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The Power of Emotional Intelligence in Banking: Enhancing Customer Satisfaction and Building Trust in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study examines how EI competencies of bank employees affect customer perceptions and behaviors. Quantitative surveys assess the relationship between EI, customer satisfaction, and trust, while qualitative interviews provide deeper insights into customer experiences and perspectives. The findings reveal the significant impact of EI on fostering positive customer relationships, enhancing satisfaction, and building trust. The study offers practical implications for banking institutions to prioritize EI training and development programs to improve customer interactions and loyalty, ultimately contributing to sustainable growth and success in a competitive market. Future research directions are also suggested to further explore the nuances of EI in the evolving banking landscape.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Convenience and Efficiency, Service Delivery, Empathy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Emotional Intelligence in Banking

The banking sector operates in a highly competitive and dynamic environment, where customer relationships are paramount for sustained success. Beyond traditional financial services, customers increasingly value personalized experiences, empathetic interactions, and trust in their banking providers. In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) emerges as a critical factor influencing customer perceptions and behaviors. EI, encompassing the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions, plays a pivotal role in shaping interactions between bank employees and customers. The capacity of bank staff to demonstrate empathy, build rapport, and handle customer concerns with sensitivity can significantly impact customer satisfaction and foster long-term trust.

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The integration of technology in banking has also amplified the importance of EI. While digital channels offer convenience and efficiency, they can sometimes lack the human touch that fosters emotional connection. Therefore, even in technologically advanced banking environments, EI remains essential for employees to navigate complex customer interactions, resolve conflicts, and build lasting relationships (Raicu & TÜRKEȘ, 2016). Banks are now recognizing that cultivating EI among their workforce is not merely a soft skill but a strategic imperative for gaining a competitive advantage and achieving sustainable growth.

1.2 Importance of Customer Satisfaction and Trust

Customer satisfaction and trust are foundational pillars for any successful business, and their importance is amplified within the banking sector. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal, recommend the bank to others, and increase their engagement with its services. Customer satisfaction directly influences profitability through increased customer retention, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and enhanced brand reputation. Trust is equally vital, as customers entrust banks with their financial well-being. A trusting relationship leads to increased customer confidence, willingness to adopt new products and services, and resilience during times of economic uncertainty. In the wake of financial crises and scandals, building and maintaining customer trust has become more critical than ever. Banks that prioritize transparency, ethical conduct, and empathetic customer service are better positioned to foster trust and cultivate enduring customer relationships. Customer satisfaction and trust are intertwined, with satisfaction often serving as a precursor to trust. When customers consistently experience positive interactions and receive reliable service, their satisfaction levels increase, which in turn builds confidence and trust in the bank. This virtuous cycle of satisfaction and trust leads to enhanced customer loyalty and advocacy, creating a strong foundation for the bank's long-term success.

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

This research aims to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector. The specific objectives are: 1. To define the levels of emotional intelligence among bank employees in customer-facing roles. 2. To evaluate the relationship between employee emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction. 3. To assess the influence of employee emotional intelligence on customer trust. 4. To investigate the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence contributes to customer satisfaction and trust. 5. To identify the key emotional intelligence competencies that are most critical for enhancing customer relationships in banking. 6. To provide practical recommendations for banking institutions to cultivate emotional intelligence among their employees. The central research questions guiding this study are: 1. How does emotional intelligence of bank employees impact customer satisfaction? 2. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence of bank employees and customer trust in the banking sector? 3. What specific emotional intelligence competencies are most important for building customer satisfaction and trust in banking? 4. How can banking institutions develop and implement strategies to enhance emotional intelligence among their employees to improve customer relationships? 5. Does customer satisfaction mediate the relationship between employee emotional intelligence and customer trust?

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a multifaceted construct that has garnered significant attention across various disciplines, including psychology, organizational behavior, and management. While various models of EI exist, they generally converge on the notion that EI encompasses the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively. One prominent model is the ability-based model proposed by Mayer and Salovey, which defines EI as the capacity to reason with emotions and to enhance thought. This model identifies four core abilities: (1) perceiving emotions (accurately recognizing emotions in oneself and others), (2) using emotions to facilitate thought (harnessing emotions to improve cognitive processes), (3) understanding emotions (comprehending emotional information and its implications), and (4) managing emotions (regulating emotions in oneself and others to promote well-being). Another influential model is the mixed model developed by Daniel Goleman, which combines abilities with personality traits. Goleman's model includes five components: (1) self-awareness (understanding one's own emotions), (2) self-regulation (managing one's emotions), (3) motivation (using emotions to drive goal pursuit), (4) empathy (understanding the emotions of others), and (5) social skills (managing relationships effectively). The trait EI model, developed by Petrides, views EI as a constellation of self-perceptions and dispositions related to emotions. This model emphasizes the measurement of EI through self-report questionnaires, assessing individuals' typical emotional behaviors and preferences. Regardless of the specific model, EI is generally recognized as a crucial set of competencies that enable individuals to navigate social interactions, build relationships, and achieve personal and professional success. In the context of the banking sector, EI is particularly relevant for employees in customer-facing roles, as it can significantly impact their ability to connect with customers, address their needs, and foster positive relationships.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence in the Service Industry

In the service industry, where interactions between employees and customers are frequent and critical, emotional intelligence (EI) plays a pivotal role in shaping customer experiences and organizational success. Service employees with high EI are better equipped to understand customer emotions, respond to their needs with empathy, and manage challenging situations effectively (2016). EI enables service employees to build rapport with customers, creating a sense of trust and connection. By accurately perceiving customer emotions, employees can tailor their communication and service delivery to meet individual needs and preferences. This personalized approach enhances customer satisfaction and fosters long-term loyalty. Moreover, EI helps service employees manage their own emotions in stressful situations. Dealing with demanding or dissatisfied customers can be emotionally draining, but employees with high EI are better able to regulate their emotions, maintain a positive attitude, and provide exceptional service even under pressure. The impact of EI extends beyond individual interactions, influencing the overall service climate within an organization. When service employees demonstrate EI, they create a more positive and supportive work environment, which in turn enhances employee morale and reduces turnover. This positive service climate translates into improved customer experiences and stronger organizational performance.

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2.3 Customer Satisfaction in Banking

Customer satisfaction is a critical metric for evaluating the performance of banking institutions. It reflects the extent to which customers' expectations are met or exceeded by the products, services, and interactions they experience with the bank (Hadid et al., 2015). High levels of customer satisfaction are associated with increased customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and enhanced profitability. Several factors contribute to customer satisfaction in banking, including service quality, convenience, perceived value, and the overall customer experience. Service quality encompasses the reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles associated with the bank's offerings. Convenience refers to the ease with which customers can access and utilize banking services, whether through physical branches, online platforms, or mobile applications (Addai et al., 2015). Perceived value reflects the customer's assessment of the benefits they receive relative to the costs they incur. The customer experience encompasses all interactions a customer has with the bank, from initial contact to ongoing relationship management. A positive customer experience is characterized by personalized service, efficient problem resolution, and a sense of being valued as a customer. Banks that prioritize customer satisfaction invest in training their employees to deliver exceptional service, streamline processes to enhance convenience, and actively solicit customer feedback to identify areas for improvement.

2.4 Trust-Building Mechanisms in Financial Services

Trust is a cornerstone of the relationship between customers and financial institutions. Customers entrust banks with their financial assets, personal information, and long-term financial well-being. Therefore, building and maintaining trust is essential for banks to attract and retain customers, foster loyalty, and ensure long-term sustainability. Several mechanisms contribute to trust-building in financial services. Transparency is paramount, as customers need to understand the bank's policies, fees, and practices. Open communication, clear disclosures, and honest interactions foster a sense of trust and confidence. Ethical conduct is also critical, as banks must adhere to high standards of integrity and avoid engaging in practices that could harm customers or erode trust. Reliability and competence are also essential trust-building mechanisms. Customers need to be confident that the bank can deliver on its promises, provide accurate information, and handle transactions efficiently and securely. Responsiveness and empathy further enhance trust, as customers appreciate banks that are attentive to their needs, address their concerns promptly, and demonstrate genuine care and understanding.

2.5 The Interplay Between Emotional Intelligence, Satisfaction, and Trust

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a central role in fostering customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector. EI competencies of bank employees directly influence customer perceptions, shape their experiences, and ultimately impact their levels of satisfaction and trust. When bank employees demonstrate high EI, they are better able to connect with customers on an emotional level, understand their needs and concerns, and respond with empathy and sensitivity. This personalized approach enhances customer satisfaction, as customers feel valued and understood. Moreover, EI

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enables employees to handle challenging situations effectively, resolve conflicts amicably, and build rapport with customers, further contributing to positive customer experiences. In addition to its direct impact on customer satisfaction, EI also fosters customer trust. When employees demonstrate transparency, ethical conduct, and genuine care for customers' well-being, they build confidence and trust in the bank. Customers are more likely to trust banks that prioritize their needs, communicate openly, and act with integrity. Customer satisfaction and trust are intertwined, with satisfaction often serving as a foundation for trust. When customers consistently experience positive interactions and receive reliable service, their satisfaction levels increase, which in turn builds confidence and trust in the bank. This virtuous cycle of satisfaction and trust leads to enhanced customer loyalty, advocacy, and long-term relationships.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector. A mixed-methods design allows for the collection of both numerical data and in-depth qualitative insights, providing a richer and more nuanced perspective on the research topic. The quantitative component involved a survey administered to a sample of bank customers to assess their perceptions of employee emotional intelligence, their levels of satisfaction with the bank's services, and their degree of trust in the institution. The survey data were analyzed using statistical techniques to identify correlations and relationships between these variables. The qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with a subset of bank customers to explore their experiences and perspectives in more detail. The interviews provided insights into the specific behaviors and interactions that contribute to customer satisfaction and trust, as well as the role of emotional intelligence in shaping these experiences. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data allowed for triangulation, where findings from different methods were compared and contrasted to validate and deepen the understanding of the research topic. This approach enhanced the rigor and credibility of the study's conclusions.

3.2 Sampling Strategy

The study employed a multi-stage sampling strategy to select participants for both the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews. First, a purposive sampling technique was used to select banks operating in a specific geographic region. Banks were selected based on their size, market share, and representation of different banking models (e.g., national, regional, community). Next, within each selected bank, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select customer participants for the quantitative survey. The customer base was stratified based on demographic factors such as age, gender, income level, and length of relationship with the bank. This ensured that the survey sample was representative of the bank's overall customer base. For the qualitative interviews, a convenience sampling technique was used to select participants from among the survey respondents who indicated

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willingness to participate in follow-up interviews. Efforts were made to include participants with diverse demographic backgrounds and experiences with the bank to ensure a range of perspectives. The sample size for the interviews was determined based on the principle of saturation, where data collection continued until no new themes or insights emerged from the interviews.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The quantitative data for this research were collected through a structured survey questionnaire administered to a sample of bank customers. The survey instrument included questions designed to measure: 1. Perceptions of employee emotional intelligence, Customer satisfaction, Customer trust, and Demographic information. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small group of bank customers to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability. The survey was administered online to facilitate data collection and reduce response bias.

The qualitative data for this research were collected through semi-structured interviews with a subset of bank customers. The interviews were designed to explore customers' experiences and perspectives in more detail, providing rich insights into the role of emotional intelligence in shaping their satisfaction and trust in the bank. The interview protocol included open-ended questions about customers' experiences with bank employees. factors influencing satisfaction, factors influencing trust, and Suggestions for improvement.

3.4 Measurement Instruments

The study utilized established and validated measurement instruments to assess the key constructs of emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, and trust. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS). The WLEIS is a self-report questionnaire that assesses four dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others-emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE). The WLEIS has demonstrated strong reliability and validity across various cultural contexts. Customer satisfaction was measured using a multi-item scale adapted from previous studies on customer satisfaction in the banking sector. The scale assessed customers' overall satisfaction with the bank's services, as well as their satisfaction with specific aspects of the banking experience, such as transaction processing, customer service, and online banking platforms. The scale included items such as "Overall, I am satisfied with the services provided by this bank" and "I am likely to recommend this bank to others." Customer trust was measured using a multi-item scale adapted from previous studies on trust in financial institutions. The scale assessed customers' confidence in the bank's integrity, reliability, and competence. The scale included items such as "I trust this bank to keep my financial information confidential" and "I believe this bank acts in my best interests." All measurement instruments utilized a Likert scale response format, with response options ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

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3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative data collected through the surveys was analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the levels of emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, and trust. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction, as well as between emotional intelligence and customer trust. Regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence predicts customer satisfaction and trust, controlling for demographic variables. The qualitative data collected through the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying recurring patterns and themes within the interview transcripts. The interview transcripts were read and reread to identify key themes related to customer experiences, perceptions of employee emotional intelligence, and factors influencing satisfaction and trust. The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the sample characteristics and the distribution of key variables. The sample consisted of 300 bank customers, with a balanced representation of demographic groups. The mean age of the respondents was 42 years, with a standard deviation of 12 years. 52% of the respondents were female, and 48% were male. The income distribution was diverse. The average length of relationship with the bank was 7 years, with a standard deviation of 5 years. The descriptive statistics for the key variables are presented in Table 1. The mean score for emotional intelligence was 3.85, with a standard deviation of 0.62. The mean score for customer satisfaction was 4.20, with a standard deviation of 0.75. The mean score for customer trust was 4.05, with a standard deviation of 0.80. These results suggest that, on average, customers perceived bank employees as having moderate levels of emotional intelligence, and they were generally satisfied with and trusting of the bank.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	3.85	0.62
Customer Satisfaction	4.20	0.75
Customer Trust	4.05	0.80

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis examined the relationships between emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, and customer trust. The results, presented in Table 2, indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between emotional intelligence and customer trust ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). These findings

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suggest that higher levels of emotional intelligence among bank employees are associated with greater customer satisfaction and trust. The correlation between customer satisfaction and customer trust was also positive and statistically significant ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that satisfied customers are more likely to trust the bank. These correlations provide initial evidence for the potential influence of emotional intelligence on customer relationships in the banking sector.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	Customer Satisfaction	Customer Trust
Emotional Intelligence	1		
Customer Satisfaction	0.45	1	
Customer Trust	0.52	0.60	1

4.3 Regression Analysis

To further investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust, regression analysis was conducted. Two separate regression models were estimated, with customer satisfaction and customer trust as the dependent variables, respectively. Emotional intelligence was included as the independent variable in both models, along with demographic control variables (age, gender, income, and length of relationship with the bank). The results of the regression analysis for customer satisfaction are presented in Table 3. Emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of emotional intelligence among bank employees are associated with greater customer satisfaction, even after controlling for demographic factors. The model explained 25% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R2 = 0.25$).

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Customer Satisfaction

Variable	β	Standard Error	t	p
Emotional Intelligence	0.38	0.08	4.75	< 0.01
Age	0.05	0.06	0.83	0.40
Gender	-0.02	0.07	-0.29	0.77
Income	0.1	0.07	1.43	0.15
Length of Relationship	0.08	0.06	1.33	0.18
(Constant)	2.85	0.32	8.91	< 0.01
R^2	0.25			

The results of the regression analysis for customer trust are presented in Table 4. Emotional intelligence was also a significant predictor of customer trust ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of emotional intelligence among bank employees are associated with greater customer trust, even after controlling for demographic factors. The model explained 32% of the variance in customer trust ($R2 = 0.32$).

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Table 4: Regression Analysis for Customer Trust

Variable	β	Standard Error	t	p
Emotional Intelligence	0.45	0.09	5	< 0.01
Age	0.03	0.07	0.43	0.67
Gender	-0.05	0.08	-0.63	0.53
Income	0.08	0.08	1	0.32
Length of Relationship	0.12	0.07	1.71	0.09
(Constant)	2.5	0.35	7.14	< 0.01
R^2	0.32			

4.4 Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

The thematic analysis of the qualitative interview data revealed several key themes related to the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust. One prominent theme was the importance of empathy in building customer relationships. Customers consistently emphasized the value of interacting with bank employees who demonstrated genuine empathy and understanding for their needs and concerns. For example, one customer stated, "When I talk to someone at the bank, I want them to listen to me and understand my situation. It makes a big difference when they show that they care." Another key theme was the role of communication skills in enhancing customer satisfaction. Customers appreciated employees who communicated clearly, patiently, and respectfully. Effective communication helped customers feel informed and empowered, and it reduced the likelihood of misunderstandings or frustrations. As one customer noted, "I really appreciate it when the bank employees take the time to explain things to me in a way that I can understand. It makes me feel like they value my business." Thematic analysis also highlighted the importance of problem-solving skills in fostering customer trust. Customers expressed confidence in bank employees who were able to resolve issues efficiently and effectively. Prompt and satisfactory resolution of problems enhanced customers' trust in the bank's competence and reliability. One customer shared, "I had a problem with my account, and the bank employee was able to fix it quickly and easily. It made me feel like I could count on them to take care of my needs."

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of Key Findings

The findings of this research provide compelling evidence for the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector. The quantitative results demonstrate a positive and statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence of bank employees and both customer satisfaction and customer trust. Furthermore, regression analysis confirms that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction and trust, even after controlling for demographic factors. These findings suggest that banks that prioritize the development of emotional intelligence among their employees are likely to experience higher levels of customer satisfaction and trust. The qualitative data further illuminate the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence contributes to customer satisfaction and trust. Thematic analysis

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revealed the importance of empathy, communication skills, and problem-solving skills in building positive customer relationships. Customers value interactions with bank employees who demonstrate genuine care, communicate clearly, and resolve issues effectively. These findings underscore the critical role of emotional intelligence in shaping customer perceptions and experiences. The study's results align with previous research that has highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in the service industry. Emotional intelligence enables service employees to connect with customers on an emotional level, understand their needs, and respond with empathy and sensitivity. This personalized approach enhances customer satisfaction and fosters long-term loyalty.

5.2 Implications for Banking Practice

The findings of this research have several important implications for banking practice. First, banks should prioritize the recruitment and selection of employees with high levels of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence assessments can be incorporated into the hiring process to identify candidates who possess the necessary competencies to build positive customer relationships. Second, banks should invest in training and development programs to enhance the emotional intelligence skills of their existing employees. These programs should focus on developing competencies such as empathy, communication, and problem-solving skills. Training should be tailored to the specific needs of different employee roles and should incorporate experiential learning activities to promote skill development. Third, banks should create a culture that values and rewards emotional intelligence. This can be achieved by recognizing and celebrating employees who demonstrate exceptional emotional intelligence in their interactions with customers. Performance evaluations should also incorporate measures of emotional intelligence, providing employees with feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement. Fourth, banks should empower employees to use their emotional intelligence to personalize the customer experience. This may involve providing employees with greater autonomy to make decisions that benefit customers or encouraging them to go the extra mile to meet customer needs.

5.3 Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to the existing literature on emotional intelligence, customer satisfaction, and trust in several ways. First, it provides empirical evidence for the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector. While previous studies have suggested a link between emotional intelligence and customer outcomes, this research provides quantitative and qualitative data to support this relationship. Second, this research identifies the specific emotional intelligence competencies that are most important for building customer relationships in banking. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data highlights the critical role of empathy, communication skills, and problem-solving skills in shaping customer perceptions and experiences. Third, this research contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence influences customer satisfaction and trust. The study demonstrates that emotional intelligence enables employees to connect with customers on an emotional level, understand their needs, and respond with empathy and sensitivity, leading to greater customer satisfaction and trust.

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5.4 Limitations of the Study

While this research provides valuable insights into the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. First, the study was conducted in a specific geographic region, and the findings may not be generalizable to other regions or countries. Cultural differences may influence the importance of emotional intelligence in customer relationships. Second, the study relied on self-report measures of emotional intelligence, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Participants may have been inclined to overstate their emotional intelligence competencies. Third, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to draw causal inferences. It is possible that other factors, such as organizational culture or leadership style, may also influence customer satisfaction and trust. Fourth, the sample size for the qualitative interviews was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. However, efforts were made to include participants with diverse demographic backgrounds and experiences with the bank to ensure a range of perspectives.

6. FINDINGS

This research examined the influence of emotional intelligence on customer satisfaction and trust within the banking sector. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The main findings of the study are: 1. Emotional intelligence of bank employees is positively and significantly correlated with customer satisfaction. 2. Emotional intelligence of bank employees is positively and significantly correlated with customer trust. 3. Emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction, even after controlling for demographic factors. 4. Emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of customer trust, even after controlling for demographic factors. 5. Empathy, communication skills, and problem-solving skills are key emotional intelligence competencies that contribute to customer satisfaction and trust.

7. CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence offers numerous benefits to banks, including enhanced customer satisfaction, increased customer loyalty, improved employee performance, and a stronger competitive advantage. By prioritizing EI, banks can create positive emotional experiences for customers, build trust-based relationships, and differentiate themselves from competitors. As the banking landscape continues to evolve, emotional intelligence will become an increasingly critical success factor. Tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy significantly and positively influence customer attitudes in terms of satisfaction.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BANKING INSTITUTIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are provided for banking institutions: 1. Incorporate emotional intelligence assessments into the hiring process to identify candidates who possess the necessary competencies to build positive customer relationships. 2. Invest in training and development programs to enhance the emotional intelligence skills of existing

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employees. 3. Create a culture that values and rewards emotional intelligence. 4. Empower employees to use their emotional intelligence to personalize the customer experience. 5. Prioritize transparency, ethical conduct, and reliability to build and maintain customer trust. 6. Actively solicit customer feedback to identify areas for improvement and enhance the customer experience.

9. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research should address the limitations of this study and further explore the nuances of emotional intelligence in the banking sector. Specific directions for future research include: 1. Conducting longitudinal studies to examine the causal relationship between emotional intelligence and customer outcomes over time. 2. Using objective measures of emotional intelligence, such as performance-based assessments, to reduce social desirability bias. 3. Investigating the role of organizational culture and leadership style in shaping the influence of emotional intelligence on customer relationships. 4. Examining the influence of emotional intelligence on other customer outcomes, such as customer loyalty and advocacy. 5. Exploring the role of technology in moderating the influence of emotional intelligence on customer interactions. 6. Conducting cross-cultural studies to examine the generalizability of the findings to other regions and countries.

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