The integrated analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data provides compelling evidence that emotional intelligence is a critical driver of marketing success in India. The following conclusions can be drawn from the results:

1. **Emotional intelligence significantly predicts marketing performance** across multiple dimensions, including customer satisfaction, retention, and campaign success.
2. **Empathy and social skills** are the most influential EI components for consumer engagement, especially in emotionally expressive markets like India.
3. **EI training programs** positively affect team collaboration, morale, and creativity, leading to enhanced productivity and campaign innovation.

In conclusion, the results confirm that emotional intelligence development significantly enhances marketing outcomes by improving interpersonal communication, emotional awareness, and collaborative culture. Indian marketing professionals and organizations that invest in EI development not only achieve superior customer engagement but also foster a more innovative, cohesive, and emotionally resilient workforce—an essential asset in today's emotionally-driven marketing landscape.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly establish that emotional intelligence is not only a desirable personal trait but also a strategic competency that significantly contributes to marketing success, especially in the Indian context. In a market where consumer decisions are often shaped by feelings, cultural values, and social connections rather than purely rational factors, the ability of marketers to understand, interpret, and respond to emotions becomes a powerful differentiator. The study revealed that emotionally intelligent marketers are better equipped to craft marketing messages that resonate deeply with audiences, build trust, and establish long-term brand loyalty. These marketers can sense consumer moods, adapt communication styles accordingly, and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics with sensitivity and awareness, ultimately translating emotional understanding into measurable business outcomes. Indian marketing offers a unique landscape for applying emotional intelligence due to its cultural richness and diversity. Emotions are deeply woven into India's social fabric—be it through family values, festivals, or the collective sense of identity that consumers often associate with brands. Emotional intelligence helps marketers navigate this diversity effectively by aligning campaigns with shared cultural sentiments. Brands like Amul, Tanishq, and Surf Excel have demonstrated how emotional storytelling, empathy, and socially conscious messaging can create powerful and enduring consumer relationships.

In such emotionally charged environments, EI becomes the bridge between brand identity and consumer perception, transforming transactional interactions into emotional engagements. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that developing emotional intelligence within organizations is both a human resource and strategic priority. When marketing teams undergo EI training or operate under empathetic leadership, they become more collaborative, innovative, and resilient. Emotionally intelligent teams exhibit greater creativity in campaign design, improved communication with clients, and higher adaptability in responding to market changes. This reinforces the idea that emotional intelligence development is not confined to individual improvement but contributes directly to collective organizational performance. Companies that institutionalize emotional intelligence through structured programs, leadership modeling, and continuous learning can build sustainable competitive advantages that go beyond short-term profitability. The implications of this study also extend to marketing education and professional training.

Incorporating emotional intelligence modules into business curricula can prepare future marketers to balance data analytics with emotional insight, thereby creating a more holistic approach to understanding consumers. As marketing becomes increasingly digital and data-driven, the human dimension of empathy and emotional connection remains irreplaceable. Integrating emotional intelligence with technological tools—such as AI-based emotional analytics, sentiment analysis, and behavioral modeling—could redefine the next frontier of marketing research and practice. In conclusion, emotional intelligence serves as both the emotional backbone and strategic compass of modern marketing. It allows brands to transcend conventional marketing techniques and connect with consumers at a deeper psychological level. In a culturally vibrant and emotionally diverse market like India, emotional intelligence provides the sensitivity and adaptability required to engage meaningfully with consumers. Future research could further expand on these findings by conducting cross-industry and cross-regional comparisons or by exploring how digital technologies can complement human emotional

intelligence in creating more personalized and emotionally responsive marketing strategies. Through such continued exploration, emotional intelligence will remain a cornerstone of both human and brand success in the evolving world of marketing.

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