THE EFFECT OF RELATIONSHIP MARKETING ON SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN GHANA: THE MODERATING ROLE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT: *This study assesses the effect of relationship marketing on service quality and customer satisfaction from the perspective of the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the hospitality sector in Ghana. A descriptive quantitative research technique is employed. A random sample of 384 each of customers and customer service attendants of hotels, leisure centres, resorts and five-star restaurants in Accra are used as the source of data. According to findings, emotional intelligence makes a strong positive effect on relationship marketing at 5% significance level, r (288) = .785, p = .000. Though relationship marketing makes a strong positive effect on service quality (r = .712, p < .05) and customer satisfaction (r = .318, p < .05), these effects degenerate into negative ones when the effect of emotional intelligence on relationship marketing is controlled for. It is therefore recommended that firms in the hospitality sector give priority to equipping their customer service attendants with emotional intelligence to maximise service quality and customer satisfaction.*

KEYWORDS: Relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, emotional intelligence, hospitality sector

INTRODUCTION

To generate sales, interaction between a business and its customers is mandatory. Similarly, for a service to be sustainably patronised, service providers must continue to impress customers by offering them services in satisfactory relationships. These assertions are based on the argument that customers' service quality perceptions and their satisfaction and loyalty are driven by the cordiality, warmth and mutuality of the relationship in which they are served (Aminu, 2012; Aali *et al.,* 2014). Aminu (2012, p. 1249) also posits that customer-organisational relationships are

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critical drivers of the growth of service firms. As a result, relationship marketing is gradually replacing transactional marketing in practice. To better explain the relevance of relationship marketing to services marketing, it is worthwhile to know what the term means.

"Relationship marketing is concerned with establishing, maintaining and enhancing relationships with customers and other partners in an effort to sustain and improve an organisation's customer base and profitability" (Gronroos, 1994: 347). Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011:901) also defines relationship marketing as a marketing mechanism for creating a satisfactory interactive link between customers and the firm. Based on these definitions, the primary goal of relationship marketing is to impress customers in the firm's effort to relate with them in service delivery. Relationship marketing also provides avenues for service providers to listen and address the concerns and needs of customers in a bid to promote customer value and satisfaction. From a personal viewpoint, relationship marketing constitutes a framework of principles for personalising service delivery, where each customer is made to believe that a service is specially tailored for him or her.

Increasingly, relationship marketing is becoming the basis of services marketing in many firms (Dinh & Pickler; 2012; Jesri, Ahmadi & Fatehipoor, 2013). By personal observation, this phenomenon is more characteristic of the financial services and hospitality sectors in Ghana. Empirically, relationship marketing is positively related to service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty (Arora & Saxena, 2013; Desbordes, 2011; Dinh & Pickler; 2012; Jesri, Ahmadi & Fatehipoor, 2013; etc.). However, Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011) and other researchers (e.g. Arora & Saxena, 2013; Desbordes, 2011; Dinh & Pickler; 2012; Jesri, Ahmadi & Fatehipoor, 2013; etc.) argue in the light of empirical evidences that the positive effect of relationship marketing on service quality and customer satisfaction and loyalty is insignificant when relationship officers or service providers do not apply emotional intelligence in service delivery.

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to identify, assess and control the emotions of oneself, of others and of groups (Harms & Credé, 2010). It was first defined by Mayer & Salovey (1997) as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 18). This definition was later modified by Mayer & Salovey (2001) to "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions towards personal growth" (p. 233). In addition, the commonest belief about emotional intelligence is that its demonstration enhances human interactions (Harms & Credé, 2010; Danquah, 2014). In marketing, service providers' emotional intelligence has being confirmed by many researchers as a driver of service quality and customer satisfaction and loyalty (Danquah, 2014; Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014), where relationship marketing serves as a medium of relishing service providers' emotional intelligence. This means that relationship marketing would make little or no positive effect on service quality and customer satisfaction when service providers do not apply emotional intelligence in their relationship with customers.

As acknowledged earlier, relationship marketing is an important marketing tool in the financial services and hospitality sectors. Impressively, many empirical studies (e.g. Arora & Saxena, 2013; Aali *et al.,* 2014; Danquah, 2014; Kenbach & Schutte, 2005; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014; etc.) have demonstrated the positive effect of relationship marketing practices on service quality, and customer satisfaction from both developed and developing country contexts in the financial services sector. However, a personal survey of research studies indicates that relationship marketing research has been overly focused on the banking and financial services sectors, with the insurance and the hospitality sectors lagging grossly in terms of evidence on the relevance of relationship marketing to services marketing. This situation constitutes a huge gap in the literature of the subject since relationship marketing is heavily used in these two sectors, at least in Ghana.

This paper therefore provides evidence on the effect of relationship marketing on service quality and customer satisfaction in the hospitality sector in Ghana. Since the relationship between relationship marketing and service quality and customer satisfaction is moderated by emotional intelligence in the financial services sector (Danquah, 2014; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014), this study investigates if this situation is also prevalent in the hospitality sector. Of course, this investigation is based on the fact that there is very limited empirical evidence on how emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between relationship marketing and service quality and customer satisfaction in the hospitality sector. This study is based on the research objective stated in the next section.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study investigates the prevalence of two empirical evidences in the hospitality sector in Ghana. These evidences are: (1) relationship marketing does not significantly influence service quality when service providers do not demonstrate emotional intelligence in interacting with customers; and (2) relationship marketing does not significantly influence customer satisfaction when service providers do not demonstrate emotional intelligence in interacting with customers.

The study contributes to academic debate on the effect of emotional intelligence on service quality and customer satisfaction. It also establishes empirical evidence on the relevance of emotional intelligence to the development and management of customer relationships in the hospitality sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service firms undoubtedly depend largely on their relationship with customers to achieve desired service quality levels, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. As a result, relationship marketing is of superior value to service firms such as insurance companies. Interestingly, the effect of relationship marketing on service quality and customer satisfaction is empirically confirmed to be insignificant or weak without service providers demonstrating emotional

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intelligence in interacting with customers (Akbari & Safarnia, 2012; Danquah, 2014; Heffernan *et al.* 2005).

Goleman (1995) provides one of the earliest models that express the positive effect of emotional intelligence on customer relationship management. His model sources the effect of emotional intelligence on customer-organisation relationship from five arms of the EI construct. These arms are self-awareness, self-regulation, social skill, empathy and motivation. These five elements of EI are explained as follows (Goleman, 1995; Kernbach & Schutte, 2005; Radha & Prasad, 2013; Danquah, 2014):

Self-awareness: It is the ability to know customers' and one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and goals and recognize their impact on others while using gut feelings to guide decisions (of the service provider).

Self-regulation: This involves controlling or redirecting one's disruptive emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances of customers. This is based on the fact that customer taste, preferences or/demands keep changing with time.

Social skill: This involves managing relationships with customers to move them in the desired direction of patronage and retention.

Empathy: This deals with considering customers' feelings, especially when making decisions about product/service packaging and customer-focused strategy implementation.

Motivation: This is a psychological element that drives the service provider to achieve the highest level of customer patronage and satisfaction through service quality.

Through research, in which Factor Analysis was used, Boyatzis *et al.* (1998) later reduced the above five elements of EI to four, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and social skill. The model of the four arms comes with 25 emotional and social competences. The four constructs model, made up of 19 emotional competences, has become the modern framework of measuring EI (Bradberry & Greaves, 2008). Currently, however, the emotional intelligence model is generally embedded in a model that views relationship marketing as a dependent variable on emotional intelligence (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2013). This model is conceptualised in the following figure.

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Figure 1: Conceptualisation of Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Marketing

Source: Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011)
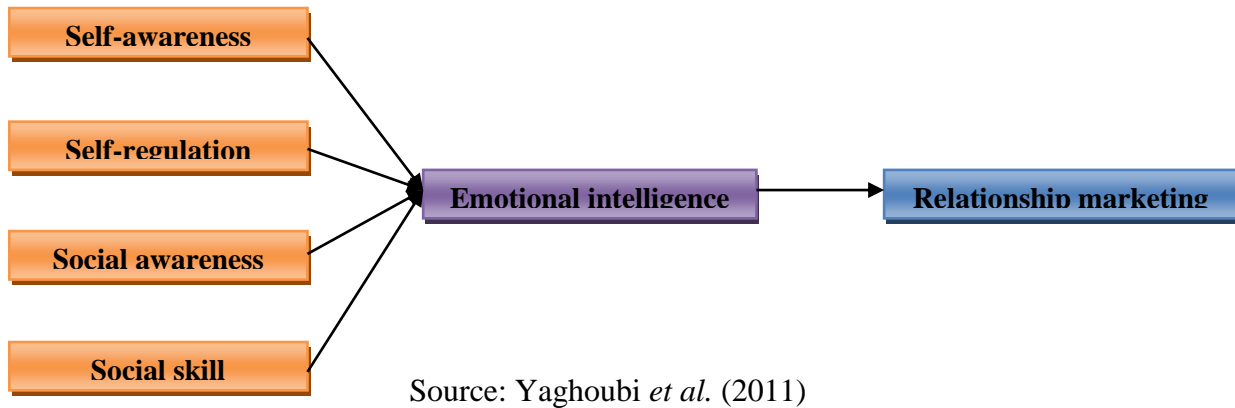
From Figure 1, emotional intelligence is composed of its four primary constructs (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Horri, *et al.* 2013), which are self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and social skill. Emotional intelligence is then viewed broadly as a necessary foundation for effective relationship marketing (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011). In services marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and customer retention are driven by the effectiveness of relationship marketing (Heffernan *et al.* 2005; Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Horri, *et al.* 2013; Akbari & Safarnia, 2012). Based on this understanding, the conceptual model seen in Figure 1 was restructured by Heffernan (2005) to portray the position of service quality and customer satisfaction (see Figure 2) in the EI-RM relationship.

Figure 2: Conceptualisation of EI and RM: From the Perspective of SQ and CS
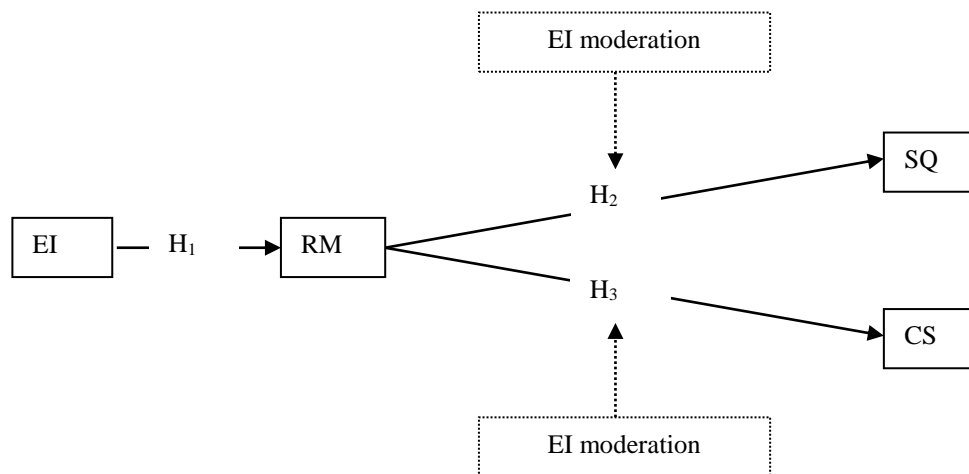
With reference to Figure 2, the effect of relationship marketing (RM) on service quality (SQ) and customer satisfaction (CS) comes from emotional intelligence (EI). Since the effect of RM on

SQ and CS comes from EI, SQ and CS would also be influenced by EI; but this effect is best considered a moderation of the relationship between RM and SQ, and RM and CS. In essence, RM is acting as a mediator between EI and SQ and EI and CS. Since loyalty is naturally driven by customer satisfaction, we argue that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty. Impressively, the conceptual model of Figure 2 has significant empirical backing. This is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Popular Empirical Evidences on EI and RM Relationship

Relationship	Covariate	Popular sources	Main sectors of evidence	Uncovered sectors
EI*RM	-	Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Heffernan *et al.* 2005	Banking, health, small business	Insurance, hospitality
EI*SQ	-	Danquah (2014); Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014); Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011); Heffernan *et al.* (2005)	Banking, health, telecommunication	Insurance, hospitality
EI*CS	-	Radha & Prasad (2013); Danquah (2014); Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014); Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011); Heffernan *et al.* (2005); Wong (2004)	Banking, health, small business, telecommunication	Insurance, hospitality
RM*SQ	EI	Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011); Heffernan *et al.* (2005); Danquah (2014); Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	Banking, health, telecommunication	Insurance, hospitality
RM*CS	EI	Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Heffernan *et al.* (2005); Danquah (2014); Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014)	Banking, health, telecommunication	Insurance, hospitality

Table 1 shows a framework of empirical studies that support the relationships shown in Figure 2. The table also shows that available evidences are concentrated on the banking and healthcare sectors. Evidently, related EI empirical studies ought to be conducted in the insurance and hospitality sectors. This study was therefore focused on the hospitality sector in Ghana; where we have already conducted a similar study on the insurance sector. In view of the conceptual model represented by Figure 1, the alternative hypotheses of this study are:

H_1: Emotional intelligence is positively related to relationship marketing in the hospitality sector in Ghana.

H_2: Without the effect of emotional intelligence, relationship marketing cannot significantly influence service quality in the hospitality sector in Ghana.

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H$_3$: Without the effect of emotional intelligence, relationship marketing cannot significantly influence customer satisfaction in the hospitality sector in Ghana.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the descriptive quantitative research technique was adopted owing to the need to test the hypotheses stated from objectivist philosophical standpoint. The quantitative research technique also made room for determining the reliability of items in the scales used in collecting data. It was coupled with randomisation techniques of selecting respondents to ensure that findings and conclusions of this study could be generalised in a Ghanaian context.

The population of this study was employees (i.e. customer attendants) and customers of hotels, leisure centres and five-star restaurants in Accra. The firms selected include Holiday Inn Hotel, Movenpic Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, Afrikiko Leisure Centre, La Leisure Resort, Frankis Restaurant, and Papaye Restaurant. These firms were chosen because they embark on relationship marketing practices formally. No sampling frame was used for customers in this study since not much was known about them prior to data collection. However, the sampling frame of employees comprised of those who had worked in their respective firms for at least 2 years. As a result of the need to ensure that service providers provided accurate information in this study, members of the sampling frame were required to have worked in their respective firms for at least 2 years.

The number of customers for all chosen firms was above 100,000. Considering the credibility and appropriateness of the sampling principle of Krejcie & Morgan (1970), it was used as a basis of choosing a sample of 384 customers. With the aid of a sampling frame, the selection of service providers was done using simple random and stratified sampling techniques. By applying the sampling principle of Krejcie & Morgan (1970), a sample size of 226 service providers was applicable, since the number of members of the sampling frame was 555. But due to the need to ensure that equal numbers of service providers and customers were used to ensure that unbiased comparisons were made in this study, this sample size was adjusted upward to 384. This upward adjustment is acceptable according to Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

A self-administered question for employees and customers was used to collect data. The construct of emotional intelligence was measured with employees' questionnaire, which served as a medium of measuring employees' EI potential, at the continuous level, in service delivery. The Emotional Intelligence Appraisal (EIA) and Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) scales of EI were used in this measurement. Customer satisfaction and service quality were measured with customers' questionnaire, which was based on the Zeithml *et al.* (1990) Service Delivery scale. Relationship marketing was measured using the Standard Questionnaire of Bennet (2005). A response rate of 75% was achieved in this study. Tables 2 and 3 come with tests that prove the reliability of the instrument used in this study.

Table 2: Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	288	100.0
	Excludedª	0	.0
	Total	288	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in
the procedure.

Table 2 is the first table of a reliability test. It indicates that no item was removed from the instrument. In other words, all items of the instrument used in collecting data contributed to reliable data. Table 3 is an associated test that justifies this assertion.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.777	4

Table 3 shows the reliability coefficient; thus the Cronbach's apha value. From the table, the reliable coefficient of .777 indicates that the instrument used in data collection was highly reliable. Nonetheless, it must be noted that items in the instrument were consolidated into 4 major items that represent emotional intelligence (EI), relationship marketing, service quality and customer satisfaction.

In data collection, customers at the various firms were asked to respond to questionnaires after they had just been attended to by the participating relationship officers, after which service providers were issued with questionnaires for completion. This strategy was to ensure that customers provided information based on their current experiences with service delivery. Employees were made to provide responses after customers had done so to avoid employees' self-favored responses caused by their prior knowledge of the data collection exercise. An accidental approach was used to administer questionnaires to customers since they were not aware of their participation in the study.

Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analysis was backed with the normality assumption. As result, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to verify the normality of data. Cronbach's alpha was used to identify reliability of the instruments used in data collection (see Tables 2 and 3). All hypotheses were tested using parametric statistical tools owing to the fact that data used were continuous and were normally distributed. The first, second

and third hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlation test, with the support of partial correlation test, ordinary least squares regression and Univariate Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The next section comes with the results of this study.

RESULTS

This section presents results of this study. Results are presented in view of the assumption that continuous data collected are normally or approximately normally distributed. As a result, the Shapiro-Wilk's test is used to verify the normality of the data collected. Table 4 shows results of the Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality.

Table 4: Shapiro Wilk's Test

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Emotional intelligence	.317	288	.543
Relationship marketing	.259	288	.653
Service quality	.344	288	.332
Customer satisfaction	.257	288	.665

Table 4 shows results of the Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality. Generally, the null hypothesis is that data associated with each variable (i.e. emotional intelligence; relationship marketing; service quality; customer satisfaction) is normally distributed at 5% significance level. From the table, each variable has a significance value greater than 5%. It is therefore worth saying that data associated with each variable is normally distributed at 5% significance level (p > .05). With this result, the normality assumption is satisfied for each variable, providing a basis for making valid conclusions. In the next table, descriptive statistics reveal the extent of relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction in the chosen firms, and the level of emotional intelligence demonstrated by their customer attendants.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional intelligence	288	3.4000	.66555
Relationship marketing	288	4.1000	.94656
Service quality	288	4.7000	.64246
Customer satisfaction	288	4.8000	.40288

Table 5 shows the extent of relationship marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and emotional intelligence relating to the participating hospitality firms. From the table, a very high level of relationship marketing is practiced in the chosen firms (M = 4.10, SD = .95). The table also indicates that a substantial level of emotional intelligence (M = 3.40, SD = .67) is applied by service providers in serving customers in the chosen firms. In addition, the level of service quality (M = 4.70, SD = .64) and customer satisfaction (M = 4.80, SD = .40) is evidently high. Possibly therefore, relationship marketing impacts service quality and customer satisfaction through the moderation of emotional intelligence. Table 6 shows the relationship between relationship marketing and service quality, customer satisfaction and emotional intelligence.

Table 6: Correlations

		Emotional intelligence	Relationship marketing	Service quality	Customer satisfaction
Emotional intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.785**	.753**	.302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288
Relationship marketing	Pearson Correlation	.785**	1	.712**	.318**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	288	288	288	288
Service quality	Pearson Correlation	.753**	.712**	1	.547**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	288	288	288	288
Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.302**	.318**	.547**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	288	288	288	288

**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

In Table 6 is the relationship between relationship marketing and service quality, customer satisfaction and emotional intelligence. From the table, EI makes the highest positive relationship

with relationship marketing at 5% significance level, r (288) = .785, p = .000. This relationship confirms the first alternative hypothesis (H₁) of this study. This means that as service providers demonstrate a high level of EI, the effectiveness of RM increases. Moreover, RM is highly positively related to SQ (r = .712, p < .05) and CS (r = .318, p < .05). Since EI positively influences RM, it is thinkable that EI positively influences SQ and CS. This is confirmed in the table, where EI positively relates to SQ (r = .753, p < .05) and CS (r = .302, p < .05). It is therefore possible that a greater part of the influence made by RM on SQ and CS come from EI. Table 7 comes with estimates of a regression analysis in which RM is treated as a predictor of SQ and CS.

Table 7: ANOVA Tests

Outcome variable	R Square	ANOVA		Coefficient			
		F	Sig.	Constant	B	t	Sig.
Service quality	.505	288.54	.000	-0.835	1.05	11.6	.000
Customer satisfaction	.432	14.23	.000	0.789	0.461	9.43	.000

Table 7 shows estimates of two regression models, with RM being the predictor in both models. In the first model, SQ is the outcome variable, which is significantly predicted by RM (t = 11.6, p = .000) with 50.5% of the variance accounted by RM. The second model also shows that RM significantly predicts customer satisfaction (t = 9.43, p = .000), with 43.2% of the variance contributed by RM. Though RM predicts SQ better than it predicts CS, it is evident that it significantly positively influences the two variables. This relationship provides the foundation for testing the second and third alternative hypotheses.

Table 8: Partial Correlations

Variable pair(s)	N	Covariate	Original r	Controlled r	Change in r	Sig.
RM*SQ	288	EI	0.712	-.354	0.358	.000
RM*CS	288	EI	0.318	-.149	0.169	.070

Table 8 shows the relationship between RM and SQ, and RM and CS when the effect of EI is controlled for. Thus this table gives partial correlations of RM and SQ, and RM and CS, with the effect of EI on RM taken. From the table, the strength of the relationship between EM and SQ reduces from .712 (with p = .000) to -.354 (with p = .000). This means that when service providers do not demonstrate EI in serving customers, RM rather makes a negative effect on service quality. A similar scenario is given with respect to the partial relationship between RM

and CS. However, the resulting relationship in this situation takes a less negative dimension (r = -.149). Evidently, RM does not make any positive effect on SQ and CS without service providers' emotional intelligence in the hospitality sector in Ghana. Yet, Table 9 comes with findings that buttress this evidence.

Table 9: Estimates of Univariate Analysis of Variance

Outcome variable	Covariate	Original R Square	Controlled R Square	Change in R Square	Controlled Sig.	Lack of fit	Homogeneity Test
Service quality	EI	0.505	0.212	-0.293	0	0.211	0.711
Customer satisfaction	EI	0.432	0.133	-0.299	0.07	0.322	0.219

Table 9 shows estimates of a Univariate Analysis of Covariance in which EI is controlled for. It can be seen that the respective variances contributed by SQ and CS reduces drastically when the effect of EI on RM is taken, with the lack of fit and homogeneity of variances assumptions duly satisfied at $p > .05$. This result supports the evidence given in Table 8. There is therefore ample evidence to retain the second and third alternative hypotheses of this study.

DISCUSSION

This study tests three evidences enshrined in related academic literature of the subject. This study's findings confirm these evidences in the context of Ghana's hospitality sector. Findings of the study indicate that emotional intelligence is positively related to relationship marketing. This means that the effectiveness and expected impact of relationship marketing increases as emotional intelligence is increasingly applied by customer service attendants in the chosen hospitality firms. Relative to previous related studies conducted in a Ghanaian perspective, this empirical evidence is characteristic of the banking, telecommunication and insurance sectors in Ghana (Danquah, 2014; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014), with support from other studies conducted in developed and developing country contexts (Yaghoubi *et al.* 2011; Heffernan *et al.* 2005). Possibly therefore, the positive influence of emotional intelligence on relationship marketing is characteristic of all service sectors and jurisdictions.

It is also made evident that without the effect of emotional intelligence, relationship marketing cannot significantly influence service quality in the hospitality sector in Ghana. This requires that relationship marketers and personal sellers demonstrate sufficient emotional intelligence to impress customers. This finding squares with several empirical evidences provided by researchers in a Ghanaian context (Danquah, 2014; Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi, 2014) and in the context of multiple jurisdictions and sectors. Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014) confirmed this relationship in the context of insurance service delivery, whereas Heffernan *et al.* (2005) and Danquah (2014) did so in the context of banking. Akbari & Safarnia (2012), on the other hand,

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confirmed this relationship from the perspective of multiple sectors in Iran. Possibly therefore, this relationship exists regardless of which subsector of the services sector and jurisdiction is concerned. The same dimension of empirical evidence exists on the finding that relationship marketing does not significantly influence customer satisfaction without emotional intelligence.

Based on the study's findings, the conceptual framework shown in Figure 2, which is developed in view of findings in the studies of Yaghoubi *et al.* (2011), Heffernan *et al.* (2005) and Opuni & Adu-Gyamfi (2014) is supported. Yet, an important empirical finding supported in this study is the fact that the effect of emotional intelligence is more concentrated on relationship marketing relative to service quality and customer satisfaction. This situation is logical because emotional intelligence is demonstrated at the level of relationship marketing and service delivery. As a result, its direct effect on relationship marketing is expected to be stronger relative to service quality and customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Results of this study indicate that relationship marketing is sufficiently practiced in the chosen hospitality firms in Ghana. Moreover, customer attendants demonstrate an appreciable level of emotional intelligence while serving customers through relationship marketing.

Emotional intelligence makes a strong positive relationship with relationship marketing at 5% significance level, $r (288) = .785$, $p = .000$. This means that the effectiveness and influence of relationship marketing increase as emotional intelligence is increasingly demonstrated by customer attendants in the hospitality sector in Ghana. Moreover, relationship marketing is highly positively related to service quality ($r = .712$, $p < .05$) and customer satisfaction ($r = .318$, $p < .05$). Emotional intelligence also positively relates to service quality ($r = .735$, $p < .05$) and customer satisfaction ($r = .302$, $p < .05$). The ordinary least squares regression shows that service quality is significantly predicted by relationship marketing ($t = 11.6$, $p = .000$) with 50.5% of variance accounted. Moreover, relationship marketing significantly predicts customer satisfaction ($t = 9.43$, $p = .000$), with 43.2% of the variance contributed.

However, the influence of relationship marketing on service quality and customer satisfaction is largely contributed by emotional intelligence. This is because the strength of the relationship between relationship marketing and service quality reduces significantly when the contribution of emotional intelligence to relationship marketing is taken away. This means that when service providers do not demonstrate EI in serving customers, relationship marketing makes no significant positive effect on service quality. Similarly, relationship marketing does not make any positive influence on customer satisfaction when the effect of emotional intelligence on relationship marketing is taken away.

Therefore, the three alternative hypotheses stated are confirmed. So, emotional intelligence is positively related to relationship marketing in the hospitality sector in Ghana. Additionally,

without the effect of emotional intelligence, relationship marketing cannot significantly influence service quality in the hospitality sector in Ghana; neither can relationship marketing significantly influence customer satisfaction without emotional intelligence.

It is therefore recommended that firms in the hospitality sector in Ghana use customer service attendants who have and apply emotional intelligence in service delivery. This implies that customer service attendants in the sector must be equipped with emotional intelligence using special training programs.

Moreover, related future studies should be conducted to provide evidences on the subject from a multiple sectorial perspective. In this regard, researchers can conduct future studies to examine the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between relationship marketing and service quality and customer satisfaction using data from major service sectors such as banking, insurance, telecommunication and hospitality.

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