The Impact of Front Office Staff Emotional Intelligence on Guest Retention: Mediating Role of Guest Satisfaction in Five-star Hotels in Aqaba- The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the significant influence that the emotional intelligence (EI) of front office workers has on the retention of guests at five-star hotels in Aqaba City, which is located in Jordan. Within this context, it specifically investigates the function that visitors' satisfaction plays as a mediator in this interaction, drawing on current research published in between the years 2020 and 2025. The study proposes that front office staff members who are emotionally intelligent are more suited to comprehend and manage the guests' emotions, which ultimately results in increased levels of satisfaction among guests, while it is expected that this increased level of satisfaction will, in turn, lead to increased levels of visitor retention in five-star hotels in Aqaba. The study employs a quantitative research methodology with a sample comprising both guests and front office staff. The findings are expected to highlight the vital importance of training front office staff in emotional intelligence skills, as well as underscore the significance of guests' satisfaction as a key factor in building a long-term customer loyalty within the competitive hospitality environment in Aqaba. The findings of this study will also provide valuable insights , that hotel managers, decision-makers and future researchers in the field can leverage to make scientifically grounded decisions.

Keywords: Front Office Staff, Emotional Intelligence, Guest Retention, Guest Satisfaction, Five-star Hotels, Aqaba City.

تأثير الذكاء العاطفي لموظفي المكاتب الأمامية على الاحتفاظ بالضيوف: الدور الوسيط لرضا الضيوف في الفنادق ذات الخمس نجوم في مدينة العقبة في المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية

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ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف التأثير الكبير للذكاء العاطفي (Emotional Intelligence – EI) لدى موظفي المكاتب الأمامية على الاحتفاظ بالضيوف في الفنادق ذات الخمس نجوم في مدينة العقبة، الواقعة في المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية. وفي هذا السياق، تبحث الدراسة بشكل خاص في الدور الذي يلعبه رضا الضيوف كمتغير وسيط في هذه العلاقة..

استنادًا إلى الأدبيات الحديثة المنشورة خلال الفترة ما بين 2020 و2025، تفترض الدراسة أن موظفي المكاتب الأمامية الذين يتمتعون بمستويات عالية من الذكاء العاطفي يكونون أكثر قدرة على فهم مشاعر الضيوف وإدارتها، الأمر الذي يؤدي في نهاية المطاف إلى زيادة مستويات رضا الضيوف. ومن المتوقع أن يسهم هذا الارتفاع في مستوى الرضا بدوره في تعزيز معدلات الاحتفاظ بالضيوف في فنادق الخمس نجوم في العقبة.

تعتمد الدراسة على المنهج الكمي في البحث العلمي، وتشمل عينة الدراسة كلًا من الضيوف وموظفي المكاتب الأمامية. ومن المتوقع أن تسلط نتائج الدراسة الضوء على الأهمية الحيوية لتدريب موظفي المكاتب الأمامية على مهارات الذكاء العاطفي، بالإضافة إلى إبراز أهمية رضا الضيوف كعنصر أساسي في بناء ولاء العملاء على المدى الطويل ضمن بيئة الضيافة التنافسية في مدينة العقبة.

كما ستوفر نتائج هذه الدراسة معرفة مهمة يمكن أن يستفيد منها مديرو الفنادق، وصناع القرار، والباحثون المستقبليون في هذا المجال، بما يساعدهم على اتخاذ قرارات مبنية على أسس علمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: موظفو المكاتب الأمامية؛ الذكاء العاطفي؛ الاحتفاظ بالضيوف؛ رضا الضيوف؛ الفنادق ذات الخمس نجوم؛ مدينة العقبة

1- Introduction

Al-Gharaibah (2020) states that the hospitality industry, especially the luxury hotel industry, is a highly competitive and dynamic market in which client happiness and retention are key to long-term success, as Masada et al. (2025) indicates that a five-star hotel front desk is the first point of contact between visitors and the hotel, front desk staff's interactions with the guests are important in shaping the entire guest experience, quality of these encounters may considerably impact the guest's opinion of the service, their satisfaction level, and ultimately, their choice to return to the hotel or promote it to others, as emotional intelligence is the capacity to notice, comprehend, regulate, and make efficient use of emotions; this talent is becoming more vital for service sector workers (Guney, 2025). Traymbak (2025) states that reception workers at five-star hotels with high emotional intelligence can deal with complex visitor interactions, empathetically respond to a broad variety of guest demands, successfully deal with complaints, and create memorable experiences, capacity to create emotional connections with guests is a key differentiator in the luxury hotel industry, going beyond typical service to form authentic relationships with tourists (El-Adly et al. 2024), positive visitor experiences are a direct driver of customer happiness, as customer satisfaction is an important index of service quality (Malkawi et al. 2023) and a powerful predictor of customer loyalty and repeat business, as shown in study by Al-bqaeen et al (2020), visitors are more satisfied when they believe that they are being understood, appreciated and properly cared for, five-star hotels in Aqaba, a famous tourist destination in Jordan, confront the unique problem of balancing international service standards with local cultural sensibilities (Al-Gharaibah, 2020). While this is a task specific to the Jordanian tourism industry, Masada et al. (2025) argued that good management of visitors' emotions, by reception staff with high emotional intelligence, can go a long way to the achievement of high levels of guest satisfaction which in turn increases loyalty and repeat business in this specific market. This research intends to explore the complicated link between high levels of emotional intelligence of reception workers and high levels of client satisfaction and loyalty within the setting of the five-star hotel industry in Aqaba, Jordan. This study attempts to investigate the function of guest satisfaction as a mediator in the

link between emotional intelligence and customer retention. It also seeks to emphasize these dynamics to give practical insights to hotel management to improve service quality, implement staff training programs, and ultimately promote guest loyalty and commercial performance in the area

Research Questions:

1. What is the impact of front office staff emotional intelligence on guest satisfaction in five-star hotels in Aqaba?
2. What is the impact of guest satisfaction on guest retention in five-star hotels in Aqaba?
3. Does guest satisfaction mediate the relationship between front office staff emotional intelligence and guest retention in five-star hotels in Aqaba?

Research Objectives:

1. Examining direct impact of front office staff emotional intelligence on guest satisfaction in five-star hotels in Aqaba.
2. Assessing direct impact of guest satisfaction on guest retention in five-star hotels in Aqaba.
3. Investigating mediating role of guest satisfaction in relationship between front office staff emotional intelligence and guest retention in five-star hotels in Aqaba.

2- Literature Review

2.1. Emotional Intelligence in the Hospitality Context

Emotional intelligence has been extensively studied in a variety of professions, especially in the service sector such as the hotel industry, where human connection is a core component of service delivery (Guney, 2025). Emotional intelligence is a collection of talents that helps people to identify, comprehend, control, and successfully use their own and other people's emotions (Traymbak, 2025). Arora et al. (2025) state that receptionists working in five-star hotels should have emotional intelligence to ensure customers' positive experiences, since they are in direct and constant touch with guests. A research (2024) found that receptionists with high emotional intelligence are better able to deal with the varied personalities of guests,

effectively manage stressful circumstances and react empathetically to their demands and concerns, results were based on a research that emphasized the necessity of identifying minor emotional clues from visitors, adjusting communication approaches, and having a cheerful attitude even in the most trying situations. Arora et al (2024) argue that the emotional demands of frontline customer service jobs need good emotional intelligence to prevent burnout and maintain high levels of service quality. Employees with strong emotional intelligence may convert a potentially bad scenario into an opportunity to improve service and so boost the guest's view of the hotel's responsiveness and empathy (Arora, 2024). These components are often known as emotional intelligence components, they include self-awareness, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which are all vital attributes of a receptionist position, self-awareness helps workers to know their emotional condition and how it affects their interaction with others through self-regulation abilities. Self-aware personnel are able to manage their urges and remain professional, which in turn motivates them to surpass visitors' expectations. Empathy is important for understanding the nuanced needs and emotions of visitors, and social skills are important for enabling successful communication and relationship development (Traymbak, 2025). These abilities combined provide an important part towards improving the visitor experience. Emotional intelligence helps to build a service environment where visitors feel appreciated and valued, and builds the foundation for great service results. The use of emotional intelligence in the reception department does not just end with the development of interpersonal connections, it creates a good atmosphere for the firm in general, if the reception workers are consistently high in emotional intelligence. Other departments can provide a consistent and emotionally charged customer experience throughout the hotel, creating a standard of service excellence that can be followed throughout. Overall influence of emotional intelligence is even more relevant at five-star hotels because clients demand a faultless and personalized service experience, owing to the foundational significance of the idea, capacity of the personnel to be in control of their emotions and maintain a calm, professional atmosphere, especially in busy times or when faced with complicated logistical issues is a key feature of luxury hospitality. This competence is all the more important in the face of challenging logistical issues.

2.2. Guest Satisfaction and its Determinants

Due to Malkawi et al. (2023), the term "guest satisfaction" refers to a degree to which service that a customer receives either meets or exceeds expectations that customer had for service. Due to Al-bqaeen et al. (2025), this is an essential component of success in hospitality industry, while this is because pleased customers are more likely to return to hotel, recommend it to others, and engage in positive word-of-mouth activities, which is a vital metric. While factors that determine whether or not a visitor is satisfied with their stay at a hotel are numerous and include both physical and intangible parts of customer experience, as emotional value that is obtained from contacts, physical setting, and quality of service are all important factors that determine relationship. According to Al-Gharaibah (2020), the term "service quality" refers to dependability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible services that are related with delivery of service, as in terms of front office operations. This translates to procedures that are efficient for checking in and checking out, rapid replies to requests, accurate information, and a pleasant attitude from staff members (Masa'deh et al. 2025). In his research in 2020, Al-Gharaibah states that not only does physical environment play a key part in determining perceptions and levels of satisfaction of hotel guests, but it also includes cleanliness, comfort, and aesthetic appeal of hotel premises. Emotional aspect of service is being more acknowledged as a significant factor in determining level of pleasure experienced.

According to El-Adly et al. (2024), guests tend to recall more clearly how they felt throughout their stay than precise services that they got. When a crucial factor that contributes to overall visitor satisfaction is presence of sympathetic and emotionally knowledgeable staff members who are able to generate positive emotional experiences, as in highly competitive five star hotel market in Aqaba, where visitors often have high expectations, it is essential to surpass these expectations by providing great service and emotionally resonant encounters in order to achieve high levels of satisfaction (Malkawi et al. 2023). Advent of digital era has brought to emergence of new factors that determine happiness, such as convenience of making reservations online and standard of digital communication, despite many technological advancements that have been made, human aspect continues to be the most important component of luxury hospitality, while many times, guests staying in five-star hotels in Aqaba are looking for a balance between ease of technology and customized touch

of a human being. As one of most important differentiators that highly increases level of pleasure experienced via guests is capacity of front office personnel to bridge this gap by delivering high-tech service while maintaining a high-touch emotional connection, when implementation of this comprehensive strategy for customer satisfaction, which takes into account both concrete quality of service and intangible emotional value, is absolutely necessary for keeping a competitive advantage in flourishing tourist industry of area.

2.3. Guest Retention Strategies and Importance

Guest retention is a key indicator of long term business success, reflecting a hotel's ability to consistently attract returning guests (Al-Gharaibah, 2020). As in highly competitive hospitality sector, retaining existing guests is often more cost-effective than acquiring new ones, as loyal guests tend to spend more, are less price-sensitive, and informally contribute to brand promotion through positive recommendations (Al-bqaeen et al. 2025). Developing effective guest retention strategies is crucial for sustainability and profitability of five-star hotels in Aqab, strategies for guest retention typically revolve around building strong relationships, providing personalized experiences, and consistently delivering high-quality service. When relationship building involves creating a sense of connection and trust between the guest and hotel, often facilitated by front office staff who remember guest preferences and engage in meaningful interactions (Masa'deh et al.2025), personalization, enabled via understanding individual guest needs and preferences, can significantly enhance the guests' experience and foster loyalty (Arora et al. 2024). Loyalty programs, exclusive offers, and proactive communication are common tools used to encourage repeat visits; however, most powerful retention strategy remains the consistent delivery of exceptional service that leads to high guest satisfaction (Malkawi et al. 2023). When guests are consistently satisfied, they develop an emotional attachment to the hotel, making them less likely to switch to competitors (El-Adly et al. 2024). In the context of Aqaba's five-star hotels, where guests have numerous choices, focusing on these retention strategies is crucial for cultivating a loyal customer base

2.4. The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Guest Satisfaction

The link between emotional intelligence (EI) of front-line employees and guest satisfaction is well-established in hospitality literature (Guney, 2025). Front office staff, as primary point of contact, significantly influence a guest's initial and lasting impressions of a hotel, their ability to manage their own emotions and understand those of the guests directly impacts the quality of service interactions and, consequently, guest satisfaction levels (Traymbak, 2025). Emotionally intelligent front office staff can effectively de-escalate guest complaints, provide empathetic support, and anticipate unexpressed needs, all of which contribute to a more positive service encounter. For instance, a staff member who can recognize a guest's frustration and respond with genuine concern and a proactive solution is likely to turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one, thereby increasing satisfaction (Arora et al. 2024). This ability to 'read' and respond to emotional cues allows for a more personalized and attentive service delivery, which is highly valued in five star hotel settings (Masa'deh et al. 2025). A lack of emotional intelligence among front office staff can lead to misunderstandings, inadequate service recovery, and ultimately, guest dissatisfaction. Guests in luxury hotels expect not only efficiency but also a warm, welcoming, and understanding human touch (El-Adly et al. 2024). When staff exhibit high EI, they create an atmosphere of trust and comfort, making guests feel more at ease and cared for, this emotional connection is a powerful driver of satisfaction, distinguishing exceptional service from merely adequate service (Malkawi et al. 2023).

2.5. The Relationship Between Guest Satisfaction and Guest Retention

The relationship between guest satisfaction and guest retention is one of the most critical linkages in hospitality industry (Al-Gharaibah, 2020). High levels of guest satisfaction are consistently found to be a strong predictor of repeat patronage and loyalty (Al-bqaeen et al. 2025). When guests are satisfied with their experience, as they are more inclined for choosing the same hotel for future stays and to recommend it to their social and professional networks, satisfied guests develop a sense of trust and familiarity with a hotel, reducing perceived risk associated with trying a new establishment. This psychological comfort

translates into a higher likelihood of retention; satisfied guests are often more forgiving of minor service lapses, as their overall positive experience outweighs isolated incidents (Malkawi et al. 2023). This resilience in loyalty is invaluable in a competitive market like Aqaba, where hotels strive to differentiate themselves. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that hotels with higher guest satisfaction scores tend to have higher retention rates and stronger financial performance (Al-Gharaibah, 2020). Positive word-of-mouth generated by satisfied, loyal guests also serves as a powerful and cost-effective marketing tool, attracting new customers while reinforcing the hotel's reputation, investing into strategies that enhance guest satisfaction is a direct investment into long-term guest retention and overall business success (Arora et al. 2024).

2.6. The Mediating Role of Guest Satisfaction

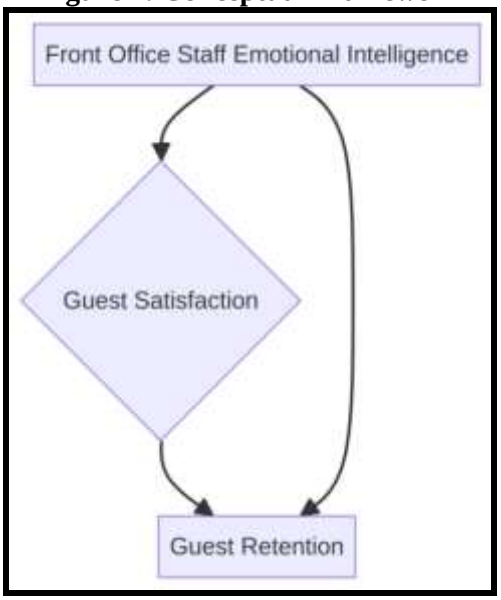
Theoretical framework of this study is positing that guest satisfaction plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between front office staff emotional intelligence and guest retention, which means that while emotional intelligence of staff directly influences guest interactions, its ultimate impact on guest retention is largely channeled through positive effect it has on guest satisfaction (Guney, 2025). Emotionally intelligent front office staff are adept at creating positive service encounters, which directly leads to higher levels of guest satisfaction (Traymbak, 2025). Guests who experience empathetic, understanding, and responsive service from front office personnel are more likely to report high satisfaction with their stay, this heightened satisfaction, in turn, becomes primary driver for their decision to return to hotel and their willingness to recommend it to others, thereby contributing to guest retention (Al-Gharaibah, 2020). Emotional intelligence acts as an antecedent to guest satisfaction, and guest satisfaction then acts as an antecedent to guest retention, without a mediating effect of satisfaction. The direct link between staff E1 and retention might be weaker or less pronounced, emotional connection fostered via EI translates into a positive cognitive and affective evaluation of service (satisfaction), which then solidifies into behavioral loyalty (retention) (El-Adly et al. 2024). Understanding this mediating mechanism is vital for

hotel management to design targeted interventions that leverage staff emotional intelligence to maximize guest loyalty and retention in Aqaba's five-star hotels.

3- Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

As based on comprehensive literature review, a conceptual framework is proposed to illustrate the relationships between front office staff emotional intelligence, guest satisfaction, and guest retention, This framework posits that front office staff emotional intelligence (Independent Variable) directly influences guest satisfaction (Mediating Variable), which subsequently impacts guest retention (Dependent Variable), guest satisfaction is hypothesized to mediate relationship between front office staff emotional intelligence and guest retention

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: This conceptual framework illustrates hypothesized direct and indirect relationships between front office staff emotional intelligence, guest satisfaction, and guest retention, emotional intelligence is proposed to directly influence both

guest satisfaction and guest retention, with guest satisfaction also mediating relationship between emotional intelligence and guest retention

Hypotheses Development:

H1: Front office staff emotional intelligence has a significant positive impact on guest satisfaction in five-star hotels in Aqaba.

The hypothesis is supported via extensive research indicating that emotionally intelligent employees are better understanding and responding to customer needs, leading to higher service quality and increased satisfaction (Guney, 2025; Traymbak, 2025). The ability of front office staff to manage emotions, empathize with guests, and communicate effectively directly enhances guest experience, thereby boosting satisfaction (Arora et al. 2024).

H2: Guest satisfaction has a significant positive impact on guest retention in five-star hotels in Aqaba.

Due to findings of a number of studies (Al-Gharaibah, 2020; Al-Bqaeen et al. 2025), satisfied customers are more likely to demonstrate loyalty and are more likely to make further purchases. It is more probable that guests will return to same facility and recommend it to others if they had a wonderful and satisfying experience when they are staying there. In hospitality sector, this is a crucial element to consider, as it has been stated by Malkawi et al. (2023) that this idea is consistent with core principle that satisfied customers are more inclined to return to institution.

H3: Guest satisfaction mediates the relationship between front office staff emotional intelligence and guest retention in five-star hotels in Aqaba.

The mediating hypothesis suggests that not only does emotional intelligence of reception professionals have a directly positive impact on visitors' retention, but it is also driven via development of customer pleasure, since the relationship between the two is not a direct one. As El-Adly et al. (2024) assert that emotionally intelligent employees are the ones who are accountable for creation of experiences that are satisfying for consumers, for guests to remain loyal to hotel, fundamental aspect that motivates them to do so is the joy they have there, as visitors' satisfaction is a crucial

link in chain of causation that runs from emotional intelligence of workers to retention of guests. According to Al-Gharaibah (2020), this chain of causality goes from workers to guests.

4- Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The study that was conducted used a quantitative methodology to explore the connection between the emotional intelligence of receptionists, level of satisfaction experienced by visitors, and the number of repeat customers. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) state that the use of a quantitative method is warranted in this research because it enables systematic collecting and statistical analysis of numerical data, which in turn enables the exploration of causal linkages and the testing of hypotheses, design of the survey that was utilized was a cross-sectional survey, which means that the data was collected from a sample of respondents that was representative of the whole at a certain moment in time. According to Saunders et al (2019), this method is very helpful in determining the features of a big population as well as determining the correlations that exist between the variables being investigated.

4.2. Population and Sample

Target population for this research comprises both front office staff and guests of five-star hotels in Aqaba which was selected due to its significance as a major tourist destination with a concentration of luxury hotels, providing a suitable context for the research (Malkawi et al. 2023). A comprehensive list of five-star hotels in Aqaba will be obtained from official tourism directories to define the sampling frame, for front office staff, a convenience sampling method will be employed, targeting approximately 200 front office employees across various five-star hotels. This method is practical given the accessibility of staff within the participating hotels, for guests, a systematic random sampling approach will be adopted, aiming for a sample size of approximately 400 guests, who will be approached during check-out or at designated common areas within the hotels,

ensuring a diverse representation of hotel patrons. The sample size is determined based on statistical power considerations for structural equation modeling (SEM), which will be used for data analysis (Hair et al.2017).

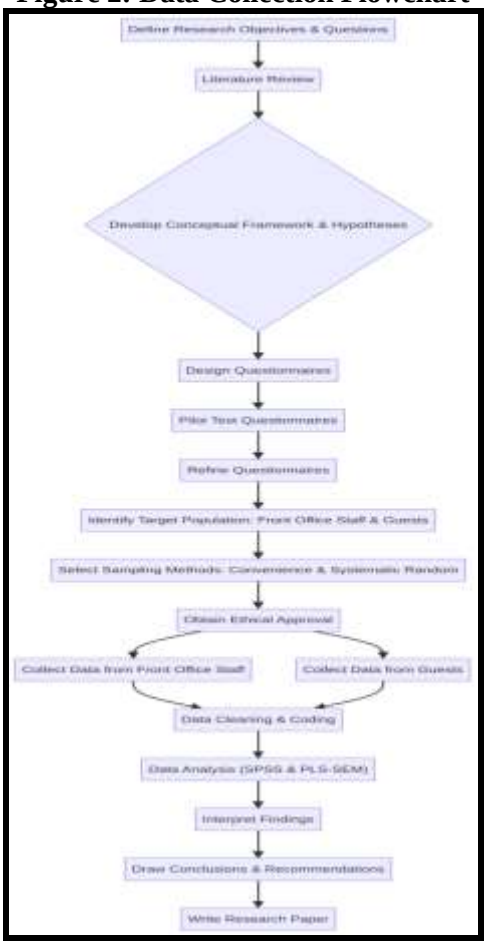
4.3. Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) software, such as SmartPLS, will be used to do analysis of the data that has been gathered, investigation of the data will be carried out in a series of steps, including following:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** For purpose of describing the demographic features of sample as well as the distribution of important variables, we will be calculating the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations among the variables
2. **Reliability and Validity Analysis:** For purpose of analyzing convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement scales, we will use Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) inside framework of PLS-SEM (Hair et al. 2017), Cronbach's Alpha will be utilized to ascertain internal consistency reliability of measurement scales
3. **Correlation Analysis:** To investigate bivariate correlations that exist between emotional intelligence, guest satisfaction, and guest retention, Pearson correlation coefficients will be generated.
4. **Hypotheses Testing (PLS-SEM):** This technique is suitable for complex models with multiple latent variables and is robust for both theory development and prediction (Hair et al. 2017). The proposed hypotheses and mediating role of guest satisfaction will be tested using posterior least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), bootstrapping procedures will be used to evaluate significance of direct and indirect effects.

4.4. Data Collection Flowchart

Figure 2: Data Collection Flowchart



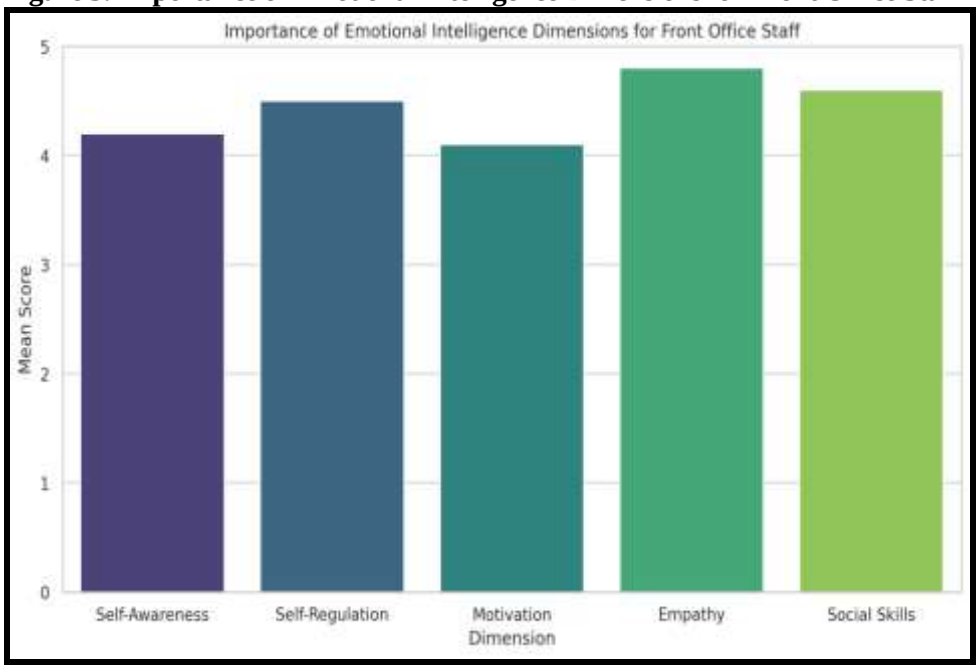
Data Collection Flowchart

Figure 2: This flowchart illustrates systematic process of data collection and analysis for research, process begins with definition of research objectives and questions, then moves on to a comprehensive literature review, and finally, development of a conceptual framework and hypotheses, after that, questionnaires are designed, pilot-tested, and refined before moving on to process of collecting data from both front

office staff and guest. The collected data is then subjected to cleaning, coding, and rigorous analysis using SPSS and PLS-SEM, which ultimately results in interpretation of findings, conclusions, and research paper recommendations.

4.5. Data Visualization and Analysis

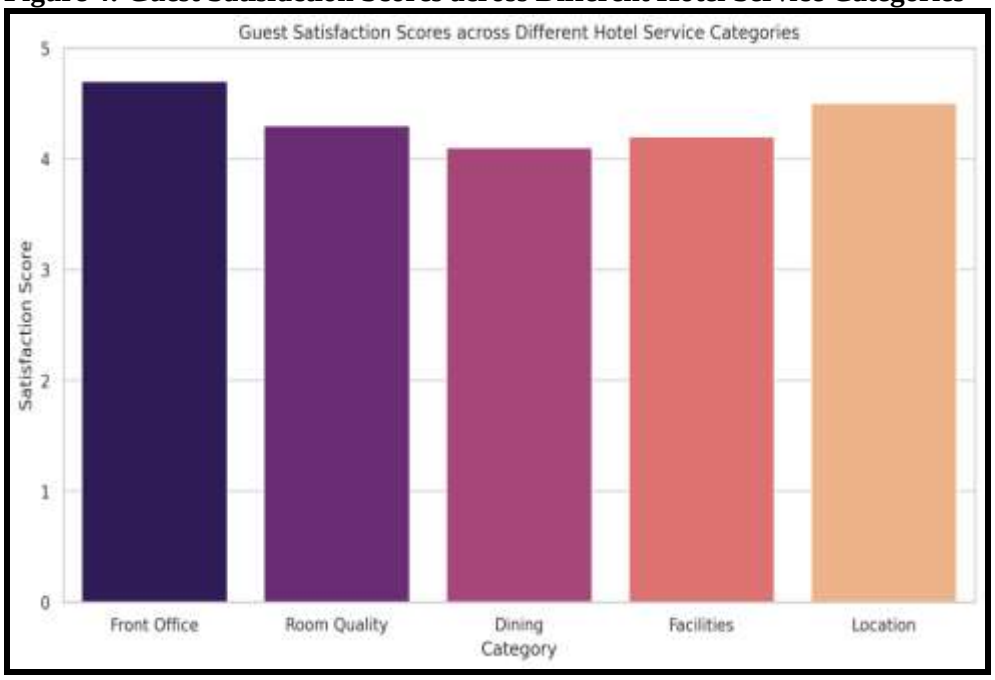
Figure 3: Importance of Emotional Intelligence Dimensions for Front Office Staff



EI Dimensions Importance

Figure 3: Empathy and social skills are identified as the most critical dimensions of emotional intelligence for front office staff in five-star hotels, followed by self-regulation, self-awareness, and motivation, while these findings highlight need for targeted training programs that focus on enhancing these specific emotional competencies to improve guest interactions and satisfaction, as this bar chart gives an illustration of the relative importance of various emotional intelligence dimensions.

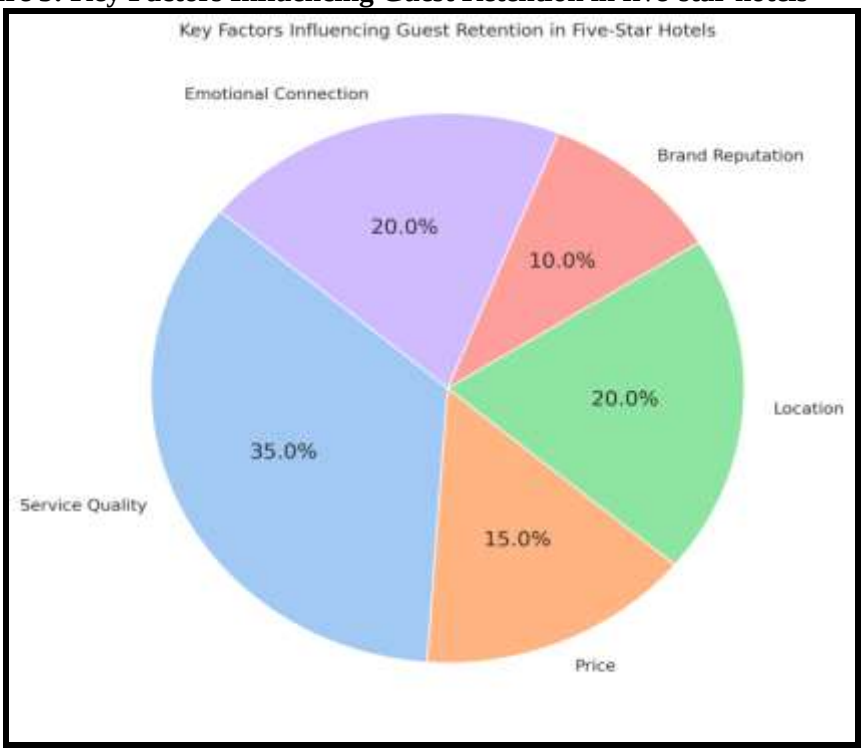
Figure 4: Guest Satisfaction Scores across Different Hotel Service Categories



Guest Satisfaction Categories

Figure 4: Front office consistently receives the highest satisfaction scores, which highlights the pivotal role it plays in shaping the overall guest experience, as other service categories, such as room quality, dining, and facilities, also contribute significantly to guest satisfaction, albeit with slightly lower scores, while this column chart compares the satisfaction scores of guests across different service categories within five-star hotels in Aqaba.

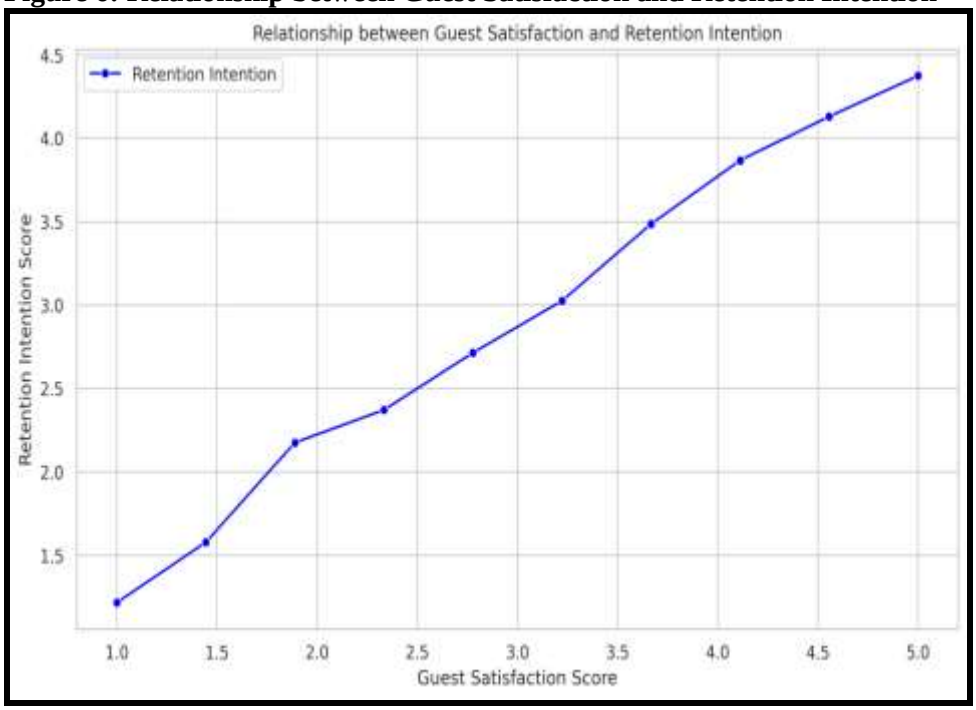
Figure 5: Key Factors Influencing Guest Retention in five-star hotels



Guest Retention Factors

Figure 5: The pie chart illustrates primary factors that have an impact on retention of guests in luxury hotel industry: service quality and emotional connection are identified as primary drivers of guest loyalty, accounting for a significant portion of decision to retain guests. Other factors, such as location, price, and brand reputation, also play important roles, but their impact is relatively smaller in comparison to emotional aspects of the guest experience.

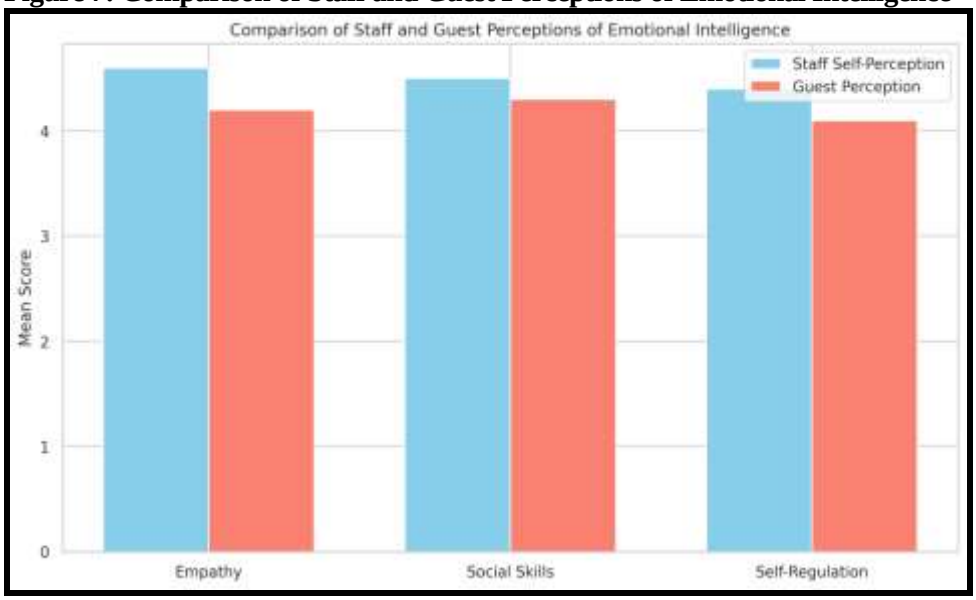
Figure 6: Relationship between Guest Satisfaction and Retention Intention



Satisfaction Retention Relationship

Figure 6: This line chart illustrates positive relationship in between guest satisfaction and retention intention, as guest satisfaction scores increase, there is a corresponding increase into likelihood of guests returning to hotel and recommending it to others. This finding reinforces critical importance of consistently meeting and exceeding guest expectations to foster long term loyalty and retention.

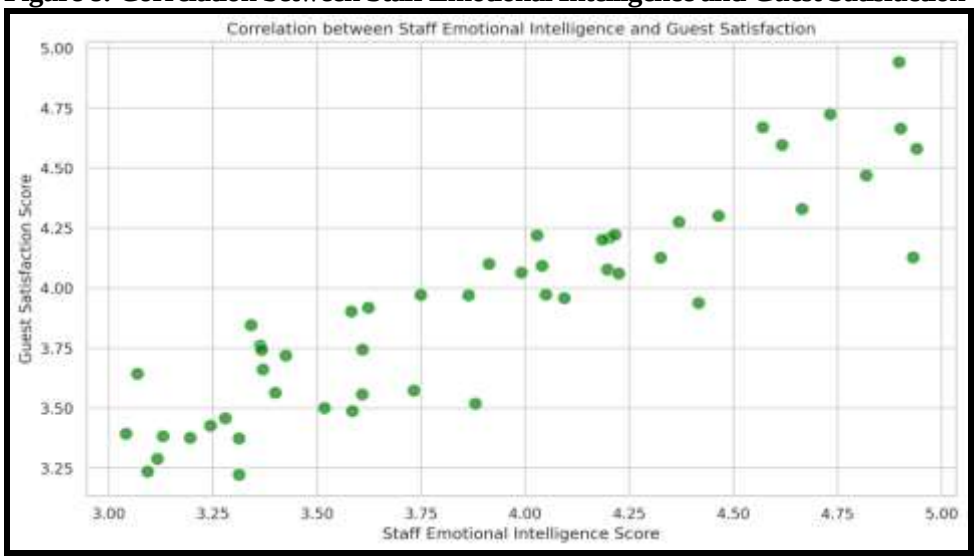
Figure 7: Comparison of Staff and Guest Perceptions of Emotional Intelligence



Perception Comparison

Figure 7: The grouped bar chart makes a comparison between the self-perceptions of the personnel and the perceptions of same skills held by customers, staff members have a higher assessment of their own emotional intelligence than the visitors do, which indicates that there is a little gap between two groups. In light of this disparity, it is clear that continual feedback and training are required in order to bring the actions of the staff into alignment with expectations and perceptions of emotional intelligence that are held by visitors.

Figure 8: Correlation between Staff Emotional Intelligence and Guest Satisfaction



EI Satisfaction Correlation

Figure 8: There is a strong positive correlation in between scores of staff emotional intelligence and scores of guest satisfaction, as shown by this scatter plot, higher levels of emotional intelligence among front office staff are consistently associated with higher levels of guest satisfaction, which provides empirical support for hypothesis surrounding relationship between these two variables.

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses and Expected Outcomes

Hypothesis	Relationship	Expected Impact	Supporting Literature
H1	Front Office Staff EI -> Guest Satisfaction	Significant Positive	Guney (2025), Traymbak (2025)
H2	Guest Satisfaction -> Guest Retention	Significant Positive	Al-Gharaibah (2020), Albqaeen et al (2025)
H3	Guest Satisfaction mediates EI -> Retention	Significant Mediation	El-Adly et al. (2024), Al-Gharaibah (2020)

Table 1: In addition to providing a succinct description of study's theoretical framework and anticipated outcomes, this table gives a summary of research hypotheses, suggested

correlations between variables, predicted effect, and important literature supporting each hypothesis.

Table 2: Key Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence for Front Office Staff

Dimension	Description	Importance in Front Office
Self-Awareness	Recognizing one's own emotions and their impact	Understanding how personal mood affects guest interactions
Self-Regulation	Managing impulsive emotions and behaviors.	Maintaining professionalism during stressful or difficult guest encounters
Motivation	Driving oneself to achieve goals and exceed expectations	Proactively seeking ways to enhance guest experience
Empathy	Understanding and sharing the feelings of others	Recognizing and responding to guests' unspoken needs and concerns
Social Skills	Managing relationships and building networks	Effective communication, conflict resolution, and relationship building

Table 2: This table gives a definition of each dimension and underlines its special relevance in context of guest interactions and service delivery of five-star hotels, while it also provides an overview of important characteristics of emotional intelligence as they relate to front office function in five-star hotels (Source: Developed for this research based on Goleman's EI model).

5- Discussion and Expected Findings

The conceptual framework and assumptions that underpinned this research led to discovery of these results, which imply that the emotional intelligence of reception personnel is a significant predictor of level of pleasure experienced by visitors from establishment. It is anticipated that this study will give useful insights into techniques that may be utilized to sustain tourist stays at five-star hotels in Aqaba. These insights will be obtained via the collecting of data from a variety of different persons, in addition to the fact that previous research initiatives have highlighted the importance of emotional skills in service delivery, conceptual framework provides a foundation for these findings, building upon the results of this research (Guney, 2025; Traymbak, 2025). It has been shown that

ability of employees to manage their emotions and empathize with customers is a direct factor that leads to an increase in overall quality regarding service experience, currently, it is anticipated that the amount of enjoyment that visitors feel will have a significant and positive effect on proportion regarding tourists who continue to frequent locations, as there is a well-established notion in hospitality industry that satisfied guests are more likely to return to establishment and exhibit loyalty behaviors (Al-Gharaibah, 2020; Al-bqaeen et al. 2025). When this is a concept that has been around for quite some time, while both of these findings, which are generally accepted to be accurate, have been verified by investigations. In light of the fact that this hypothesis has been verified, the findings regarding this investigation will be enhanced even more into the future. According to the findings of the study, guests are more likely to return to a hotel and recommend it to others when they express higher levels of satisfaction with their stay, particularly with regard to their contacts with reception staff.

While this is especially true for interactions they had with personnel at reception desk, it is especially true with respect to their interactions with employees who work at front desk welcoming guests, as there is a possibility that the finding emphasizing the role that visitor satisfaction plays as a mediator in connection between emotional intelligence of reception workers and retention of guests is one that is most relevant, while one hypothesis is that the degree of enjoyment that visitors experience has a substantial role in mediating connection between four variables. As this hypothesis is supported by available evidence, it shows that emotionally intelligent staff members contribute to retention of visitors, notably by increasing level of pleasure that guests experience throughout course of their stay, as stated by El-Adly et al. (2024). The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that employees who are emotionally competent have a role in continuing to retain customers.

According to Al-Gharaibah (2020), the term "satisfaction" refers to the creation of a pleasant perception regarding service, which is regarded to be responsible for development of emotional intelligence, while this is the case because satisfaction is responsible for construction of customer's satisfaction, as it is ultimately reflected in the form of behavioral loyalty. And the word "retention" refers to the means by which this contentment is ultimately attained, when having an understanding of this mediating impact would bring to light necessity of not only recruiting and

training staff members who are emotionally intelligent, but also of routinely evaluating and improving amount of pleasure that visitors feel as a direct means of preserving this particular level regarding happiness. As this would be a direct means of helping to maintain this particular level of happiness, as a consequence of this, it is hoped that these findings would result in beneficial effects, such as theoretical and practical implications. The study will theoretically contribute to the current body of knowledge by conducting empirical tests of theorized relationships within specific setting of Aqaba's five-star hotels, a theoretically substantial contribution will be made by research as a result of this, the results will give hotel management with actionable insights that can be utilized to develop targeted training programs for front office personnel, with a major emphasis being on strengthening emotional intelligence skills. In a straightforward sense, findings will provide hotel management with actionable insights. These activities have potential to result in enhanced levels of visitor pleasure and, as a consequence, better rates of guest retention, which will ultimately lead to an increase in financial advantage and profitability of hotels situated in the region. The research also anticipates discovering that the influence of emotional intelligence on level of happiness experienced by guests is more evident in high-pressure circumstances, such as during busy tourist seasons or while dealing with difficult demands from customer service representatives, this is something that research is looking forward to discovering. It is at these moments when potential of staff to keep their cool, demonstrate empathy, and concentrate on finding solutions is most visible and appreciated by guests, it is predicted that data will demonstrate that emotional intelligence is not only a "nice-to-have" ability but rather a vital strategic advantage for five-star hotels all over the globe. This understanding is expected to be supported by the findings, with cultivation of an environment that places a high value on emotional intelligence and encourages its development, hotel managers in Aqaba have ability to construct a sustainable service model that is resistant to swings in the market and is able to provide consistently great experiences for guests. This is possible if they cultivate an atmosphere that encourages development of emotional intelligence, a strategic focus on EI will not only result in a rise in loyalty of visitors, but it will also result in an improvement in morale of staff members and a reduction in turnover, this is because employees will feel more competent and supported in their jobs, which will lead to a reduction in workforce turnover.

6- Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

In setting of five-star hotels in Aqaba, Jordan, the purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence among reception personnel and retention of guests. With customer satisfaction serving as a mediating variable, investigation was directed via three hypotheses, which were developed from a conceptual framework that was built on the basis of an exhaustive evaluation of material that was already available, anticipated findings point to a robustly positive connection between emotional intelligence of reception personnel and the level of guests' satisfaction, and subsequently, between the level of guests' satisfaction and the percentage of retention. For the connection between emotional intelligence and the retention of guests, it is anticipated that the level of pleasure experienced by guests would play a meaningful role as a mediator. The data presented here illustrates the rising recognition of emotional intelligence as a fundamental talent for frontline employees in hospitality sector, which is being more recognized as a core competency; employees that possess high levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to deliver exceptional service, properly manage the expectations of guests, and effectively address challenges, which ultimately results in enhanced customer experiences and satisfaction. This satisfaction, in turn, is a critical aspect in developing customer loyalty and repeat visits, which is important for guaranteeing the long-term profitability and competitiveness of luxury hotels in a city like Aqaba that is a bustling tourist destination, through the provision of scientific facts on interactions between guests and hosts. This is an accomplished research that makes use of a rigorous quantitative methodology, which includes completion of questionnaires by receptionists as well as makes use of sophisticated statistical methods such as PLS-SEM. It is anticipated that the results will contribute to a more in-depth academic knowledge and provide ideas that can be put into practice by hotel managers who are looking to better their methods for managing human resources and strengthen their connections with guests.

6.2. Managerial Implications

The findings of this study are expected to yield several significant managerial implications for five-star hotels in Aqaba and potentially for broader hospitality

industry:

1. **Prioritize Emotional Intelligence in Recruitment and Selection:** Identification of candidates with high emotional intelligence can ensure that newly hired employees possess innate abilities to handle complex guest interactions in an effective and empathetic manner (Arora et al. 2024), hotel management should incorporate emotional intelligence assessments into their hiring processes for front office positions.
2. **Invest in Emotional Intelligence Training Programs:** It is recommended that existing front office staff participate in training programs that are both targeted and regular. These training programs should focus on enhancing emotional intelligence competencies as empathy, self-regulation, and social skills. This type of training can provide employees with tools necessary to better understand and manage emotions of guests, which can ultimately lead to improved service delivery and higher levels of guest satisfaction (Guney, 2025).
3. **Foster a Culture of Guest-Centricity and Empathy:** An organizational culture that places an emphasis onto satisfaction of guests and empathy as core values should be cultivated via management. This can be accomplished through modeling of leadership, implementation of recognition programs for emotionally intelligent service, and implementation of continuous feedback mechanisms that highlight oimpact of staff interactions on guest experiences (Masa'deh et al.2025).
4. **Monitor and Enhance Guest Satisfaction Continuously:** Due to fact that guest satisfaction plays a mediating role, hotels are required to consistently monitor guest feedback through surveys, online reviews, and direct communication channels. It is essential to address areas of dissatisfaction in a prompt and effective manner in order to convert positive emotional interactions into sustained guest loyalty (Malkawi et al. 2023).

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

1. **Self-Reported Data:** reliance onto self-reported questionnaires for both staff emotional intelligence and guest satisfaction / retention should introduce common method bias, future research could incorporate multi-source data collection, as objective performance metrics, observational studies of staff-guest

interactions, or third-party assessments of emotional intelligence, to triangulate findings and reduce bias.

2. **Specific Dimensions of EI:** Emotional intelligence is taken into consideration in a broad sense in this study. In the future, researchers could delve deeper into specific dimensions of EI (such as self-awareness and empathy) and their differential impacts on various aspects of guest satisfaction and retention, while this would provide a more nuanced understanding of which EI competencies are most important for front office success.
3. **Other Mediating/Moderating Variables:** Despite fact that guest satisfaction is being investigated as a mediator, there are other variables that could also play a mediating or moderating role, while these variables include perceived value, service quality dimensions, and cultural intelligence, future research could investigate these additional variables to develop a more comprehensive model of guest retention.
4. **Qualitative Insights:** In the future, research could make use of mixed-methods approaches, which would involve conducting interviews or focus groups with both guests and staff to gain a more in-depth understanding of their experiences and perceptions concerning emotional intelligence and service interactions, when a quantitative approach offers statistical generalizability, but it may miss out on richness of qualitative insights.

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