

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES



**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PROACTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE
BEHAVIOUR: THE ROLE OF PERSPECTIVE-TAKING**

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
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DECLARATION

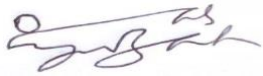
This thesis, “Emotional Intelligence and Proactive Customer Service Behaviour: The role of Perspective-Taking” is a study done and presented to the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana, for the award of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Industrial & Organizational Psychology. With the exception of references duly cited, this work represents an original work of study by me, Valentina Danso, under the supervision of Dr. Inusah Abdul-Nasiru and Dr. Eric Delle. This work has not been presented anywhere for a degree.



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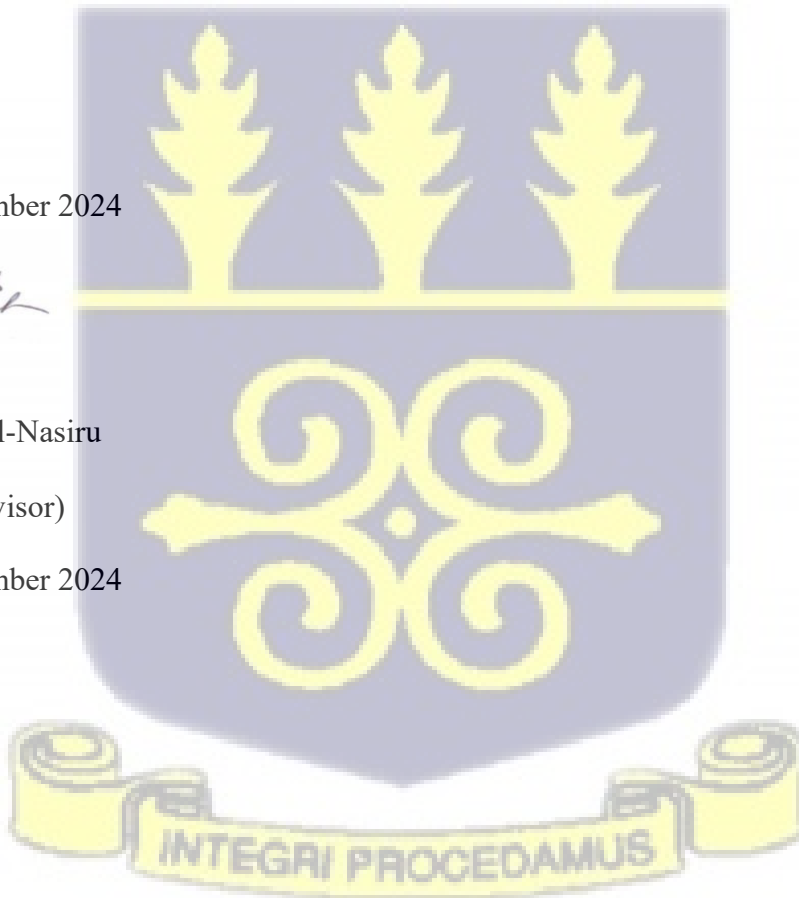
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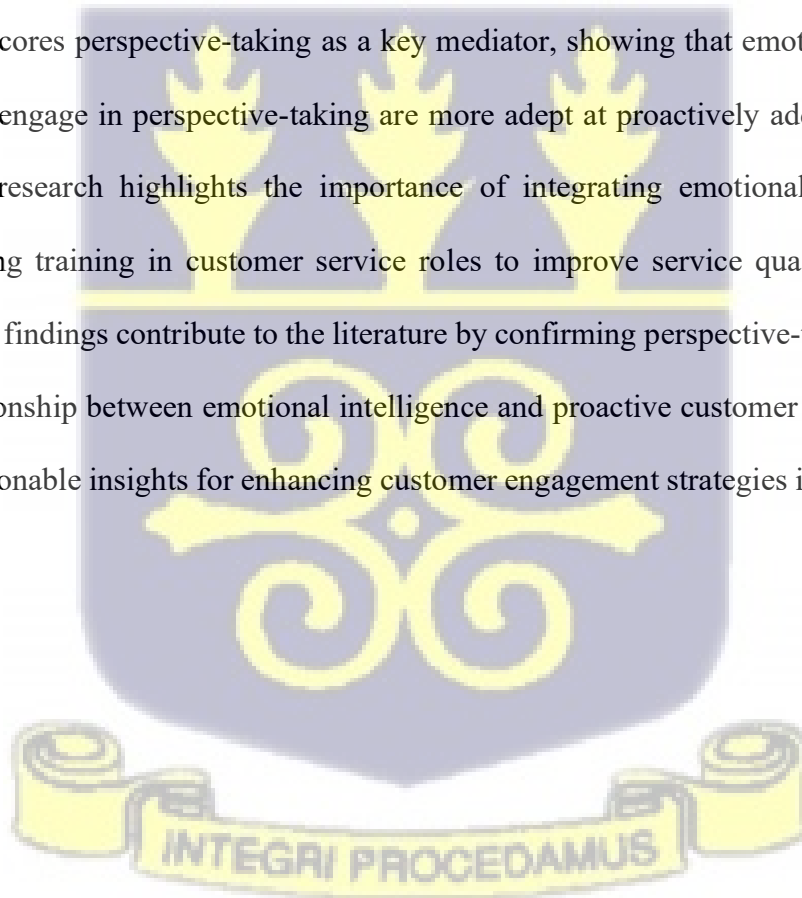
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB), focusing on the mediating role of perspective-taking (PT) in service-oriented industries in Ghana. The study employed a three-wave explanatory survey design, and data was collected from 111 frontline employees across various service sectors. The influence of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking on employees' engagement in proactive customer service behaviour was analyzed. Findings reveal that employees with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate significantly more proactive customer service behaviours. Furthermore, the study found a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and perspective-taking. Lastly, the study underscores perspective-taking as a key mediator, showing that emotionally intelligent employees who engage in perspective-taking are more adept at proactively addressing customer concerns. This research highlights the importance of integrating emotional intelligence and perspective-taking training in customer service roles to improve service quality and customer satisfaction. The findings contribute to the literature by confirming perspective-taking's mediating role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour and offering actionable insights for enhancing customer engagement strategies in service-oriented organizations.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The world economy is a complex ecosystem, and at its heart lies the service sector. With regards to the global GDP, the service sector is a major contributor, driving innovation, employment and economic growth. In 2019, the services sector accounted for an average of 55% of GDP and 45% of employment in developing economies (Nayyar et al. 2021). It is on this basis that organisation and cooperate institutions desire and are interested in individuals who can provide services in ways that can make the organisation effective. Service provision can be demanding. Organisations are therefore looking for people with high levels of emotional intelligence (EI) in addition to technical expertise in today's competitive and dynamic business environment. Employees who are emotionally intelligent are more likely to succeed or work effectively. Organisations require emotionally competent people for a variety of reasons. Emotionally intelligent people are better able to forge close bonds with clients and staff, manage pressure and difficult circumstances, inspire and encourage others, and lead with effectiveness. Emotional intelligence (EI) makes it possible for people to relate to others, comprehend their needs and viewpoints, and communicate clearly. This can lead to stronger customer ties, more customer satisfaction, and a more harmonious and effective work environment (Jordan et al., 2006). Additionally, those who possess emotional intelligence are more adept at controlling their own emotions and maintaining composure under duress. This can support them in making wise judgements, resolving problems amicably, and remaining composed under pressure (Bar-On, 2000). Once more, emotional intelligence (EI) enables people to comprehend and react to the needs and motives of others. As a result, there may

be an uptick in engagement and productivity as they encourage and stimulate their peers (Côté, 2006). Finally, it empowers leaders to create powerful teams, cultivate a happy and productive workplace, and make wise decisions that benefit the organization as a whole (Goleman, 2000).

It is argued that customer service representatives with high EI can manage the emotional demands of their job better, build rapport with customers, and provide personalized service. In other words, customer service representatives who are emotionally intelligent tend to exhibit proactive behaviours at work. If people with high emotional intelligence can manage the emotional demands of their job better, build rapport with customers, and provide personalized service, then it can be said that such individuals will engage in proactive customer service behaviours such as taking initiative to provide services that are suitable and personalized. Proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB) is behaviour that goes beyond what is expected to meet and exceed customer needs (Bitner et al., 1990). It encompasses actions like giving warm welcomes to clients, figuring out what they need ahead of time, providing individualised service, and going above and beyond. It has been demonstrated that proactive customer service practises boost client happiness and loyalty. It is a major factor in determining client loyalty and satisfaction.

PCSB provides organisations with numerous benefits. Among these benefits is an increase in client satisfaction. Customers are more satisfied and spread good word of mouth when employees with PCSB show them that their needs and expectations are valued (Huo et al., 2018). Customers that are happy with an organisation have a higher propensity to refer others to it and come back for more purchases. Additionally, PCSB increases customer loyalty. Repeat customers that feel a deep emotional bond with the organisation are considered loyal customers. By providing a satisfying and memorable experience that entices customers to return, PCSB can increase customer loyalty

(Fornell, 2001). Furthermore, PCSB increases customer retention. It is more economical to keep current customers than to find new ones. By proactively attending to customer demands and resolving problems before they develop, PCSB can assist lower customer attrition (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Finally, PCSB improves the image of the brand. Attracting and keeping clients requires a strong brand image. By showcasing the company's dedication to offering top-notch service, PCSB can strengthen its brand image (Fornell, 2001).

There are underlying mechanisms that facilitate the relationship between emotional intelligence and individual outcomes. One important underlying mechanism is perspective-taking. Perspectivetaking has not been tested as a mechanism in the relationship between emotional intelligence and corresponding individual outcomes. Not much literature is found on it. Perspective-taking is very important because of the idea that customer service representatives need to provide personalized service. They can only do this by perspective-taking. Just being emotionally intelligent may not be enough. The ability to put oneself in other people's situation will help to provide services that are suitable and satisfying. Perspective-Taking (PT) is the "ability to understand the world from another person's point of view" (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). By adopting a customer's perspective, customer service employees can comprehend the requirements and anticipations of their clients from their point of view. Afterwards, this knowledge can be applied to deliver service that is more responsive and customised. A customer service employee who can empathise with a disgruntled customer, for instance, may be more inclined to provide a solution that is customised to meet the needs of the individual consumer. Moreover, adopting a different perspective contributes to the development of closer bonds between customer service employees and clients. Customers are more likely to be happy with the service they receive and to patronise the establishment again in the future when they feel heard and valued. A customer service

employee who can see things from the standpoint of a client who is celebrating a particular event, for instance, could be more inclined to extend a warm greeting or a gift.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In service-oriented organizations, frontline employees are critical to ensuring customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall organizational success. However, these employees often face emotionally demanding situations, requiring them to manage their own emotions while responding effectively to diverse customer needs. Despite the importance of proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB) in enhancing service quality, many organizations continue to struggle with inconsistencies in service delivery, reactive rather than proactive employee behaviours, and suboptimal customer experiences.

Previous studies have identified gaps in understanding the mechanisms that enable employees to engage proactively with customers, particularly the role of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking (e.g., Huo et al. 2018; Jordan et al., 2002). While research highlights that EI and PT are individually linked to positive service outcomes, there is limited clarity on how emotional intelligence translates into proactive customer service behaviour through perspective-taking. This lack of understanding creates several practical and theoretical problems. To begin with, without insights into the mechanisms that promote proactive service behaviours, employees may lack strategies to manage emotionally challenging interactions effectively, potentially leading to stress, burnout, and reduced job performance. Secondly, ineffective customer service limits customer satisfaction, retention, and overall organizational performance, ultimately affecting profitability and competitive advantage. For researchers and practitioners, the absence of empirical evidence on the mediating role of perspective-taking limits the development of evidence-based training

programs, interventions, and theoretical models that integrate EI, PT, and proactive customer service.

Therefore, the specific problem under investigation is that while emotional intelligence and perspective-taking are recognized as important for effective customer service, the precise way in which emotional intelligence influences proactive customer service behaviour through perspective-taking remains unclear. This lack of clarity impedes the development of strategies that can enhance employee performance, organizational outcomes, and customer satisfaction in service-oriented sectors.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The general aim of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour in the Ghanaian service-oriented industry, testing perspective-taking as a potential mediator.

The specific objectives of the study are;

1. To assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and perspective-taking.
3. To investigate the relationship between perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour.
4. To examine the mediating role of perspective-taking in the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour.

1.4 Rational of the Study

There is a growing body of research that suggests that EI is positively related to PCSB. However, the role of perspective-taking in the relationship between EI and PCSB has not been investigated much. A recent study by Huo et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between customer-oriented perspective-taking and proactive service performance. The findings strengthen the argument that perspective-taking skills may be crucial for understanding the EI-PCSB connection. This provides further support to the idea that perspective-taking is crucial to understanding the relationship between EI and PCSB.

In numerous respects, this study will significantly advance the fields of study on emotional intelligence, perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour. Firstly, a full model incorporating all three variables will be tested in the study. This will make it possible to comprehend the complex relationships between EI, perspective-taking and PCSB better. Moving on, a longitudinal design will be used in this research. This will make it possible to examine the hypothesized relationships more thoroughly and will aid in ruling out opposing hypotheses. Also, a sample of customer service agents from various businesses will be included in the study. This will improve the generalizability of the findings.

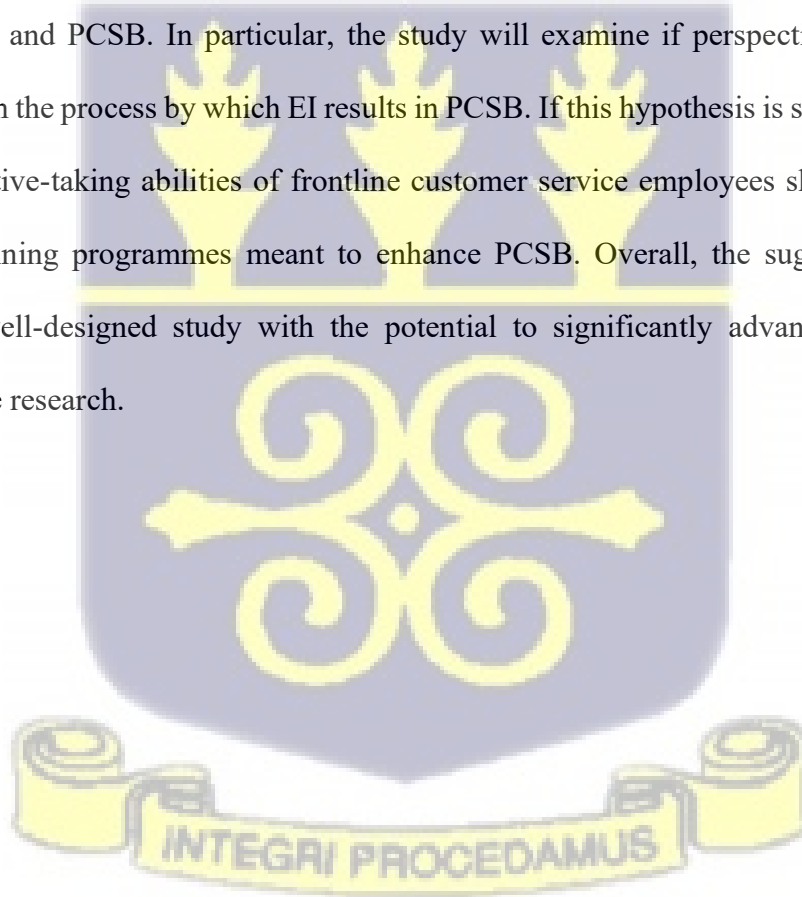
1.5 Relevance of the Study

There are various reasons why this study on emotional intelligence (EI), perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB) is important. To begin with, a lot of organizations rely heavily on customer service, and research has shown that PCSB increases client loyalty and satisfaction (Bitner et al., 1990). Consequently, it is critical to comprehend how to enhance PCSB among frontline customer service employees. Furthermore, research indicates that emotional

intelligence (EI) is a significant predictor of job success across a range of professions, including customer service (Jordan et al., 2002). However, the role of perspective-taking in the relationship between EI and PCSB is unclear. By examining the mediating role of perspective-taking in the relationship between EI and PCSB, this study will fill this research gap.

The results of this study will have a significant impact on the creation and execution of educational initiatives aimed at enhancing PCSB of frontline customer service employees.

The study has theoretical implications in addition to practical ones for organisations and frontline customer service employees. The study also aims to enhance comprehension of the mechanisms by which EI influences job performance by investigating the function of perspective-taking in the link between EI and PCSB. In particular, the study will examine if perspective-taking plays a significant role in the process by which EI results in PCSB. If this hypothesis is supported, it means that the perspective-taking abilities of frontline customer service employees should be the main emphasis of training programmes meant to enhance PCSB. Overall, the suggested study is a pertinent and well-designed study with the potential to significantly advance the subject of customer service research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an in-depth review of the relevant literature on emotional intelligence, perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour. The theoretical framework of this study, which include the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, the social exchange theory, self-determination theory and role theory are discussed. The chapter also offers a critical and conceptual evaluation of existing studies in order to identify key findings and research gaps. The chapter ends with the formulation of research hypotheses based on the theoretical framework and empirical data.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions

The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions, developed by Barbara Fredrickson in the early 2000s, provides a framework for understanding how positive emotions contribute to psychological growth, resilience, and well-being. Experiencing positive emotions helps individuals to grow and learn by expanding their attention and cognitive horizons. Perspectivetaking can be viewed as a means of increasing one's attention span and cognitive reach. When an individual takes the perspective of another person, he or she is forced to consider a different point of view. This can assist him or her in developing fresh perspectives on the world and more imaginative solutions to issues (Fredrickson, 2001). Negative emotions, on the other hand, cause individuals to focus less and think less, which might result in tunnel vision and poor problemsolving skills.

Positive emotions such as joy, love, gratitude, and contentment are fundamental to the Broaden-and-Build Theory. Fredrickson (1998) emphasizes that these emotions differ from negative emotions, which often narrow focus as part of a survival mechanism. Instead, positive emotions broaden an individual's range of thoughts and actions, opening them to new experiences and fostering adaptability. Joy, for instance, sparks playfulness and openness, encouraging exploration.

Love encompasses various positive emotions, facilitating trust and social bonds (Fredrickson, 2004). Gratitude fosters social connections and strengthens relationships.

According to this theory, positive emotions broaden an individual's thoughts and behaviours (Fredrickson, 2001). This “broadening” is a response pattern where an individual, influenced by positive emotions, becomes more open to experiences, making them more creative and capable of problem-solving. For example, a person experiencing joy may be more inclined to explore, experiment, or build new relationships. Studies have shown that such broadened perspectives are crucial in promoting personal development and adaptive thinking (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005).

A study by Isen also revealed that when people are in positive emotional states, they are more likely to engage in activities that expand their cognitive, social, and physical skills (Isen, 2000). The broadened mindset that positive emotions induce eventually leads to the development of personal resources—skills, social connections, and cognitive abilities that endure beyond the emotional experience itself (Fredrickson, 2004). For instance, a customer service employee who feels positive emotions at work, such as gratitude and enjoyment from his supportive team. These emotions broaden his thinking, allowing him to engage in perspective-taking with customers. When customers call with complaints, he actively imagines the customers' frustration and proactively suggests solutions that address both the immediate issue and potential future concerns.

This practice of perspective-taking helps him build valuable skills like empathy and problemsolving.

Many studies have been conducted to validate the theory. A study by Fredrickson & Branigan found that participants induced to feel positive emotions demonstrated more creativity and a greater ability to connect with others (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). Another longitudinal study showed that positive emotions experienced over time lead to increased resilience, reinforcing the build aspect of the theory (Cohn et al., 2009). Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) also demonstrated that individuals experiencing positive emotions are more likely to develop upward spirals of wellbeing, where initial positive emotions lead to broader mindsets, further resource-building, and ultimately higher levels of well-being. This process contrasts with negative emotions, which often trap individuals in downward spirals of limited thinking and decreased resilience.

The relationship between emotional intelligence, perspective-taking, and proactive customer service behaviour can be explained in a number of ways using the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been shown to facilitate customer service employees' experiences of happiness and contentment, among other good feelings (Fredrickson, 2001). For example, a customer service employee with high emotional intelligence may feel happier and more content while engaging with customers because they can handle stressful interactions calmly and maintain positive relationships. This happiness broadens their perspective, allowing them to practice empathy and anticipate customer needs proactively. Over time, these repeated positive experiences help them build skills in perspective-taking, problem-solving, and resilience, which improve their proactive approach to customer service.

Additionally, positive emotions increase the attention and cognitive range of customer service employees, making it easier for them to see things from their customers' point of view

(Fredrickson, 2001). Customer service employees can better grasp the wants and expectations of their clients by adopting a customer's perspective (Huo et al., 2018). More individualised and responsive service results from knowing the requirements and expectations of the client (Huo et. al, 2018). Higher customer satisfaction and loyalty are a result of more responsive and personalised service (Huo et. al, 2018).

2.2.2 Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory, propounded by Blau (1964), is centered on the principle that human interactions are motivated by the expectation of mutual benefits. Within the context of emotional intelligence (EI) and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB), this theory provides an essential lens for analyzing how emotionally intelligent employees cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with customers. Employees with high EI can recognize and manage emotions effectively, fostering an atmosphere of trust and satisfaction in service encounters. For instance, when a customer service representative anticipates and fulfills customer needs with empathy, the customer reciprocates through loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, thereby creating a cycle of beneficial exchanges. This dynamic is in line with the study's objectives, which emphasize the mediating role of perspective-taking in the EI-PCSB relationship, demonstrating how emotionally intelligent employees leverage social exchanges to proactively engage and satisfy customer expectations (Huo et al., 2018).

The theory also directly supports the study's methodological framework, particularly its longitudinal design that tracks the interplay of EI, perspective-taking, and PCSB over time. The sequential data collection mirrors the gradual evolution of trust and reciprocal relationships in social exchanges. Perspective-taking, as a mediator, enhances the understanding of customer

expectations, further enriching service quality and fostering deeper customer loyalty. This relationship underscores how the principles of social exchange, particularly the balance of giving and receiving in interpersonal interactions, are manifested in the proactive behaviours of service employees. The study employs validated tools such as the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) and the Perspective Taking Scale (Axtell et al., 2007), which capture these exchange dynamics effectively within the service-oriented industries in Ghana.

The application of Social Exchange Theory to this study highlights its theoretical contribution to understanding the psychological mechanisms that foster proactive customer service behaviours. Emotional intelligence equips employees with the tools to initiate and sustain positive exchanges, while perspective-taking refines their ability to align with customer needs. This alignment is particularly relevant to the study's goal of examining how perspective-taking influences the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive service behaviour. In this regard, the theory not only supports the empirical methodology but also provides a conceptual foundation for exploring the incremental role of perspective-taking in enhancing reciprocal customer interactions and service outcomes. By embedding this theory within its analytical framework, the study contributes valuable insights into the interplay of psychological and behavioural drivers in customer service excellence.

2.2.3 Self-Determination Theory

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), posits that human motivation is guided by the need to satisfy three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the context of proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB), this theory provides a robust framework for understanding how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

influence employee behaviour. Employees with high levels of emotional intelligence (EI) are often intrinsically motivated, as their ability to regulate and understand emotions aligns with the need for competence and relatedness. For instance, customer service representatives who exhibit proactive behaviours are not only motivated by external rewards but also derive intrinsic satisfaction from solving customer problems and fostering positive interactions. This association of intrinsic motivation with EI underscores how employees proactively seek to meet customer needs in ways that are fulfilling both to the customer and to themselves (Huo et al., 2018). The application of SDT to the study's objectives is evident in its explanation of how perspectivetaking mediates the relationship between EI and PCSB. Perspective-taking, which involves understanding and empathizing with the customer's viewpoint, satisfies the need for relatedness by fostering meaningful connections with customers. Employees with high EI are better equipped to adopt such perspectives, as they can intuitively adjust their behaviours to the emotional and cognitive states of others. This is in line with the study's goal of exploring how perspective-taking enhances proactive behaviours, as it demonstrates how intrinsic motivation to engage with customers is amplified by an understanding of their needs. Moreover, SDT suggests that fostering autonomy within the workplace can further enhance these behaviours, as employees who feel empowered to make decisions are more likely to take initiative and exceed customer expectations (Axtell et al., 2007).

The integration of SDT within the study's methodology emphasizes its relevance in shaping data collection and analysis strategies. The use of validated scales like the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) and the Perspective Taking Scale (Axtell et al., 2007) reflects an understanding of the psychological dimensions of motivation and their impact on proactive customer service behaviours. Furthermore, the longitudinal design of the study, which captures the

interplay of EI, perspective-taking, and PCSB over time, mirrors the dynamic process through which intrinsic motivation develops and influences behaviour. By grounding its framework in SDT, the study not only enriches the theoretical understanding of these relationships but also provides actionable insights into how organizations can cultivate environments that foster intrinsic motivation, ultimately enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction (Huo et al., 2018).

2.2.4 Role Theory

Role Theory, as described by Biddle (1979), explores how individuals conform to the expectations associated with their social roles. Within the framework of customer service, this theory provides a lens for understanding how emotional intelligence (EI) and perspective-taking drive proactive customer service behaviours (PCSB). Employees in customer-oriented roles often internalize organizational norms and expectations, which influence their behaviour in interactions with customers. Emotionally intelligent employees can regulate their responses to these role expectations, ensuring that they meet or exceed customer needs. For instance, such employees may proactively identify issues customers might encounter, demonstrating not only technical competence but also a deeper alignment with the social expectations of their roles (Axtell et al., 2007). This reinforces the study's focus on how EI facilitates perspective-taking, enabling employees to anticipate and fulfill customer needs proactively.

The application of Role Theory to the study's methodology highlights its relevance to the examination of perspective-taking as a mediator in the EI-PCSB relationship. Employees with high levels of EI are often better equipped to adopt the perspectives of their customers, a key requirement of their role in service-oriented industries. The theory emphasizes that meeting role expectations requires both cognitive and emotional engagement, which are fostered by emotional

intelligence. The longitudinal design employed in the study captures these evolving role dynamics over time, providing insights into how perspective-taking enhances an employee's ability to fulfill the proactive behaviours expected of their roles (Huo et al., 2018).

Role Theory is integral to understanding the broader implications of this study, particularly its contribution to organizational training and development. Service-oriented organizations can leverage this theory to design training programs that reinforce role expectations while enhancing emotional intelligence and perspective-taking skills. By aligning these elements, employees can internalize their roles more effectively, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study's findings demonstrate how the connection between role expectations and employee behaviour, facilitated by EI and perspective-taking, contributes to a proactive and responsive service culture. This connection not only fulfills organizational objectives but also reinforces the significance of Role Theory in explaining how emotional and cognitive factors underpin effective service delivery.

2.3 Conceptual Review

The conceptual review explores the key concepts underlying the research on emotional intelligence, perspective-taking, and proactive customer service behaviour. It investigates the theoretical and empirical foundations of these concepts and their interrelationships within service-oriented industries. These concepts are integral to the study's aims and objectives as they help identify key findings and research gaps.

2.3.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a concept can be traced back to the early 20th century. Psychologist Edward Lee Thorndike in 1920 propounded the theory of social intelligence which he defined as

“the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relations” (Thorndike, 1920, p. 228). Other psychologists such as David Wechsler and Abraham Maslow developed various theories to explain non cognitive intelligence and building emotional strength. The works of these earlier psychologists paved way for the development of emotional intelligence concept by Salovey and Mayer (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In 1990, psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer introduced the term "emotional intelligence" in a paper titled "Emotional Intelligence." The first definition of emotional intelligence is “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s emotions, to discriminate among them and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). They later redefined it as "the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion and regulate emotion in self and others” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This was soon followed by Bar-On who then defined emotional intelligence as “noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence an individual’s ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures successfully” (Bar-On, 1997). Goleman (1995) also defined it as “any underlying personal characteristic that is not represented by cognitive intelligence”.

These definitions led to the categorization of emotional intelligence in three main models. These are the ability model, the mixed model and the trait model. The ability model argues that emotions are processed based on one’s cognitive ability and not personality trait. The mixed model on the other hand views emotional intelligence as “a combination of cognitive ability and aspects of personality, health and wellbeing” (Bar-On, 1997). The trait model views emotional intelligence as a personality trait. Petrides (2009, 2010) argued that emotional intelligence is “a trait and not intelligence”. This study will focus on the ability model.

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Ability Model of emotional intelligence is a widely accepted and empirically validated model. This model posits that emotional intelligence is “ability based and not a trait (consistent behaviour over time) as it increases by age and training” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This model purely uses one’s cognitive ability in processing emotions as opposed to processing emotions based on personality traits. According to this model, there are four key components of EI: perception of emotion, understanding of emotion, use of emotion, and management of emotion.

To begin with, the basis of EI lies within the ability to accurately perceive emotions in oneself and others (Mayer et al., 2004). Perception of emotions involves recognizing and identifying emotional cues, such as facial expressions, vocal tone, and body language. Effective perception of emotion allows individuals to understand the emotional states of those around them, providing a basis for empathetic and appropriate interactions. Beyond perceiving emotions, EI encompasses the ability to comprehend the meaning and significance of emotional cues (Mayer et al., 2004). This entails understanding the underlying causes of emotions, their potential consequences, and how they influence behaviour. A deep understanding of emotions allows individuals to interpret emotional signals accurately and respond in a manner that acknowledges and addresses the underlying emotional needs. The third component is the use of emotion. Effective EI involves utilizing emotions to facilitate thought, judgment, and action (Mayer et al., 2004). A study by Zeidner et. al (2012) suggest that individuals with high EI can harness emotions to enhance decision-making, problem-solving, and creativity. Emotions can serve as valuable sources of information, guiding individuals towards adaptive and effective decisions. By understanding their own emotions and the emotions of others, individuals can make informed choices and navigate complex social situations with greater success. The last component of emotional intelligence according to this

model is management of emotions, that is, the ability to regulate and manage one's emotions. This includes the capacity to control impulsive reactions, delay gratification, and cope with stress and frustration. Managing one's emotions effectively allows for him or her to maintain composure and resilience in the face of challenging circumstances, promoting emotional well-being and interpersonal harmony. The Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's EI ability model has been used in a variety of research settings, including educational, organizational, and clinical settings. The model has also been used to develop training programs and interventions aimed at improving EI. In service-oriented environments, such as customer-facing roles, EI becomes a critical factor in enhancing interpersonal interactions and ensuring quality service delivery. Employees with high EI can identify customer emotions, assess their needs accurately, and manage their own emotional responses to challenging scenarios, fostering a positive service experience (Huo et al., 2018). This capability is particularly valuable in resolving conflicts and addressing customer complaints, as it allows employees to remain composed and empathetic, promoting trust and satisfaction in service relationships.

The relevance of EI extends to its influence on employee behaviours, particularly in encouraging proactive engagement with customers. Research indicates that emotionally intelligent employees are more adept at anticipating customer needs and providing tailored solutions that go beyond basic expectations (Kim, 2007). This proactive approach is driven by their ability to regulate emotions and maintain a positive outlook, which fuels their motivation to exceed customer expectations. Furthermore, EI facilitates the development of strong interpersonal connections, enabling employees to foster deeper relationships with customers. Such relationships contribute to customer loyalty and retention, which are critical for organizational success. As highlighted by Jordan et al.

(2002), the integration of emotional intelligence in service roles corresponds with the broader goal of enhancing organizational performance through superior customer engagement.

From a methodological perspective, the study's use of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) effectively operationalizes EI within the research framework. This tool captures essential dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-emotional appraisal, regulation of emotions, and the use of emotions to facilitate thought processes (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). Overall, the study highlights the centrality of emotional intelligence in shaping customer service outcomes, offering valuable implications for both academic research and practical applications.

2.3.2 Perspective-Taking

Perspective-taking (PT) is the cognitive ability to see the world from another person's viewpoint, encompassing both emotional and rational dimensions. As described by Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000), it enables individuals to adopt and empathize with the experiences, emotions, and intentions of others. In customer service, perspective-taking serves as a vital skill, as employees who effectively engage in PT can anticipate and address customer needs with precision. This ability allows them to tailor solutions that resonate with customers on a personal level, fostering trust and satisfaction. For instance, a customer service agent who understands a dissatisfied customer's frustrations can proactively offer solutions that meet and exceed the customer's expectations, enhancing the service experience (Axtell et al., 2007). PT thus becomes a cornerstone of effective customer engagement, particularly in dynamic service environments.

The connection between perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB) is indicated by its role in fostering anticipatory and empathetic interactions. Employees with strong PT skills are better equipped to foresee potential challenges and act preemptively to address them.

This proactive approach, rooted in empathy, contributes to building long-term customer relationships. The study's emphasis on PT is in accordance with findings by Huo et al. (2018), which highlight the critical impact of PT on enhancing proactive service outcomes. Organizations that cultivate PT among employees are likely to see improvements in service delivery, as employees leverage their understanding of customer perspectives to create value-driven interactions. This integration of organizational goals with customer needs illustrates the practical importance of PT in achieving superior service standards.

Perspective-taking is integral to the study's examination of its mediating role between emotional intelligence (EI) and PCSB. PT enhances the effect of EI by providing a cognitive framework for employees to apply their emotional awareness in practical scenarios. As emotionally intelligent employees engage in PT, they bridge the gap between understanding emotions and acting on them to deliver proactive services. This mediating role of PT not only validates its importance but also highlights the necessity of incorporating it into training programs aimed at enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction.

2.3.3 Proactive Customer Service Behaviour

Proactive Customer Service Behaviour (PCSB) refers to self-initiated actions that go beyond the basic requirements of a customer service role to anticipate and address customer needs before they arise (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). This behaviour involves identifying potential issues, providing tailored solutions, and suggesting improvements that enhance customer satisfaction. Employees who exhibit PCSB are often driven by a combination of emotional intelligence and a deep understanding of customer perspectives, enabling them to create personalized and memorable service experiences (Huo et al., 2018). PCSB includes behaviours such as welcoming customers

warmly, understanding their needs, and taking initiatives that exceed their expectations, all of which contribute to strengthening customer loyalty and organizational reputation (Rank et al., 2007).

The role of PCSB is particularly critical in industries where customer satisfaction and loyalty are paramount. Research has shown that proactive behaviours not only improve immediate customer experiences but also build long-term relationships that benefit organizations through repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Employees capable of anticipating customer needs are better equipped to handle complex service interactions and prevent potential dissatisfaction (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). Organizations that encourage PCSB among their employees tend to develop stronger brand images, as proactive service behaviours signal a commitment to excellence. These behaviours are particularly impactful in competitive service environments where differentiation through superior customer engagement is vital for success.

PCSB aligns closely with the study's objectives of examining the role of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking in fostering proactive customer service. The longitudinal methodology employed in the research captures how these psychological constructs evolve to influence PCSB over time. The integration of PCSB into the study highlights its significance as a measurable outcome of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking, offering actionable insights into how organizations can train and empower employees to deliver exceptional customer service.

2.4 Review of Related Studies

2.4.1 Emotional Intelligence and Proactive Customer Service Behaviour

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been widely recognized as a key determinant of proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB), which refers to behaviour that goes beyond what is expected to meet and exceed customer needs (Bitner et al., 1990). Employees with higher EI are more adept at

identifying and regulating their own emotions, empathising with customers, and fostering positive interactions, all of which provide the foundation for proactive service.

A substantial body of research supports this link, though findings are not entirely uniform. For instance, Kim (2007) examined the impact of salespersons' emotional intelligence on their adaptive selling and emotional expression, as well as its influence on perceived service quality. The study utilized a survey methodology to assess these relationships in customer interactions. The findings revealed that higher emotional intelligence in salespersons led to better adaptive selling and positive emotional expression, which significantly enhanced customers' perceived service quality. This reinforces the view that EI equips employees with the flexibility and emotional regulation needed to deliver service beyond routine expectations. Similarly, studies conducted in Ghana highlight EI's influence in workplace contexts. Tetteh (2019) assessed how leaders' emotional intelligence influenced employee creativity in indigenous Ghanaian banks, while also exploring the mediating role of employee voice. A cross-sectional study was conducted using an explanatory sequential mixedmethod approach, involving surveys from 266 employees and interviews with 18 branch managers across four banks. The findings indicated that leaders' emotional intelligence positively impacted employee creativity and employee voice, with transformational leadership more strongly predicting creativity than transactional leadership. Employee voice mediated the relationship between leaders' emotional intelligence and creativity. Ajeigbe (2019) also examined the relationship between workforce diversity, emotional intelligence, and organizational performance in Kwara State's public service. The study used a mixed-method approach, surveying 600 respondents and conducting eight interviews, with data analyzed using multiple regression, correlation analysis, and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that workforce diversity factors like ethnicity, religion, language, and education positively influenced service efficiency,

innovative capacity, and operational effectiveness, though language had a negative effect on innovation. Additionally, emotional intelligence positively affected public service delivery. The study concluded that education levels and emotional intelligence are key to improving public service performance in Kwara State.

Beyond organisational performance, EI also appears to strengthen relational dynamics. Boohene et al. (2020) investigated how emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between social capital and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). They selected 1,532 SMEs through a simple random sampling technique and analyzed the data using structural equation modeling with AMOS. The findings revealed that social capital had a positive and significant relationship with emotional intelligence, which also positively impacted SME performance. Furthermore, emotional intelligence strengthened the relationship between social capital and performance. The study concluded that enhancing emotional intelligence and social networks can improve SME performance. Similarly, a study by Bashir (2021) explored the impact of workplace incivility on employee emotional exhaustion, personality traits, customer satisfaction, self-worth, self-efficacy, and perspective-taking intention. Using a quantitative methodology, the study collected data through questionnaires from employees and customers in the Australian services sector, with 226 and 412 responses, respectively. The findings indicated that workplace incivility significantly influenced employee and customer behaviours, moderated by gender and personality traits, and mediated by self-worth and satisfaction. The study concluded that addressing workplace incivility could improve service performance and employee well-being, offering insights for the Australian services industry. Collectively, these findings indicate that EI not only fosters proactive behaviour directly but also operates as a buffer or amplifier within broader organisational processes.

2.4.2 Emotional intelligence and Perspective-Taking

Emotional intelligence and perspective-taking are closely related psychological concepts that are essential to productive interpersonal interactions in a variety of contexts, such as the workplace, personal relationships, and customer service. Perspective-Taking (PT) is the “ability to understand the world from another person's point of view” (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). This ability is strengthened by emotional intelligence, which allows people to effectively process and react to social and emotional stimuli.

A crucial aspect of emotional intelligence, empathy, fosters the emotional connection required to comprehend another person's experiences, which in turn enhances perspective-taking. Individuals with emotional intelligence are able to effectively interpret nonverbal clues, including body language or voice tone, which is crucial for understanding other people's perspectives. Emotionally intelligent individuals are also better able to analyse their emotions and use that information to guide their behaviour. Perspective-taking, for instance, enables an emotionally intelligent individual to anticipate other people's reactions to particular circumstances and adapt their own behaviour accordingly.

A study by Singh (2014) investigated the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) and perspective-taking (PT) on managerial effectiveness in multinational corporations (MNCs). The study emphasized the manner in which these two psychological concepts facilitate improved team management, leadership, and decision-making in complex organizational settings. Singh demonstrated how having both high levels of emotional intelligence and the ability to see things from a different perspective significantly improves effectiveness in management. Managers who possess these qualities perform better at inspiring teams, handling complex interpersonal

situations, and promoting organizational success. This study is especially important to recognizing the value of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking in the workplace, particularly in customer service or team leadership roles. Singh's research highlights how crucial it is to incorporate EI and PT into management development frameworks in order to increase organizational effectiveness.

2.4.3 Perspective-Taking and Proactive Customer Service Behaviour

Perspective-taking is essential to demonstrating proactive customer service behaviour. Proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB) is behaviour that goes beyond what is expected to meet and exceed customer needs (Bitner et al., 1990). Employees that adopt this behaviour are better able to anticipate and satisfy the demands of their customers, which increases customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, it enables employees to evaluate circumstances from several perspectives, which leads to more innovative and practical solutions. Finally, by considering things from the perspective of the customer, employees can react empathetically, building rapport and trust. Customers are more likely to see the service provider as thoughtful and attentive as a result of this emotional connection.

Studies have shown that perspective-taking significantly enhances proactive customer service behaviour. Huo et al. (2018) aimed to investigate how customer-oriented perspective-taking influences employees' proactive service performance. They conducted a three-wave, time-lagged study with 145 frontline employees and their supervisors in the Chinese hospitality industry. Using structural equation modeling, they found that customer-oriented perspective-taking enhanced employees' role breadth self-efficacy (RBSE), which, in turn, positively impacted proactive customer service and complaint-handling performance. The effect was stronger for employees with

proactive personalities. The study concluded that RBSE mediated the relationship between perspective-taking and proactive service behaviours, offering valuable insights into service performance improvement.

2.4.4 Perspective-taking as a mediating mechanism

In research design, mediation is not a universal property of any given construct but is context-specific. A variable functions as a mediator only when it provides the mechanistic pathway linking a predictor to an outcome (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In this study, perspective-taking (PT) is proposed as the mediating mechanism that explains how employees' emotional intelligence (EI) translates into proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB).

The theoretical basis for this claim lies in the interplay between emotional processes and cognitive role-taking. EI equips employees with the ability to perceive and regulate emotions, which facilitates empathic understanding and reduces egocentric bias in interpreting customer situations (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Schutte et al., 2001). This emotional ability creates the conditions under which PT is more likely to occur. Once engaged, PT enables employees to adopt the customer's perspective, anticipate latent needs, and craft proactive solutions that exceed expectations (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Grant & Berry, 2011).

Empirical studies provide growing support for this pathway. For instance, a study by Schröder-Abé and Schütz in 2011 investigated the mediating role of perspective-taking in the relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship quality. They discovered that the relationship between EI and relationship quality is significantly mediated by perspective-taking. Relationship quality was generally higher among individuals with higher EI levels. The relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship quality was facilitated by perspective-taking. Improved relationships resulted from perspective-taking, which is more common among individuals with

higher EI. Perspective-taking improved communication, empathy, and understanding in partnerships, which ultimately increased relationship quality. This study emphasizes how crucial perspective-taking and emotional intelligence are to establishing and preserving healthy relationships. Individuals can create stronger bonds and enhance the quality of their relationships by understanding and managing their emotions and considering the viewpoints of others.

Thus, in the EI and PCSB relationship, PT functions as a theoretically and empirically supported mechanism. Specifically, EI provides the emotional foundation, PT operationalises that foundation into an understanding of customer perspectives, and PCSB emerges as the behavioural outcome. Modelling PT in this way allows the present study to contribute to theory by clarifying the mechanism that links emotional intelligence to proactive customer service behaviour, and to practice by highlighting PT as a trainable skill that organisations can cultivate to improve customer service outcomes.

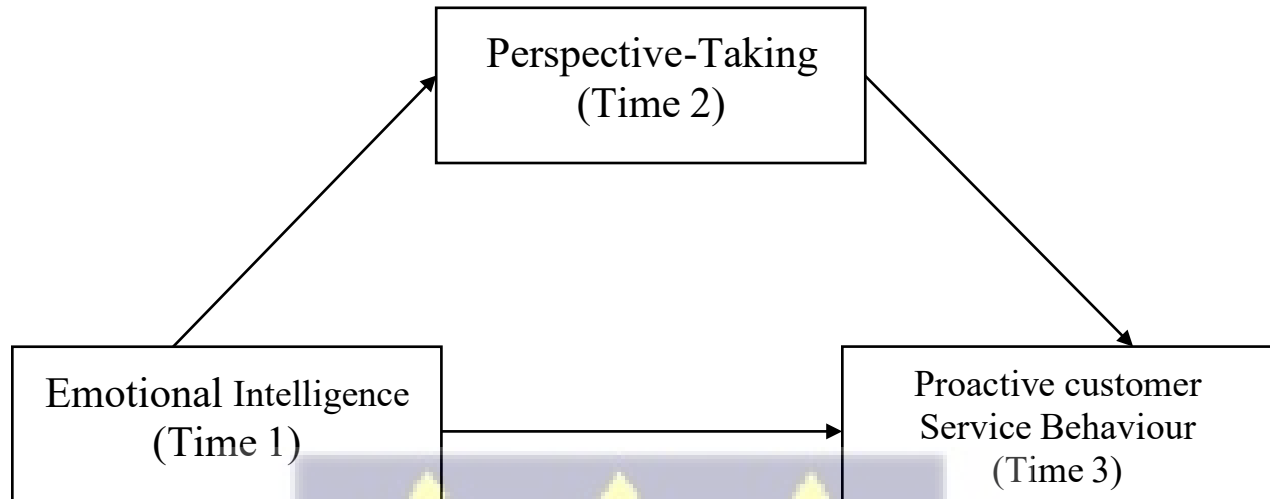
2.5 Statement of Hypotheses

Based on the study objectives and reviewed literature, the following hypotheses were tested, reflecting the conceptual framework of this study:

1. There will be a significant positive relationship between EI and PCSB.
2. There will be a significant positive relationship between EI and PT.
3. There will be a significant positive relationship between PT and PCSB.
4. EI will affect PCSB through perspective-taking.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research design, setting and population used for the study are discussed in this chapter. It also defines the sampling technique and sample characteristics. Furthermore, the chapter provides an in-depth description of the research instrument used as well as the procedure used in collecting data and analysis. Ethical issues considered in the study are also discussed.

3.2 Research Design

The study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour, with perspective-taking as a mediator variable. The study was focused on frontline employees in service-oriented organizations in Ghana. In order to achieve this aim, a three-wave explanatory survey design was employed to investigate the research problem. A threewave design is a longitudinal research design in which data is collected from the same participants at three different time points (Bryk & Raudenbush, 2016). This survey design was used in order to capture the indirect relationship between variables more clearly. Also, collecting data at different time points helps reduce common biases, such as "common method bias," which can occur when data is collected all at once. Spacing out data collection helps ensure that responses are more accurate and less influenced by temporary moods or immediate context.

3.3 Population

The study was conducted across service-oriented organizations in Ghana. The target population for this study comprised frontline employees working in customer service roles across service-oriented

organisations in Ghana, particularly in industries such as banking, telecommunications, and hospitality. These sectors were chosen because they involve intensive customer interaction where proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB) is most visible and relevant. The research setting included both public and private sector organizations as well as small and large-scale enterprises and non-profit organizations. The selection of organizations was based on their willingness to participate in the study and the availability of participants.

The accessible population was limited to three service organisations in Accra that granted the researcher access to their employees. While the target population extended nationwide, the study was restricted to Accra due to feasibility constraints and organisational access.

3.4 Sample size & Sampling Technique

A sample size of 111 participants was used for the study. This sample size was determined using the formula offered by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) which states that $N > 50 + 8m$ where m = number of predictor variables. Following this formula, a sample size of 66 would have been enough for this study. As such, the sample size of 111 was ideal as it surpasses 66. The participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Participants included employees in the service industry of Ghana between the ages of 18 and 60 who have a minimum of six months of experience in their current organization and are willing to take part in the study. Employees with less than six months of experience, employees on temporary contracts or probation and employees unwilling to take part in the study were excluded. National Service Personnel and interns were also excluded from participating in the study. The minimum age was set at 18 to ensure participants had the legal capacity to provide informed consent, and because individuals under 18 are not typically employed full-time in customer service roles. A

minimum working experience of six months also ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to customer service roles to accurately report on emotional intelligence, perspective-taking, and proactive behaviours.

To guarantee a diverse representation of the population, the participants were selected from different organizations in the service industry of Ghana.

The researcher contacted and was granted permission from the Human Resource (HR) Departments of selected organizations to conduct the study among their employees.

The demographic data collected showed that of the 111 customer service employees who responded, 56 were males and 55 were females. Table 1 summaries the characteristics of the samples used in the study in the form of frequency and percentage.

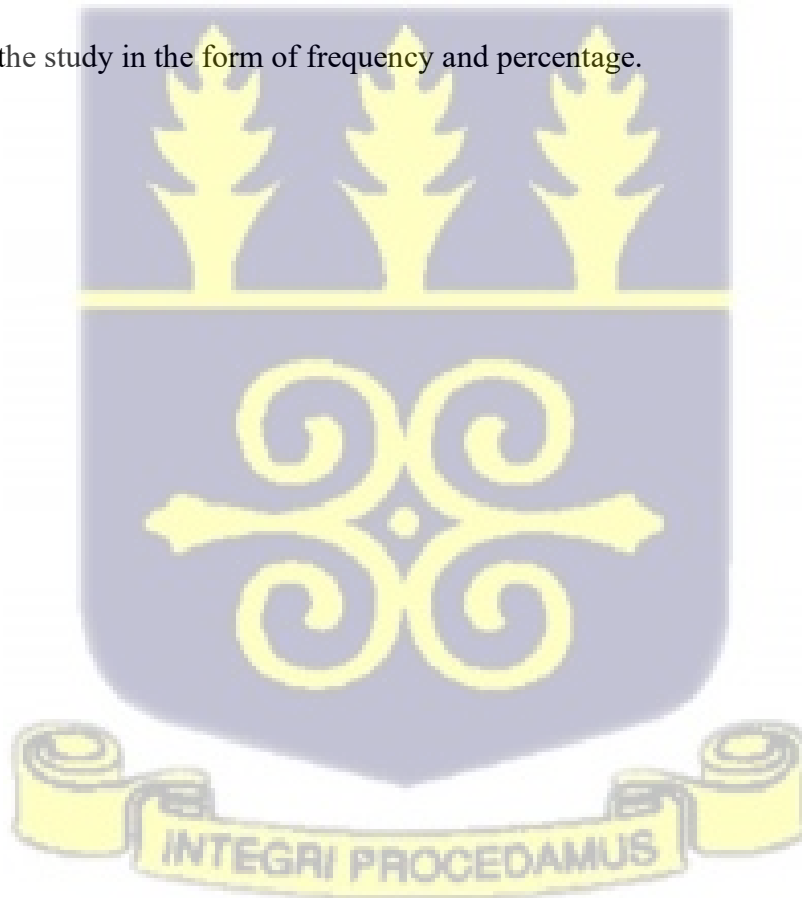


Table 1

Demographic characteristics of participants

Response	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	56	50.5%
	Female	55	49.5%
Age	18-29 years	72	64.9%
	30-39 years	24	21.6%
	40-49 years	7	6.3%
	> 50 years	8	7.2%
Educational	Diploma/HND	10	9%
Background	First Degree	69	62.2%
	Master's degree	24	21.6%
	Doctorate	4	3.6%
	Other	4	3.6%
Working	£ 1 year	40	36%
Experience	2-5 years	37	33.3%
	6-10 years	21	19%

> 10 years

13

11.7%

The demographic information reveals a well-distributed sample in terms of gender, with a slight male predominance. Most respondents are in their early to mid-career stages, particularly between the ages of 18-29 years. The majority of the sample holds a degree, indicating a well-educated workforce. Furthermore, most respondents have significant working experience, primarily between 1-5 years, highlighting a seasoned and experienced participant pool for the study. This diverse background information ensures a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour among a varied group of service-oriented employees in Ghana.

3.5 Measures

To achieve the objectives of this study, three instruments were used. The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002), the Perspective Taking Scale by Axell et al. (2007) and the Proactive Service Performance Scale by Rank et al. (2007). The questionnaires were designed on a 7-point Likert scale. The first questionnaire assessed the participants' perceptions of emotional intelligence, the second questionnaire assessed the participants' level perspective-taking and the third questionnaire assessed participants' ability to engage in proactive customer service behaviours.

3.5.1 Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002).

Emotional intelligence was measured using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale

(WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002). It is a widely used instrument for measuring emotional intelligence (EI) in organizational and psychological research. Developed by Wong and Law in 2002, the WLEIS is a self-report scale constructed to assess emotional intelligence (EI) based on the ability model of EI proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997). This model posits that EI involves the ability to perceive, understand, use, and manage emotions effectively. It is a 16 items scale made up of 4 questions from the four dimensions of EI which are “appraisal and expression of emotion in the self (self-emotional appraisal [SEA]), appraisal and recognition of emotion in others (others’ emotional appraisal [OEA]), regulation of emotion in the self (regulation of emotion [ROE]), and use of emotion to facilitate performance (use of emotion [UOE])” (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). Participants will respond based on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating “strongly disagree” and 7 indicating “strongly agree”. An example of an item on the scale is “I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time”. This scale has been widely used in research and organizational settings due to its reliability and validity across diverse cultural contexts. It has been applied in studies on job performance, job satisfaction, leadership, customer service, and employee well-being, among other areas. Studies using the WLEIS have shown that high scores in emotional intelligence are often associated with better workplace outcomes, including improved interpersonal relationships, higher performance, and enhanced resilience (Wong & Law, 2002).

3.5.2 Perspective Taking Scale (Axtell et al., 2007)

Perspective-taking was measured using a scale developed by Axtell et al. (2007). The Perspective Taking Scale developed by Axtell, Parker, Holman, and Totterdell (2007) is a measure designed to assess an individual's ability to adopt the perspective of others, particularly in workplace settings. This scale focuses on understanding how well employees can empathize with or view

situations from the standpoint of colleagues, clients, or customers, which is crucial for fostering collaboration, effective communication, and proactive behaviour.

This scale distinguishes between two distinct aspects of perspective-taking. These are cognitive perspective-taking and affective perspective-taking. The cognitive aspect focuses on the ability to understand another person's thoughts, beliefs, and intentions. It involves mentally simulating the other person's perspective and considering their point of view. The affective aspect focuses on the ability to share the other person's emotions and feelings. It involves experiencing empathy and compassion for the other person's situation. It is a self-report items that assess both cognitive and affective perspective-taking. It is a 4 items scale that is measured on a 7-point likert scale. An example of an item on the scale is “I think about how I would feel in customers’ shoes”. The Axtell et al. (2007) Perspective Taking Scale is commonly used in studies on workplace dynamics, customer service, teamwork, and leadership. Research using this scale has shown that perspectivetaking is closely linked to positive work outcomes such as improved teamwork, proactive customer service, job performance, and conflict resolution. It is particularly relevant in roles requiring high interpersonal interaction, as it enables employees to anticipate others’ needs and respond in a way that fosters collaboration and customer satisfaction.

3.5.3 The Proactive Service Performance Scale (Rank et al., 2007)

Proactive customer service behaviour was measured using the Proactive Service Performance Scale. The Proactive Service Performance Scale developed by Rank, Carsten, Unger, and Spector (2007) is an instrument designed to measure proactive behaviour in customer service contexts. This scale evaluates an employee’s tendency to go beyond standard service requirements by actively identifying and addressing customer needs, solving problems before they arise, and

making suggestions for service improvements. Proactive service is essential in service roles where anticipating customer needs and taking initiative can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is a seven-item scale and an example of an item on the scale is “I anticipate issues or needs customers might have and proactively develop solutions”. Items on the scale are presented on a 7point likert scale with 1= “strongly disagree” to 7= “strongly agree”. This scale is particularly relevant in customer service, sales, and hospitality sectors, where employees' ability to anticipate customer needs can lead to increased satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business success. Employees who score highly on this scale are typically seen as leaders in service environments because they not only address immediate customer concerns but also enhance customer experience by anticipating future needs and solving potential issues before they arise. The scale is used in both academic research and organizational settings to measure how employees engage with customers in proactive ways and how this behaviour impacts business outcomes. High scores on proactive service performance have been associated with improved customer satisfaction, enhanced team collaboration, and higher sales or service metrics.

3.6 Procedure

The data collection procedure was designed to ensure that the data collected was accurate, reliable, and ethical. It was split into two parts. The first part involved conducting a pilot study for the measuring instruments, and the second part involved gathering data from participants for analysis using the piloted instruments. Data on the variables was collected from the same participants across three measurement occasions. Two weeks interval separated the measurement points. This design is often used to study change or development over time. Data was collected using self-administered survey questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered in-person, where the researcher

distributed hard copies to participants at their respective workplaces. The purpose of the study, confidentiality, and instructions for completing the questionnaires were explained prior to administration. Participants completed the questionnaires during breaks or designated periods, ensuring minimal disruption to work activities.

3.6.1 Pilot Study

For the pilot study, a sample of 27 customer service employees was used. The sample size for pilot study was determined based on the recommendation of Sim and Lewis (2012). The pilot study was conducted in order to identify potential challenges of the instruments (Kraemer, 2006). All instruments used in the study were found to be reliable and valid in the Ghanaian context. The emotional intelligence, perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour scale obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of .94, .93 and .87 respectively during piloting.

3.6.2 Main Study

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Departmental Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology prior to data collection. Also, permission from the Human Resource (HR) departments of selected organizations was sought before the data collection procedure. A total of 128 questionnaires were initially administered across the selected organizations. Out of these, 111 questionnaires were completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 86.7%. The high response rate was achieved through continuous follow-ups and coordination with the Human Resource (HR) departments. Data was collected through self-administered survey questionnaires. The researcher explained the purpose and nature of the study to the participants, and their informed consent was obtained before administering the survey. The introductory letter for the questionnaire

contained information on the researcher, the purpose of the study and the estimated time it will take to complete the questionnaire. This was followed by an informed consent form explaining the procedures, risks, and benefits of the study and these were given to participants. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions.

Data were collected across three measurement occasions, with two weeks separating each wave. At Time 1, participants provided demographic information and completed the Emotional Intelligence (EI) scale. A total number of 128 questionnaires were administered and 118 valid responses were received. At Time 2, two weeks later, participants completed the Perspective-Taking (PT) scale. A total of 118 questionnaires were administered. Of these, 112 responses were obtained. At Time 3, two weeks after Time 2, they completed the Proactive Customer Service Behaviour (PCSB) scale. A total of 112 questionnaires were administered to the same participants and 111 were successfully completed and returned. To ensure that participants' responses were correctly matched across the three waves, each participant was assigned a unique identification code at the start of the study. Participants recorded this code on all subsequent questionnaires, allowing the researcher to link their responses accurately for longitudinal analysis while maintaining anonymity. The overall data collection period spanned six weeks. Each wave took approximately one week for completion, accounting for administration, follow-up reminders, and collection. The two-week intervals between waves allowed for temporal separation, minimizing common method bias.

Of the 128 participants who completed the first wave, 111 participants completed all three waves. Maintaining engagement was facilitated through clear communication of the study's importance, reminders via email and phone, and the support of HR departments. However, several practical challenges were encountered during data collection. One of such challenges is that some

participants were unavailable due to work demands. Data collection was then coordinated with supervisors to identify convenient times, such as breaks or after peak service hours. A few employees were also concerned about confidentiality. The researcher reassured participants that all responses were anonymous, emphasizing the use of unique identification codes. Lastly, a small number of questionnaires were partially filled during the first wave. The researcher made sure to review each questionnaire on collection, requesting participants to complete missing items immediately.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was first screened for missing values and outliers, and any necessary data cleaning and recoding was performed before analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants. To examine the relationships between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour, emotional intelligence and perspective-taking as well as perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour, correlation analysis was conducted. To further examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour, regression analysis was conducted. The dependent variable was proactive customer service behaviour, and the independent variables were emotional intelligence and perspective-taking. Control variables, such as age, gender, education, and work experience, were also included in the analysis to account for their potential influence on proactive customer service behaviour. This is because prior studies suggest that demographic characteristics may influence service behaviour and emotional competencies (Ng & Feldman, 2010). The results of the analysis were presented in the form of tables, and they were discussed in relation to the

research questions and objectives. The implications of the findings for the service industry in Ghana was also discussed, and recommendations for future research and practice were provided.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Measures were taken to ensure that the American Psychological Association's (APA) ethical guidelines for the conduct of psychological research (APA, 2002) were followed in this study. The study received ethical clearance from the Departmental Research and Ethics Committee (DREC) after submitting an application for ethical clearance (DREC/008/23-24). A consent letter was included with the questionnaire. (1) "The purpose of the research, the length of time expected for completion, and procedures; (2) Participants' right to refuse participation and/or withdraw from the study even after it had begun; (3) anticipated consequences in withdrawing; and (4) predictable factors expected to influence willingness to participate, such as potential risks or discomforts, (5) benefits, (6) confidentiality limits; and (7) inducements for participation (8) contact details of researcher for questioning and clarifications of the research, in accordance with Standard 3.10 of the APA's ethical regulations. Permission was granted by the Human Resource (HR) departments of selected organizations. Participants were given the opportunity to indicate their willingness to participate in the study as the information on the consent form was provided to participants during data collection. To cater for confidentiality, participants were not required to write their names on their questionnaires.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data analysis, focusing on the relationships between emotional intelligence, proactive customer service behaviour and perspective-taking. The presentation of the results of the data analysis was done in two parts. The first part involves the preliminary tests which includes frequencies, descriptive statistics and reliability analysis. The second part involves a presentation of the tests of the hypotheses for this study. The results are analyzed using correlation and regression models to assess the direct and mediated effects of the variables in the study. Key findings are discussed in relation to the study's objectives and existing literature.

4.2 Preliminary Analysis

Descriptive statistics of the variables in the study were analyzed and presented in the form of means and standard deviations. Table 2 summarizes the results of the descriptive statistics performed. A reliability analysis was conducted to test the reliability of the measuring instrument used in the study and the results showed that all instruments used were reliable with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .788 to .903. Data collected was tested for normality in fulfillment of the basic requirements for performing regression analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The results obtained from the normality test performed during the preliminary analysis suggests that the data can be subjected to parametric statistical analysis with a skewness and kurtosis values between -1 and 1. The test for normality indicates that variables were normally distributed as skewness and kurtosis values fell between the acceptable range of -1 to +1 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Table 2 also

shows the reliability coefficients of the instruments used were strong. The instruments were therefore reliable.

Table 2

Summary of Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S. D	Skewness	Kurtosis	Alpha
EI	111	25.00	112.00	78.24	18.86	-.484	-.247	.903
PS	111	11.00	49.00	33.44	7.46	-.573	.100	.788
PT	111	5.00	28.00	20.18	5.67	-.638	-.486	.814
Vaild N	111							
(listwise)								

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

The statistical tests that were mainly used in testing the hypotheses formulated for this study were correlational analysis and Hierarchical multiple regression. Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were tested using both correlational analysis and Hierarchical multiple regression. Hypotheses 4 was tested using only Hierarchical multiple regression because the study sought to test mediation.

Although regression analysis alone is sufficient for hypothesis testing, correlation analysis was carried out to provide a descriptive overview of the bivariate associations among emotional intelligence (EI), perspective-taking (PT), and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB). Correlation results were thus descriptive, while regression results were inferential. Also,

correlation alone cannot determine the unique contribution of predictors when other factors are held constant.



Table 3

Summary of Correlations Analysis

Variable	1	2	3
1. Emotional Intelligence	1		
2. Perspective-Taking	.80**	1	
3. Proactive Customer Service Behaviour	.71**	.78**	1

* significant at 0.05, ** significant at the 0.01



Table 4
Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Variable	B	S. E	β	P	R ₂	DR ₂	P
Step 1					.06	.06	.016
(Constant)	4.56	.36		.000			
Gender	.27	.16	.12	.084			
Age	-.11	.15	-.08	.479			
Education	.11	.09	.08	.243			
Work tenure	-.13	.12	-.11	.294			
Step 2					.53	.47	.000
(Constant)	.81	.37		.030			
Gender	.37	.11	.16	.001			
Age	.08	.11	.06	.451			
Education	.03	.07	.02	.703			
Work tenure	-.02	.09	-.02	.779			
EI	.68	.05	.72	.000			

Table 4 Continued

Variable	B	S. E	β	P	R ²	DR ²	P
Step 3					.63	.12	.000
(Constant)	.98	.33		.003			
Gender	.15	.10	.07	.149			
Age	.09	.09	.06	.342			
Education	-.02	.06	-.02	.724			
Work tenure	-.02	.08	-.02	.810			
EI	.25	.07	.26	.001			
PT	.46	.06	.58	.000			

Controlling Multicollinearity

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between EI and PT, $r = .80$, $p < .001$. While this indicates a significant association, it also raised concerns about multicollinearity. Such a high correlation suggests that these two variables might share a large proportion of variance, which can complicate interpretation in predictive models. The steps by which multicollinearity was controlled are discussed below.

To begin with, for the regression analysis, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was calculated to detect multicollinearity. Hair et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

and tolerance values in assessing multicollinearity. They recommend VIF values below 10 and tolerance values above 0.1 to indicate acceptable levels of multicollinearity. Tolerance values for EI and PT were above the acceptable threshold, and VIF values were below 10, indicating that multicollinearity was not severe enough to invalidate the regression model. These statistical checks helped ensure the reliability of the regression coefficients.

Moving on, to reduce the impact of multicollinearity, the regression models were built sequentially. Aiken and West (1991) discussed hierarchical regression as an effective approach to isolate the unique contributions of predictors when multicollinearity is a concern. Sequentially adding variables allows researchers to examine their incremental effects. Model 1 included control variables such as gender, age, education, and tenure. EI was added as a predictor in Model 2 to assess its direct impact on proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB). Model 3 included PT to examine its additional predictive value while controlling for EI. By isolating the incremental effects of PT after accounting for EI, the unique contributions of each variable to PCSB were identified.

Furthermore, standardized beta coefficients were analyzed to determine the relative importance of EI and PT in predicting PCSB. This allowed the unique effects of each variable to be interpreted independently of their shared variance. Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) recommend interpreting standardized beta coefficients to compare the relative contributions of predictors in the presence of shared variance. This helps ensure clarity in identifying which variable has a stronger effect.

Lastly, given the theoretical significance of PT as a mediator between EI and PCSB, mediation analysis was performed. Preacher and Hayes (2008) provided a framework for testing mediation using bootstrapping methods, which are robust even in the presence of moderately high correlations. They emphasize that strong relationships between variables can indicate meaningful

mediation pathways rather than redundancy. The strong correlation between EI and PT was treated as a pathway rather than a confounding factor, aligning with the study's conceptual framework. Mediation analysis confirmed that PT partially mediated the effect of EI on PCSB, emphasizing its role as a mechanism rather than a redundant predictor.

To conclude, although EI and PT are strongly correlated, these steps ensured that their effects were statistically distinguishable in the analysis. The approach minimized multicollinearity while preserving the theoretical integrity of the study. The results support the complementary roles of EI and PT in enhancing proactive customer service behaviour.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 states that *there would be a significant positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Proactive Customer Service Behaviour (PCSB)*. The results of the correlation analysis supported this hypothesis, showing a significant positive correlation between EI and PCSB $r = .71, p < .001$. This indicates that as employees' emotional intelligence increases, so does their engagement in proactive customer service behaviours.

Additionally, the results from the hierarchical multiple regression further validated this relationship. Adding EI as a predictor in step 2 significantly enhanced the explanatory power, increasing the R^2 value from .06 in the control variables only step to .53, ($\Delta R^2 = .47, F(1,203) = 200.74, p < .001$). A substantial direct effect of EI on PCSB was found $\beta = .72, p < .001$. Even in step 3, where PT was added as an additional predictor, EI remained significant $\beta = .26, p = .001$, though its effect size was reduced, suggesting that other variables, such as PT, mediate its impact on PCSB.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 proposed that *there would be a significant positive relationship between EI and PT*. The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = .80$, $p < .001$), thereby supporting this hypothesis. The hierarchical multiple regression also demonstrated that EI is a significant predictor of PT, accounting for a substantial proportion of variance in PT ($R^2 = .63$, $F(1,203) = 368.89$, $p < .001$) in step 3. The substantial effect of EI on PT was highlighted $\beta = .80$, $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 posited that *there would be a significant positive relationship between PT and PCSB*. The results supported this hypothesis, showing a significant correlation between PT and PCSB $r = .78$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, regression analysis confirmed that PT is a strong predictor of PCSB. In step 3 when PT was added, the R^2 value increased to .63 ($\Delta R^2 = .11$, $F(1,202) = 160.91$, $p < .001$), highlighting the additional explanatory power provided by PT. The standardized coefficient for PT ($\beta = .574$, $p < .001$) was the strongest among all predictors, underscoring its critical role in driving PCSB.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states that *emotional intelligence will affect proactive customer service behaviour through perspective-taking*. The findings indicate that perspective-taking partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour. The correlation analysis showed that EI significantly predicts PT $\beta = .80$, $p < .001$, and PT, in turn, significantly predicts PCSB $\beta = .57$, $p < .001$. The inclusion of PT in step 3 of the hierarchical

multiple regression increased the R^2 value from .53 (step 2, EI-only) to .63, highlighting PT's added explanatory power in predicting PCSB. Additionally, the direct effect of EI on PCSB decreased from $\beta = .72$ in step 2 to $\beta = .26$ in step 3, indicating partial mediation. This suggests that while EI has a direct effect on PCSB, its influence is significantly mediated by PT.

4.4 Summary

The correlation analysis provides insights into the relationships between emotional intelligence, perspective-taking, and proactive customer service behaviour. EI is positively correlated with PT ($r = .80, p < 0.001$) and PCSB ($r = .71, p < 0.001$), demonstrating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to exhibit greater perspective-taking ability and proactive customer service behaviour. Similarly, PT is strongly correlated with PCSB ($r = .78, p < 0.001$), suggesting that employees who engage in perspective-taking are more proactive in their customer service. These strong correlations highlight the crucial role of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking in shaping proactive customer service behaviour.

The regression analysis aimed to assess the relationships between emotional intelligence (EI), perspective-taking (PT), and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB) while controlling for demographic variables such as work tenure, education, gender, and age. The analysis was conducted in three steps, with each step introducing additional predictors. In step 1, only the demographic variables were included. The results showed that the relationship between the demographic factors and PCSB was weak, with an R^2 of .06, meaning that only 6% of the variance in PCSB was explained by these variables. The step was statistically significant ($p = 0.016$), but the impact of each demographic factor was minimal, and none showed significant individual effects on PCSB, except for gender, which had a borderline significance ($p = 0.084$).

In step 2, Emotional Intelligence (EI) was added as a predictor, and the results indicated a significant improvement in the model. The R^2 increased to .53, meaning that 53% of the variance in PCSB was now explained by the demographic variables and EI. This substantial jump highlights the critical role of emotional intelligence in predicting proactive customer service behaviour. The significance level for this step was highly robust ($p < 0.001$), and EI emerged as a major predictor, with a standardized Beta of .717, indicating a strong positive relationship between EI and PCSB. Interestingly, gender became a significant predictor in this step ($p = 0.001$), suggesting that when EI is considered, gender differences may influence proactive customer service behaviour. The final step, step 3, included both Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Perspective-Taking (PT) as predictors. With the inclusion of PT, the step's explanatory power increased further, with an R^2 of .63, indicating that 63% of the variance in PCSB was now explained by the combination of demographic factors, EI, and PT. This step was also highly significant ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that adding PT significantly improves the prediction of proactive customer service behaviour. EI remained a significant predictor ($p = 0.001$), but its Beta coefficient dropped from .717 to .261, indicating that PT plays a mediating role, partially explaining the effect of EI on PCSB. PT itself had a strong effect, with a Beta coefficient of .574, confirming its importance in predicting PCSB.

4.5 Key Findings

1. Higher levels of emotional intelligence will lead to increased proactive behaviours in customer service employees. This supports the notion that emotionally intelligent employees are better equipped to initiate and implement proactive service measures.
2. Higher levels of emotional intelligence will lead to increased perspective-taking abilities in customer service employees.

3. The ability to understand and consider the customer's viewpoint is crucial in rendering proactive customer service.
4. Perspective-taking partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour.

The results and implications were discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, and recommendations made appropriately.



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The present study sought to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on proactive customer service behaviour in service-oriented industries across Ghana. The study also sought to assess relationship between emotional intelligence and perspective-taking. Lastly, the study examined perspective-taking as a mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour. This chapter discusses the findings of the study and makes recommendations for practice. Also, the practical implication of the study and limitations are discussed.

5.2 Emotional Intelligence and Proactive Customer Service Behaviour

The first research objective aimed to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB), and the results of the study confirmed a significant positive relationship between these two variables. The study found that employees with higher emotional intelligence were more likely to engage in proactive customer service, as their ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions enabled them to anticipate customer needs, offer tailored solutions, and address potential service issues effectively. This finding aligns with the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), which suggests that emotionally intelligent employees experience positive emotions that broaden their cognitive and social resources. Such employees are more capable of generating innovative responses, thereby engaging in proactive behaviours that enhance service encounters. Kim (2007)

demonstrated that salespersons with higher emotional intelligence engaged in adaptive selling and positive emotional expression, which enhanced customer service outcomes.

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), emotionally intelligent employees are better able to establish positive interactions with customers, which foster reciprocity. Customers, in turn, respond with trust and cooperation, motivating employees to continue demonstrating proactive service behaviours.

The findings can also be understood through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). EI enhances employees' capacity for emotional regulation and empathy, which fulfills the psychological needs for competence and relatedness. By satisfying these intrinsic needs, employees are more motivated to engage in proactive behaviours that go beyond routine service delivery. Another potential explanation for the strong relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour is the increased emotional regulation and empathy that emotionally intelligent employees possess. This emotional regulation allows them to navigate complex customer interactions more smoothly, as suggested by Bashir (2021), who found that emotional intelligence mitigates the negative effects of workplace incivility on service performance.

Lastly, Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964) highlights how employees with high EI expand their interpretation of their roles. Rather than viewing customer service narrowly as responding to requests, they perceive their roles as requiring anticipatory and proactive engagement with customers, thereby strengthening overall service quality.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives reinforce the empirical finding that EI is a critical driver of proactive customer service. Employees with strong emotional competencies not only

regulate emotions effectively but also broaden their role scope, build trust-based exchanges, and draw on intrinsic motivation to exceed customer expectations.

5.3 Emotional Intelligence and Perspective-Taking

In line with the third objective of the study, which is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and perspective-taking, the results show a strong and significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and perspective-taking. The study observed that perspective-taking skills were stronger among employees with higher emotional intelligence. An essential component of perspective-taking is understanding and empathizing with other people's points of views, and this is strengthened by emotional intelligence. Employees with high emotional intelligence are highly skilled in emotional awareness and regulation, which helps them understand social cues and take on perspectives of others. This is in line with earlier studies by Schröder-Abé and Schütz (2011), who discovered that emotional intelligence fosters empathy and reduces egocentric biases in social interactions, hence facilitating perspective-taking. The present findings also provide credence to the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), which holds that people's cognitive and social resources are broadened through positive emotions produced by emotional intelligence. In this context, emotional intelligence encourages adaptability and openness, making it easier and more profound for individuals to adopt a different viewpoint. According to Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees who demonstrate perspective-taking foster cooperative and trusting relationships with customers. These positive exchanges reinforce employees' motivation to maintain empathetic behaviours, creating a cycle of mutually beneficial interactions. In the context of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), perspective-taking satisfies the psychological needs for relatedness and competence. Employees

who feel effective in understanding and responding to customers' needs are intrinsically motivated to maintain these behaviours. Finally, Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964) suggests that perspective-taking allows employees to expand their interpretation of their service roles. Rather than simply reacting to customer demands, they actively seek to understand customer experiences and anticipate expectations, thereby enhancing the proactivity and effectiveness of their service delivery.

These results imply that organizations need to prioritize emotional intelligence training in order to improve employee abilities for perspective-taking. Training programs emphasizing regulation, empathy, and emotional awareness could significantly improve interpersonal comprehension, which in turn may promote improved customer service, teamwork, and leadership. Additionally, Singh (2014) discovered that PT and EI are complementary skills that are essential for managerial effectiveness. The strong predictive relationship discovered in this study highlights how EI and PT are universally applicable in various kinds of sectors, such as customer service, team dynamics, and leadership.

5.4 Perspective-Taking and Proactive Customer Service Behaviour

The findings from this study suggest a strong positive relationship between perspective-taking (PT) and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB), indicating that employees who are adept at understanding customer viewpoints are more likely to engage in proactive service actions. This result aligns with the notion that perspective-taking allows employees to anticipate customer needs and tailor their services accordingly, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction. This is consistent with the work of Huo et al. (2018), who demonstrated that customer-oriented perspective taking positively impacted proactive service performance by enhancing role breadth self-efficacy

(RBSE). Employees who can step into the customer's shoes are better positioned to foresee potential issues and resolve them before they escalate, which strengthens customer relationships and boosts overall service performance. The empathy-driven strategies that emerge from perspective-taking provide service employees with the ability to predict customer expectations and respond promptly, a critical element in industries where customer satisfaction is paramount.

Furthermore, the results may be influenced by the nature of service roles, which often require high levels of interpersonal interaction. Employees in such roles benefit from being able to see situations from the customer's perspective, as this enhances their ability to provide tailored and anticipatory solutions. This observation is in line with the findings of Van Tonder et al. (2024), who emphasized that psychological factors like self-efficacy and optimism lead to proactive behaviours in customer interactions. While their study focused on proactive customer behaviours, both studies underscore the critical role of perspective taking in shaping proactive actions within service contexts. By understanding customers' needs and responding effectively, employees not only resolve issues but also contribute to a more personalized and responsive customer experience, fostering long-term customer loyalty.

The evidence from this study further support broader theoretical frameworks, highlighting the pivotal role of empathy and perspective-taking in enhancing proactive customer service behaviours. The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001) posits that perspective-taking expands employees' cognitive and social resources, enabling them to generate creative and proactive solutions in customer service contexts. By understanding customer emotions and viewpoints, employees broaden their thinking and develop strategies to enhance customer satisfaction.

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees' engagement in perspective-taking strengthens trust and positive relationships with customers. These constructive exchanges encourage employees to continue proactive behaviours, as they anticipate reciprocal benefits such as customer loyalty, satisfaction, and appreciation.

As explained by the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), perspective-taking fulfills the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Employees who effectively understand customer perspectives experience a sense of mastery and connection, which intrinsically motivates them to act proactively in addressing customer needs.

Finally, Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964) posits that perspective-taking allows employees to expand the boundaries of their service roles. Instead of responding solely to explicit customer requests, employees anticipate and act on implicit needs, demonstrating proactive role behaviours that exceed standard expectations.

In sum, perspective-taking equips employees with cognitive, relational, and motivational resources that facilitate proactive engagement with customers. Integrating these theoretical frameworks highlights how PT drives PCSB through emotional, social, and role-based mechanisms, emphasizing its critical importance in service-oriented environments.

5.5 The mediating role of perspective-taking in the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour

Objective four aimed to explore the mediating role of perspective-taking in the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB). The study's findings reveal that perspective-taking significantly mediates this relationship, suggesting that emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to engage in perspective-taking, which in

turn leads to proactive customer service actions. This result is consistent with Huo et al. (2018), who found that perspective-taking enhances employees' ability to anticipate and address customer needs by increasing their role breadth self-efficacy. In the current study, perspective-taking serves as a crucial psychological mechanism through which emotionally intelligent employees become more attuned to customers' perspectives, thus enhancing their proactive engagement with customers. Emotional intelligence, with its emphasis on recognizing and managing emotions, allows employees to be more empathetic, aligning their responses with customer expectations. Kim (2007) also highlighted the role of emotional intelligence in enabling salespersons to better adapt their behaviours to customer needs, while Tetteh (2019) emphasized how emotionally intelligent leaders influence creativity through employee voice, a mediating factor similar to perspective-taking. The current study builds on these findings by demonstrating that emotional intelligence does not act alone but rather influences customer service behaviours through perspective-taking, enhancing employees' ability to proactively engage with customers. Furthermore, the study supports Boohene et al. (2020), who found that emotional intelligence strengthens the relationship between social capital and SME performance, by illustrating how EI, through perspective-taking, drives better service performance. This suggests that organizations should focus on developing both emotional intelligence and perspective-taking skills to foster proactive customer service behaviours, improve service quality, and enhance overall customer satisfaction.

The mediation effect of perspective-taking also resonates with the theories that explain emotional intelligence and service behaviours. From the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), emotional intelligence generates positive emotional experiences that broaden employees' thought-action repertoires. By fostering perspective-taking, EI enables employees to

identify novel ways to anticipate and meet customer needs, building enduring personal and social resources that facilitate proactive customer engagement.

In terms of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees who demonstrate high EI and engage in perspective-taking create a positive cycle of social exchange with customers. Understanding customer viewpoints and responding proactively fosters trust and reciprocity, motivating employees to continue engaging in proactive behaviours that strengthen customer relationships and satisfaction.

From the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), perspective-taking satisfies employees' intrinsic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Emotionally intelligent employees who adopt customers' perspectives feel more competent and connected, which intrinsically motivates proactive service behaviours, reinforcing a self-sustaining pattern of engagement and initiative.

Finally, Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964) suggests that EI-driven perspective-taking allows employees to expand their perceived role boundaries. Instead of merely performing prescribed duties, employees anticipate customer needs and act proactively, demonstrating role breadth and flexibility. This expansion of role expectations highlights the mechanism through which EI translates into proactive customer service behaviour via perspective-taking.

In summary, perspective-taking acts as a critical psychological and behavioural pathway linking emotional intelligence to proactive customer service. By integrating these four theoretical perspectives, it is evident that EI fosters positive emotions, social reciprocity, intrinsic motivation, and role expansion—all of which converge to enhance proactive customer engagement and service excellence.

5.6 Implications for Practice and Future Research

The findings of this study have significant implications for policy and practice within service-oriented organizations. At the policy level, organizations should prioritize the integration of emotional intelligence and perspective-taking skills into their hiring and training frameworks. By embedding these competencies into recruitment processes and performance assessments, organizations can ensure that they hire and develop individuals who are equipped to handle customer service demands proactively. In practice, organizations should implement continuous professional development programs focusing on emotional intelligence and perspective-taking. These programs can empower employees to enhance their interpersonal skills, leading to more effective customer service interactions. Additionally, creating policies that encourage collaboration and teamwork will foster environments where employees can share best practices and offer more seamless customer experiences, ensuring that service quality remains high.

For future research, this study opens several avenues for deeper exploration. One important area is the need for longitudinal studies to examine how emotional intelligence and perspective-taking evolve over time and their sustained impact on proactive customer service behaviour. Future studies could also explore the role of organizational factors such as leadership style, workplace culture, and job satisfaction in shaping these behaviours. Moreover, expanding the research to different sectors and cultural contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how emotional intelligence and perspective-taking interact with customer service across diverse environments. Qualitative studies could further enrich these findings by capturing in-depth employee experiences, offering a more nuanced understanding of the factors that drive proactive customer service behaviour.

5.7 Limitations of the Study

The study, while providing valuable insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence, perspective-taking, and proactive customer service behaviour, is not without its limitations. One notable limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce biases such as social desirability, where respondents may overestimate their emotional intelligence or proactive behaviours to align with perceived positive traits. Additionally, the study's focus on a specific service-oriented sector may limit the generalizability of the findings across other industries or cultural contexts. Furthermore, while the study employed robust quantitative methods, it did not account for potential external factors, such as organizational culture or leadership styles, which could also influence customer service behaviour. These limitations suggest that future research could benefit from longitudinal designs, a more diverse range of industries, and the inclusion of qualitative insights to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

5.8 Recommendations for Practice

To begin, organizations should invest in emotional intelligence training for their customer service staff to enhance their ability to manage emotions effectively during customer interactions. By developing emotional awareness, employees can better handle challenging situations, resulting in more personalized and proactive service. Emotional intelligence training can also improve employees' self-regulation and empathy, which are crucial for anticipating customer needs and providing tailored solutions.

Secondly, organizations should integrate perspective-taking exercises into their regular training programs. Encouraging employees to consistently put themselves in customers' shoes can help

them better understand customer emotions and expectations. This skill can lead to a more empathetic approach to customer service, where employees proactively identify and address potential concerns, thereby improving overall customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, organizations should establish collaborative team environments that encourage employees to work together in providing seamless customer service. By fostering partnerships between service representatives, organizations can ensure that the transfer of information and customer care is handled efficiently and proactively. This teamwork can reduce gaps in service delivery and ensure that customer needs are consistently met, even when different representatives are involved.

Lastly, organizations should implement feedback mechanisms to monitor and continuously improve the proactive behaviours of customer service teams. By regularly collecting and analyzing feedback from both customers and employees, organizations can identify areas where employees might need further support or training. This feedback loop can also highlight successful strategies, allowing the organization to reinforce effective customer service practices and adapt to changing customer needs.

5.9 Conclusion

The study concludes that emotional intelligence (EI) and perspective-taking (PT) play significant roles in shaping proactive customer service behaviour (PCSB), particularly within service-oriented sectors. The findings underscore the importance of employees' ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions, which directly contributes to their proactive engagement with customers. Emotional intelligence enhances the likelihood of employees anticipating customer needs, addressing potential issues, and offering tailored solutions, demonstrating the value of

emotional intelligence in customer service settings. Moreover, the strong relationship between EI and PCSB suggests that emotionally intelligent employees can effectively manage customer interactions, ensuring smoother service transitions and overall satisfaction.

Furthermore, the study highlights the critical role of perspective-taking in proactive customer service behaviour. Employees who can see situations from the customer's viewpoint are better able to predict customer expectations, resulting in more personalized and responsive service. Perspective-taking enables service representatives to empathize with customers, anticipate their needs, and offer solutions before issues arise. This capability enhances their ability to build stronger customer relationships and fosters customer satisfaction. The positive association between perspective-taking and proactive customer service behaviour emphasizes the importance of empathy-driven strategies in customer service roles.

The study concludes that perspective-taking mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and proactive customer service behaviour, demonstrating that emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to engage in perspective-taking, which in turn leads to proactive service actions. This mediation effect illustrates that perspective-taking is a key mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences customer service behaviour. The findings suggest that organizations should prioritize training programs that focus on developing both emotional intelligence and perspective-taking skills, as these attributes contribute to more proactive, effective, and customer-centered service. By enhancing these capabilities, organizations can improve their service quality and drive greater customer satisfaction, ultimately benefiting both the employees and the business.

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APPENDIX

Demographic Information

1. Gender

Male { } Female { }

2. Age

18-29 years

30-39 years

40-49 years

>50 years

3. Educational qualification

HND

First Degree

Master's Degree

Doctorate

Other (please specify)

4. What is your current job position?.....

5. How long have you been working in this current job?

£ 1 year

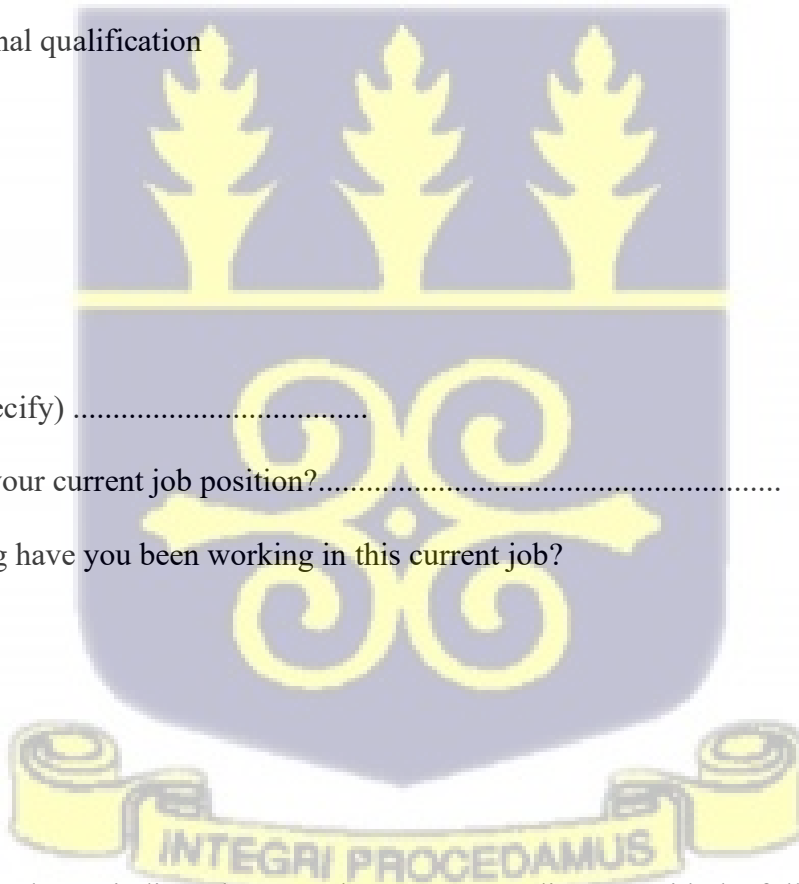
2-5 years

6-9 years

>10 years

Please circle a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)



Please circle a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have a good sense of why I feel certain feelings most of the time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I have a good understanding of my own emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I really understand what I feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I always know whether I am happy or not.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I always know my friends' emotions from their behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I am a good observer of others' emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10	I always tell myself I am a competent person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I am a self-motivating person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I would always encourage myself to try my best.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	I have good control of my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Please circle a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Proactive Service Performance Scale

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I proactively share information with customers to meet their financial needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I anticipate issues or needs customers might have and proactively develop solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I use my own judgment and understanding of risk to determine when to make exceptions or improvise solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I take ownership by following through with the customer interaction and ensure a smooth transition to other service representatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I actively create partnerships with other service representatives to better serve customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6	I take initiative to communicate client requirements to other service areas and collaborate in implementing solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I proactively check with customers to verify that customer expectations have been met or exceeded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Please circle a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Customer-oriented Perspective Taking Scale

	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I imagine how things look from the customer's perspective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I think about how I would feel in customers' situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I try to see things from their customers' viewpoints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I try to imagine myself as a customer in a similar situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



SPSS Output from Data Analysis

REGRESSION

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age ^b	.	Enter
2	EI ^b	.	Enter
3	PT ^b	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: PCS			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Model Summary ^d										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	F
1	.241 ^a	.058	.039	1.09926	.058	3.135	4	204	.016	
2	.725 ^b	.526	.515	.78139	.468	200.736	1	203	.000	
3	.795 ^c	.632	.621	.69066	.105	57.837	1	202	.000	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age										
b. Predictors: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age, EI										
c. Predictors: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age, EI, PT										

d. Dependent Variable: PCS

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.155	4	3.789	3.135	.016 ^b
	Residual	246.508	204	1.208		
	Total	261.663	208			
2	Regression	137.718	5	27.544	45.111	.000 ^c
	Residual	123.945	203	.611		
	Total	261.663	208			
3	Regression	165.307	6	27.551	57.758	.000 ^d
	Residual	96.356	202	.477		
	Total	261.663	208			
a. Dependent Variable: PCS						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age, EI						
d. Predictors: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age, EI, PT						



Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.555	.360		12.640	.000
	Gender	.269	.155	.120	1.736	.084
	Age	-.106	.149	-.075	-.709	.479
	Education	.108	.093	.081	1.171	.243
	Work tenure	-.127	.120	-.111	-1.052	.294
2	(Constant)	.807	.368		2.192	.030
	Gender	.365	.110	.163	3.308	.001
	Age	.081	.107	.057	.755	.451
	Education	.025	.066	.019	.382	.703
	Work tenure	-.024	.086	-.021	-.281	.779
	EI	.676	.048	.717	14.168	.000
3	(Constant)	.977	.326		2.996	.003
	Gender	.147	.102	.066	1.448	.149
	Age	.090	.094	.064	.953	.342
	Education	-.021	.059	-.015	-.353	.724
	Work tenure	-.018	.076	-.016	-.241	.810

	EI	.246	.071	.261	3.484	.001
	PT	.459	.060	.574	7.605	.000
a. Dependent Variable: PCS						

Excluded Variables ^a						
Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
1	EI	.717 ^b	14.168	.000	.705	.912
	PT	.785 ^b	16.938	.000	.765	.895
2	PT	.574 ^c	7.605	.000	.472	.320
a. Dependent Variable: PCS						
b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age						
c. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Work tenure, Education, Gender, Age, EI						

Residuals Statistics ^a					
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.2296	6.0983	4.7943	.89148	209

Std. Predicted Value	-2.877	1.463	.000	1.000	209
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.085	.220	.123	.030	209
Adjusted Predicted Value	2.2679	6.1117	4.7949	.89052	209
Residual	-1.31160	2.05406	.00000	.68063	209
Std. Residual	-1.899	2.974	.000	.985	209
Stud. Residual	-1.917	3.025	.000	1.004	209
Deleted Residual	-1.33692	2.12529	-.00069	.70591	209
Stud. Deleted Residual	-1.930	3.088	.000	1.009	209
Mahal. Distance	2.122	20.133	5.971	3.594	209
Cook's Distance	.000	.051	.005	.009	209
Centered Leverage Value	.010	.097	.029	.017	209
a. Dependent Variable: PCS					

CORRELATION

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Gender	1.48	.501	209
Age	1.47	.797	209
Education	2.32	.836	209
Work tenure	2.01	.983	209

EI	4.9079	1.18930	209
PT	5.1112	1.40351	209
PCS	4.7943	1.12160	209

Correlations								
		Gender	Age	Education	Work tenure	EI	PT	PCS
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-.167*	.076	-.122	-.007	.171*	.152*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.016	.274	.080	.918	.013	.028
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.167*	1	-.020	.758**	-.271**	-.263**	-.181**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016		.777	.000	.000	.000	.009
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
Education	Pearson Correlation	.076	-.020	1	.088	.075	.131	.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.274	.777		.205	.284	.058	.240
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
Work tenure	Pearson Correlation	-.122	.758**	.088	1	-.251**	-.232**	-.175*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.080	.000	.205		.000	.001	.011
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
EI	Pearson Correlation	-.007	-.271**	.075	-.251**	1	.803**	.707**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.918	.000	.284	.000		.000	.000
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209	209

PT	Pearson Correlation	.171*	-.263**	.131	-.232**	.803**	1	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.000	.058	.001	.000		.000
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
PCS	Pearson Correlation	.152*	-.181**	.082	-.175*	.707**	.780**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.009	.240	.011	.000	.000	
	N	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								

