

Perceived Employee Emotional Intelligence on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty: A Holistic Approach

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Abstract

The ability of employees to demonstrate emotional intelligence represents a vital qualifying factor for service quality delivery within organizations dedicated to customer service because it determines customer satisfaction levels and maintains long-term loyalty to the company. The way customers experience services depends on emotional intelligence levels which determines both customer satisfaction and loyalty levels. Customer satisfaction leads to increased chances of developing loyalty between customers and organizations which results in long-term business relationships. Service industry customers provide survey data for empirical testing in addition to a thorough literature review which reveals these connections. The data collection process will involve random sampling to ensure diverse representation (150 samples). According to research findings emotionally intelligent staff members are viewed by clients as both more skillful and easier to reach thus increasing trust and service satisfaction levels. Research through this investigation extends knowledge about psychological factors which influence market behavior in service management literature. The research provides business management strategies which teach enterprises how to develop emotional intelligence skills among front staff through training programs. Future research should examine how changes in industry and cultural elements affect the current relationship findings. Emotional intelligence development among employees acts as an organizational asset to preserve competitive superiority within customer-centered industries. The study delivers practical applications through employee training programs complemented with service management strategies to implement service excellence programs.

Keywords: Employee Emotional Intelligence, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Service Quality, Emotional Competence, Consumer Behavior and Relationship Management.

Introduction

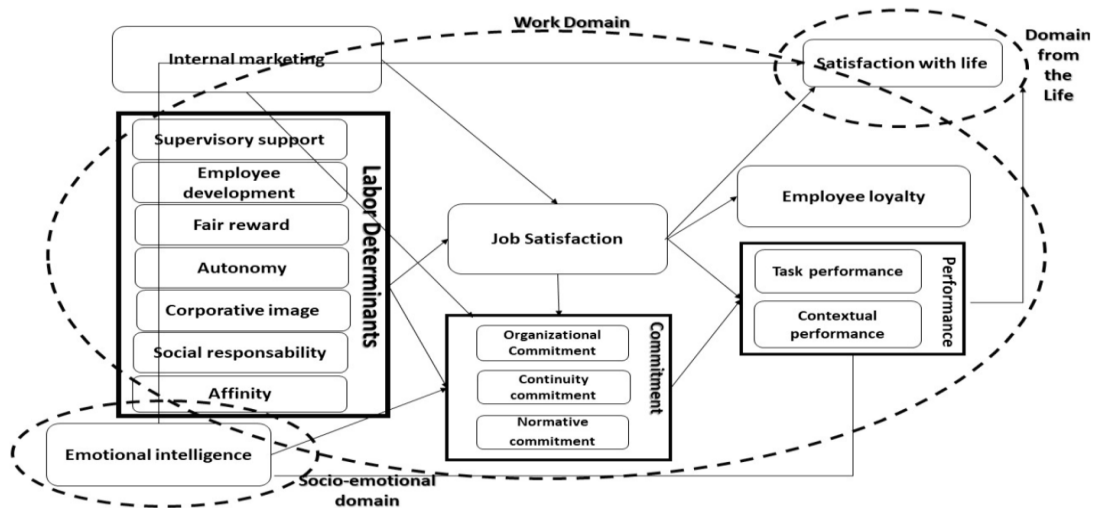
Offering outstanding client experiences has become a strategic need for companies in many different fields in the competitive corporate climate of today. Two key performance indicators, customer satisfaction and loyalty, are under growing influence from the

emotional intelligence (EI) of front-line staff. Those with high emotional intelligence have improved communication skills, emotional control, and conflict resolution ability in customer service settings—all of which help to build positive client impressions. Viewed as emotionally intelligent, customers are more likely to enjoy the better quality of service

interactions, customized engagement, and responsive to their needs. Corporate performance depends much on customer satisfaction, which directly influences customer retention and brand loyalty. Studies show that people with strong emotional intelligence could help to reduce conflicts, build rapport, and foster trust, therefore raising client satisfaction. Moreover, those with strong emotional intelligence create a corporate culture that stresses empathy, attentive listening, and customized service, therefore cultivating lifetime customer loyalty. Though the value of emotional intelligence in consumer interactions is becoming better known, comprehensive studies combining its effects on loyalty and satisfaction are still lacking.

While earlier studies have looked at emotional intelligence in team interactions and leadership, few studies have examined its direct impact on results connected to customers. Furthermore understudied is the impact of demographic variables and industrial surroundings on this connection. This study addresses these shortcomings by using a thorough approach looking at numerous aspects of emotional intelligence and how it influences consumer behavior. The findings will have a major influence on companies trying to raise emotional intelligence-based service quality by means of specialized training and development projects.

Figure: 1 Research Background



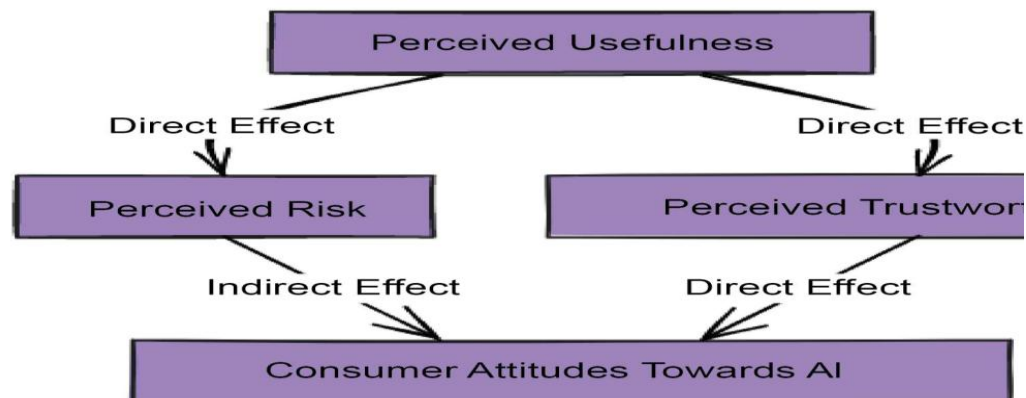
Chaudhary et al. (2024) argue higher emotional intelligence employees are better able to understand client needs, negotiate interpersonal connections, and handle demanding situations, therefore improving customer satisfaction. Strong emotional control techniques help banks to increase staff responsiveness, empathy, and problem-solving capacity, thereby improving service quality. Moreover, the research emphasizes that emotional intelligence (EI) benefits not only people but also serves as a strategic tool for banks trying to stand out in a crowded market. Emotionally intelligent leadership and training programs should be top priorities for financial

institutions as they help to create a customer-centric culture, therefore strengthening brand loyalty and ensuring ongoing profitability. According to the studies, emotional intelligence improves communication, cooperation, and decision-making in financial institutions, thereby supporting operational effectiveness. The writers support banks include emotional intelligence assessments into their hiring practices, provide ongoing staff development, and create leadership initiatives with emotional awareness and control first in mind. Emphasizing emotional intelligence can help banks enhance their internal working environment and external customer contacts, therefore gaining a competitive edge in the financial

sector. The study underlines the growing importance of emotional intelligence in service-oriented industries and its possible function as a strategic driver of continuous success in banking. Anastasiadou et al. (2022). Moreover, the research shows that emotional intelligence greatly increases customer satisfaction. Emotional intelligent consumers are better able to control expectations and see service interactions favorably, therefore raising their levels of satisfaction. This euphoria then leads to increased loyalty intentions since emotionally conscious consumers are

more likely to form relationships to companies and stick to their commitment over time. The report stresses the need of companies applying emotional intelligence in the development of digital marketing plans. By using emotionally intelligent customer service strategies, customized communication, and empathy-based engagement activities, companies may raise customer satisfaction and loyalty. Understanding the emotional side of consumer behavior could therefore provide a competitive advantage in the internet market. Anastasiadou et al. (2022).

Figure: 2 Review of Agenda and Literature



Saratian, Efendi, and Utami (2024), let companies better understand and respond to customer emotions. Companies may design more personalized and important interactions by recognizing consumers' needs, tastes, and emotional triggers. This covers the use of emotionally striking commercials, sympathetic customer service, and relationship-building techniques that really touch people. The study also looks at how emotional intelligence could influence consumer decisions. Those with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to engage with businesses that share their emotional beliefs and experiences. They are more likely to build lifelong bonds with companies that show integrity and sensitivity. Therefore, companies which use emotional intelligence into their marketing plans may raise customer satisfaction and strengthen brand loyalty. Furthermore emphasized by the writers is the need of emotional intelligence in digital marketing. In a time

when online interaction is crucial, businesses with emotional intelligence might set themselves apart by creating experiences and materials that make one happy. Effective ways to build emotional ties with consumers are social media engagement, influencer relationships, and narrative-driven marketing campaigns. The studies highlight how important emotional intelligence is to reaching marketing excellence. Companies that stress consumer welfare and emotional ties are more likely to build long-lasting relationships, build customer confidence, and achieve sustainable business success. Sharma and Kumra (2024) find Published in the International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences, their studies highlight how leadership style influences employees' capacity to show proactive service behaviors, thereby enhancing client experiences. Inspired by inspiration, drive, and individualized attention, transformational leadership, according to the authors, improves employees'

emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Empathetic leaders with vision help staff members to control their emotions and increase their confidence in their own skills. Emotional intelligence workers could be better at managing stress, handling customer interactions, and keeping cool under pressure. At the same time, self-efficacy strengthens their confidence in their ability to solve problems, therefore raising their inclination to participate in the provision of services. The results show that companies have to start leadership development initiatives aiming at developing transformative leadership qualities. Moreover, training courses meant to improve employees' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy might provide better customer service performance. Emphasizing these psychological and emotional aspects could help companies produce a more proactive and customer-oriented workforce.

Khan et al. (2024) underline that emotional labor is common among customer service agents, so emotional management of emotions is necessary to give good client experiences. This procedure depends on emotional intelligence, which helps workers to recognize, understand, and control their own as well as those of their clients. Employees who effectively control their emotions have more confidence in their capacity for problem-solving and in their accuracy of decision-making. Still, emotional labor—especially when people are expected to hide real feelings or show sensations that run counter to their underlying mood—can affect this relationship. Workers who undertake too much emotional work without enough emotional control may burn out, therefore compromising their self-efficacy. According to the report, companies have to give emotional intelligence training top priority so that customer support agents may develop more successful emotional control strategies. Moreover, companies ought to offer encouraging work environments that recognize the emotional demands of service roles. Providing psychological support and techniques to handle emotional labor will assist to raise employee satisfaction and performance of work. The study emphasizes the need of emotional intelligence in improving self-efficacy and providing

outstanding customer service while also noting the challenges related with emotional labor in front-line jobs. The researcher argues that employees' responses to professional demands depend critically on emotional intelligence—which consists of self-awareness, emotional control, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The research finds a strong link between organizational commitment and emotional intelligence. Strong emotional intelligence employees show more participation in their work, more job happiness, and more loyalty to their companies. Emotional intelligence improves cooperation, communication, and human relationships, thereby strengthening a wonderful work culture. Those who control their emotions and understand the emotions of others create a more cooperative and encouraging workplace, therefore improving general job involvement and reducing turnover intentions. According to the findings, companies could benefit from adding programs for the development of emotional intelligence into their leadership and training plans. Improving employees' emotional intelligence helps companies to reduce workplace stress, raise job satisfaction, and inspire a more committed workforce. Moreover, companies may help to create teams more adaptable to workplace challenges by stressing emotional intelligence in recruiting plans. Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) highlight the need of emotional intelligence as a key component in reducing professional stress and improving organizational commitment, thereby making it a great tool for both companies and staff members equally.

Research Gap

There are still significant research gaps even with the great body of knowledge on emotional intelligence and service excellence. With little attention paid to its direct influence on customer happiness and loyalty, most studies on emotional intelligence have centered on its impacts on staff performance and leadership efficacy. While studies highlight the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in consumer interactions, empirical studies linking apparent staff EI to consumer

behavior results are limited. Second, albeit overlooking its connection with corporate culture, training programs, and industry-specific factors, contemporary research sometimes studies emotional intelligence as a stand-alone trait. To fully understand the value of emotional intelligence in service environments, one must do a thorough investigation including various contextual elements. Third, we should look closer at industry and demographic modifiers. While several studies show that those in the service industry benefit more from emotional intelligence training, less scientific evidence exists separating the impacts of emotional intelligence across other sectors, including retail, hotel, healthcare, and financial services. Although consumer demographics—including age, gender, and cultural background—may affect the connection between perceived staff emotional intelligence and customer happiness; yet, this element is not much studied. In the end, the literature shows methodological flaws. Many studies rely on self-reported emotional intelligence tests, which could be biased and devoid of outside validation. Combining consumer opinions, observational data, and longitudinal research under a mixed-methods approach can help one to have a more complete knowledge of how EI shapes consumer experiences. This study aims to offer important new perspectives on the interaction between emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, and loyalty, together with both theoretical discoveries and useful guidance for companies trying to raise the quality of their offerings.

Importance of the Study

In the service industry, (EI) has grown to be essential as interactions between employees and customers greatly affect loyalty and satisfaction. Understanding this link helps companies to find practical answers to raise profitability, client retention, and service quality. Client loyalty is very vital for ongoing success in industries such banking, retail, and hotels. Furthermore, the findings will help companies create training courses to improve the emotional capacity of employees, thereby raising customer satisfaction

levels. The study provides lawmakers with a foundation to set business norms stressing the need of emotional intelligence in roles involving customer service. Moreover, it addresses present research gaps by looking at emotional intelligence as a measurable determinant of consumer behavior, therefore offering fresh understanding of service quality and competitive advantage.

Research Statement

Corporate success depends mostly on customer pleasure and loyalty; nevertheless, companies often struggle to maintain consistent service quality. While several elements influence customer impressions, staff emotional intelligence is a poorly studied component of service delivery. The effect of perceived staff emotional intelligence on consumer loyalty and satisfaction is investigated in this paper. Many companies spend a lot of money on operational efficiency and technology while ignoring the human element directly influencing customer experiences. Finding out whether customers believe staff's emotional intelligence to be a major factor influencing their loyalty and whole service experience is vital. This study seeks to close this discrepancy by looking at whether higher opinions of staff emotional intelligence match increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, therefore offering a strategic framework for companies to develop customer-centric approaches. Examining the effects of emotional intelligence (EI) on various aspects of online consumer behavior, including perceived e-service quality, perceived value, buy intentions, loyalty intents, and satisfaction, Anastasiadou, Papalexandris, and Konteos (2022) find appear in the HAICTA conference papers, highlight how important emotional intelligence is becoming in digital consumer interactions. Studies show that those with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to view online services positively. Emotional intelligence particularly influences the impression of e-service quality, therefore raising the possibility that customers would respect dependability, responsiveness, and efficiency of services.

Objectives:

1. To analyze the key emotional intelligence dimensions that influence customer experiences.
2. To assess the moderating role of industry type and customer demographics on the EI-satisfaction-loyalty relationship.
3. To provide managerial insights for enhancing customer service through emotional intelligence training.

Methodology

The research involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the subject. A structured survey will be distributed to customers who have interacted with employees in service-based industries such as hospitality, retail, and banking. The survey will include validated emotional intelligence scales, customer satisfaction measures, and loyalty indicators to assess correlations between these variables. Additionally, in-depth interviews with managers and customer service employees will provide qualitative insights into the role of EI in shaping customer perceptions. The data collection process will involve random sampling to ensure diverse representation (150 samples). Hence, a non-probability sampling method has been applied in the study. Statistical techniques such as Kendal's test and Kruskal-Wallis test will be used to analyze quantitative data.

Analysis and findings

Perceived employee emotional intelligence (EI) denotes the assessment by customers, colleagues, and supervisors of an employee's capacity to identify, comprehend, and regulate emotions proficiently in the workplace. It is essential in influencing human interactions, organizational dynamics, and service excellence. Employees with elevated perceived emotional intelligence are frequently regarded as sympathetic, self-aware, and adaptive, hence fostering a favorable corporate atmosphere. In client-facing positions, perceived emotional intelligence markedly affects customer happiness and loyalty. Employees demonstrating emotional awareness, empathy, and proficient communication foster excellent service experiences. Customers are more likely to trust and engage with emotionally intelligent personnel, viewing them as sensitive, compassionate, and responsive to their needs. This view improves brand reputation and consumer loyalty. Perceived emotional intelligence also influences team dynamics and corporate success. In a collaborative work environment, people possessing high emotional intelligence are seen as helpful, cooperative, and proficient communicators. Their capacity to manage disagreements, deliver constructive criticism, and sustain workplace harmony results in enhanced team morale and productivity. Colleagues and bosses frequently see such individuals as dependable and emotionally resilient, promoting a more positive work environment.

Results of Kendal's test for Perceived employee emotional intelligence

Statement	Mean Rank
Recognizing one's own emotions and their impact on work.	6.32
Displaying confidence and realistic self-assessment.	7.59
Admitting mistakes and taking responsibility.	6.40
Managing emotional reactions in stressful situations	5.22
Demonstrating adaptability and resilience	5.31
Setting and achieving personal and professional goals	5.86
Displaying active listening skills.	5.54
Showing cultural sensitivity and inclusivity.	5.60
Positive influence on team morale and collaboration.	5.31
Contribution to a healthy work environment.	4.22
Chi-square value	59.321
p-value	<0.001**

Displaying confidence and realistic self-assessment" has the highest mean rank (7.59), suggesting it is the most highly rated aspect of emotional intelligence.

"Contribution to a healthy work environment" has the lowest mean rank (4.22), indicating it is the least emphasized or perceived aspect.

Chi-square value = 59.321 with p-value < 0.001 implies a statistically significant difference among the ranked emotional intelligence attributes. This means at least one aspect is rated significantly differently from others. Employees perceive clear distinctions among different aspects of emotional intelligence, with **confidence and self-assessment (MR = 7.59)** being the highest and **work environment contribution (MR = 4.22)** the lowest. Kim (2010) contends that salespeople possessing high emotional intelligence demonstrate enhanced work performance due to their ability to control emotions, cultivate robust client connections, and adjust their conduct according to consumer requirements. Emotional intelligence empowers sales people to manage stress, sympathize with clients, and communicate effectively, resulting in more favorable and productive encounters. Sales professionals possessing robust emotional intelligence are more adept at managing rejection, settling disputes, and sustaining enthusiasm in high-pressure situations. Moreover, the study reveals that emotional intelligence directly influences consumers' perceived service quality. Customers access service quality based on both the tangible elements of the transaction

and the emotional connection and involvement offered by the salesperson. Sales people exhibiting empathy, active listening, and emotional intelligence foster a more gratifying and reliable service experience. Consequently, clients are more inclined to perceive themselves as appreciated and cultivate enhanced devotion to the company.

Age

The leadership's assessment of employee emotional intelligence is crucial for career advancement and corporate success. Managers who see workers as possessing emotional intelligence are more inclined to delegate leadership positions, mentorship roles, and significant projects to them. Employees who can regulate their emotions, handle stress, and exhibit perseverance in stressful situations are frequently acknowledged for their professionalism and problem-solving skills. Organizations may augment perceived employee emotional intelligence through specialized training programs, emotional intelligence evaluations, and workplace culture initiatives. Promoting emotional awareness, active listening, and stress management strategies can enhance employee relationships and overall workplace wellness. The perceived emotional intelligence of employees is a vital determinant of corporate performance. It affects customer interactions, team cooperation, leadership prospects, and overall workplace happiness. Organizations that emphasize emotional intelligence development have a competitive advantage in cultivating a productive and emotionally astute staff.

Table 2: Perception of customer satisfaction and loyalty according to the age group- Kruskal-Wallis test

Purpose	Age group	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square
Personalization & Positive Interactions	Young	57	81.64	3.419
	Middle	48	74.53	
	Old	45	68.76	
Effective Conflict Resolution	Young	57	76.50	2.232
	Middle	48	79.15	
	Old	45	70.34	
Increased Service Recovery Success	Young	57	77.40	11.687*
	Middle	48	71.88	
	Old	45	76.96	

Emotional Connection and Trust Building	Young	57	80.89	3.097
	Middle	48	68.30	
	Old	45	76.36	
Higher Retention & Repeat Purchases	Young	57	75.58	11.161*
	Middle	48	76.10	
	Old	45	74.76	
Positive Word-of-Mouth & Brand Advocacy	Young	57	73.01	1.182
	Middle	48	74.52	
	Old	45	71.09	
Total		150		

* Significant at 1% level

1. Mean Ranks Interpretation:

- Higher mean ranks indicate stronger agreement or preference for that purpose within the given age group.
- For example, "**Personalization & Positive Interactions**" has the highest mean rank among young respondents (81.64), indicating they value it more than older groups.

2. Statistical Significance (Chi-Square Test):

- The **Kruskal-Wallis Chi-square test** compares differences between age groups.
- A significant result ($p < 0.01$) indicates at least one age group differs significantly in perception.
- Significant differences were found for:**
 - Increased Service Recovery Success** (Chi-square = **11.687**, $p < 0.01$)
 - Higher Retention & Repeat Purchases** (Chi-square = **11.161**, $p < 0.01$)
- For other purposes, the p-values are **not significant**, suggesting no strong differences in perception across age groups.

Recommendations:

1. Post-hoc Analysis:

- Since two categories (**Service Recovery Success** and **Retention & Repeat Purchases**) showed significant differences, a **Dunn's test with Bonferroni correction** should be performed to pinpoint which age groups differ significantly.

2. Visualization:

- A **boxplot** or **bar chart** of mean ranks can help visualize the differences between age groups for each category.
- Practical Insights:**
 - Young customers** value **Personalization & Positive Interactions** and **Emotional Connection** more.
 - Middle-aged customers** rank **Effective Conflict Resolution** the highest.
 - Older customers** seem to place slightly lower emphasis on personalization but still prioritize **Trust Building** and **Retention**.
 - Service Recovery Success is a major differentiator** across age groups, requiring further investigation.

Discussion

Salovey and Pizarro (2003) assert that emotional intelligence is essential for effective communication, relationship cultivation, and problem-solving, making it a vital skill across several life domains. Unlike traditional intelligence (IQ), which focuses on analytical reasoning and knowledge acquisition, emotional intelligence (EI) enables individuals to navigate complex social environments, regulate emotions in stressful circumstances, and foster meaningful relationships. These qualities enhance job performance, organizational commitment, and employee welfare. Emotional intelligence integrates emotions with logical reasoning, enabling individuals to avoid impulsive reactions and develop more

effective problem-solving strategies. They advocate for emotional intelligence training and development programs in educational and professional settings to enhance interpersonal effectiveness, resilience, and overall life satisfaction. Their research validates the idea that emotional intelligence is a vital skill and an essential determinant of sustained success and well-being. Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000) conducted an extensive investigation of the interaction between these characteristics and their influence on consumer decisions, encompassing repeat purchases, word-of-mouth referrals, and brand loyalty. The authors contend that although service quality significantly impacts consumer perceptions, it is not the exclusive driver of behavioral intentions. They suggest that perceived value and customer satisfaction work as mediating variables that enhance or diminish the influence of service quality on consumer behavior. Consumers who recognize superior service quality are inclined to attribute greater value to the service, resulting in enhanced satisfaction and a heightened probability of repeat patronage. Their findings indicate that customer satisfaction exerts the most significant direct influence on behavioral intentions. When consumers exhibit great satisfaction with a service, they are more inclined to demonstrate loyalty, engage in repeat purchases, and promote the company. Furthermore, perceived value—characterized as the equilibrium between service advantages and expenses—significantly influences overall satisfaction. When consumers perceive high value for their expenditure, they are more inclined to demonstrate favorable behavioral intentions, regardless of whether service quality is subpar. The report emphasizes the necessity for firms to have a comprehensive strategy in service management that focuses on both elevating service quality and augmenting consumer value and satisfaction. Organizations want to concentrate on pricing methods, customer relationship management, and tailored offerings to enhance consumer engagement. By addressing the three aspects of quality, value, and satisfaction, service providers may enhance client retention and long-term profitability. Cronin et al.

(2000) provide significant insights into consumer decision-making dynamics within service sectors, highlighting the necessity for a balanced strategy to promote favorable customer behaviors.

Management Implications

The findings of this study hold substantial theoretical and practical importance. This study conceptually advances comprehension in service marketing and emotional intelligence research by demonstrating the impact of employee emotional intelligence on client perceptions. It provides concrete evidence that emotional intelligence is a vital determinant of consumer satisfaction and loyalty. This enriches the existing literature on service excellence by offering a framework for integrating emotional intelligence into customer service strategy. The research has pragmatic implications for companies seeking to enhance customer experience. Organizations may leverage the data to develop targeted training programs aimed at improving staff' emotional intelligence abilities, hence fostering superior customer interactions. The study has policy implications, emphasizing the need for regulatory authorities to establish industry standards that promote emotional intelligence in service interactions. Moreover, the research findings may guide recruitment practices, encouraging firms to incorporate emotional intelligence assessments into their hiring processes. By emphasizing the significance of emotional intelligence, companies may develop emotionally perceptive employees that deliver outstanding customer service, leading to increased satisfaction and lasting client loyalty.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Organizations have to prioritize emotional intelligence training for employees by integrating EI development into customer service training programs. Regular practical courses on self-awareness, empathy, and social skills should be instituted to enhance staff's ability to handle client interactions effectively. Secondly, organizations want to include emotional intelligence assessments into their recruitment processes to ensure that applicants exhibit the

necessary interpersonal skills for customer engagement. Third, firms have to implement a feedback mechanism that allows consumers to evaluate staff emotional intelligence and service quality, so promoting continuous improvement. Policymakers should develop industry standards that emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in customer service roles, therefore creating benchmarks for service excellence. Moreover, organizations must explore the application of AI-driven tools to manage and enhance employee-customer interactions, leveraging technology to foster the development of emotional intelligence. Future research should encompass longitudinal studies to examine the lasting impact of staff emotional intelligence on customer loyalty across diverse sectors. Examining cultural and racial disparities in the perception of emotional intelligence might provide significant insights into its universal significance. By implementing these rules, firms may foster emotionally intelligent cultures that improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is crucial in affecting consumer satisfaction and loyalty, making it an essential talent for people in service-oriented industries. Organizations prioritizing emotional intelligence training may develop emotionally skilled workforces capable of delivering exceptional customer experiences. Integrating emotional intelligence assessments in recruitment processes and implementing customized training programs can enhance service quality, customer engagement, and retention rates for organizations. The research findings underscore the imperative for firms to surpass operational efficiency and focus on the emotional connection between employees and customers. Policymakers may employ this data to establish industry standards that emphasize emotional intelligence as a critical ability in customer service roles. Future research should examine the inter-industry impact of emotional intelligence and its lasting effects on company performance. Ultimately, emotional intelligence serves as a competitive

advantage, differentiating firms in more customer-centric markets. By fostering emotional intelligence among employees, companies may forge strong client relationships, improve loyalty, and achieve enduring success in a volatile business environment.

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