

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF POTENTIAL MEDIATORS AND MODERATORS

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is a widely studied phenomenon in the workplace context. Due to its high applicability and relevance in the hospitality sector, emotional intelligence has been explored by various research scholars empirically, with a different set of mediators and moderators. In this paper, the author intends to review the papers centered around the concept of emotional intelligence with special relevance to the mediators and moderators used. This paper attempts to provide insights to the research scholars who are interested in studying the gap and introducing novel mediators and moderators in future studies revolving around emotional intelligence in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Hospitality sector.

Emotional Intelligence Concept

Emotional intelligence has been defined by many seminal scholars (Goleman,1995; Mayer & Salovey,1995). According to them, EI is the ability of a person to understand their own emotions as well the emotions of others. It is observed that people who possess high EI levels tend to have better interpersonal skills as they tailor their responses as per the interaction and know how to muzzle negative emotions that they may across as a consequence of these interactions (Mayer and Salovey,1997). Emotional intelligence is a mechanism in which people try to delve deep and understand their own emotions and similarly they repeat the process for others (Wong and Law,2002). It means on the basis of the occurrence and situation at hand a person tailors their emotions and makes adjustments accordingly.

Emotional intelligence is a concept that signifies a positive response that people exhibit on the basis of things happening around them that sends a positive message to the other person and discourages any kind of behavior that is incivil and not as per the organizational rules and regulations.

Many seminal authors have pointed out that in order to be productive at the workplace and maximize performance employees need to be at peace and have a positive state of mind. It is observed that an ambient work environment can be quite useful in harboring positive emotions at the workplace. This further includes the kind of people, infrastructural facilities, etc. which can leave a positive impression on the employee's mind and induce his overall

job performance (Kim et.al.,2011). Emotional intelligence can help employees in adapting themselves to difficult situations. Such employees will usually have high flexibility and adaptability towards tough situations. Because of these emotionally intelligent employees have better sustainability and effective coping mechanism, things that are most sought after in the hospitality sector (Kernbach and Schuttle,2005).

Emotional intelligence is widely studied in the workplace. From the employer and employee perspective, emotional intelligence helps in facilitating, and understanding emotions for both groups and helps in adapting to change. This reflects the relevance of EI in the realm of workplace dynamics. To summarize, emotional intelligence is detrimental to a person's professional and career success. The best and most positive thing about it is that EI is a phenomenon that can be developed among employees through proper training and development programs. Management must focus on providing such training programs that are critical to employees' success (Elfenbein,2006). Employees with high EI levels are assets for the organization since they can deliver a high-quality performance which in turn can induce customer loyalty and satisfaction (Kim et.al.,2011). People who have better EI levels display high P-O fit and comparatively, they are likely to excel at their job.

Emotional Intelligence in Hospitality Industry

The hospitality sector is one sector that is centered primarily around its employees, comprising high guest interaction. The guest interaction involves a high involvement of the employees as service providers and in this transaction, emotions are also involved (Langhorn,2004; Koc,2019). Emotions are an unavoidable part of this transaction because it being an essential part of how humans' function (Kim and Agrusa,2011). In the hospitality sector, the management must focus on correctly discerning the emotions of their employees (Kim et.al., 2011). This will allow them to handle the emotions of their employees well. Emotional Intelligence as a concept has high applicability in the hospitality sector.

The frontline employees who are always at their workstations to facilitate service, as a consequence of their role, face several emotions due to long working hours such as boring, unrewarding, highly mechanistic, and low paying in comparison to jobs in other sectors. Hospitality jobs can be emotionally very demanding because the employees have to deal with guests of different ethnicities, colors, races, etc. Jobs in the hospitality sector require employees to display emotional labor because they have to conceal their true feelings and put up a decent and pleasant face in front of the guests (Karatepe,2011). When employees face tough encounters, at that moment it is observed that emotionally intelligent employees will adopt the deep-acting mechanism of emotional labor (Mikolajczak et.al., 2007). Emotionally intelligent employees are mentally tough and show resilience. They are successful in balancing the negativity and tension that arises due to undesirable interactions between employees and guests. EI can be quite useful in combating the negative effects of long working hours and other hindrances that employees face at work. Such employees implementing emotional intelligence can nullify the effects of challenges that employees face (Prentice,2013).

The frontline employees have to behave in a certain and courteous manner during service performance which requires an employee to possess a good amount of emotional labor (Grandey,2003). They are expected to function in a specific manner and conceal their original feelings and emotions based on the organization's rules and

regulations (Chu et.al.,2012). These employees are required to exhibit emotions that are in tandem with guests' needs and basis the interaction which means that they conceal their inner feelings and emotions and exhibit high surface-level acting (Lee & Ok,2014). This inconsistency and disparity between how they feel vs how they act has its own repercussions on their mental and physical health which results in high psychological stress, cynicism, and burnout (Lee & Ok,2012). It is observed that an emotionally intelligent employee will be able to adjust and accommodate their feelings and emotions as per the guest's needs and display high flexibility and courteous behavior (Koc,2019). It can be observed that the concept of emotional labor is largely governed by positive emotional intelligence competencies e.g., displaying apparent sincerity, care, and empathy while serving the guests. When employees display such behaviors, it results in augmenting their job satisfaction, customer loyalty, performance, and reduced turnover intent (Lee&Ok,2012).

Methodology

This study looked at the mediators and moderators used to study emotional intelligence in the hospitality sector and in order to provide a broader perspective, a multidisciplinary view involving psychology, general management, hospitality, and tourism management was taken into consideration. Other than this, the author made an attempt to study the mediators and moderators utilized in the various studies to give hospitality researchers a flavor of mediators and moderators studied in past, find gaps and pave way for new research using novel mediators and moderators. Since this is a review paper, in this paper the author collected papers primarily by using the keywords, emotional intelligence, and the hospitality sector. For the purpose of building the review matrix, the years taken into consideration were from 2009-2022. This review timeline was chosen to provide readers with a fresh perspective on research conducted in this domain. The research was conducted from Oct 2022 to Dec 2022. To build this review matrix, 26 studies were referred. The databases utilized for conducting the review were EBSCO, Google Scholar, Elsevier, Scopus, and SAGE. For the purpose of building a review, mainly research papers and articles were considered. To gain deep insights, the author first referred to the abstract and then thoroughly studied the paper. This gave a vivid idea about the methodology, theoretical framework, hypothesis, findings, theoretical and managerial implications mentioned in each study. Since the study involved reviewing mediators and moderators, solely empirical studies were reviewed. Conceptual studies were referred to solely to build arguments related to the concept of emotional intelligence.

Literature Review Matrix Emotional Intelligence in the Hospitality Industry

Author & Year	IDV	Mediator	Moderator	DV	Theory	Country
Lu et.al. (2022)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	Job Burnout	Turnover Intention	NA	China
Hori and Chao (2022)	Emotional Labor	NA	Emotional Intelligence	Job Performance	NA	Taiwan
Alipore et.al., (2021)	Ambiance	a) Emotional Intelligence	NA	Service Sabotage	a) Stimuli and-Organism-	Cyprus

		b) Emotional Dissonance			Response Model b) Mehrabian and Russell Model	
Park and Kim (2021)	Emotional Exhaustion	NA	Emotional Intelligence	Job satisfaction	NA	Korea
Knezevic et.al., (2021)	Job Satisfaction	Emotional Intelligence	NA	Emotional Labor	NA	Serbia
Vasilagos et.al., (2021)	a) Emotional intelligence b) Motivation	NA	NA	Mentorship Received		Greece
Miao et.al., (2021)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	a) Demographic Moderators b) National Cultural Moderators	Job performance	COR Theory	China
Prentice (2020)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	NA	NA	Australia
Lam et.al., (2020)	a) Emotional Intelligence b) Cultural Intelligence	NA	NA	Guest Satisfaction	NA	China
Bozhkova & Buhalis (2020)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	NA	NA	United Kingdom
Boadi et.al., (2020)	Customer Participation	Emotional Intelligence	NA	Value Co-creation	Service-Dominant Logic	Ghana
Prentice (2019)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	NA	NA	Australia
Korniosis et.al., (2019)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	a) Job Satisfaction b) Job Performance	NA	Greece
Wen et.al., (2019)	Emotional Intelligence	Emotional Labor	Perceived Organization Support	Job Satisfaction	COR Theory	China

Yuping et.al., (2019)	Leadership Preferences	NA	NA	a) Emotional Intelligence b) Demographics	NA	Malaysia
Mishra et.al., (2019)	Transformational Leadership	Emotional Intelligence	NA	Team Performance	NA	India
K.Naseem (2018)	Job stress	NA	Emotional Intelligence	a) Life Satisfaction b) Happiness	Appraisal Theory framework	Pakistan
Darvishmotevali et.al., (2018)	Emotional Intelligence	Environmental Uncertainty	Cultural Intelligence	Creative Performance	Social Categorization Theory	North Cyprus
Nguyen et.al., (2016)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	NA	NA	United Kingdom
Walsh et.al., (2015)	a) Emotional Intelligence b) Service Orientation	Overall Industry Satisfaction	NA	Intention to Join the Industry	NA	Hong Kong and USA
Oriarewo et.al., (2014)	Sub-constructs of Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	Entrepreneurial Performance	NA	Nigeria
Hanzaee and Mirvaisi (2013)	a) Emotional Intelligence b) Job Satisfaction c) Organization Citizenship Behaviour	NA	NA	Employee Performance	NA	Iran
Barabara Wagner (2013)	Leadership	NA	NA	a) Motivation b) Emotional Intelligence	NA	Latvia
Kim et.al., (2012)	Emotional Labour acting strategies	Emotional Exhaustion	Emotional Intelligence	Service Recovery Performance	Conservation of resources theory (COR)	South Korea
Jain et.al., (2011)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	Service Quality	Affective Events Theory	India
Cha et.al., (2009)	Emotional Intelligence	NA	NA	a) Social Skills b) Stress Management	NA	USA

Discussion (A Review of Mediators and Moderators)

Alipore et.al., 2021 studied how emotional intelligence along with emotional dissonance impacted the employee-guest relationship in the environmental stimuli in the tourism sector. This study has used the Mehrabian Russel model and stimulus organism response framework to study these associations. In this association, emotional intelligence and emotional dissonance acted as mediators in the direct association between ambiance and service sabotage. Data was collected from hotels in Cyprus from 378 respondents. Data was analyzed using CFA_AMOS. As per the results, ambiance had a favorable impact on emotional intelligence and emotional dissonance which implies that environs also have a favorable impact on the psychological aspect of the workers employed in this sector. Emotional intelligence does not show an association with sabotage. This paper primarily shows how emotionally intelligent employees use emotional labor in dealing with tough encounters.

Park and Kim (2021) in their paper explored how emotional exhaustion impacted job satisfaction via the moderation of sub-constructs of emotional intelligence. Data was collected from 314 individuals working in high-end hotels in South Korea. It was analyzed using correlation and hierarchical multiple regression. Exhaustion didn't have any positive impact on job satisfaction. It also didn't show positive relationships with all the sub-constructs of emotional intelligence. The only positive association existed between all the sub-constructs of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. When all the sub-constructs of EI were taken into consideration, it had a positive moderation impact on emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. In the implications portion, the authors have suggested that since employees working in this sector face high exhaustion, they are vulnerable to multiple problems arising out of challenging situations hence the authors suggest that employees should use positive emotions to reduce the effect of such things. The optimum use of emotions can be beneficial in countering such issues. Limitations of the study are also provided in detail. They have specifically been curated as per the needs of this sector.

Knezevic et.al., (2021) in their paper studied the relationship between dimensions of emotional labor and job satisfaction, and emotional intelligence mediated this relationship. Data was collected from n=160 respondents from Serbia. Data were analyzed using a regression for the direct relationship and PROCESS Macro for the mediation. The results indicated that emotional intelligence mediates the relation between job satisfaction and dimensions of emotional labor. It was observed that employees who are emotionally intelligent understand their emotions well and are able to do it for others as well. This paper reflected that individuals with high satisfaction levels are likely to display better emotions than their peers which also implies greater usage of the deep-acting component of emotional labor. Similarly, if the SEA component of emotional intelligence was found high in the employees they will avoid indulging in the surface-acting component of EL. It was seen that job satisfaction had a positive relation with deep acting for the employees working in that sector.

Boadi et.al., (2020). In their study utilizing the service dominant logic theory and transactional theory of stress, they examined the association between customer's value co-creation and employee silence where emotional intelligence played the role of mediator. Data were collected from 528 respondents working in hotels. In order to test the hypothesis and the structural model, SEM was used. The results indicated that co-creation played an

important role in the hospitality sector. Co-creation impacted employee silence and EI played a major role in this. The majority of the hypothesis decision was not accepted and therefore the results implied that EI as a personal resource can potentially let the person decide whether to pursue a consumer's participation in the process of value co-creation and accordingly, they can decide if silence is the best policy as a source of coping mechanism. The results also indicated that only some aspects of EI mediated the association between consumer participation in value co-creation and silence. This paper particularly deals with the role of employee silence and how it can be utilized in different situations in this sector where the public interface is high.

Wen et.al., (2019) explored the impact of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction where this relation was mediated by sub-constructs of emotional labor and moderated by perceived organization support. N=279 respondents employed in an upscale hotel in China responded to the survey floated. The framework utilized to study this association was the conservation of resources theory. SEM was utilized to study the association and for the purpose of testing moderation, hierarchical regression analysis was used. The authors concluded that emotional intelligence had a direct association with job satisfaction and of the two sub-constructs of emotional labor only deep acting mediated this relation. POS played the role of moderator within the relation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction with emotional labor mediating this relationship. EI significantly impacted the emotional labor of the individuals employed in hotels which in turn had a direct bearing on job satisfaction. The authors had ample empirical evidence to support why deep acting mediated this association and not surface-acting and why deep acting had relation with job satisfaction. There was enough evidence, as per the authors, in the previous study that indicated that POS as a moderator strengthened relation between deep acting and job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence and emotional labor are some of the most imperative concepts from the hospitality sector perspective.

Mishra et.al., (2019) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on team performance. The association was mediated by emotional intelligence. This study was conducted in the Indian context. This was a conceptual paper that focused on the role of EI in the leadership context. This paper also gives insights into the role of emotional intelligence in team outcomes. In the very beginning, it defines the theoretical framework for all the variables under the study i.e., transformational leadership, team performance, and emotional intelligence, and then the authors have given insights into the relationship between transformational leadership and team performance and outcomes and then further by defining the relationship between EI and team performance. The study emphasizes the importance of studying emotions in the hospitality sector because of the industry needs that require their employees to deliver excellent performance and display the desired emotions to enhance performance and meet customer expectations. This paper emphasizes that leaders can utilize emotional intelligence competencies to understand and manage their direct reports and various other stakeholders. If this is implemented, it can leave a positive impact on the overall team performance.

Darvishmotevali et.al., (2018). Investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee creativity where environmental uncertainty mediated this relation and cultural intelligence moderated this relation. The creative performance as an outcome variable also included demographics. Data was collected from

elite hotels in Cyprus from n=283 respondents. In order to analyze the data, structural equation modeling and hierarchical multiple regression analysis were utilized. The findings from the study state that employees who rank high in emotional intelligence have the ability to deliver better creative performance because with their cognitive abilities they are able to diffuse conflict, have better decisiveness, and can facilitate problem-solving. Environmental uncertainty as mediator conditions this relationship although it mediates this relationship partially and not completely. Employees high on EI can foresee uncertainties and exhibit less resistance to change to the new things introduced that they come across on the daily basis. They are likely to exhibit flexibility with their colleagues as well. Going by the theoretical framework adopted in this paper, the moderator cultural intelligence was found to strengthen the direct association between emotional intelligence and creative performance. Studying these associations was quite relevant in the hospitality industry context.

Walsh et.al., (2015) Examined the role of emotional intelligence and service orientation on the intention to join the industry. This was mediated by satisfaction in the industry. Data was collected from n=247 undergrad students studying hospitality management in two countries Hongkong and the USA namely. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Results stated that emotional intelligence to a great extent determines the undergrad's intention to join this particular industry. The authors pointed out that students who possess high EI levels would attune their emotions as per the requirements of this role and choose a hospitality career more than their counterparts who are low on EI. Their personal characteristics are closely aligned with the requirements of this sector. This also entails that such students with a higher P-O fit will derive greater satisfaction from their job and contribute wholeheartedly to their job. This paper provides deep insights into how the optimum use of emotions as per the situation can optimize overall performance. The results from this paper suggest that high EI levels and service orientation among the undergrads will define their intent whether they wish to join this industry or not. This paper also threw light on why undergrads don't wish to join this industry or what demotivates them to pursue this career.

Kim et.al., (2012) Explored the relationship between sub-constructs of emotional labor and service recovery performance, and this association was moderated by emotional intelligence and mediated by emotional exhaustion. The conservation of resources framework was used to study this association. Data was collected from a 5-star hotel in a major city in Korea and a total of n=371 data points were used for further analysis. Analysis was conducted using path analysis. On the basis of analysis, the authors argue that emotional intelligence is considerably important in order to support emotional labor. In tandem with the previous studies, the authors concluded that EI had a significant impact on the sub-constructs of emotional labor. Emotional intelligence at the same time also impacted service recovery performance positively. The results clearly stated that individuals who possess high emotional intelligence skills will have better service recovery performance. When it comes to the relationship between emotional labor and service recovery performance, it was observed that individuals who have a positive mindset will exhibit emotions along the same lines which will have a positive impact on the service recovery performance. The study reflected that higher emotional intelligence levels among the employees help in better regulation of emotional labor as per the situation they face at work.

CONCLUSION

The hospitality sector requires frontline employees to play a significant role in shaping the customer's perception and requires them to induce customer loyalty by providing the best-in-class service (Kim & Agrusa, 2011). Positive guest-employee encounters can shape the entire opinion of the customer toward the hospitality organization. These interactions involve emotions and require the employees to display high emotional competency (Wong & Law, 2002). Employees who are better at emotional intelligence can handle guest encounters with higher proficiency which has a direct relation to shaping customers' perceptions and experiences. Looking at the larger picture, from the hospitality sector perspective, employees' behaviors define guest encounters and can leave a long-lasting impression of the organization on the customer's mind (Langhorn, 2004). As per the seminal research, it is observed that emotional intelligence is quite useful in forecasting real-life problems and workplace behaviors. Emotional intelligence as a construct is highly relevant in the business context because it helps in determining a major chunk of interactions between the employee and the guest (particularly in sectors where the public interface is high). EI can be considered an extremely important factor in facilitating two-way interaction between frontline employees and the guest and it can be detrimental in augmenting the guest experience (Kernbach and Schuttle, 2005; Ye et al., 2017). Such employees can prove to be indispensable assets for their organizations since they can shape customers' outcomes on the whole. EI is somewhat of a necessity in building bonds with the customer in the long term. Such employees other than being indispensable for the organization are also empathetic towards the needs of the customers.

Employees who are good at displaying their emotions will automatically deliver great service to the guests. Expressing real emotions is directly related to the kind of service performance an employee delivers. Such employees know how to handle difficult situations proficiently and using their sense and sensibilities they can dispel such situations with ease (Ahn et al., 2016). Adding to this, they can use effective coping mechanisms to put up with such situations. Such employees in the face of conflict, using emotional intelligence competency can facilitate better guest interaction leading to positive customer outcomes. EI is a proven construct in facilitating smooth and strong customer relationship management which is key to great customer experience (Kim & Drumwright, 2016). From the organizational perspective, it has a deeper meaning, the administration can keep better checks and balances and ensure that employees are conforming to the standard display rules as it has long-lasting repercussions for the organizations (Gelbrich and Roschk, 2011).

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