



Hospitality Managerial Attitudes in the Spotlight of Emotional Intelligence

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Received: August 30, 2024
Accepted: December 20, 2024
Published: April 5, 2025

Keywords:

Emotional intelligence;
Hospitality management;
Managerial attitudes;
Leadership;
360-degree Feedback;
Hotel industry

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Abstract: *This research delves into how Emotional Intelligence (EI) impacts managers' attitudes in the hospitality industry, focusing on how these attitudes shape leadership effectiveness in hotel management. Emotional intelligence, which involves recognizing, understanding, managing, and influencing one another emotions, is increasingly seen as a skill for managers in demanding fields like hospitality. The study combines a review of existing literature with research that includes interviews with hotel managers and a 360-degree assessment of management competencies. The results indicate that managers with emotional intelligence tend to display more positive managerial attitudes, resulting in enhanced staff performance, customer satisfaction, and overall organizational achievement. The research suggests ways to incorporate emotional intelligence training into hospitality management development initiatives.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector revolves around people. It emphasizes customer service quality, which is closely linked to the happiness and involvement of employees. Within this setting, the role of a manager is crucial in shaping an organization's culture, influencing employee behaviour, and ensuring customer contentment. Emotional intelligence (EI), which includes self-awareness, self-control, drive, empathy, and interpersonal skills, is increasingly acknowledged as an element in leadership and management. This article explores how emotional intelligence impacts perspectives in the hospitality industry, particularly within hotel management.

The research combines insights from existing literature with investigations involving interviews with hotel managers and data from a 360-degree assessment of management competencies. This mixed approach offers insight into how intelligence influences managerial perspectives and consequently impacts organizational performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Leadership Effectiveness

The strong connection between emotional intelligence and leadership efficacy, as shown by the feedback from all angles, implies that EI plays a role in predicting success in hospitality management. Leaders who can effectively handle their emotions, show empathy towards others and communicate well are likelier to steer their teams toward success and meet objectives. This discovery supports studies highlighting intelligence as a crucial skill for effective leadership in

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diverse industries (Goleman, 1998). In the hospitality industry, managers often face situations and oversee diverse teams; utilizing emotional intelligence is incredibly beneficial.

2.2. Emotional Intelligence: Definition and Importance

Daniel Goleman brought Emotional intelligence (EI) into the spotlight in the mid-1990s, describing it as the ability to understand our emotions and those of others to motivate ourselves and to handle emotions effectively in both professional relationships. Since then, the concept of EI has evolved, with researchers pinpointing five elements: self-awareness, self-control, drive, empathy, and social skills. In the realm of management, emotional intelligence plays a role in leadership (Bar-On, 2006). Managers who possess EI are better equipped to deal with stress, navigate dynamics, and lead teams successfully. This is especially significant in industries like hospitality, where managing emotions during service interactions can significantly impact employee well-being and customer satisfaction (Hochschild, 1983).

2.3. Emotional Intelligence and Managerial Attitudes

In the workplace, managerial attitudes reflect the behaviours displayed by a manager, often influenced by their beliefs and emotional reactions. Managers who maintain attitudes tend to create a collaborative work environment, increasing employee engagement and productivity. Emotional intelligence plays a role in shaping these attitudes by helping managers manage their emotions and respond effectively to the feelings of others (George, 2000). Studies indicate that intelligent managers are more inclined toward adopting a transformational leadership style. This style involves inspiring and motivating employees, encouraging innovation, and driving change (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Such leadership approaches have been associated with outcomes in the hospitality sector, such as enhanced employee satisfaction, reduced turnover rates, and better customer service quality (Kim & Brymer, 2011).

2.4. The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Hospitality Management

In the hospitality sector, dealing with customers and handling situations require emotional intelligence. Managers play a role in maintaining a workplace atmosphere and ensuring customer satisfaction amidst these demands (Karatepe, 2011). Research indicates that emotional intelligence is a factor in success within the industry. For instance, Wong and Law (2002) discovered that hotel managers with intelligence levels excelled in team management, conflict resolution, and meeting organizational objectives. Similarly, Grobelna's study (2015) emphasized the significance of intelligence in overseeing the well-being of hospitality staff, resulting in improved job performance and decreased burnout rates.

3. METHODOLOGY

360-degree feedback gathers input from multiple sources to provide a comprehensive view of a manager's skills and behaviours, supporting growth (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997). In hospitality, it is vital to assess both abilities and interpersonal skills, like emotional intelligence (Nowack, 1994), helping managers refine their leadership impact.

3.1. Research Design

This research uses a blend of methods merging a review of existing literature with research. The literature review lays the groundwork for comprehending the significance of intelligence in

hospitality management. The qualitative research includes conducting structured interviews with hotel managers and implementing a survey on management competence from different perspectives.

3.2. Participants

The study involved choosing participants from a group of hotel managers employed in different types of hotels, including upscale and budget accommodations. Fifteen managers were interviewed, covering a range of management roles from frontline supervisors to managers.

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Two main approaches were used to gather information: conducting interviews and distributing a 360-degree feedback questionnaire. During the interviews, a semi-structured format was employed to delve deeply into the participant's thoughts and feelings about intelligence in their positions. Additionally, every manager completed a 360-degree feedback survey that included input from colleagues, team members, and supervisors.

The interviews with hotel managers played a role in gathering data to delve into their thoughts and experiences related to emotional intelligence in their managerial roles. A diverse group of 15 hotel managers, ranging from front-line supervisors to managers, were purposefully chosen for these interviews based on their industry experience, duties, and willingness to participate. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or via video, depending on the participant's availability and location. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, providing time for discussions. An interview guide was created to maintain consistency while allowing participants the flexibility to elaborate on topics to them. The guide included ended questions covering aspects such as;

- The role of emotional intelligence in daily managerial tasks.
- Examples of situations where emotional intelligence was crucial in resolving workplace issues.
- The impact of emotional intelligence on team dynamics and customer interactions.
- Challenges faced in managing emotions in high-stress environments.
- Perceptions of how emotional intelligence affects overall leadership effectiveness.

Participants could share their experiences using a structured format, allowing for a detailed exploration of emotional intelligence within hospitality management. All conversations were recorded with permission and transcribed word for word for examination.

3.3.2. 360-Degree Feedback Survey

To supplement the insights gathered from the interviews, we conducted a 360-degree feedback survey for all managers involved. The 360-degree feedback approach was selected because it evaluates a manager's skills and behaviours as perceived by stakeholders like supervisors, colleagues, team members, and managers (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997). The survey consisted of statements focusing on competencies linked to intelligence, such as self-awareness, emotional control, empathy, interpersonal communication, and conflict resolution. Participants were requested to rate each statement on a Likert scale ranging from (1 - Strongly Disagree/ 2 – Disagree/ 3 – Neutral/ 4 – Agree/ 5 - Strongly Agree). Some examples include: “The manager remains calm and composed under

pressure.” “The manager is aware of the impact of their emotions on their team.” “The manager effectively resolves conflicts by considering the emotions of all parties involved.” “The manager demonstrates empathy towards both employees and customers.”

The survey asked questions and allowed respondents to share specific examples and additional thoughts on how the manager’s emotional intelligence influences their leadership skills. This qualitative input added depth to the ratings, giving insights into how emotional intelligence plays out in day-to-day interactions and decision-making.

To maintain confidentiality and encourage responses, the 360-degree surveys were conducted online, allowing participants to give feedback anonymously. The collected data was then analyzed to uncover connections between intelligence abilities and managerial effectiveness as perceived by stakeholders.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were prioritized in data collection. Participants were informed of their rights and gave consent before the study. Data was anonymized and securely stored, accessible only to the research team.

3.5. Data Analysis

The interview information was examined through analysis, a technique for recognizing, evaluating, and describing trends in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings from the 360-degree feedback were scrutinized to determine how emotional intelligence competencies correlate with perceptions as seen by stakeholders.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Interview Findings

The interviews uncovered themes regarding how emotional intelligence plays a role in hospitality management. Managers stressed the significance of self-awareness and empathy in their positions, especially when dealing with staff and customers. Many participants mentioned that staying composed under pressure and handling their emotions were crucial for their achievements.

One manager shared how emotional intelligence guided them through a situation with a customer; “I could see things from the customer’s perspective, validate their feelings, and then collaborate with my team to reach a resolution that pleased everyone. It wasn’t about fixing the issue but managing the emotions involved.”

Another manager pointed out how intelligence impacts team leadership; “Being mindful of my emotions and their impact on my team is vital. When I’m stressed, it affects everyone. I’ve improved my stress management skills, changing how my team deals with challenges.”

4.2. 360-Degree Feedback Results

The feedback from 360-degree assessments aligned with the insights from the interviews, showing a link between emotional intelligence levels and favourable managerial perceptions. Managers

who demonstrated elevated intelligence levels consistently received ratings from their colleagues, subordinates, and supervisors regarding their leadership effectiveness, communication proficiency, and conflict-resolution skills.

For instance, their team members frequently described managers with high EI ratings as approachable, supportive, and inspirational. These managers were also recognized for their communication and problem-solving skills in demanding situations.

On the contrary, managers with lower EI scores often received feedback highlighting difficulties in managing stress, handling conflicts, and nurturing team relationships. They were perceived as effective in their roles, particularly when faced with challenges that required control and interpersonal understanding.

4.2.1. The following average scores were obtained on the Likert scale

Self-Awareness (4.2): The ratings predominantly fall under the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” categories suggesting that most survey participants view the manager as possessing a high level of self-awareness. **Self-Regulation (3.8):** Indicates a tendency towards agreement. Is more closely aligned with neutrality when compared to other skills. This implies that there may be differences, in how managers are perceived in terms of their ability to effectively manage emotions. **Motivation (4.5):** The manager is seen as highly motivated, with most ratings falling between “Agree” and “Strongly Agree,” highlighting a strong ability to inspire and maintain enthusiasm. **Empathy (4.0) and Social Skills (4.1):** Both competencies are rated slightly lower than motivation but are still firmly within the “Agree” category, showing that the manager is generally empathetic and socially adept, though there may be room for slight improvement. **Overall Leadership Effectiveness (4.3):** High scores indicate that the manager is regarded as effective in their leadership role, with strong agreement from respondents on this competency.

Overall, the evaluation shows that the managers who took part in the survey performed well in all emotional intelligence competencies, and their motivation and general management effectiveness are particularly strong. The areas for improvement, although not significantly weak, suggest that by further developing self-regulation, empathy and social skills, managers can further increase their effectiveness. This comprehensive feedback provides clear direction for personal and professional development, ensuring managers continue to excel in their leadership roles in the hospitality industry.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Managerial Attitudes

The results of this study highlight the influence of intelligence on managers’ attitudes in the hospitality sector. Managers with high EI skills can better manage their emotions, empathize with others, and navigate the intricate interpersonal relationships prevalent in hospitality. These capabilities lead to managerial outlooks fostering a supportive and productive workplace environment. Managers demonstrating EI levels are more inclined to embrace a transformational leadership approach, which boosts employee satisfaction, decreases turnover rates, and enhances organizational performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

5.2. Implications for Hospitality Management Training

This research highlights how crucial (EI) is for the growth and education of hospitality managers. Since the hospitality sector prioritizes customer service, managers must grasp and handle emotions effectively – whether their own or their staff – to cultivate a workplace, boost employee involvement, and maintain top-notch customer happiness. The impact on training programs for hospitality management is wide-ranging, demanding a strategy that weaves (EI) into the heart of management training initiatives.

5.2.1. Integrating Emotional Intelligence into Leadership Development Programs

The study highlights the importance of hospitality organizations incorporating (EI) training into their leadership development programs. The strong link between (EI) and effective leadership, supported by research and feedback surveys, emphasizes the need for prioritizing (EI) in training managers in the hospitality industry.

Studies have demonstrated that targeted training can enhance emotional intelligence. For instance, **Clarke's research (2006)** revealed that emotional intelligence training significantly boosted managers' interpersonal skills, leading to improved leadership effectiveness. Hospitality organizations can integrate (EI) training through workshops, coaching sessions, and role-playing exercises to strengthen self-awareness, empathy, and emotional management.

Moreover, (EI) integration into leadership development programs must be more continuous than sporadic interventions. Managers should be encouraged to engage in self-assessment and reflection to monitor their (EI) competencies over time. Tools like the Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) developed by Boyatzis and Goleman in 2007 can help assess managers' EI levels and pinpoint areas for growth.

5.2.2. Fostering a Culture of Emotional Intelligence

In addition to training, hospitality companies must cultivate a culture that values and emphasizes (EI) on a broader scale. This means integrating EI principles into the organization's core values, procedures, and day-to-day activities. For instance, when hiring for roles, assessing candidates' emotional intelligence is crucial to ensure they have the skills to thrive in the demanding hospitality industry (**Groves et al., 2008**).

Moreover, businesses can introduce policies and initiatives that promote intelligence development across all staff levels, not among managers. This may involve offering EI training sessions, providing stress management resources, and encouraging team communication and feedback. By fostering a culture that values intelligence, hospitality companies can build a supportive and adaptable workforce capable of delivering exceptional customer service even in challenging circumstances (**Madera et al., 2011**).

5.2.3. Enhancing Customer Service through Emotional Intelligence

The impact of attitudes on customer service quality is crucial, and improving (EI) among hospitality managers can significantly enhance customer satisfaction. Managers who possess (EI) are more adept at handling customer complaints, defusing tense situations, and fostering a welcoming environment, all of which are vital for achieving high levels of customer satisfaction (**Delcourt et al., 2013**).

It is recommended that hospitality management training programs incorporate modules that focus on customer service, emphasizing the significance of (EI) in managing interactions with customers. The training should encompass techniques for identifying and responding to customers' emotional cues, dealing with interactions effectively, and using empathy to cultivate customer relationships. For example, interactive role-playing sessions can replicate real-life customer service scenarios to allow managers to practice and enhance their intelligence skills in a setting. Furthermore, organizations should contemplate integrating emotional intelligence into their assessment metrics for customer service. This could involve including questions in customer feedback forms that evaluate staff members' emotional intelligence levels by assessing their ability to comprehend customer needs and respond empathetically. By associating intelligence with performance in customer service, organizations can underscore the importance of emotional intelligence in delivering exceptional service (Gabbott et al., 2011).

5.2.4. Addressing Emotional Labor and Employee Well-being

The idea of labour, which involves managing and expressing emotions in line with company expectations, is crucial in the hospitality industry. Excessive emotional labour can result in stress, exhaustion, and dissatisfaction among employees who feel compelled to hide their feelings (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional Intelligence training can assist managers in understanding and handling their employee's emotional labour better, reducing its effects on their well-being.

Training sessions should educate managers on recognizing signs of fatigue and offer strategies to support employees facing challenges with labour. For instance, managers can learn to identify when an employee is emotionally overwhelmed and provide assistance like breaks, temporary changes in duties, or access to employee support programs. By meeting the needs of their team members, managers can help prevent burnout and enhance job satisfaction, ultimately improving performance (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

Moreover, hospitality businesses should implement emotional intelligence assessments for managers to ensure they can manage their emotional labour and that of their team members.

Continuous training and assistance can support managers in sustaining their emotional intelligence, especially when dealing with the distinctive obstacles encountered in the hospitality sector.

5.2.5. Leveraging 360-Degree Feedback for Continuous Improvement

The study emphasized the effectiveness of using 360-degree feedback to evaluate emotional intelligence and managerial attitudes. By gathering input from supervisors, peers, and subordinates, managers gain insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997). It is recommended that hospitality organizations integrate 360-degree feedback into their performance assessments, focusing on emotional intelligence competencies to provide managers with constructive feedback on their EI-related behaviours. This feedback can help create development plans to enhance EI skills relevant to the manager's role and organizational needs. Additionally, receiving and acting on 360-degree feedback allows managers to practice emotional intelligence skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy. Providing training on obtaining and utilizing feedback effectively can further link intelligence with professional growth. (Nowack & Mashih, 2012).

5.2.6. Incorporating Emotional Intelligence into Crisis Management Training

The hospitality sector is highly susceptible to crises, including disasters, economic downturns, and public health emergencies. Emotional Intelligence is crucial for managers in times of crisis as it helps them stay composed, make informed decisions, and offer emotional support to their teams. Hospitality management training programs need to include sections on crisis management that also cover intelligence training (Haver et al., 2013). These sections should concentrate on building the strength to lead effectively under pressure by teaching tactics for handling stress, communicating openly with staff members, and maintaining a positive attitude when faced with challenges. One practical approach is to use real-life examples of crises in the hospitality industry to demonstrate how emotional intelligence plays a role in successful crisis management. Managers can analyse these scenarios to pinpoint the emotional intelligence skills that led to positive outcomes and practice applying these skills in simulated crises. By equipping managers with the ability to lead with emotional intelligence during crises, organizations can strengthen their resilience and capacity to bounce back from circumstances.

5.2.7. Customizing Training Based on Individual and Organizational Needs

The study findings suggest that emotional intelligence training should be tailored to suit the needs of managers and the organization. Managers vary in their levels of intelligence. They encounter distinct challenges in their roles, so a one-size-fits-all approach to EI training may be ineffective.

Organizations need to assess both organizational emotional intelligence requirements regularly. These assessments can guide the development of customized training programs that target areas needing improvement. For example, a manager lacking empathy could benefit from coaching sessions to enhance this skill, while an organization dealing with high employee turnover might prioritize training that helps managers build supportive relationships with their teams.

Apart from formal training initiatives, organizations can promote emotional intelligence through mentoring, peer support networks, and hands-on learning opportunities. Organizations can cultivate an environment that fosters learning and growth in emotional intelligence by offering resources and support systems.

6. CONCLUSION

This research has offered insights into how emotional intelligence (EI) shapes managers' attitudes and improves leadership effectiveness in the hospitality sector. By conducting a literature review, interviews, and gathering 360-degree feedback, the study emphasizes that emotional intelligence not only shapes managers' behaviours and attitudes but also directly impacts organizational results, like employee satisfaction, customer service quality, and overall business performance.

6.1. Summary of Findings

The study's discoveries highlight how crucial emotional intelligence is for hospitality managers. Managers with intelligence are better equipped to navigate the interpersonal complexities of working in the hospitality sector, especially during stressful times. Managing their emotions and understanding and influencing others' feelings helps managers create work environments that inspire their teams and ensure high levels of customer satisfaction. According to Goleman (1998) and Kim and Brymer (2011), this is essential.

The 360-degree feedback survey results further confirm the link between emotional intelligence and leadership. Their peers, subordinates, and superiors consistently viewed managers who scored highly in intelligence as capable leaders. They were seen as empathetic, better at communication, and more adept at conflict resolution—qualities in a customer-focused industry, like hospitality, as indicated by Wong and Law (2002) and Grobelna (2015).

6.2. Implications for Practice

The findings have implications for the hospitality sector. Recognizing the role of emotional intelligence, hospitality businesses need to prioritize enhancing EI skills among their management teams. This goal can be accomplished through structured training initiatives that concentrate on improving aspects of emotional intelligence—such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Clarke, 2006).

Furthermore, fostering an environment that appreciates emotional intelligence can result in organizational advantages. Companies that incorporate EI into their principles and operational strategies are likely to witness enhancements in employee satisfaction levels, decreased turnover rates, and increased customer contentment (Madera et al., 2011; Delcourt et al., 2013). By integrating emotional intelligence into leadership development programs and daily practices, hospitality enterprises can cultivate a more resilient and adaptable workforce.

6.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should explore the long-term impacts of emotional intelligence (EI) training on managers' performance, particularly how sustained EI development influences organizational outcomes like employee retention and customer satisfaction (Prentice et al., 2020). Additionally, examining how cultural differences affect the expression and effectiveness of EI in hospitality management is crucial, as cultural contexts can significantly shape EI's impact (Gabel Shemueli et al., 2014; Park & Im, 2021). Another key area for investigation is the role of EI in crisis management within the hospitality industry. Given the challenges posed by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding how EI can enhance organizational resilience and leadership effectiveness during crises could provide valuable insights (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020; Haver et al., 2013).

Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of intelligence in hospitality management. Developing intelligence among leaders in the hospitality sector can lead to changes in their attitudes and actions, ultimately boosting overall organizational performance. In the changing hospitality sector, the significance of emotional intelligence (EI) in successful leadership is set to grow. Companies in the hospitality industry that focus on enhancing EI skills among their managers will be more equipped to tackle industry hurdles and attain lasting prosperity.

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